

*Journal of International Mobility*  
*Moving for education, training and research*

Call for papers  
Special Issue No. 13

**The resurgence of academic diplomacy?**  
**The geopolitical challenges of academic mobility**

Regular call for contributions

Varia articles  
Reading notes  
Case studies

Deadline for submission of articles: **25 may 2025**  
Contact: [revue@agence-erasmus.fr](mailto:revue@agence-erasmus.fr)

The multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed *Journal of International Mobility*, published by PUF and managed by Agence Erasmus+ France/Éducation Formation, brings together scientific contributions on all aspects of international mobility in education and training in Europe and around the world. One of its objectives is to achieve a clearer understanding of the issues, conditions and impact of mobility, providing material for the researchers and policy makers who are called upon to support it.

The agency is now launching a call for contributions to the latest special issue, placed under the editorial supervision of Guillaume Tronchet (Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, École normale supérieure-PSL, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, CNRS), Marion Vieu (Aix Marseille Université, CNRS, LEST UMR 7317, 13626, Aix-en-Provence, France), Thomas Perrin (Laboratoire TVES-Université de Lille, SCAC-Institut français de Slovaquie).

This **special issue** is entitled: *The resurgence of academic diplomacy? The geopolitical challenges of academic mobility*. Individual and multi-author submissions are welcomed. Authors are advised to position their contributions in relation to one or more of the themes discussed below.

**Varia articles** on educational mobility in Europe and around the world may also be considered for inclusion. Two other sections are also open for submissions: **reading notes** and a **case study** section (see details below).

Contributions are welcomed from various disciplinary fields: sociology, education sciences, history, geography, anthropology, economics, language teaching, etc.

### Special issue

## The resurgence of academic diplomacy? The geopolitical challenges of academic mobility

Issue coordinated by

Guillaume Tronchet (Institut d'histoire moderne et contemporaine, École normale supérieure-PSL, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, CNRS), Marion Vieu (Aix Marseille Université, CNRS, LEST UMR 7317, 13626, Aix-en-Provence, France), Thomas Perrin (Laboratoire TVES-Université de Lille, SCAC-Institut français de Slovaquie)

The internationalisation of higher education and research is an issue currently at the heart of public debate, whether it concerns international university rankings, the international mobility of students, professors and researchers, or the adaptation of national education and research systems to the standards imposed by international academic competition. It is also a sector where academic and scientific intersect with state interests, within the framework of power strategies designed to consolidate political, economic, cultural and, at times, military positions on the international stage. As a result, universities and academic institutions find themselves at the centre of diplomatic issues as they play a key role in forging international alliances, the assertion of cultural and scientific influences and the implementation of 'soft power' policies.

Conceptualised over the past fifteen years as an analytical category by historians (Tronchet, 2007, 2014, 2015; Adam & Lerg, 2015) and widely adopted since then – both in the field of social sciences (Piros & Koops, 2020; Baudrin & Piveteau, 2023) and as a practical category by actors in diplomatic and

international academic relations (Despréaux, 2024) – the notion of ‘university diplomacy’ provides a framework for understanding these interrelated phenomena. It offers a common analytical lens for studying the full range of international academic initiatives serving strategic influence objectives: policies for hosting and accommodating international students, faculty, and researchers; scholarship programs promoting international mobility; the establishment of branch campuses and satellite university hubs; cooperation agreements (joint degrees, collaborative programs, faculty and student exchanges, etc.); language certifications, and more.

Although this phenomenon is not new and can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it expanded throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, shaped by the numerous geopolitical reconfigurations of the global order from the end of the Second World War to the end of the Cold War. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it has experienced renewed momentum in a global context marked by rising geopolitical tensions, public health crises, fears of foreign interference in national academic systems, and profound changes in higher education policies which call into question the education of the new global elites.

