

TRAINING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA IN EUROPE - A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE AREA

Iuliana Claudia BAIAS

University of Oradea, Department of Geography, Tourism and Territorial Planning – TSAC,
1 University St., 410087, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: baiasiuliana@gmail.com

Horia CARȚI

University of Oradea, Department of Geography, Tourism and Territorial Planning – TSAC,
1 University St., 410087, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: horia_cartis@yahoo.com

Ștefan BAIAS

University of Oradea, Department of Geography, Tourism and Territorial Planning – TSAC,
1 University St., 410087, Oradea, Romania, e-mail: baias_stefan@yahoo.com

Abstract: Training specialists in various areas can contribute substantially to the economic development as they are able to help the community in identifying and solving problems more effectively, thereby achieving a more inclusive society. In Romania, the employment policy, namely the education and the professional training require a better level of education in order to train specialists for every socio-economic, cultural and political area. In this regard, the University of Oradea's main objective is to train specialists in various fields, participating in European partnerships with European universities. The participation of teachers and students in international mobility programs with European universities gives them the chance to discover Europe, to understand the visited region and to learn about the national peculiarities of each host country through a comparative approach that also leads to a better understanding of the higher education system both from Romania and from other European countries.

Key words: University of Oradea, teachers, students, international mobility,

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

Universities, as higher education institutions, had and still have an important role in any society. Under their wings intellectual elites were formed and knowledge developed in order to contribute to the explanation and understanding of the human being and all its surroundings (Vințanu, 2001).

In order to confirm its position, every university is assigned complex tasks: to train specialists in all sectors of activity and also involve them in the multilateral development of our society. This is the reason why this institution

must be highly responsive to changes appeared in the economic, social and political development of a country (Ianoş, 2010).

International exchanges and projects constitute an essential component of the scientific and didactic manifestation of every university that considers itself worthy of respect and affirmation at an international level. The purpose of these international partnerships is to improve one's own educational and research performance (Vladimirescu and Otovescu, 2007). The structure of the international relations at a university must continually expand each year in order to allow the participation of a large number of teachers and students in the planning of international mobilities.

The University of Oradea is one of the most prestigious institutions of higher education from Romania. Its main mission is to train specialists that can be active in almost every socio-economic, cultural and political field. The university encourages the participation in European programs and in collaborative projects with universities from Europe in order to enhance the knowledge and experience of the involved teachers and students. Therefore, a very important aspect of the educational activities held by the university from Oradea is represented by the international relationships, constantly consolidated and developed through the participation of professor and students in various international mobilities. Thus, during 2008-2013, different teachers participated in mobilities focused on professional training and teaching methods while the students participated in study and placement mobilities. Their participation in the international mobilities envisions the training of specialists for the fields in which they were prepared but also in other related fields. At the same time, the development of such projects in different European universities offered teachers and students a chance to familiarize with the system of higher education in Europe and to understand the national peculiarities of each host country.

METHODOLOGY

The results of this study were obtained by using geographical research methods: the method of bibliographic documentation (Cocean, 2005; Armaş, 2006), the statistical method (Khan, 1998; Petrea, 2005; Gomez and Jones, 2010;) used for processing data statistics on the number of teachers and students participating in international mobilities – the obtained data and information was then included in the profile analysis (Cocean 2005, Clifford et al., 2010), the mapping method – transforming the obtained information in cartographic representations using the GIS software (Petrea, 2005; Cope and Sarah Elwood, 2009) and the synthesis method that resulted in drawing conclusions on the international mobility during the above mentioned period. Moreover, an important role in setting the database was held by the Department of International Relations at the University of Oradea.

INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

Erasmus is part of the European program SOCRATES, a program that aims at helping and encouraging the academic mobility, both for teachers and students. This program aims at creating a European identity and unity through study trips from one country to another. These trips are simply forming students-students, students-teachers, teachers-teachers and teachers-students bonds and also offer students and teachers the opportunity to speak another language, to see new landscapes and to prepare for their profession in a different

country with different history, culture, customs and social structure (Apetrei, 2010;). In other words, this program seeks access to a global education for as many students and teachers as possible, thus promoting the right to education.

There is a strong consensus that the international mobility of teachers and students is very beneficial for a number of reasons: professional development, a new perspective on the education system of another country and access to various jobs in Europe (Goetz et al, 2011; Guruz et al, 2011; Ennew and Greenaway, 2012; Rizvi, 2014).

During 2008-2013, through the ERASMUS program the University of Oradea focused on the development of international relations with various universities in Europe. The teachers participated in mobilities focused on professional training and teaching methods while the students participated in study and placement mobilities. The statistical analysis of the mobilities undertaken by teachers shows that a particular interest was expressed by the teachers in the field of International Relations and European Studies as they participated in training mobilities (14.2% of the teachers participating in training mobilities) and in teaching mobilities (16.2%). The following places were taken by the teachers in the fields of geography, language and literature (12.6%), Industrial Engineering (9.4%), Physical Education and Sport (4.9%), History, Economics and International Business (Figures 1, 2).

These mobilities were achieved both for the field in which the participants were mainly training but also for related areas (figures 3, 4). In terms of professional training mobility stood the History and Archaeology (16.1% of the participating teachers) while in the case of teaching methods mobility the preferences focused on Earth Sciences (13.2 % of the participating teachers).

The mobilities focused on professional trainings and teaching methods took place in various countries but a large part of the teachers chose Hungary because of the accessible language and because of the fields in which they were trained. They therefore chose various institutions from this country in order to participate in two types of mobilities (Figures 5, 6).

The students attending the license and master degree courses from the University of Oradea participated in study and placement mobilities in universities from Europe (figures 7 and 8). During the above mentioned period a number of 579 students, participated in study stages, most of the students getting prepared for the fields International Relations and European Studies (13%) and Geography (10.8%).

Moreover, the students from the International Relations and European Studies department showed a particular interest for the placement mobilities (figure 8).

These mobilities covered not only the fields in which the students were already preparing for but they also included additional fields. The field in which the students were most interested in during their study mobility period was Modern Languages (7,5%). On the other side, the students participating in placement mobilities showed interest in the Political Sciences and Civic education fields (21,1%) (figures 9, 10).

In what concerns the student's preferences for the host country during their study and placement mobilities, a large percentage is held by France (22% of the total number of students participating in study mobilities) and Spain (40,4% of the total number of students participating in s placement mobilities). The following preferred countries were: Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Great Britain, Portugal, etc. (figures 11, 12).

