

# **The Professors' Concepts and Activities: The Results of a European Survey and the Debate about „Employability“**

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# Two Contradicting Assumptions about University Professors

- Professors adhere to the Humboldtian principle of “unity of research and teaching” (strive for a close link)
- Professors love research and consider teaching as a “duty” (“freedom for research” vs. “teaching load”); they are trained for research and do teaching as mere dissemination of knowledge; they are rewarded for research

# Repeated Efforts to Strengthen the Role of Teaching in HE

- Establishment of academies and reduction of research functions of universities in Soviet Union and China
- 1970s: “Higher education didactics”, “staff development”, structured curricula and expansion of non-university HE as response to student protest and “massification”
- 1990s: Emphasis on “performance”, more evaluation and accreditation, ratings of teaching through student questionnaires
- Early 20<sup>th</sup> century: Bologna Process and “employability” discourse

# What do the Academics Really Think and Do? Findings in 12 European Countries

Merger of data from two questionnaire surveys: „The Changing Academic Profession (CAP)“, undertaken in 2007, and „The Academic Profession in Europe (EUROAC)“, undertaken in 2010

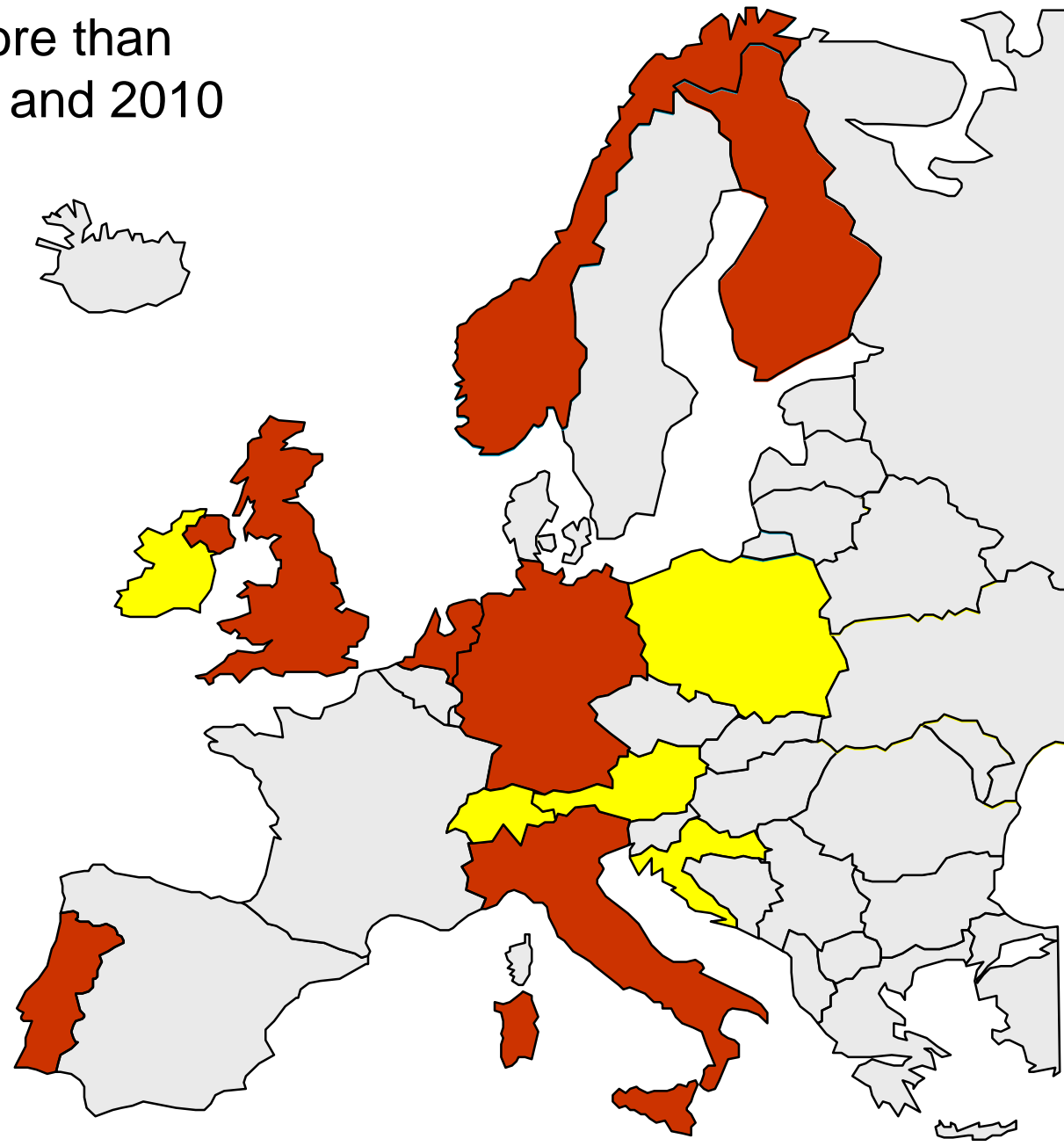
Funded by national research promotion of other funding organisations and European Science Foundation (ESF)

Key publications:

- Teichler, Ulrich & Höhle, Ester Ava. (Eds.) (2013). *The work situation of the academic profession in Europe: Findings of a survey in twelve countries*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Ledic, Jasminka (Ed.) (2012). *Promjene u akademskoj profesiji: Odgovor na izazove u društvu*. Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci.