To examine these recent geopolitical dynamics, the *Journal of International Mobility*, in keeping with previous issues (Ballatore, Bettahar, Erlich, 2024), is launching a call for contributions on the theme of the ‘resurgence of academic diplomacy’. Researchers are invited to submit articles which may involve one or more disciplines (sociology, history, political science, international relations, demography, etc.), focus on one or more geographical areas, on a national (France, United States, China, Russia, etc.) or international scale, or at the scale of intercontinental cooperation and competition (Europe, Asia, Africa, etc.). Contributions may align with one or more of the following areas of focus.

#### **Area of Focus 1: The governance of academic diplomacy**

Academic diplomacy is a field where academic rationales and state interests overlap. Its governance is a balance between academic autonomy and national strategies overseen by government bodies. This category is an invitation to authors to examine the relationship between the international policies of universities, national internationalisation policies and state diplomacy. In some countries, higher education institutions have significant leeway regarding their international partnerships, while in others, the state imposes firm policy guidelines. Are universities free to determine their own international policy or are they subject to state directives? What levels of governance are involved in these processes: Ministries of Higher Education and Research, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, specialist organisations (Campus France, DAAD in Germany, British Council in the UK, etc.), the Ministry of the Interior, etc.? How much autonomy is there in knowledge and science – and therefore how much room for academic freedom – in contexts of geopolitical tension where international collaboration by academic institutions may be restricted by state intervention?

#### **Area of Focus 2: The strategies and tools of academic diplomacy**

Governments and universities have many ways of influencing the international academic community. These tools include scholarships and invitation policies (programmes such as Erasmus+, Fulbright or the Chinese government scholarship (CGS programme) for attracting foreign students to strengthen influential ties, or to strengthen targeted collaborations by welcoming foreign academics, thereby promoting knowledge exchange while consolidating institutional ties. These schemes may target specific geographical areas or strategic disciplines, depending on diplomatic, economic or scientific considerations. *Offshore* campuses are another means of leverage: many Western universities are opening centres abroad (NYU Abu Dhabi, Sorbonne Abu Dhabi, Sciences Po in Poitiers for Latin America, Franco-Senegalese campus, etc.) in order to spread their example and exert intellectual and cultural influence. Many other tools are also being used (joint certification, staff exchanges, etc.). The choice of these tools and the funding allocated to them are not neutral and reflect strategies of influence and the balance of power between governments and institutions. In this context, authors may focus on the study of a particular system specific to a university, a government or intergovernmental organisations.

**Area of Focus 3: Areas of influence: moving towards a hierarchy of knowledge?**

Not all academic fields benefit from the same degree of diplomatic investment. Some sectors have become areas of intense competition, with science and innovation becoming issues of national sovereignty. Artificial intelligence and digital technology spark significant rivalry, particularly between China and the United States in the field of AI and big data, which has led to increased competition in the recruitment of academic talent. Medicine and biotechnology, which enjoyed a resurgence in prominence during the COVID-19 crisis, are another disciplinary field in which the training of personnel (doctors, researchers, etc.), and the production and sharing of knowledge constitute tools of influence. Humanities and social sciences, although less in the spotlight than technological competition, are also an area of ideological confrontation where the export of certain critical theories (such as postcolonial or gender studies) is met with resistance in some countries where they are perceived as cultural interference. These examples are, of course, not exhaustive. Authors who would like to examine the role of knowledge and knowledge production in global geopolitical restructuring are invited to submit contributions based on specific empirical cases.

**Area of Focus 4: The battle of the models: co-operation or rivalry?**

Academic mobility contributes to the spread of competing university models. Which university model is shaping higher education worldwide and influencing countries whose higher education systems are still developing? How relevant is the Anglo-American model, which is characterised by a high degree of university autonomy, mixed (public/private) funding and competitiveness based on international rankings? Is there a role for the European model, which is based on a more centralised approach, is primarily state funded and which enjoys strong inter-university cooperation? What role is there for the rapidly expanding Chinese model, based on strong state intervention, massive investment and a strategy of attracting talent? To what extent do these models shape emerging universities, particularly in Africa and Latin America? In this context, what role is there for major international organisations which are not only places for cooperation and exchange, but also places where differing views on the internationalisation of higher education and research, and the role of academic knowledge and science in the global arena, can be debated? In the context of this area of focus, authors are invited to study the extent to which globalisation in the university sector is leading to the standardisation of academic and scientific policies and practices or, on the contrary, is creating rivalry between academic diplomacy organisations committed to the influence and promotion of a model of knowledge creation and dissemination.