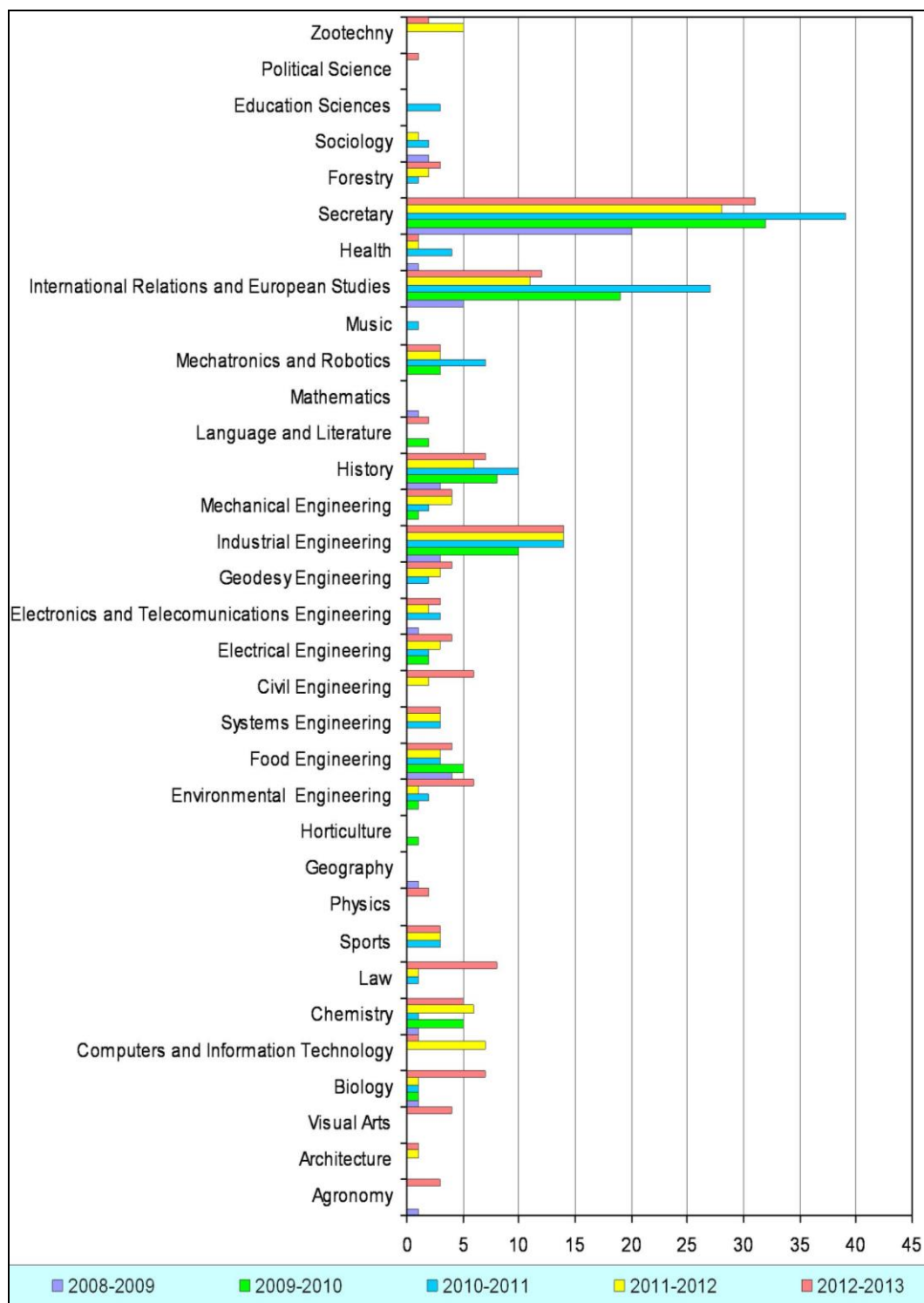


Figure 1. Departments from which teachers participated in professional training mobilities during 2008-2013

