



# Retention of international students in the EU

Preliminary findings of the 2018 EMN Study

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# Outline

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# 1. Aim and scope of the study

## Aim of the study

To explore the **national policies** and **practices** in Member State to **attract** and **retain** third-country nationals students.

## Scope of the study



EU (24 Member States)



2012 - 2018

## 2. Policy and legislative context



### EU-level

#### Legislative document

- Students and Researchers Directive ((EU)2016/801)

#### Policy documents

- 2015 European Agenda on Migration
- 1994 Council Resolution on admission of TCN for study purposes

## 2. Policy and legislative context

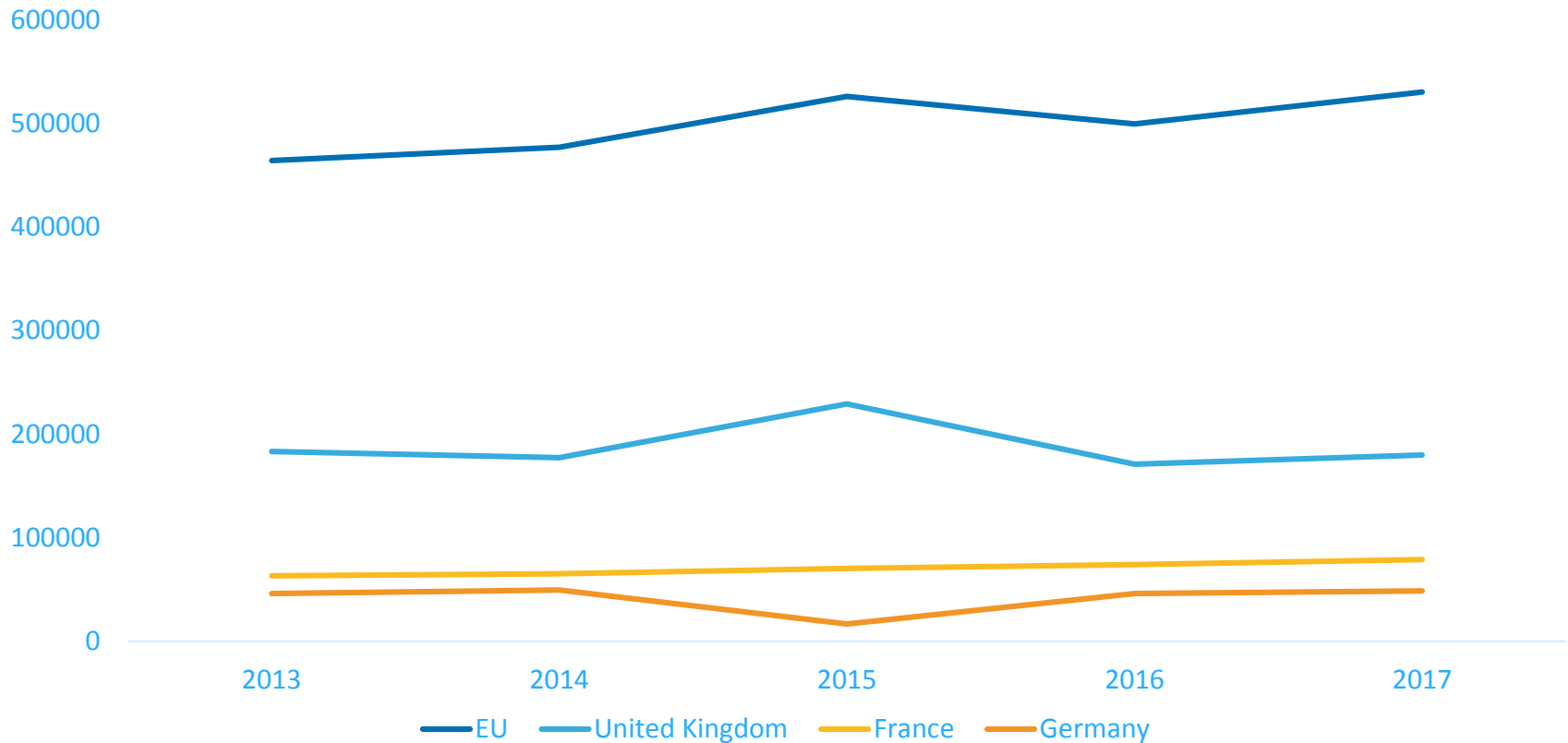


### National level

- Policy priority in many Member States
  - Economic considerations
  - Need for qualified labour
  - Potential resource for future international partnerships
- Specific national strategies for student attraction and retention
- Transposition of Students and Researchers Directive completed in most Member States
- Policy changes to facilitate the administrative process of immigration and improve labour market access

