

HOW DO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES SUPPORT STUDIES OF THEIR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES?

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HOW DO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES SUPPORT STUDIES OF THEIR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES?

One task of the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI) is to support the studies of Finnish language and culture in foreign universities. In late 2020, we started an internal discussion on developing this set of tasks. In the turbulence of a changing operating environment, we felt that a closer examination of the objectives and operating methods of our work was needed. As many other countries also promote their language and culture abroad and these activities are organised differently in different countries, we were interested in learning more about our peer organisations' activities.

We drew up a shortish online survey and sent it to 11 organisations. In particular, our survey focused on support offered to universities and the ways in which the activities are organised. This report includes the seven respondents to the survey: the Dutch-speaking countries, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Slovakia and Sweden. We have also supplemented the report with information on corresponding activities in Finland. The information provided by the organisations on their websites was also used to some extent.

The organisations that administer the promotion of their country's language and culture in foreign universities are:

- Union for the Dutch Language, the Dutch-speaking countries (the Netherlands, Flanders or Dutch-speaking part of Belgium and Suriname)
<https://taalunie.org/>, <https://taalunie.org/dossiers/68/dutch-worldwide>
- Education and Youth Board of Estonia
<https://www.harno.ee/en/scholarships-and-grants/other-support-schemes/academic-studies-estonian-language-and-culture-abroad>
- Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI), Finland
<http://edu.fi/en/finnish-around-the-world>
- Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, Iceland
<https://www.arnastofnun.is/en/icelandic-abroad>
- Latvian Language Agency, Latvia
<https://valoda.lv/en/>
- Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir, formerly Diku), Norway
<https://diku.no/programmer/utenlandslektoratsordningen>, <https://www.studyinnorway.no/mobility-grant>, <https://diku.no/programmer/norgeskunnskap-i-utlandet-arrangementsstoette>, <https://diku.no/programmer/norgeskunnskap-i-utlandet-bokstoette>; <https://hkdir.no/>
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, Slovakia
<https://fphil.uniba.sk/en/departments-and-research-centres/studia-academica-slovaca/>
- Swedish Institute, Sweden
<https://svenskaspraket.si.se/>

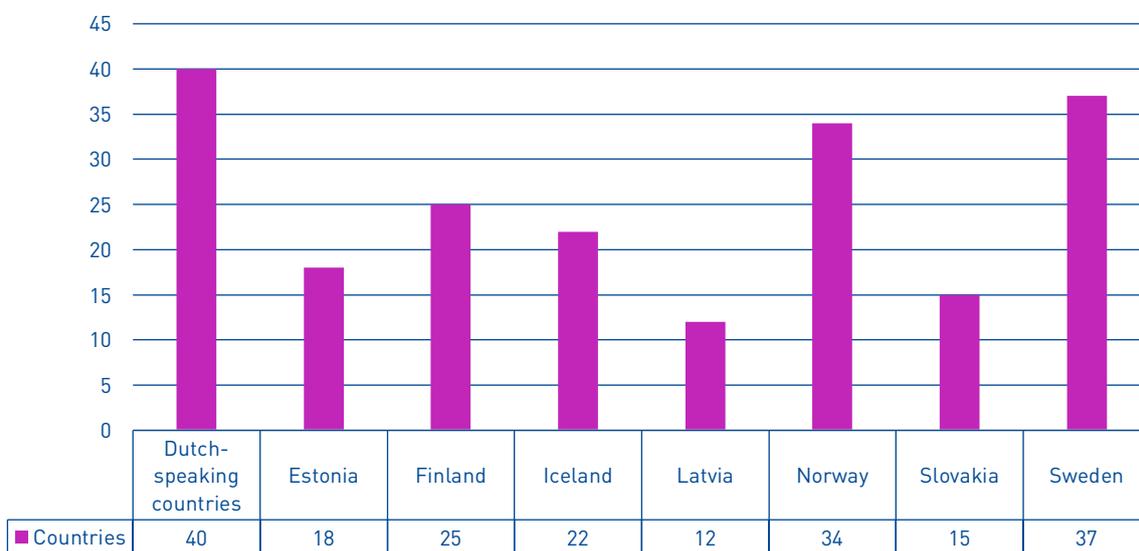
SCOPE OF SUPPORT FOR LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL STUDIES

The scope of the activities obviously varies from country to country. The resources are allocated differently and on different grounds; however, the activities are mainly financed by governments. The countries are different regarding their total populations as well as the numbers of native speakers of their languages and foreign or second language speakers. The number of people who have emigrated, which additionally impacts the activities at least indirectly, also varies.

In terms of the number of **countries**, **universities** and **teachers**, the Dutch-speaking countries (40; 130; 500), Norway (34; 130; 260) and Sweden (37; 225; 600) have the most extensive networks. Sweden's estimate of the **student numbers** (31,000) is impressive, and the other languages cannot aspire to anything approaching this figure. More than half of these students (17000) study in Finland. The reason for this is that Swedish is the other official language in Finland and a compulsory subject at schools, so there is a need for proficiency in Swedish.

The four images below describe the scale of the activities: the numbers of **countries** and **universities** in which teaching is organised and the numbers of **teachers** and **students**.¹ The given numbers are based on estimates.