(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

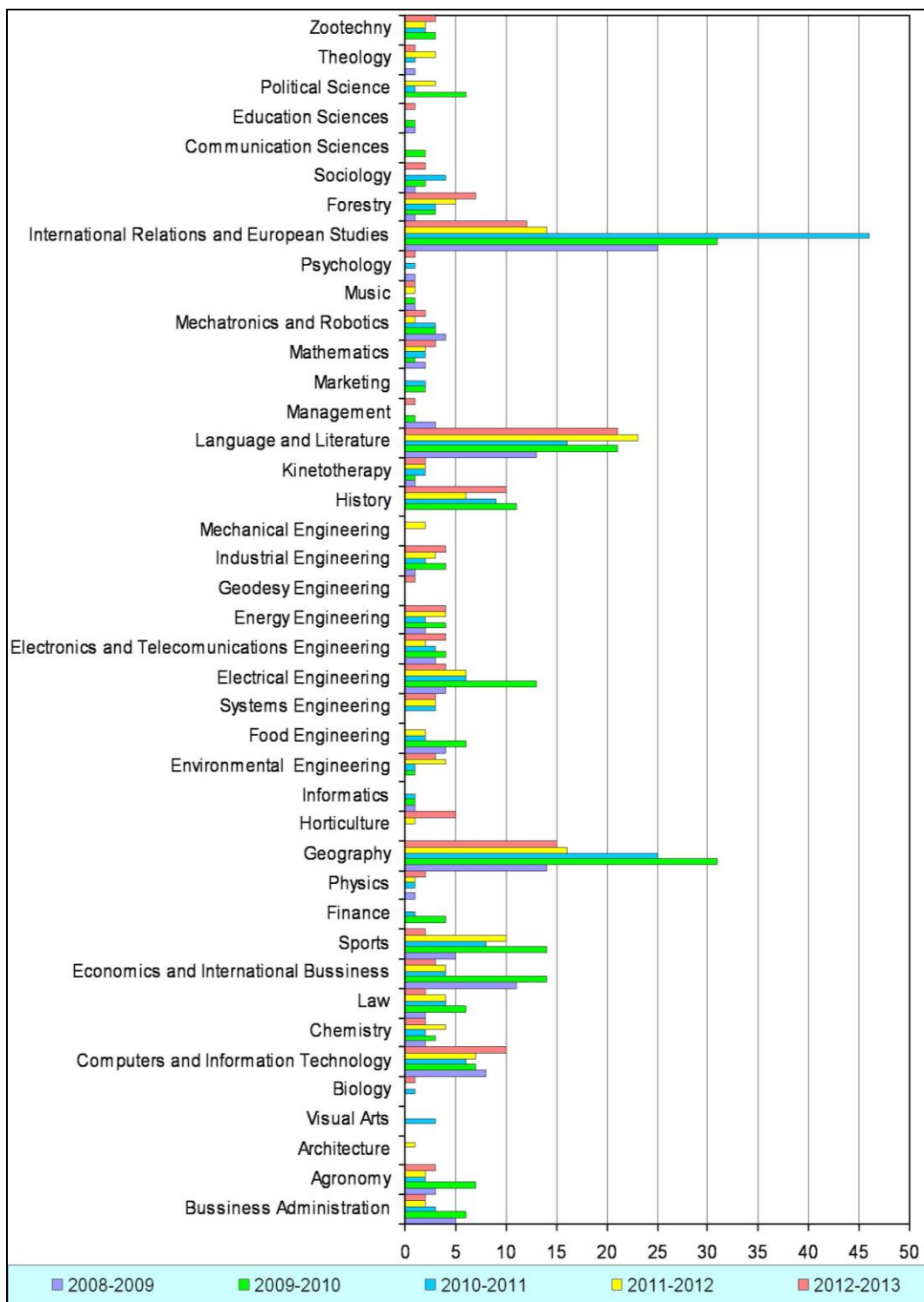


Figure 2. Departments from which teachers participated in mobilities focused on teaching methods during 2008-2013

(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

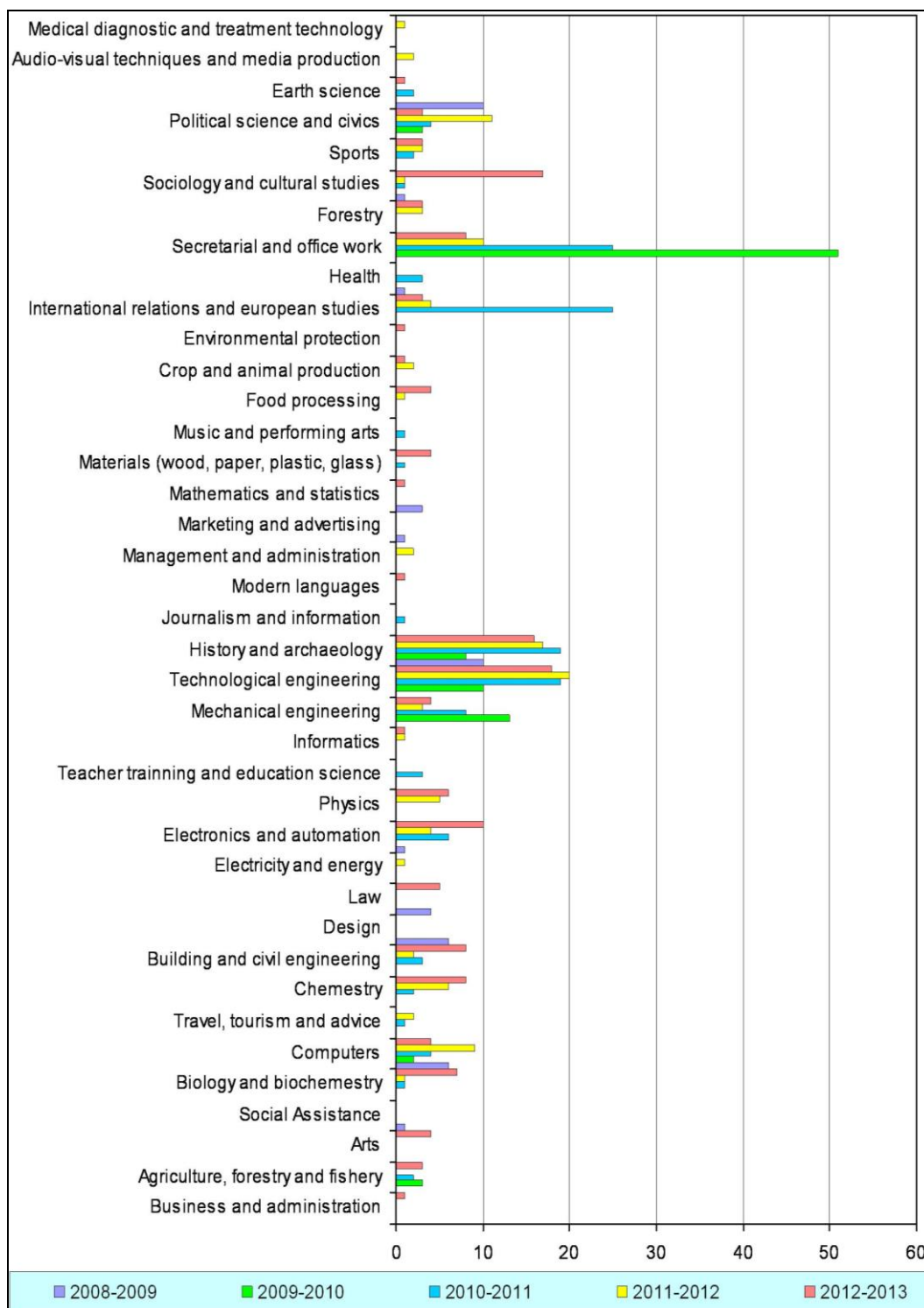


Figure 3. Fields in which the teachers from the University of Oradea were trained within the European projects during 2008-2013
(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