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## Submission of articles for the special issue

Please send full articles (**40,000 characters including spaces**) by e-mail (Word document) to [revue@agence-erasmus.fr](mailto:revue@agence-erasmus.fr) by **25 may 2025**.

Submissions will be evaluated anonymously by two members of the editorial board. You will receive one of four possible responses following the evaluation process: article accepted, accepted with request for minor changes, request for major changes, rejected. If the editors request changes, you will be asked to attach a page explaining the changes to the revised article, and your article will be re-evaluated.

Languages: articles may be submitted in French, English, Spanish, Italian or German.

### Timetable

- Submission deadline for full articles: **25 may 2025**
- Response to authors following first round of evaluation: **16 june 2025**
- Submission of articles in response to the feedback from the editorial board: **13 july 2025**
- Response to authors following second round of evaluation: **31 july 2025**
- Submission of finished articles: **1 september 2025**
- Publication: **November 2025**

### Full article format

In addition to the text of the article itself, submission should include:

- The full name(s) of the author(s),
- a clear title,
- an abstract in the language of the article (English, French, German, Spanish, Italian) and a translation into either English or French (approx. 1500 characters including spaces)
- 3 to 5 keywords,
- a brief biographical note on the author(s), in both English and French
- a bibliography of texts referenced in the article.

Total number of characters: **40,000 maximum** (including spaces).

### Formatting guidelines

Font: Times New Roman 12. Line spacing: 1.

The bibliography and website references are to be given at the end of the article, in alphabetical order.

Footnotes should appear at the bottom of the page in Times New Roman 10, single-spaced.

Quotations (of authors or interview extracts) must be inserted in the text between inverted commas, without italics, in Times New Roman 10, single spaced. Lengthy quotations should be indented and presented in Times New Roman 10, single spaced.

Foreign language expressions or terms should be italicised.

Iconographic documents may be included in the article. Images must be free of copyright.

All borrowings from other authors must be clearly indicated, and the original sources cited.

## Permanent call for papers

In addition to this call for papers on the theme of the special issue, contributions may be submitted to other sections of the journal. Contributions are welcomed from a variety of disciplines: sociology, education science, history, geography, anthropology, economics, language teaching etc. Submissions are welcomed in French, English, Spanish, Italian or German.

### **Evaluation methods and how to submit contributions**

Please send full articles (Word documents) by email to [revue@agence-erasmus.fr](mailto:revue@agence-erasmus.fr) by **25 may 2025 for the next issue, or at any time for consideration for future publication.**

Submissions will be evaluated anonymously by two members of the editorial board. You will receive one of four possible responses following the evaluation process: article accepted, accepted with request for minor changes, request for major changes, rejected. If the editors request changes, you will be asked to attach a page explaining the changes to the revised article, and your article will be re-evaluated.

If the contribution is accepted, it will be included in the next issue to be published, depending on the possibilities offered by the publication schedule.

#### **- Varia section**

This section is intended for articles on various topics in the field of European and international education and training mobility studies.

#### **- Case Studies section**

The Case Studies section is intended to strengthen the link between theory and practice by welcoming contributions from professionals with expertise in the field of education and training mobility. This section can include presentations of practical cases, educational experiments, specific tools, etc.

**Specific format of these contributions: 10,000 to 40,000 characters.**

#### **- Reading Notes section**

The Reading Notes section offers the contributor the possibility of presenting the content of a recent work in a synthetic and critical manner. The notes should give an account of the work, highlighting its contributions and limitations. The aim is not only to present a summary of the content, but also to offer a critical analysis of the directions taken, the identification of the subject, the methodology adopted and the results obtained. In addition, the notes should endeavour to put the work into perspective with the existing literature and the topics covered by the *Journal of International Mobility*.

**Specific format of these contributions: 10,000 characters maximum, including spaces and footnotes.**