FIGURE 1: IN HOW MANY COUNTRIES IS YOUR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE TAUGHT OUTSIDE YOUR COUNTRY?



¹ It should be noted that the teacher and student numbers may have been assessed in different ways, as we did not provide detailed instructions for this in our survey. Consequently, the respondents' estimates of the numbers may, for example, include all students or only major subject students, all individual students or the total number of course participants (in which case one person may be counted several times), and all teachers from part-time teachers to professors, or only full-time teachers.

FIGURE 2: IN HOW MANY UNIVERSITIES IS YOUR LANGUAGE AND CULTURE TAUGHT OUTSIDE YOUR COUNTRY?

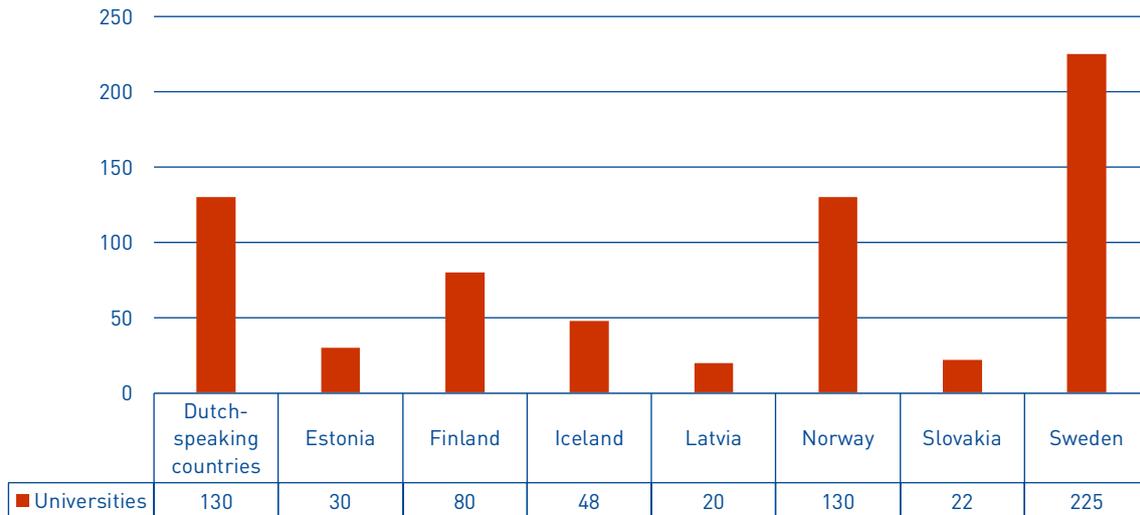


FIGURE 3: WHAT IS YOUR ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS AT THESE UNIVERSITIES?

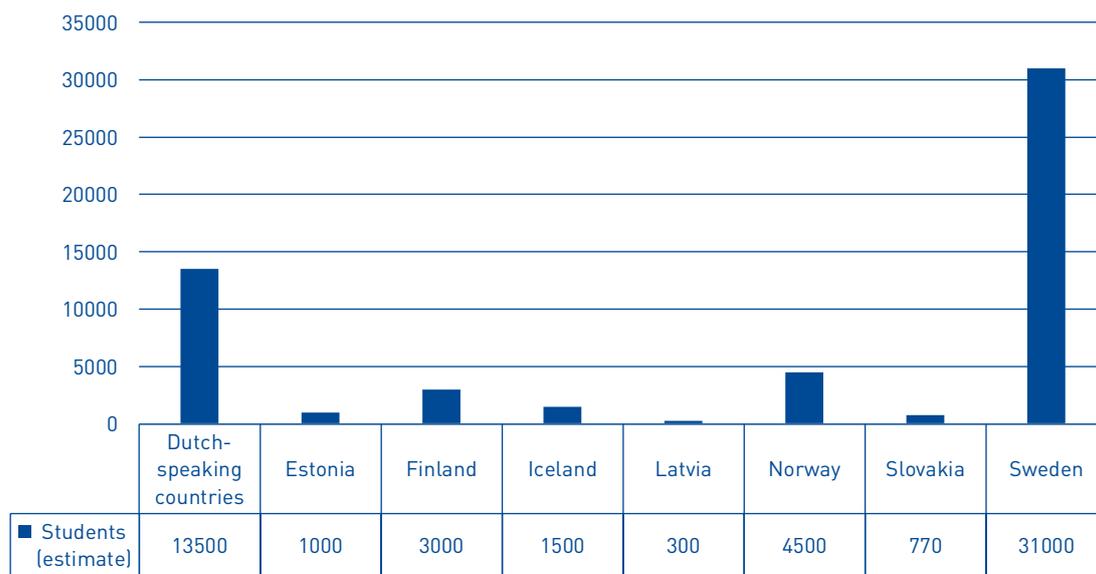
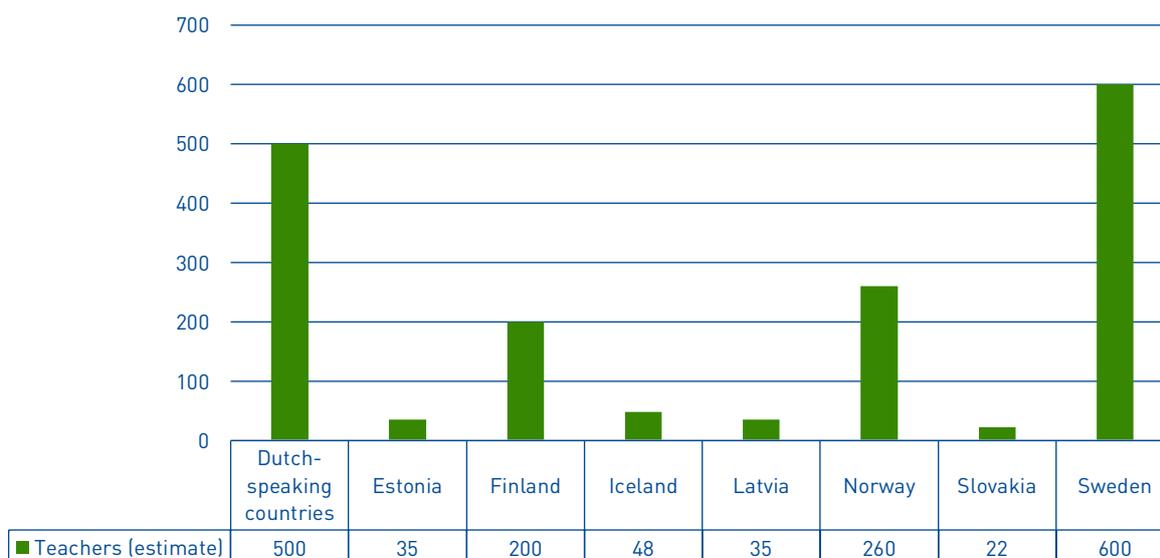