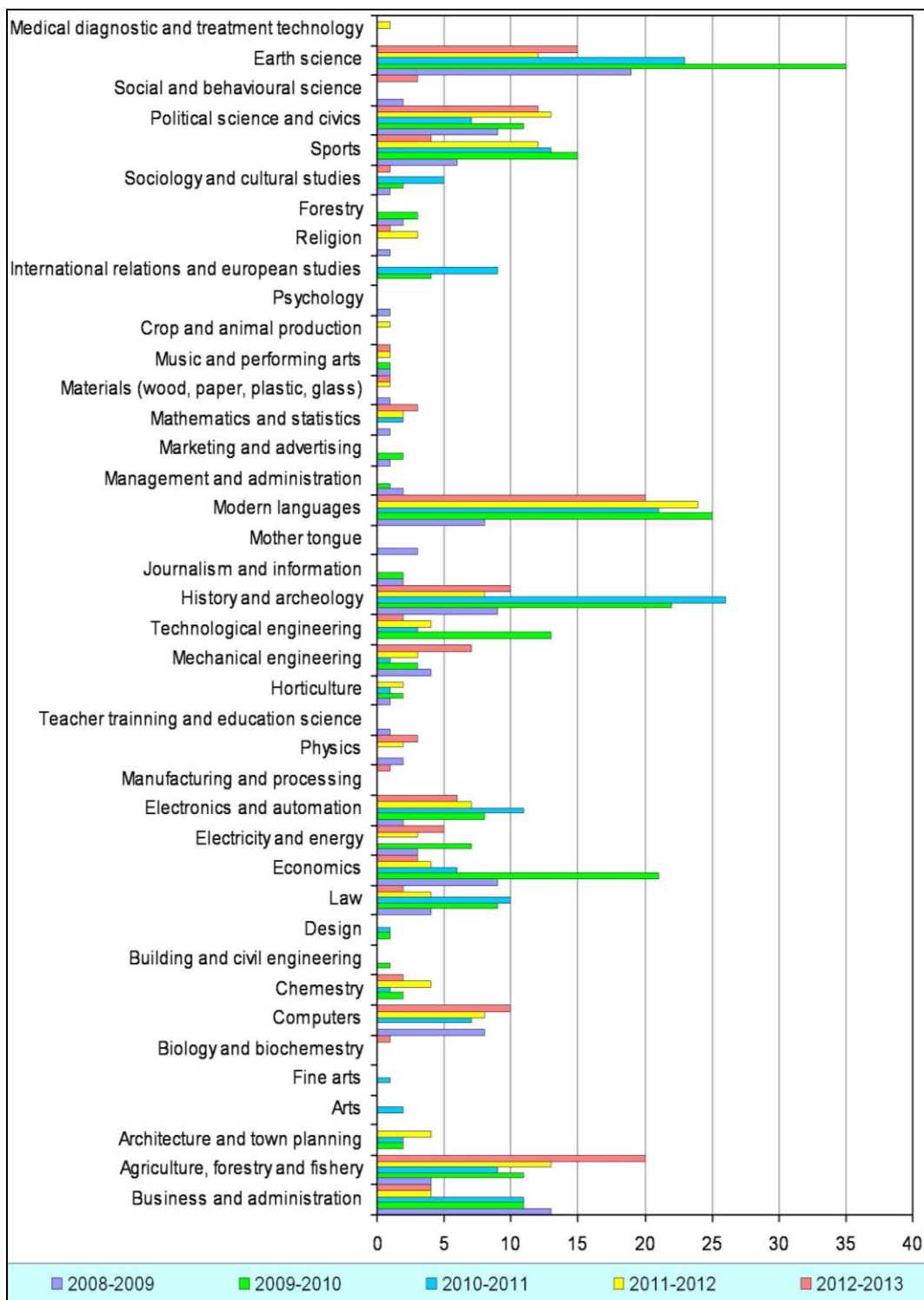


Figure 4. Fields of activity of the teachers
from the universities of Europe during 2008-2013
(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

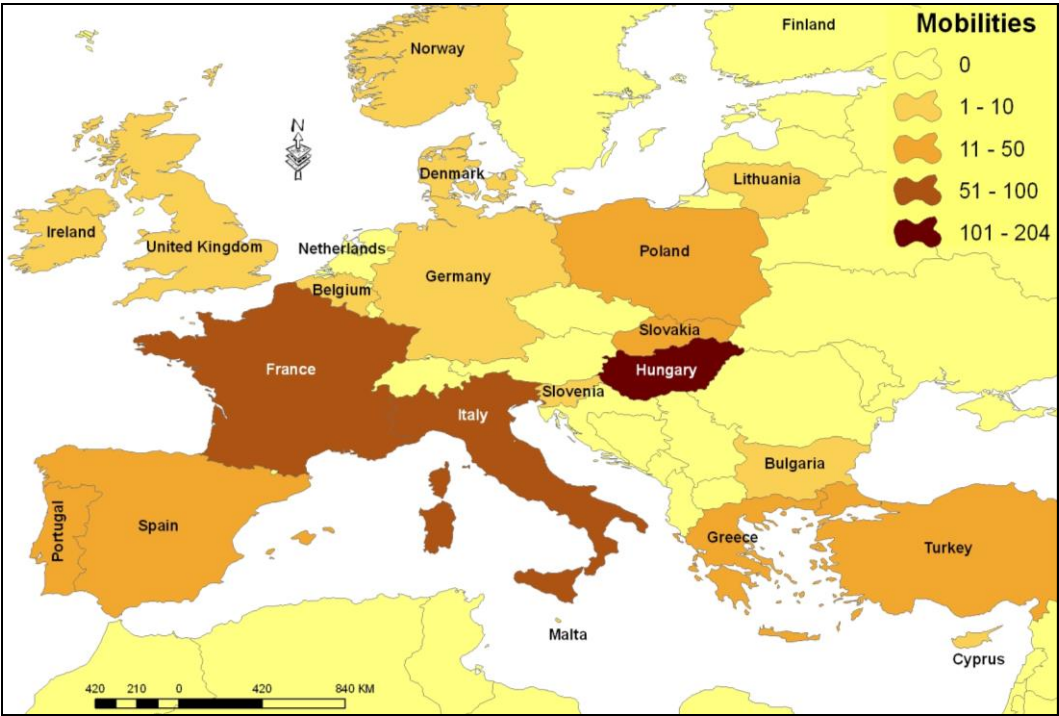


Figure 5. The European countries that hosted professional trainings mobilities for teachers during 2008-2013