Altogether dataset with more than 17.000 responses in 2007 and 2010 from academics (univ. + other HEIs) in 12 countries

- Austria
- Croatia
- Finland
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

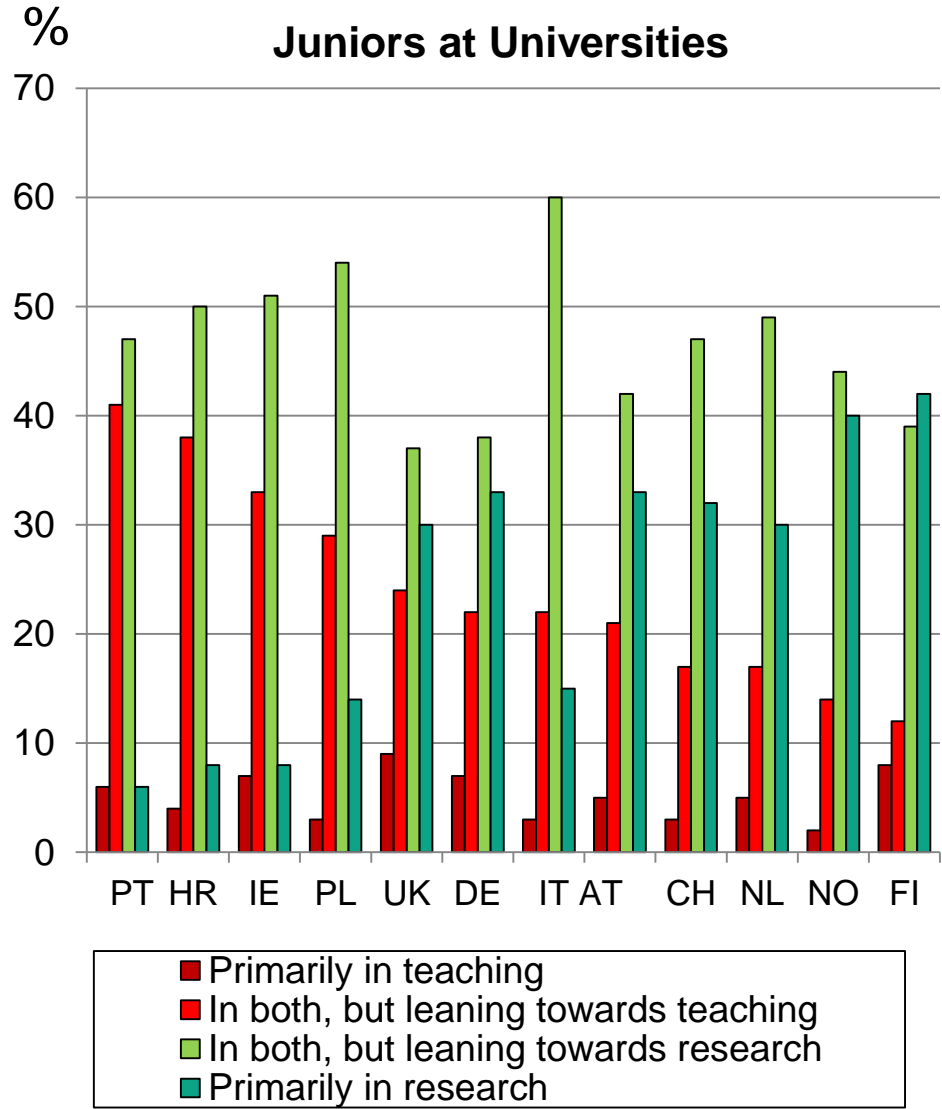
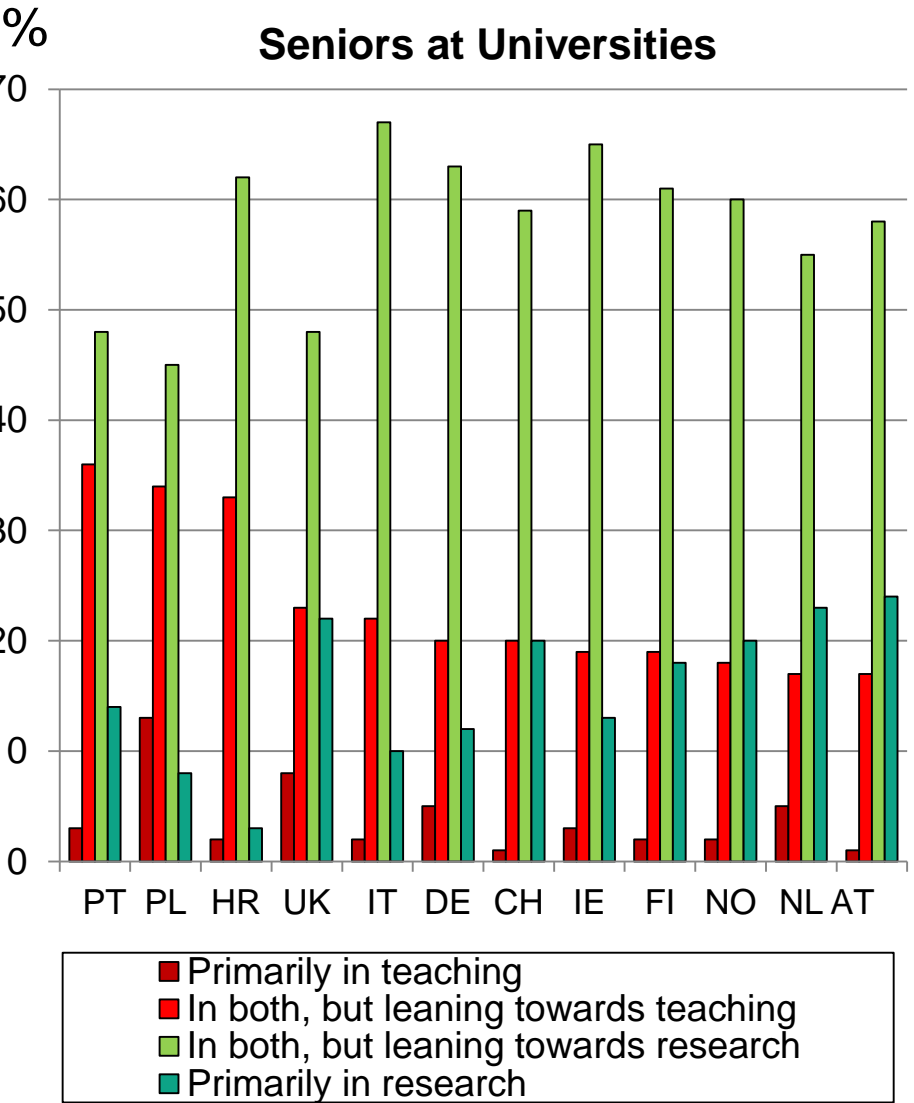


