

BalticStudyNet

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Putting the Baltic Sea Region on the map

Towards a global promotion strategy for higher education in Northern Europe

How third country students perceive European higher education

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Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)

Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries (2006)

Key findings:

- Europe is perceived as an entity in general terms and as an economic union but not with regard to culture and higher education
- Europe is generally seen as being elegant, clean, organised and modern...
- ...but also as lacking innovation, tolerance and *joie de vivre*
- Knowledge of Europe is limited to a few big countries, namely the UK, Germany and France
- Smaller countries can only gain visibility as a group, e.g. the Nordic countries



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ACA Study (2006)

Perceptions of Europe in comparison with the US and Australia

Advantages of Europe:

- Most traditional universities, most interesting cultural heritage, most attractive arts
- Safe destination, more accessible (visa)
- Cultural and linguistic diversity is mainly seen as attractive but also as confusing or as a barrier to communication



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ACA Study (2006)

Perceptions of Europe in comparison with the US and Australia

Disadvantages of Europe:

- The US is ranked above Europe in most academic and labour-market related issues (quality of education; reputation of degrees)
- Europe's single major disadvantage: English is not the universal mother language
- Little knowledge of English-taught programmes in non-English speaking countries



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Mare Europaeum

Summer School in Baltic Sea Region Studies

Previous knowledge - expectations - images:

- General lack of detailed knowledge of the Baltic Sea Region as a whole
- Expectations mostly confined to specific countries: Nordic countries and Germany
- Specific interest in the Baltic states and their successful experience of transformation and integration into the EU and NATO
- Pre-existing images largely shaped by reputation / stereotypes of Norden



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Experiences – impressions – reflections:

- Single most impressive experience: Øresund Region
- New insights: English as *lingua franca* of the Baltic Sea Region
- Thought-provoking: strong civil society; egalitarianism
- Reflecting on the existence of a single Baltic Sea Region: history and economy as crucial factors
- General evaluation: 'Bad food, everything else was excellent'



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Thank you!

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