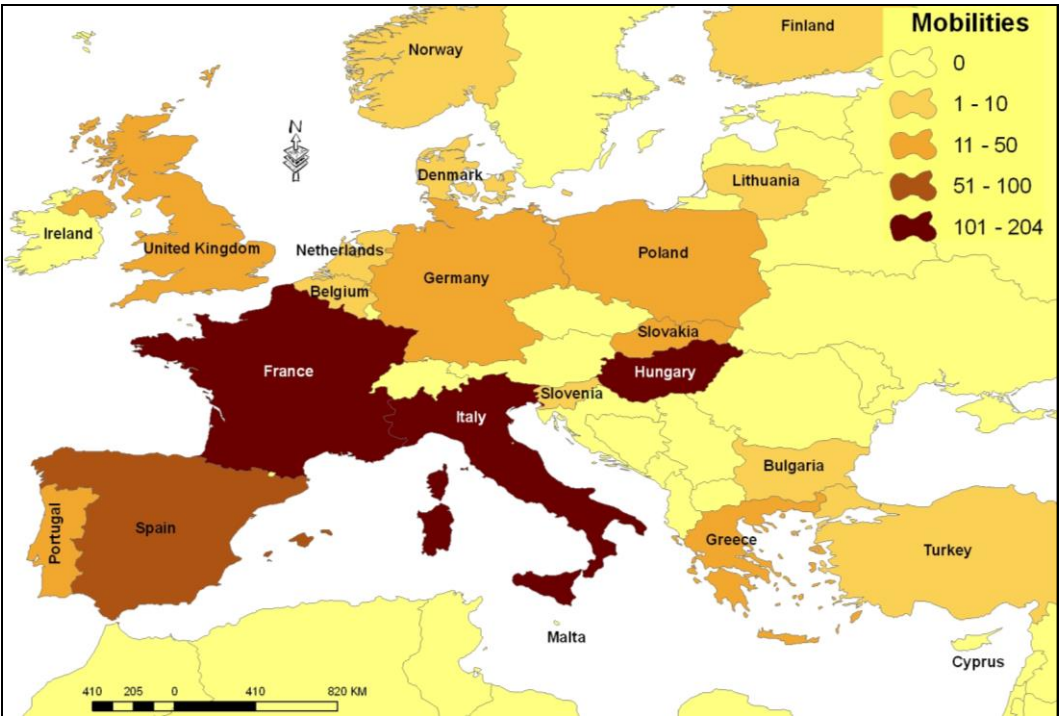


Figure 6. The European countries that hosted teaching methods mobilities for teachers during 2008-2013

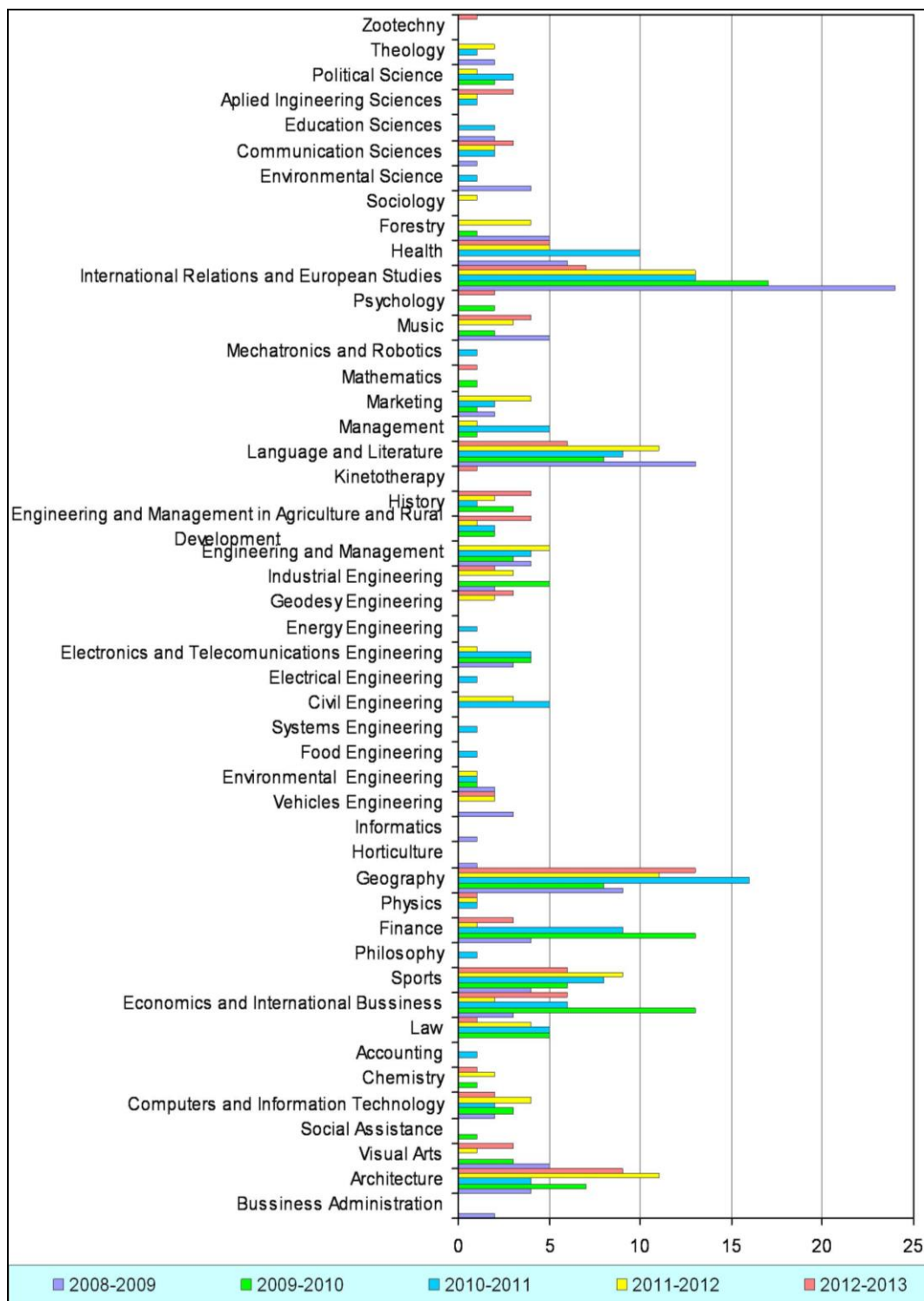


Figure 7. The study fields of the students from the University of Oradea who participated in study mobilities in universities from Europe during 2008-2013
(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