# Key Findings of the EUROAC project

(Seniors and Juniors at Universities)

- (Employment Conditions and Income)
- Preferences towards Teaching and Research
- Time Use
- Views regarding Research and Scholarship
- Number of Publications
- International Mobility
- Strain and Satisfaction

# Preferences towards Teaching and Research



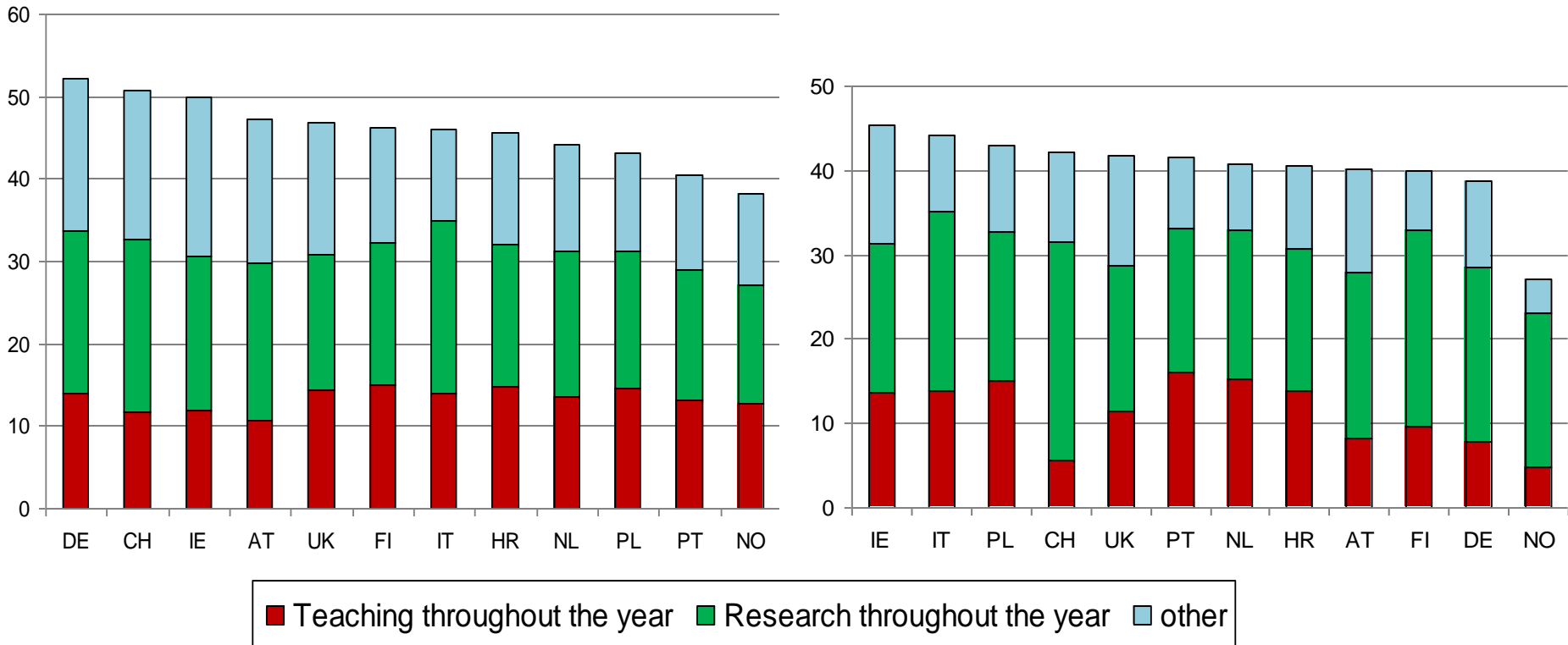
# Time Spent for Different Academic Activities