FIGURE 4: WHAT IS YOUR ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS AT THESE UNIVERSITIES?



Supporting language and culture abroad outside university settings

In this report, we focus on the teaching of language and culture *in universities*, but we also asked if the organisations support the teaching of their language and culture in other operating environments outside the country’s borders.

Almost all organisations that responded to the survey – or some other organisation in the same country – support those living permanently or temporarily abroad in maintaining their **mother tongue** and culture. This support is mainly available for children’s early childhood education and care and basic education as well as less formal club activities. Providing teaching support in the form of learning materials and various types of training is common.

Various cultural events or language courses intended for non-native speakers are supported or organised to some extent. The Dutch-speaking countries recently launched a study on non-academic Dutch language teaching in 2021.

The task of providing support for the teaching of language and culture for both foreign-language and native speakers has mainly been assigned to a single organisation in Finland, Latvia and Slovakia. In the Dutch-speaking countries, Estonia and Sweden, more than one organisation is involved in the activities.

It would be interesting to find out more details of how cooperation *within* different countries has been organised and what we could learn about it from each other.

OBJECTIVES AND CONDITIONS GUIDING THE ACTIVITIES

The organisations formulate their objectives slightly differently, and their emphases vary. Some succinctly define their objective as **supporting the teaching of language and culture in foreign universities**. Others set the goal of **increasing the recognisability of and interest in their language and culture outside the country's borders**. Yet others see their activities as part of even more extensive aims and impact.

The organisations' goal-setting and activities are naturally guided by the party that finances them, which in almost all countries is mainly the ministry responsible for education and research and/or culture (in Sweden the bigger part is financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs). It can be concluded from the responses, however, that the degree of ministerial steering varies. Latvia, Norway and Slovakia, in particular, say that the activities are steered by a ministry and influenced by the country's official education, research and cultural policies. A ministry also has a strong involvement in Estonia's activities. There the ministry appoints an 8-member Programme Council to guide the programme activities and set strategies for them.

The Dutch-speaking countries, Estonia, Iceland and Sweden mention that the teaching of language and culture is also supported because it is seen as **strengthening the country's international relations**. According to an excellent report produced by Taalunie in the Dutch-speaking countries in 2019, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Russia – which are not included in this report of EDUFI – also promote their language and culture to strengthen the country's international relations in the fields of economy, diplomacy and culture.²

Sweden is the only one of these countries to have identified **attracting students to the country's higher education institutions** as one of the objectives. This theme is currently also being discussed in Finland. Sweden also has democracy promotion as one objective.

In addition to its broader objective (promoting interest in the country), Estonia additionally focuses its activities on **strategically important countries and universities** and has also set **quantitative targets** for increasing student numbers and setting up teaching at new sites.

2 Talenbeleid in Europa - Hoe ondersteunen andere Europese landen het onderwijs van hun taal en cultuur in het buitenland? 2019. We had access to an English summary titled Language policy in Europe Management - Summary. The full report is available in Dutch: <https://taalunie.org/informatie/90/talenbeleid-in-europa>

ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS RELATED TO THE ACTIVITIES IN A NEAR FUTURE

Almost all responding organisations share the same concern: **the status of small languages in different countries' universities has deteriorated over the past few years and appears to deteriorate further.** Universities are cutting back on these programmes or dropping them completely. This is often associated with universities' financial situation and a need to find savings. As the number of programmes decreases, the student numbers also go down – and if the continued availability of the subject appears uncertain, students do not find the studies interesting and decline to select them. Language programmes at universities compete with other subjects but also with each other. In this case, the fact that other countries invest more in the teaching of their language and culture abroad and have support forms that may be more suitable for the university in question (such as direct funding versus donations of materials) may also contribute to weakening or strengthening a subject's status.