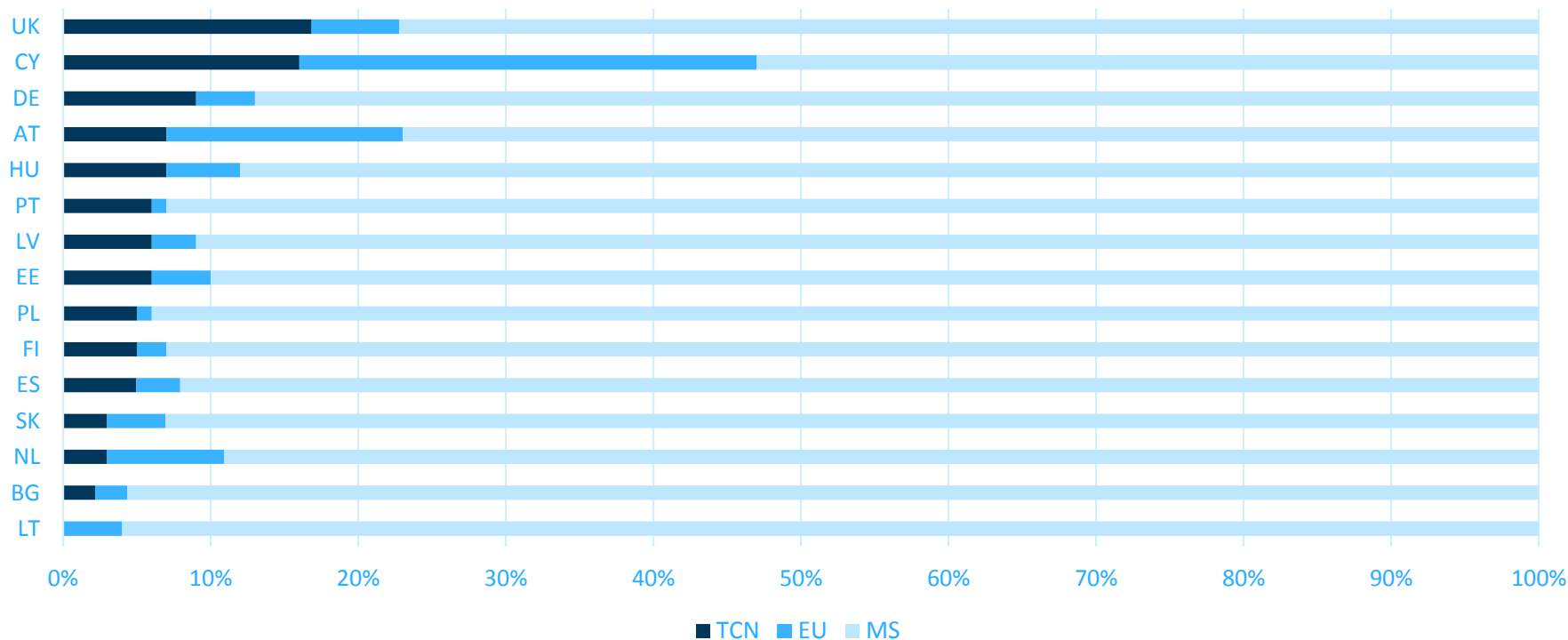
### 3. Scale of international students in the EU

- 2017: more than 530 000 first residence permit for education



Source: Eurostat

### 3. Proportion of international students among MS' student population - 2016



- UK: largest proportion of international students among general student population
- In general, proportion of international students higher than that of mobile EU students (exception: AT, CY, LT, NL)

## 4. Possibility to stay after completion of studies



**Art. 25(1): possibility to stay for min. 9 months after completion of studies to seek employment or set up a business**

- Period varies across Member States from 9 to 18 months
- Usually, permit for the purpose of seeking employment or self-employment was issued for this period



## 5. Policy measures and incentives for retention



**More than half of Member States adopted specific measures to retain international students, e.g.:**

- Exemption from the labour market test
- Exemption from having to obtain a work permit
- Exemption from salary thresholds
- No restrictions regarding the job field

## 6. Initiatives of HEIs and private sector for retention



**HEIs and the private sector are active in implementing initiatives to encourage retention in most Member States, e.g. :**

- Career centres for advice and counselling
- Job fairs and portals for graduates
- Legal advice and counselling
- Collaboration with private companies
  - Mentorship programmes

# 7. Common challenges



**Main challenge:** insufficient language skills to enter the labour market

## Other challenges:

- Competitiveness of the conditions offered on the labour market and living standards
- Cost of living (e.g. cost of housing)
- Long processing times for extension of permits

## 8. Good practice example



### Orientation year – The Netherlands

- Special residence permit ‘orientation year’
- International graduates can choose to start their orientation year immediately after graduation or later (up to 3 years after graduation)
- Free access to the Dutch labour market for one year

## 9. Learning points



- Retention measures are mostly policy-oriented
- Seek to facilitate labour market access
- A few Member States provide additional facilitation measures
- HEIs can support retention by bridging the gap between graduation and finding employment
- Retention policies should already begin during the period of study



## 10. (Upcoming) publications - EMN Study on Attracting and Retaining International Students in the EU

- National reports for the EMN Study ‘Attracting and Retaining International Students in the EU’ already available on EMN website
- May 2019:
  - Synthesis Report
  - EMN Inform
  - EMN Flash



# Thank you!

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