- annual average -

Mean of hours

Seniors at universities

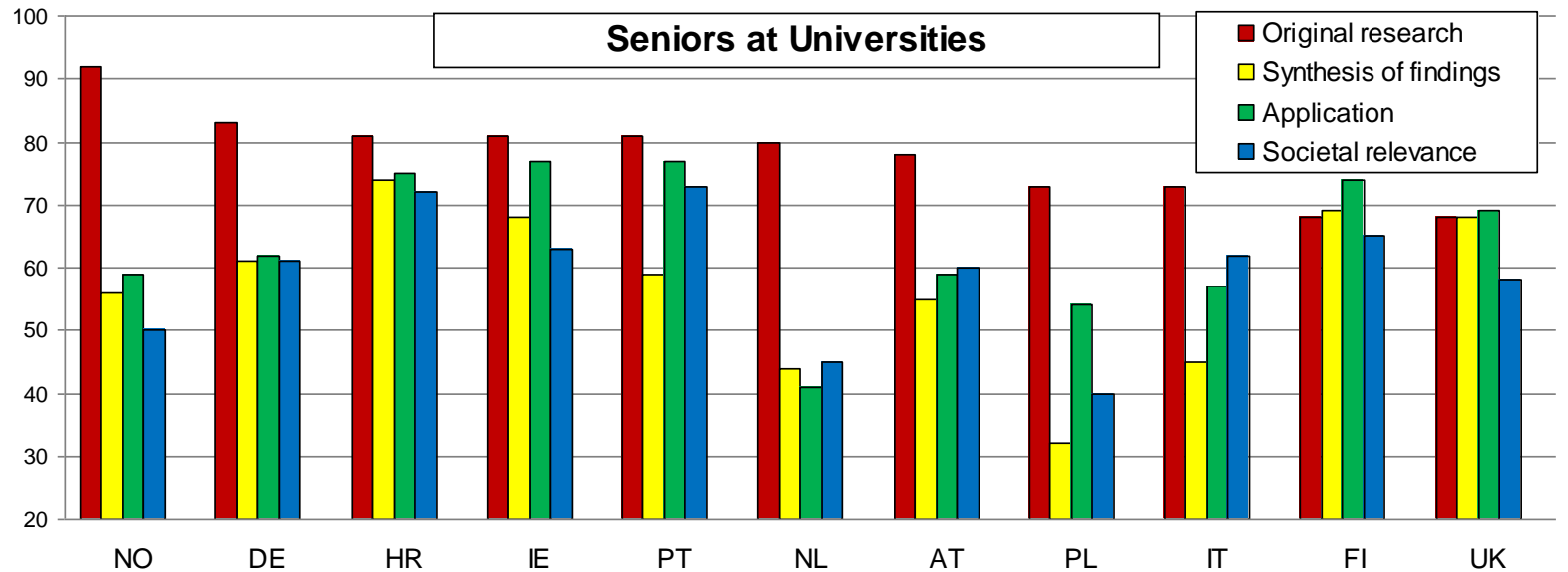
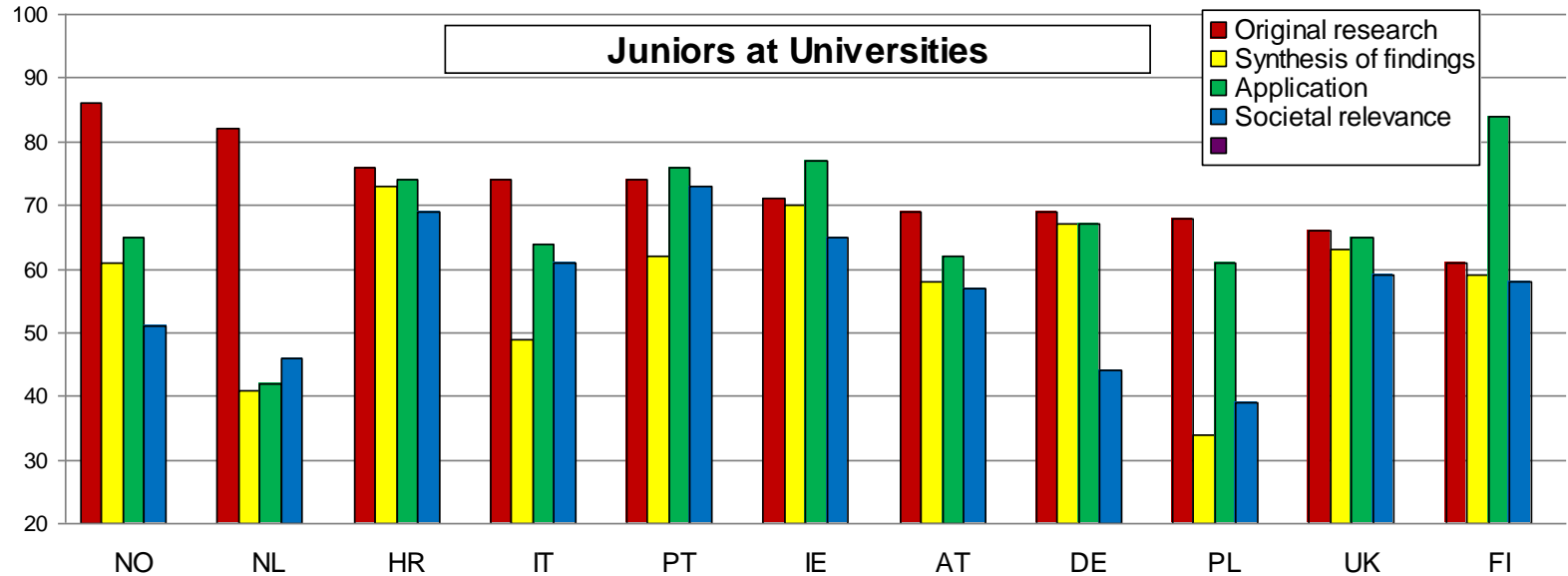
Juniors at universities