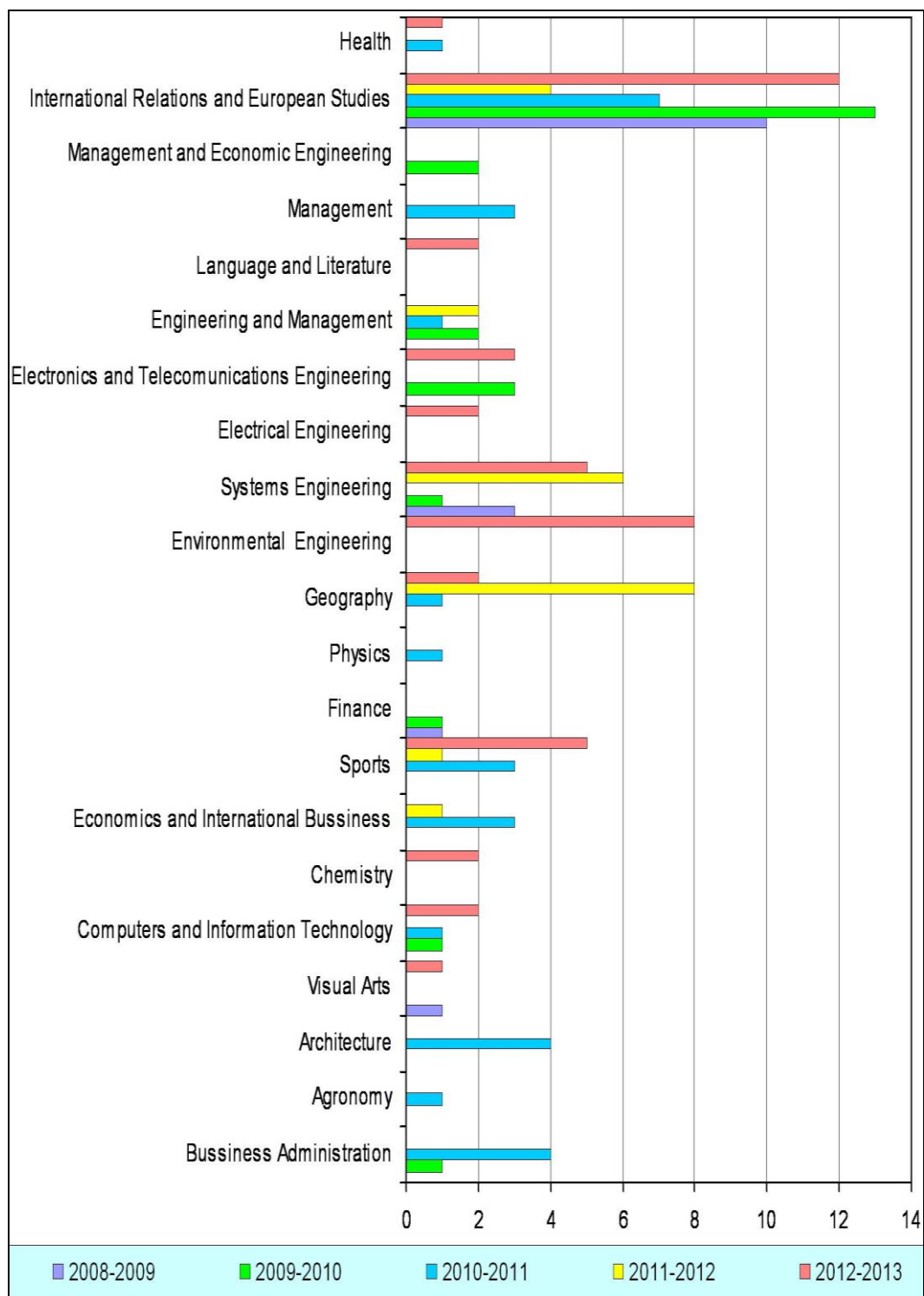


Figure 8. The study fields of the students from the University of Oradea who participated in placement mobilities in universities from Europe during 2008-2013 (Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

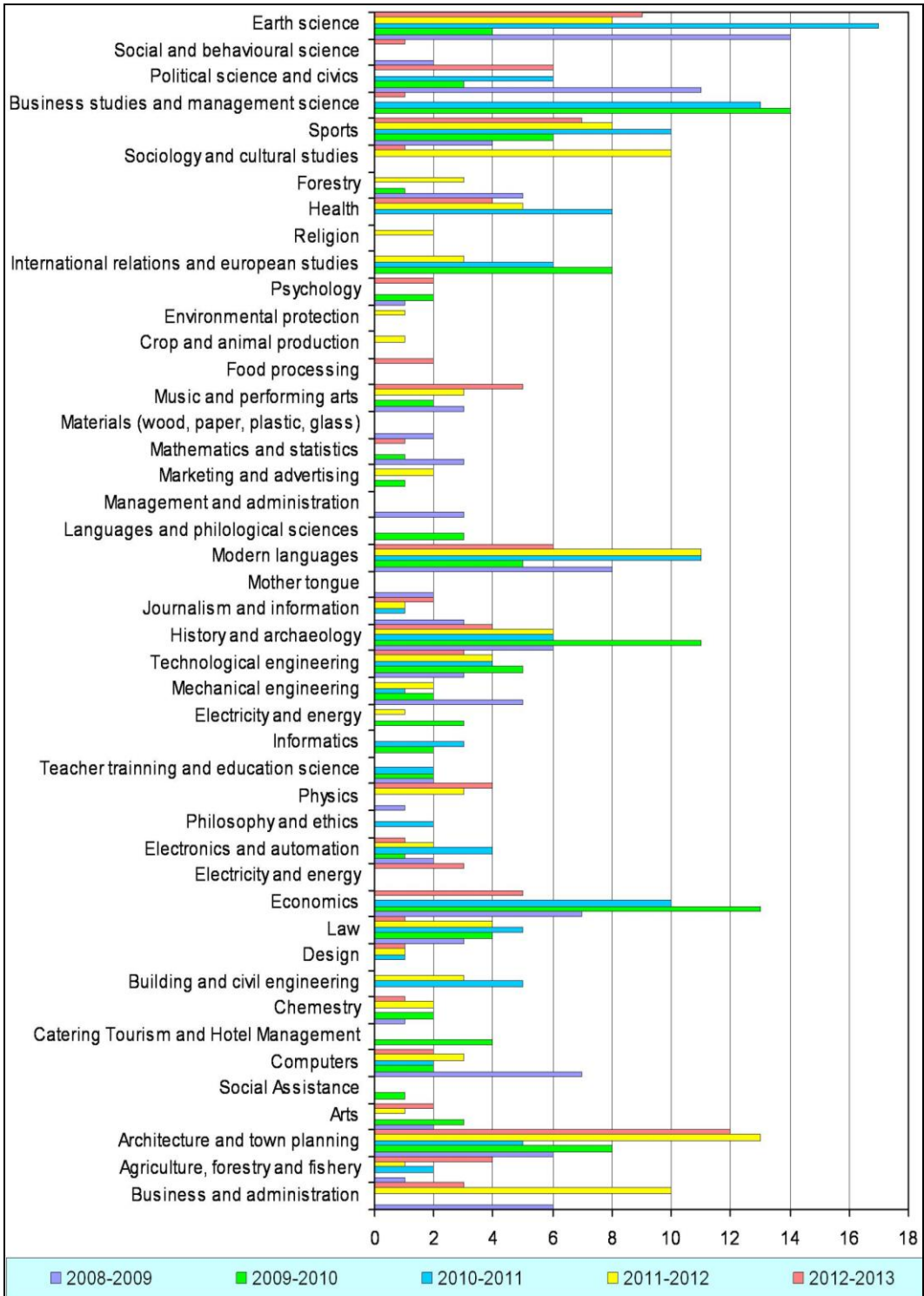


Figure 9. Fields in which were trained the students participating in study mobilities in different European universities during 2008-2013