Globalisation could be expected to be an opportunity rather than a challenge for language programmes, but this does not appear to be true for smaller languages. Major languages, like English, are strengthening their status further. – Should the tasks of the organisations that support the teaching of language and culture include providing information about the benefits of multilingualism and the importance of the national language repertoire?

Some organisations felt that their freedom to plan and develop their activities is a strength. Steady interest in the teaching of the country's language and culture and active uptake of the support forms offered by the organisation were also considered strengths. Respondents found that new possibilities could also be found in supporting cooperation between universities and developing peer networks for teachers and students.

The Nordic countries value exchanges of information and cooperation with each other's peer organisations. Information exchanges between Finland and Estonia have also always been smooth. While the organisation and resource allocation of the activities vary in different countries, as do their objectives, all organisations share the aim of increasing knowledge of other languages and cultures in various countries. Respondents felt that networking more closely with peer organisations in other countries, exploring opportunities for cooperation and promoting exchanges of information (for instance on trends of language teaching in different countries, universities' operating environments, organisation of activities, etc.) would be useful.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still difficult to assess, but they may result in a decline in student numbers. Online teaching alone is not believed to attract new students. The uncertain situation also makes it more difficult to plan for the future, as the risks are still present. The pandemic has increased the workload of many who manage operational activities and has naturally also been an exhausting time in many other ways.³

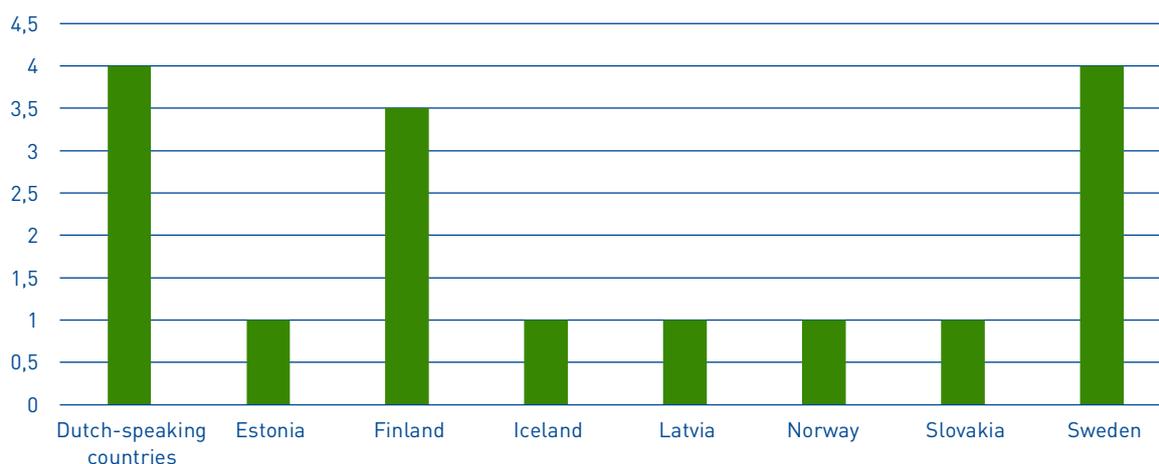
3 As we are writing this report, vaccinations are underway in most countries, whereas the incidence rates remain high in some.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION TO THE ACTIVITIES

We did not collect detailed information on various organisations' budgets, which is why this report does not include comparisons of funding levels for the activities.⁴

The image below describes the human resources available for managing the activities. Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Norway and Slovakia spend one person-year on them, while the Dutch-speaking countries, Finland and Sweden invest three to four person-years.

FIGURE 5: PERSONNEL RESOURCES FOR OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES (PERSON YEARS)



In all countries, the funding is mainly provided by the government, and it is in most cases administered by the ministry responsible for education and research and/or culture. In Sweden, the activities are mainly funded from the budget of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Different procedures are used to allocate the appropriations: in Latvia and Norway, for example, the appropriation for the activities is included in the organisation's budget, whereas in such countries as Finland, it is allocated directly by the ministry.

In some organisations, for example in Estonia, the appropriation covers all costs, also those of the operative staff. In others, including in Finland, other funding is provided to cover the costs of the operative staff.

While no generalisations can be made based on the responses, the following factors that hamper the development of operative activities emerge in them: some organisations note that they would need additional resources to expand their activities from the current level. The funding is often allocated one year at a time, and its amount may vary from year to year, which makes long-term development of the activities difficult. A funding period of one year also means that it is not necessarily possible to launch any new activities during the year. The appropriation may also be permanent, but it has not been increased as the costs go up. This means that it may actually be necessary to cut back on the activities.

On the other hand, none of the respondents sees the funding as being under threat, even if the amount of the appropriation may vary or it is perceived to be insufficient from time to time.

⁴ However, see the aforementioned report of Taalunie, which discusses this question. (Tabel 2 - Budget per land en per inwoner [2010/2017-2018].)