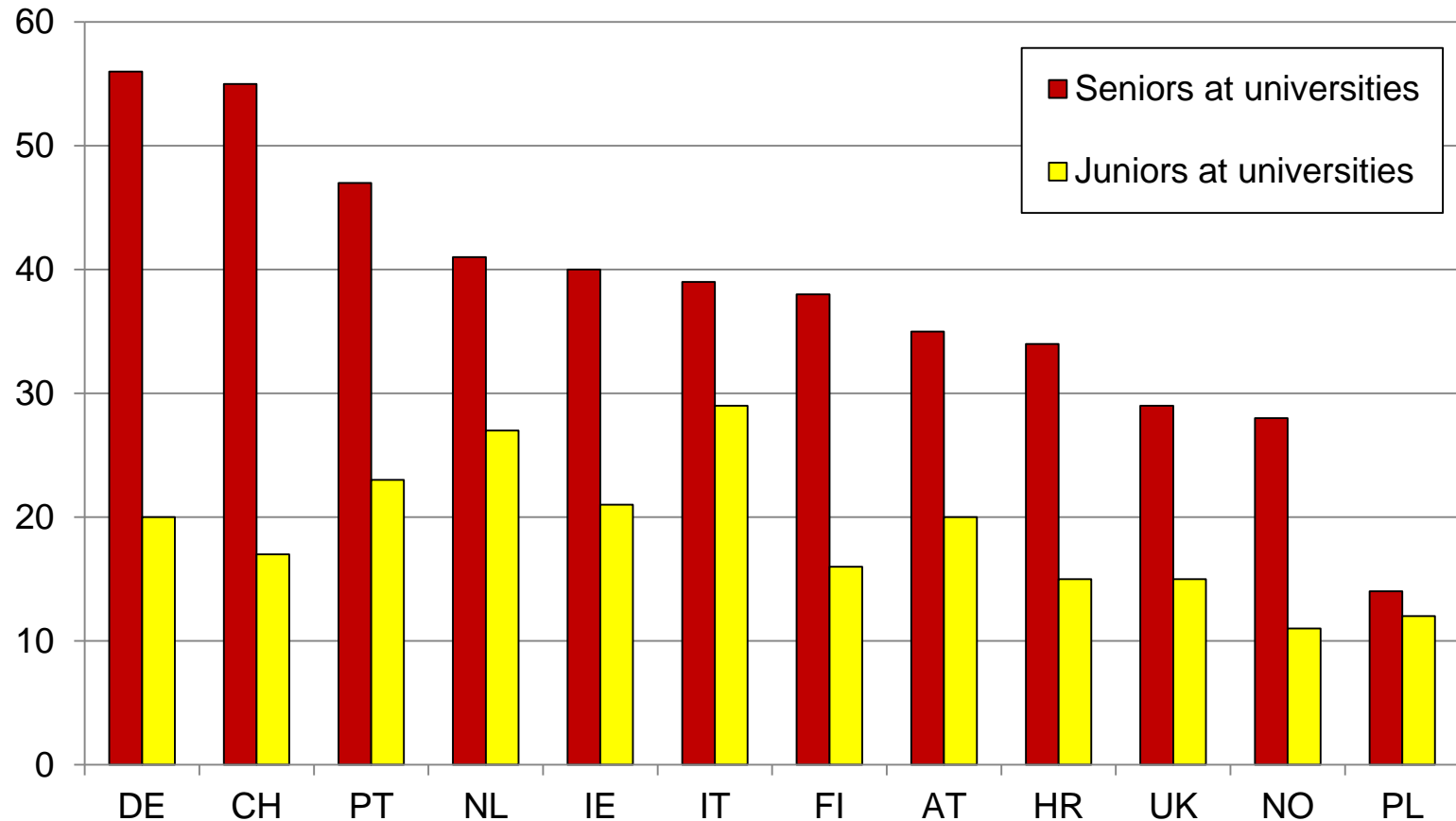
# Views Regarding Research and Scholarship