(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

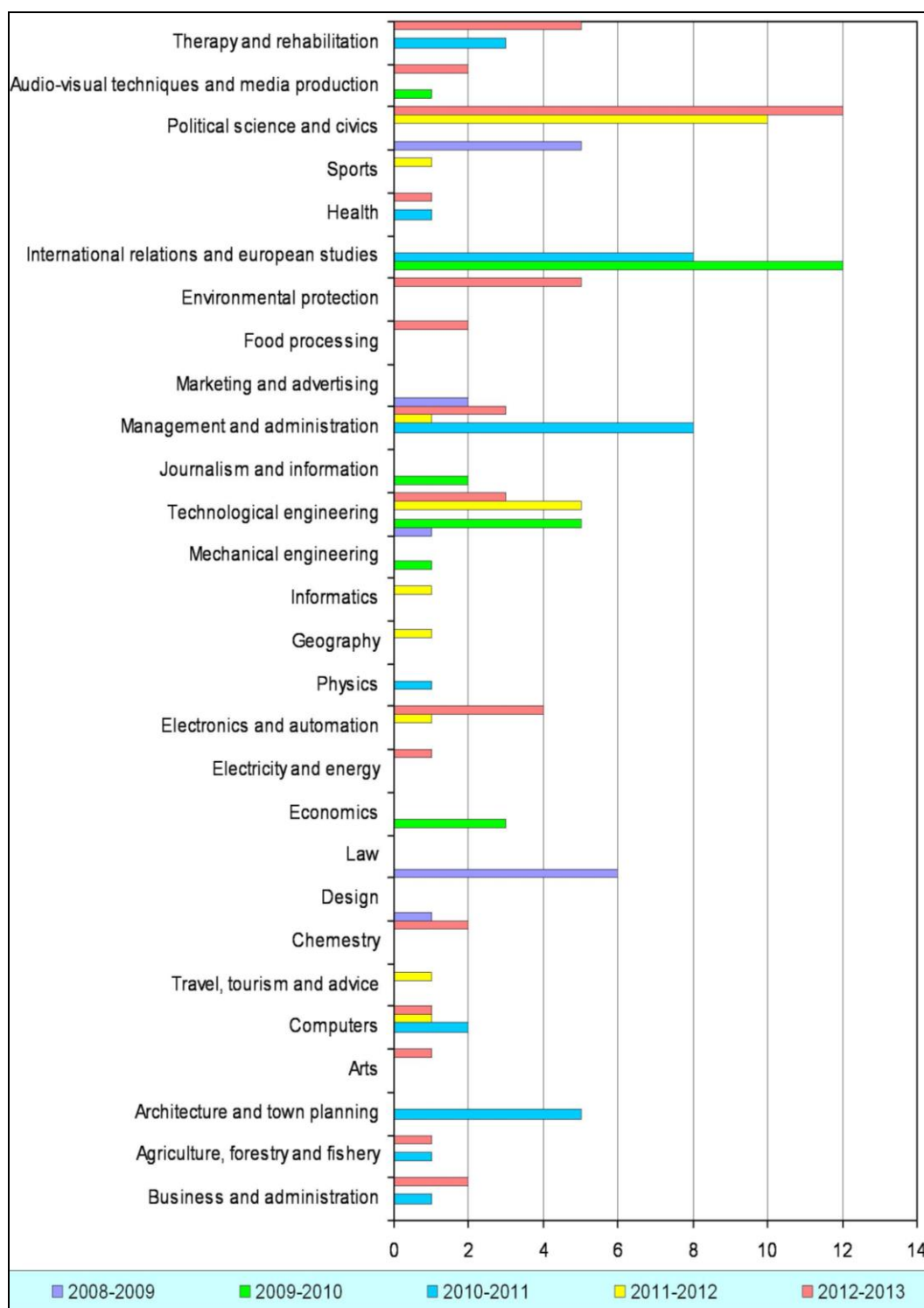


Figure 10. Fields in which were trained the students participating in placement mobilities in different European universities during 2008-2013
(Data source: Department of International Relations, University of Oradea)

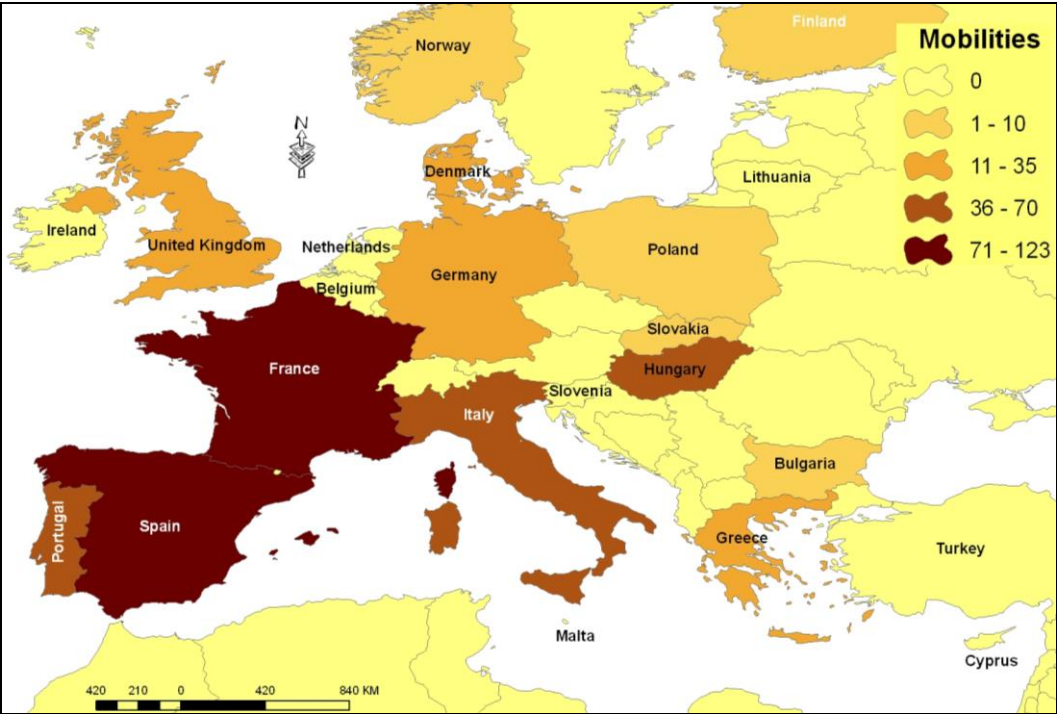


Figure 11. European countries in which study mobilities were organized during 2008-2013