ABOUT SUPPORT FORMS AND ACTIVITIES

In this section, we look at how the organisations promote studies of their language and culture in foreign universities **at the practical level**.

The figures below show the number of organisations that offer similar types of support. All countries offer support for teacher recruitment, in-service education and networking for teachers. Courses are also organised for students. Other types of support instruments are additionally in use. What could we learn from good practices in other countries?

FIGURE 6: SUPPORT PROVIDED BY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES FOR THE TEACHING OF THEIR LANGUAGE IN FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES, PART 1

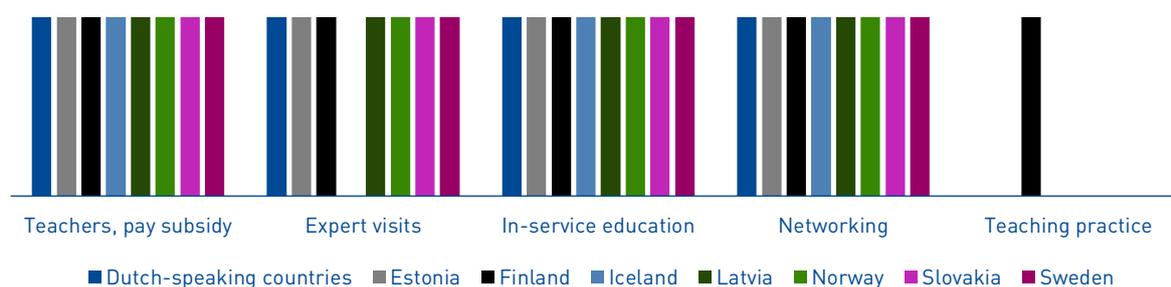
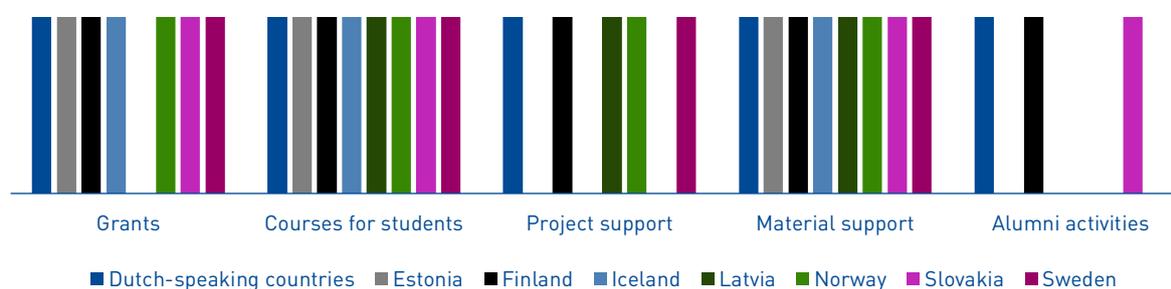


FIGURE 7: SUPPORT PROVIDED BY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES FOR THE TEACHING OF THEIR LANGUAGE IN FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES, PART 2



Sending language and culture teachers to foreign universities or subsidising the teacher's salary

Most of the respondents send visiting teachers to foreign universities. All of them pay at least some level of financial compensation if the teachers' salary level is low.

Norway and Sweden support visiting lecturers, Norway 16 and Sweden 28. They assist universities in recruiting the lecturers. While the universities are responsible for the teachers' salaries, Norway and Sweden pay a grant directly to the teachers to compensate for the pay gap between the countries. In addition, Norway provides a separate grant for travel.

Slovakia also pays a supplement to teachers in addition to the local salary paid by the university.

Norway differs from the other countries in that foreign universities must apply for a visiting lecturer every five years. A lecturer can be granted to a university that would otherwise find it difficult to recruit qualified teachers.

While Iceland does not send lecturers, it can assist universities in recruiting teachers and support teachers' living costs if local salaries are low. Iceland provides financial support to 15 foreign universities.

Estonia has bilateral agreements with the foreign universities to which it sends lecturers (10 lecturers). The Estonian agency is the teachers' employer and pays their salaries. The foreign university is expected to pay the teacher's accommodation costs, at minimum. A change in this practice is being considered, as taxation and health care can become problems when the actual employer is based abroad.

Rather than sending lecturers, the Dutch-speaking countries and Latvia grant financial support to them. The Dutch-speaking countries subsidise the teachers' salaries in some countries with a low wage level (including Central and Eastern Europe and China). Latvia grants eight or nine universities a subsidy that they can use as needed, for example towards teachers' salaries. In one case, Latvia subsidises the teacher's pay directly.

Finland sends 18 visiting lecturers to foreign universities. Visiting teachers have three types of employment relationships: 1) Visiting teachers who only have an employment relationship with EDUFI, which pays their full salary and invoices the universities for their share of the payroll costs. 2) Visiting teachers who have an employment relationship with both EDUFI and the host university. Part of the salary is paid by the university and the remainder by EDUFI. 3) Visiting teachers who have an employment relationship with the university in which they work rather than with EDUFI. The university pays the visiting teacher's full salary and invoices EDUFI for its share.