Percentage of 1 & 2



# Number of Publications

In the last three years: mean score



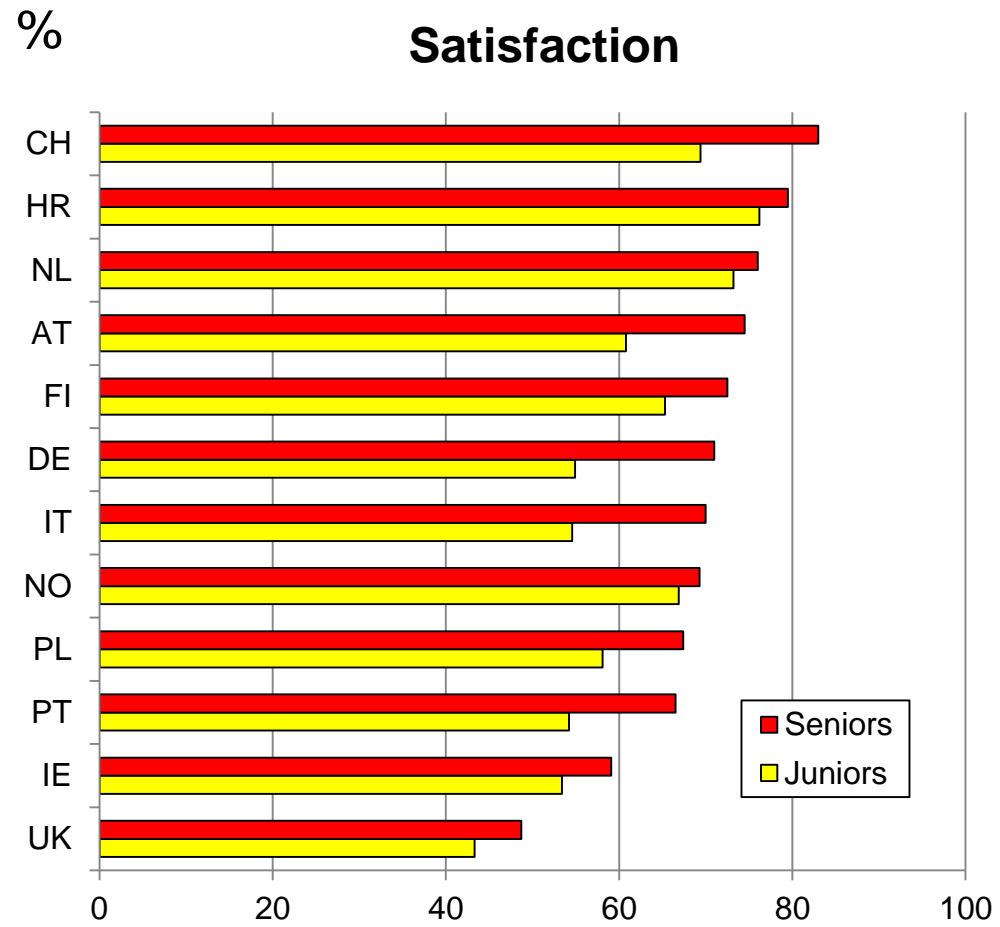
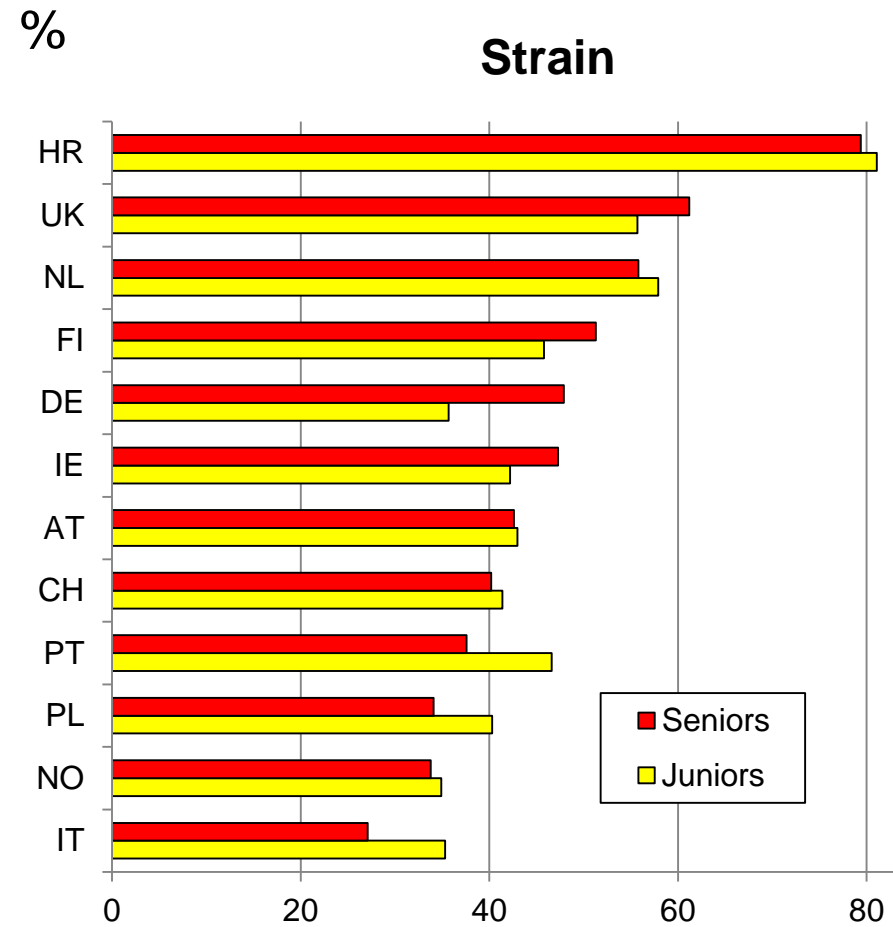
3 points each for scholarly books (co)authored and co(edited);  
2 points each for articles published in academic books or journals and research reports,  
1 point each for papers presented at conferences and articles written in newspapers/magazines

# International Mobility

| %<br><i>University professors</i> | 2010 |     |     | 2007/08 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----|-----|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
|                                   | AT   | CH  | HR  | IE      | PL  | NL  | DE  | FI  | IT  | NO  | PT  | UK  |
| Early immigrants                  | 4    | 10  |     | 18      | 0   | 3   | 4   | 1   | 1   | 6   | 1   | 3   |
| PhD immigrants                    | 1    | 4   |     | 1       | 0   | 0   | 2   | 2   | 0   | 5   | 0   | 4   |
| Professional migrants             | 18   | 39  |     | 7       | 1   | 6   | 4   | 3   | 0   | 5   | 0   | 10  |
| Study mobile academics            | 10   | 8   | 11  | 33      | 2   | 4   | 9   | 2   | 0   | 9   | 19  | 3   |
| PhD mobile academics              | 2    | 3   | 14  | 7       | 2   | 2   | 2   | 4   | 11  | 8   | 16  | 1   |
| Non-mobile academics              | 65   | 36  | 75  | 34      | 94  | 86  | 79  | 88  | 87  | 67  | 63  | 78  |
| Total                             | 100  | 100 | 100 | 100     | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

|                       |            |           |            |            |    |    |     |    |    |    |           |     |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|-----------|-----|
| Academics working in: | AT         | CH        | HR         | IE         | PL | NL | DE  | FI | IT | NO | PT        | UK  |
| Studied in:           | DE,<br>USA | DE,<br>IT | USA,<br>DE | UK,<br>USA |    | DE | USA |    |    |    | UK,<br>CH | USA |

