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Students' Mobility Programs as a Tourism Market in Porto

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Abstract

Tourism is one of the most growing sectors in recent years. Due to its continuous change it is necessary to predict new trends, enhancing competences and adapting services to tourist needs. In this context, academic tourism, and more specifically, student mobility programs can be considered one important tourism market. The continuous investment by EU in programs for education and training shows the strategic importance that is given to student mobility and represents an opportunity for destinations to enhance tourism attractiveness within this market. Universities are increasing international cooperation and establishing more Erasmus mobility agreements which bring more international students to our country. Therefore, it is relevant to consider this as a strategic tourism segment for Porto and even more important to understand the visitor profile and

destination attractiveness. With this knowledge, adequate marketing and promotional strategies can be developed and directed to the enhancement of the overall tourism experience that Erasmus students also have while they are in academic mobility in Porto. The aim of this study is to explore the potential academic tourism segment in Porto. Quantitative data were collected, through an online questionnaire, concerning Erasmus students profile and their touristic behaviour in both visiting and economic standards. Preliminary data indicate that Erasmus students take advantage of the mobility program to develop many touristic visits, not only in Porto, but also in Spain. Accommodation in Porto was the greatest weakness pointed out. Respondents revealed that accommodation was the most difficult aspect to manage, mainly as regard their price and rooms availability.

Keywords: Erasmus mobility; tourism; destination marketing; destination attractiveness; Porto.