In all three cases, the total salary is determined by EDUFI (Finnish wage level); the university's share is the full local salary. EDUFI is responsible for the recruitment process and has concluded an agreement on the visiting lectureship with each university. While this system is labour-intensive and requires human resources, the lecturers' employment relationship is secure and accumulates their pension, and the pay level is good.

In addition, universities that are not granted a visiting lecturer from Finland may apply to Finland for financial support for teaching Finnish language and culture. This support is intended to go towards the salary of a teacher recruited by the university and may not exceed 50% of the teacher's local salary. No additional salary is paid. Support is granted for one to two years at a time, but the university can always re-apply.

Short expert visits or visits for scientific or cultural purposes to foreign universities

Almost all respondents grant the universities that teach their languages support for expert visits or visits for scientific or cultural purposes.

Estonia, Latvia and Sweden support the costs of visiting lecturers. Sweden also provides recorded webinars and online lectures for teachers.

Norway supports costs connected to guest lecturers participating at seminars or conferences at foreign universities. In Norway, authors' visits abroad are supported by Norwegian Literature Abroad (NORLA).

Slovakia and Sweden mention the use of Erasmus+ grants where possible as well as agreements between universities. The Dutch-speaking countries provide financial support for visitors who are not eligible for an Erasmus+ grant. They also support visiting authors.

Finland, too, offers teaching visits to foreign universities. Foreign universities can apply for a visit once a year. These visitors are sent from Finnish universities or research institutes, and EDUFI pays the Finnish party that sends them out for their costs. During the COVID-19 pandemic (and also in the future), universities can receive virtual teaching visits. In Finland, authors' visits abroad are supported by Finnish Literature Exchange FILI.

Organisation of in-service education for teachers of foreign universities

All respondents offer some type of continuing education, or grants for continuing education, to teachers in foreign universities.

Estonia and Latvia invite teachers to a summer seminar of around three days, whereas Iceland organises annual conferences for foreign university teachers at different universities. If necessary, Estonia also provides continuing education for visiting lecturers, either individually or in groups.

Slovakia regularly organises research methodology seminars for teachers and didactic courses for new teachers. These courses are held in Slovakia and abroad.

The Dutch-speaking countries offer summer courses for teachers. The programme has been diversified, making it possible for teachers to participate on site, online or blended.

Sweden organises an annual course for foreign Swedish language teachers, an annual summer conference for all teachers, and preparatory training for new teachers.

While Norway does not provide continuing education, it improves teachers' professional competence by offering grants for participation in courses or conferences.

Finland organises yearly study days in Finland for all teachers in foreign universities. Their purpose is not only to update teachers' knowledge of the Finnish language and culture but also to promote networking. In addition, Finland organises a continuing education course on the teaching of language or literature for teachers interested in this topic every couple of years.

Support for networking between teachers in foreign universities

All respondents support the networking of teachers. The meetings and seminars for teachers mentioned in the previous section also promote networking.

Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Slovakia and Sweden have Facebook groups in which foreign university teachers can share information and experiences. Many countries also have e-mail lists for teachers. Sweden additionally uses Slack, on which teachers can share their good practices or ask for teaching tips from each other, and Flickr, on which images of events organised by universities can be published.

Sweden organises meetings for teachers abroad and an annual summer conference in Sweden. Sweden has regular regional meetings in the following regions: Russia and Belarus; Poland; Central and Eastern Europe; France, Spain, Portugal and French-speaking Belgium; the Baltic States; and the USA. In addition, Sweden grants teachers support for visits to cooperate with each other.

Norway provides grants (Grant for Activities) for improving the teaching of Norwegian and teachers' professional competence as well as for promoting Norway's country image. This grant can also be used for the networking of teachers.

The Dutch-speaking countries support regional networks in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean area, North America, the Caribbean, South Africa, Indonesia, Germany, France and French-speaking Belgium, the German-speaking countries, Scandinavia and Asia as well as Internationale Vereniging voor Neerlandistiek (IVN), an organisation for Dutch language teachers.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweden organised remote meetings for teachers online. Iceland has had virtual coffee meetings on Zoom once a month, and Estonia is also planning a virtual coffee room for teachers on Clanbeat. Slovakia uses Teams to keep in touch with the teachers.

Finnish language teachers can network during the annual study days and regional meetings abroad. The universities themselves take the initiative in organising regional meetings. Finland supports the travel and accommodation costs of participants in regional meetings. In addition, the teachers have an e-mail list for sharing information.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Finland has arranged regular Teams meetings with the visiting lecturers. Virtual study days have also been held. If necessary, virtual information sessions can be organised for teachers, for example to provide application instructions.

Support for students' teaching practice in foreign universities

Apart from Finland, no other country currently supports teaching practice abroad.

The Dutch-speaking countries and Sweden would be interested in launching this type of support. The Dutch-speaking countries currently pay support to Dutch and Flemish Erasmus+ students for offering a few hours of practice to students of that language every week.

While the Education and Youth Board of Estonia does not provide a grant for teaching practice, a grant from the Estonian Government or an Erasmus+ grant can be used for teaching practice in foreign universities.

Finland sends trainee teachers to foreign universities in which Finnish is taught. Applications for a trainee for the following year are accepted from universities once a year. Once the universities have been selected, Finnish students can apply for internships at them. Finland pays the students a grant intended to cover their living costs.