# Strain and Satisfaction



# Major Findings

University professors in Europe (country means):

- work 47 (38-47) hours weekly
- spend 1.4 times (1.0-1.8) as much time on research as on teaching
- seldom state a clear preference only for teaching or only for research (3%-24%),
- more than 2/3 have a stronger leaning tow. research
- often consider emphasis on research and practice as compatible
- two-thirds (50-82%) state overall job satisfaction
- about 80% (36-94%) were neither internationally mobile nor migrants

# Professors at Other HEIs: How Much Do They Differ from University Professors?

- When classes are in session, university professors at German universities spend 28% and professors at German Fachhochschulen spend 52% of their time on teaching. The respective figures for Poland are 36% and 41%.
- 25% of university professors and 77% of Fachhochschule professors in Germany have a preference or lean towards teaching. In Poland: 32% and 61%.
- 75% of university professors and 93% of Fachhochschule professors in Germany state that they have a practice-oriented approach in teaching. In Poland: 44% and 48%.

# The „Employability“ Debate in Europe

- Bologna Declaration (1999) does not advocate “employability”; rather, it expresses concern that the new Bachelor programmes might have too little relevance for the work of graduates
- Globally a growing “instrumental” and “utilitarian” expectation as regards higher education (“knowledge economy”, etc.)
- “Employability” - the spread of a British debate all over Europe

# “Employability”: A Misleading Term

UT started in vain a campaign against the utilisation of the term “employability”

- “Employability” is a term of labour market research and labour market policy referring to potentials and measures to secure that “youth at risk” get somehow employed at all. This is not the problem of university graduates.
- The “Bologna Process” means little for “employment” (unemployment, remuneration, social benefits, holidays, short-term vs. long-term contracts, etc.), but much for “work” (knowledge, competences, work tasks, job requirements, etc.)



# European Commission: Definition and Specification of “Employability”

- Definition: “A combination of knowledge, competences and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and progress during their career”.
- Official benchmark adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2012: “By 2020, the share of employed graduates (20-34 years old) having left education and training no more than three years before the reference years should be at least 82%”.

Source: European Commission. *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014*. Brussels: EACEA, 2014 (Eurydice Brief).

# European Commission: Measures to Enhance 'Employability' Others than Substance of Classroom Learning

1. Involvement of employers (in curriculum development, consultative bodies, teaching): Strong in Bulgaria, France and Latvia
2. Increase of training and work placements/internships: Traditionally weak in UK
3. Career guidance provision throughout the whole student lifecycle: Traditionally strong in Greece and UK
4. Monitor graduates' labour market entry: Regular graduate surveys in 11 EU countries
5. Evaluate performance: Employability-related criteria are required criteria in quality-assurance procedures in 18 EU countries

Source: European Commission. *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014*. Brussels: EACEA, 2014 (Eurydice Brief).

# „Employability“ versus „Employment Success“

- The above named EU “employability” benchmark (high employment quota) is a measure of employment success (outcome influenced by many factors; not a measure of any ability).
- Graduate employment quotas vary dramatically between European countries notably as a consequence of economic and labour market issues.
- According to the EU benchmark, all German universities are champions of “employability” and all Spanish universities more or less ignore “employability”.

# Most Frequent Critiques of “Employability”

- Loss of general, theoretical, academic learning
- Loss of critical, creative, pro-active learning
- Substitution of specific professional emphasis (laying the foundation or preparing for professions) by broad professional competence emphasis
- Questionable ethics of strong involvement of universities in transition to employment

# Possible Consequences (I)

- What does the 'knowledge society' need?
- What role does independent learning, reflection and critical thinking play?
- Strengthening of experiential learning (projects, work experience, study abroad)?

# Possible Consequences (II)

- Doubling of new entry quota to higher education in Europe since about 1990 was not accompanied by corresponding growth of typical graduate jobs.
- Some graduates will take over “average positions”.
- The “world class university” discourse is the pet discourse of administrators and academics - providing them an excuse to ignore the most salient issue, i.e. the role HE can play (its “professional relevance”) in changing competences and job roles in the “middle” of society.

**Thank you  
for your attention**

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