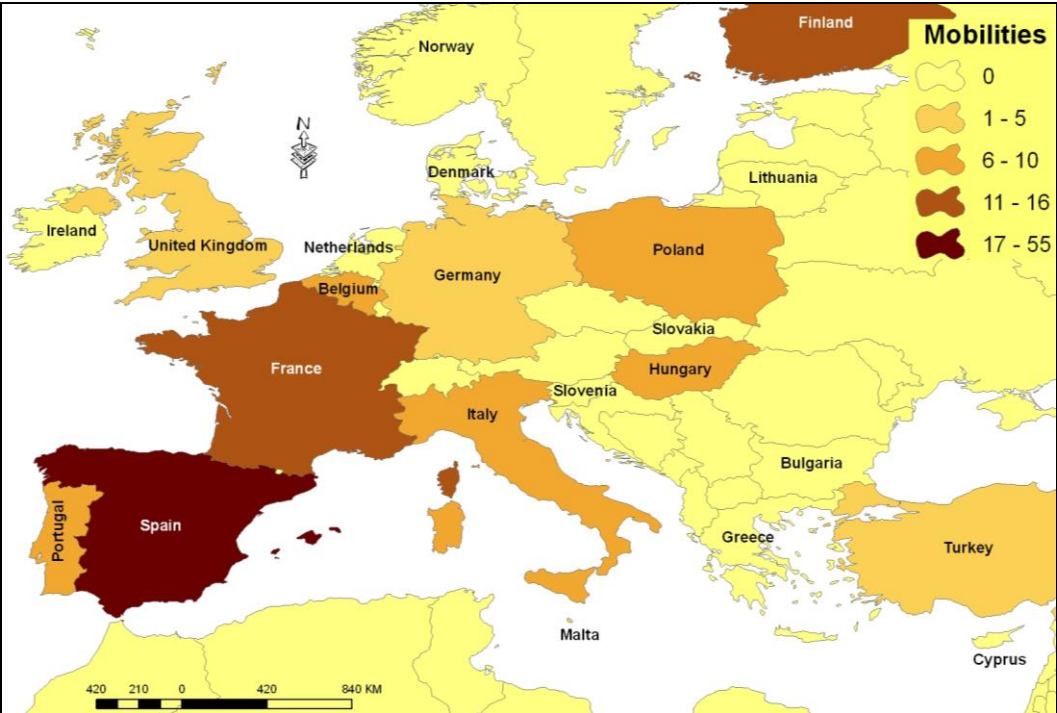


Figure 12. European countries in which placement mobilities were organized during 2008-2013

CONCLUSIONS

The University of Oradea is one of the most prestigious educational institutions in Romania, having as its main objective the training of specialists in all socio-economic, cultural and political fields. The training of specialists is also done at an international level, the university participating in European programs and cooperative partnerships with universities in Europe, thus contributing to the development of the horizon of knowledge and experience of both teachers and students. The development of various international partnerships is carried out through the European program ERASMUS that aims at training professors and students in higher education institutions and enterprises (ST), through specialized training mobilities in higher education institutions (TA), through study mobilities for students (SMS), placement mobilities for students (SMP), etc.

During 2008-2013, Oradea's university professors and students participated in developing these mobilities both in training and in related fields in various European universities. Such mobility gave them chance to discover Europe, to understand the host region with all its peculiarities and to understand the higher education system from Romania and from other European countries. During the above mentioned period, a special interest for participation in international mobility was showed by the professors and students from the fields: International Relations and European Studies, Geography, Language and Literature, Industrial Engineering, Physical Education and Sports, History, Economics and International Business.

REFERENCES

- APETREI, Alice, Mariana, (2010), *Drepturile omului în Uniunea Europeană*, Editura Lumen, Iași;
- ARMAȘ, Iuliana, (2006), *Teorie și metodologie geografică*, Editura Fundației România de Măine, București;
- CLIFFORD, N., FRENCH, S., VALENTINE, G., (2010), *Key methods in Geography*, Second Edition, Publisher SAGE Publications Ltd., London;
- COCEAN, P., (2005), *Geografie Regională*, Editura Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca;
- COPE, M., ELWOOD, Sarah, (2009), *Qualitative GIS: a mixed method approach*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London, Great Britain;
- ENNEW, Christine, GREENAWAY, D., (2012), *The globalization of higher education*, Published by Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, Great Britain;
- GOETZ, T., JARITZ, G., OSER, F., (2011), *Pains and gains of international mobility in teacher education*. Rotterdam, Netherlands ; Boston: Sense Publishers;
- GOMEZ, B., JONES, J.P., (2010), *Research methods in geography*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., USA;
- GURUZ, K., (2011), *Higher education and international student mobility in the global knowledge economy*, State University of New York Press, New York, SUA;
- IANOȘ, I., (2010), *Insertia teritorială a universităților din România*, Editura Universitară, București;
- KHAN, N., (1998), *Quantitative methods in geographical research*, Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, India;
- PETREA, D., (2005), *Obiect, metodă și cunoaștere geografică*, Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea;
- RIZVI, F., (2014), *Accounting education in the global*, Published by Routledge, New York, SUA;
- VINȚANU, N., (2001), *Educația Universitară*, Editura Aramis Print, București;
- VLADIMIRESCU, I., OTOVESCU, D., (2007), *Universitatea din Craiova. Monografie (1947-2007)*, Editura Universitaria, Editura Beladi, Craiova;
- *** *Archive of Department of International Relations, University of Oradea*;
http://geo.unibuc.ro/indrumari_studenti_erasmus.pdf (accesat în 02.02.2014).