Grants to students, teachers, etc. in foreign universities

Most respondents offer grants to students, teachers or researchers.

Estonia, Norway and Sweden provide grants for higher level students in foreign universities (usually students in Master's and doctoral programmes, in the case of Estonia also final-year Bachelor's students) for studying at these countries' universities. The maximum duration of the grant period is two months in Sweden, one to three months in Norway and one to five months in Estonia. The grant generally covers travel and living costs. The grant provided by Norway (Mobility Grant) is intended for field work in a Norwegian university, while the Swedish grant can be used to collect data for a thesis and also to buy books. The grant offered by Estonia can be used for research or data collection.

Teachers of Norwegian may apply for support for activities for the students, such as students' excursions to Norway.

Emerging researchers may apply to the Dutch-speaking countries for a research grant. Estonia also provides grants for researchers; proficiency in Estonian is an advantage but not an absolute requirement. (This also applies to BA and MA level students applying to Estonia for grants.)

Sweden gives grants to teachers in foreign universities who are working on a doctoral dissertation or developing new courses, for example. The duration of the grant is at most two months. Norway accepts grant applications from local teachers for short scientific visits to Norwegian educational institutions. The grant period is at most three months.

Slovakia uses both bilateral and multilateral grants (including Erasmus+ and CEEPUS). Slovakia additionally provides grants covering five months of studies in the Slovak language and culture. The students who receive these grants are selected by their teachers.

The Árni Magnússon Institute administers the Icelandic Government Scholarships. The scholarships are intended for students in foreign universities for studies in the Icelandic as a second language programme at the University of Iceland. While the applicants may be students of any field, priority is given to students in humanities, and especially those studying Nordic languages or Icelandic.

In Latvia the State Education Development Agency (VIAA) administers Latvian state scholarships intended for students and young researchers.

Finland offers grants to Master's degree students as well as postgraduate students and researchers for studying at Finnish universities. The grant period is at most six months

for students in Master's degree programmes and at most twelve months for postgraduate students and researchers. Both grants can be divided over several periods. In addition, postgraduate students and researchers may apply for grants for short visits related to further studies or research (one to four weeks). These grants cover their living costs. There is also a separate grant for Master's students at universities in the Finno-Ugric regions of Russia and for postgraduate students and researchers with a Finno-Ugric background in Russia. Finnish language proficiency is not necessarily required of postgraduate students and researchers.

Support for courses intended for students of language and culture in foreign universities

All respondents support the organisation of courses for foreign university students in some way. During the COVID-19 pandemic, some of them have organised online courses.

Estonia, Latvia, Norway and Sweden offer financial support for foreign university students' participation in summer courses organised by some other party in these countries. In Estonia, the courses are organised by the universities of Tallinn and Tartu, in Latvia by the University of Latvia, in Norway by Norwegian universities and in Sweden by folk high schools (*folkhögskolor*). In Latvia, also other universities organise summer courses, but they are not supported by the Latvian Language Agency. In Sweden, four courses are usually organised with around 160 students in total. In Estonia, students can also participate in winter courses organised by the cited universities.

Iceland organises two summer courses for foreign students. The course intended for students in Nordic universities is funded by Nordkurs. The course for international students is administered by the Árne Magnússon Institute; however, it is funded partly by the Icelandic government, partly by the University of Iceland and partly through participation fees.

The Dutch-speaking countries organise an annual summer school in Belgium for 120 participants. The summer school is intended for higher level students and focuses on vocational fields in which Dutch language students typically find employment. In addition, summer schools and student seminars are organised in six regions (Central Europe, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean area, South Africa, Indonesia and the USA).

Slovakia has an annually updated list of foreign countries for which it reserves a quota of summer school grants. In addition, each lecturer organises an internal competition for their students, the winner of which is guaranteed a place on the Slovakian summer school. Slovakia also organises online courses for all interested parties around the world.

Finland usually organises five Finnish language and culture courses of different levels (A1–C1) and one special course (literature, translation or history) every year. In total, around 200 students take part in these courses. The courses are organised in cooperation with Finnish universities selected by competitive tendering. The participants are selected together by EDUFI and the universities. In addition to teaching, the universities are responsible for all other practical arrangements. EDUFI pays all costs and provides students with travel grants. In 2021, the summer courses were organised online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the coming years, it may be possible to offer distance courses in addition to contact courses to make the courses more accessible to everyone.

Finland also organises an annual summer course for Finnish language students at universities in the Finno-Ugric regions of Russia. The course is organised in Russia together with a local university.

EDUFI organises a translation course in cooperation with Finnish Literature Exchange FILI every two years. The course is intended for final-stage students and recent graduates who already have some translation experience. EDUFI pays the participants' accommodation costs and offers travel grants. FILI is responsible for the costs related to teaching and other activities.

Support for foreign universities' projects

Four of the respondents support universities' projects.

The Dutch-speaking countries, Latvia and Norway accept applications for project support. Latvia supports events organised by foreign universities that promote interest in the Latvian language and culture (four to five events per year). The Dutch-speaking countries support academic, didactic and cultural projects with sustainable benefits for the field. Norway may support activities at universities abroad which are relevant to the Norwegian language teaching, such as thematic conferences or seminars, but also the developing of existing BA programmes into an MA programme.

In addition to financial support, Latvia is working to get several organisations (including UNESCO, the Translators' and Writers' union) to engage in collaboration projects with foreign universities.

Sweden has a grant for visiting lecturers, projects, events and study visits. The grant can be used for travel and accommodation costs, fees and the rent for premises.

While Estonia has not had a separate financing scheme to support projects, a need for this type of action has been identified. If the budget allows, it can consider supporting specific projects which promote the academic teaching of Estonian language and culture abroad.

Finland accepts support applications for foreign universities' cooperation projects in the field of Finnish language and culture once a year. A Finnish university may also be involved in such projects. Finland's support may cover at most 75% of all project costs (like wages, travel costs between universities, costs related to producing materials or the use of electronic services). Universities cover the remaining costs together. The project can be a one-off event or go on for one to two years.

If a university that does not have a visiting lecturer sent from Finland wishes to conduct an internal development project, it can apply for financial support for teaching Finnish language and culture for one to two years (see section *Sending language and culture teachers to foreign universities or subsidising the teacher's salary*).

Support for foreign universities for acquiring various materials

All respondents provide some support for acquiring materials.

This support can be used for purchasing textbooks and non-fiction (some also provide support for purchasing fiction). The support provided by Estonia, Norway and Sweden can also be used for subscriptions of newspapers and magazines, and for purchasing videos in the case of Estonia and Norway. Norway also provides support for digital resources. Swedish Embassies provide a service for lending Swedish films, which are also available to teachers of Swedish.

The grants offered by the Dutch-speaking countries, Slovakia and Sweden can also be spent on equipment, including licences in the Dutch-speaking countries.

Latvia sends learning materials to universities and also produces some of the materials. Besides, Latvia donates non-fiction books, Latvian films and CDs with Latvian music. In the current year they also subscribed to magazines.

Iceland provides a small amount of educational material support to 15 universities which it assists financially.

Finland grants support for universities' educational material purchases. Apart from language study books, this includes Finnish fiction and non-fiction books related to the study field. Applications for support are received once a year. The universities place their orders with a bookstore, which invoices EDUFI directly. Finland also granted support for newspaper and magazine subscriptions in the past, but this support form has been dropped at least for the time being. The support for learning materials cannot be spent on software licence fees, whereas licence fees may be included in cooperation projects.

Alumni activities

Only two respondents, the Dutch-speaking countries and Slovakia, have alumni activities.

Slovakia keeps a register of graduates and organises various events for them. Slovakia also keeps track of their activities in educational or cultural institutions, translations of Slovakian literature and the promotion of the Slovakian culture abroad. Cooperation with the local Slovakian Embassy is offered to the most successful students.

The Dutch-speaking countries have set up social media groups for the alumni.

While Estonia has no centrally organised activities for the alumni at the moment, the visiting lecturers still provide information about higher education possibilities in Estonia (for further studies) and refer to potential traineeship positions where it is possible to use and develop Estonian language and culture skills.

Sweden has no alumni activities at the moment but would like to have some activities in the future.

Finland has an e-mail list for alumni who have studied Finnish language and culture in foreign universities. It can be used to send out various types of current information related to Finland and the Finnish language and culture. The alumni are mainly students who have previously participated in programmes organised by EDUFI and whose contact details have been obtained this way.

Other support or activities for foreign universities, teachers or students

The Dutch-speaking countries offer literary translation courses and guest writers. They are currently building an online platform for various services (sharing teaching materials, teacher training, networking opportunities and grants).

Latvia, together with UNESCO, organised a translation project involving students from several higher education institutions abroad and in Latvia.

Slovakia regularly organises webinars for students and offers online courses for other interested parties. Methodology webinars are also provided for lecturers on topical didactic themes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweden has organised online lectures for teachers and students on various topics. While many of the normal activities were cancelled in 2020, a distance course was organised for both teachers and students. Sweden also has an Instagram site for students.

As members of the Coordinating Committee for Nordic Studies Abroad or SNU (Samarbetsnämnden för Nordenundervisning i utlandet), Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden support universities' joint Nordic projects every year. Support can be applied for once a year.

Finland has organised a seminar for post-graduate students in Finland every few years. To this seminar are selected postgraduate students and researchers from foreign universities who can work on their doctoral dissertations or research related to the Finnish language or literature with the help of Finnish supervisors and in joint workshops with other postgraduate students.

Finland also has an e-mail list for students and a Facebook group for all those interested in the Finnish language and culture.

Finland receives applications for accessibility grants to facilitate participation in various activities (such as courses). This support can be provided for special arrangements which are necessary because of an illness, disability or learning difficulties.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTINUE INFORMATION EXCHANGES IN THE FUTURE? – WE IN FINLAND WOULD BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE

How do different countries monitor the situation of the studies and collect information about changes in the operating environment around the world? Is information collected regularly, and how?

Do the organisations provide online instruction in language and/or culture either for universities or a wider audience?

How are different practical arrangements managed? Do you take care of them yourself or outsource the services (e.g. courses, learning materials)? Are grants and other financial support (including money for the salaries) paid to universities or individuals?

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