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Cruz Gutiérrez, Isac; Vargas-Hernández, José G.

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69

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## **BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION. A CASE OF STUDY OF THE ERASMUS MUNDUS PROGRAM AND ITS IMPACT ON MEXICAN STUDENTS**

**Isac Cruz Gutiérrez**

[isac10hil@hotmail.com](mailto:isac10hil@hotmail.com)

Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Escuela Superior de Comercio y Administración, Unidad Tepepan  
Centro Universitario de Ciencias Económico Administrativas, Universidad de Guadalajara (Mexico)

**José G. Vargas-Hernández**

[jvargas2006@gmail.com](mailto:jvargas2006@gmail.com)

M.B.A.; Ph.D.

Research Professor, Department of Administration  
University Center for economic and Managerial Sciences, University of Guadalajara (Mexico)

### **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to analyze if the implementation of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on the bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union in the time frame that goes from 2009 to 2014. The hypothesis that this research is pursuing is if bilateral relations have created a positive impact by implementing the Erasmus Mundus program. This is a longitudinal quantitative and analytical research. Primary sources such as dictionaries, books and scientific journals and secondary sources such as articles and researches are used in order to obtain all the desired information. The source and data analysis are made by descriptive statistics that allow to create a good description of the particular objects. To represent the results obtained there are presented tables and graphics that show the quantity of Mexican applications in the period that goes from 2009 to 2014. 11% of Mexican applicants are accepted, this is a considerable percentage but there is still so much more to do in order to improve these programs because without any question academic exchange programs allow the progress of a better quality of life and for those who can expand their horizons it makes a better life, a better present and future.

### **Keywords**

Bilateral relations, Erasmus Mundus, European Union, United Mexican States.

### **How to cite this article**

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## **BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION. A CASE OF STUDY OF THE ERASMUS MUNDUS PROGRAM AND ITS IMPACT ON MEXICAN STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>**

**Isac Cruz Gutiérrez  
José G. Vargas-Hernández**

### **1. Background problem**

The Economic Partnership, Political Cooperation and Cooperation Agreement (or just Global Agreement) was signed in Brussels on 8 December 1997 and its entry in force was on October the 1st, 2000; this agreement govern the bilateral relations between The United Mexican States and the European Union. Every two years summits are held to increase the political profile and several forums are opened to coordinate these relations. The VII summit took place in Brussels, Belgium the 12th June 2015; the importance of reinforcing the strategic partnership was highlighted and matters of vital importance took place such as: Instruments to facilitate mobility and academic cooperation (Delegation of the European Union to Mexico, 2015).

Education is a matter of interest in the United Mexican States and the European Union, since the beginning of their bilateral relations some academic exchange programs have been taking place. The Erasmus Mundus is one of the most recognized programs and an evaluation of the same is necessary to analyze the impact that Mexican students have had.

### **2. Problem statement**

In order to improve development in nations, it is crucial to realize about the impact and the magnitude that bilateral relationships create, in this case, in the field of higher education. Erasmus Mundus is an exchange program that allow Mexican students to travel abroad and go studying in the European Union and other places in the world in order to create development and competitiveness. It is vital to realize about the impact that this program made in the United Mexican States in the lapse of 5 years, from 2009 to 2014 which is the time frame of the its second phase.

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<sup>1</sup> Text reviewed by Carolina Peralta.



### 3. Justification

This research takes place because of the impetuous necessity of analyze the impact that bilateral relations have created in the United Mexican States specifically in the subject of higher education by allowing to Mexican students to travel abroad and go studying so as to generate more competitive people in this globalized world; without any question academic exchange programs allow the progress of a better quality of life in the present and time future.

Erasmus Mundus was conceived after the diplomatic relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union began; this research is not just about analyzing the impact that Erasmus Mundus has made in Mexican students, but it is also about realizing the impact that international relationships can create in human evolution.

Visiting another country with people who have a total different perception of life, moral, values and culture make not just more valuable knowledge when study takes place; for those who can expand their horizons it makes a better life, a better present and future. In the interest of this research one question is on the table: Does the implementation of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on the bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union? And even another one question need to be answered in order to generate more valuable knowledge: Does the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on relations of cooperation in higher education between the United Mexican States and the European Union in the time frame that goes from 2009 to 2014?

In order to answer these questions, the variables to consider are: Bilateral relations and the Erasmus Mundus program; and the indicators are: Relations of cooperation in higher education and the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program.

After making an analysis of the results obtained owing to the bilateral relations, this research is pursuing to generate knowledge and to let people know that Erasmus Mundus is a good option and a great opportunity to take; in the past, this kind of opportunities were not as achievable as today. Bilateral relations create these golden opportunities.

**Table No.1 Description of variables and indicators**

Variable	Description	Indicators
X Bilateral relations	The condition in which two countries behave towards each other and work together in order to achieve something.	Relations of cooperation in higher education
Y  Erasmus Mundus Program	A cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third-Countries. (EACEA, 2015)	Second phase of Erasmus Mundus program

Source: Own creation



#### 4. Hypothesis

Bilateral relations have created a positive impact by implementing the Erasmus Mundus program.

#### 5. Overall objective

Analyze if the implementation of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on the bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union in the time frame that goes from 2009 to 2014.

#### 6. Specific hypothesis

The relations of cooperation in higher education have created a positive impact by implementing the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program.

#### 7. Specific objective

Analyze if the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on relations of cooperation in higher education between the United Mexican States and the European Union in the time frame that goes from 2009 to 2014.

#### 8. Conceptual framework

There are definitions that need to be considered in order to understand the context of this research; up next a table of concepts is presented. It goes from diplomacy, the activity that permits international relations, it is also explained what bilateral relations are and of course the definition of the Erasmus Mundus program itself.

**Table No. 2 Definitions**

Concept	Definition
Diplomacy	The art or practice of conducting international relations, as in negotiating alliances, treaties, and agreements (American Heritage dictionary, 2011, p.511).
Bilateral	Involving two groups of people or two countries (Oxford, 2005, p. 138).
Bilateral	Affecting or undertaken by two sides equally: binding on both parties (American Heritage dictionary, 2011, p.179).
Bilateral	Involving two parties, usually countries (Oxford, 2001, p. 164).
Bilateralism	A situation in which two countries or organizations have a trade agreement or work together to achieve something (Cambridge, 2016).
Relationship	The way in which two people, groups or countries behave towards each other or deal with each other (Oxford, 2005, p. 1277).
Relationship	The condition or fact of being related; connection or association (American Heritage dictionary, 2011, pp. 1482-1483).
Relationship	The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected/ The way in which two or more people or organizations regard and behave toward each other (Oxford, 2001, p. 1437).
Erasmus Mundus	A a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third-Countries (EACEA, 2015).

Source: Own creation



In order to have a better comprehension of the first variable, a personal definition is made.

Bilateral relation: The condition in which two countries behave towards each other and work together in order to achieve something.

## 9. Theoretical framework

Seven theories about international relations that permit the bilateral relations are now presented. Also, there are five learning theories that explain how individuals obtain knowledge and development.

Table 3. Theories of international relations

Theory	Description
<b>Liberalism</b>	It is argued that liberalism is an inside-out approach to international relations because the inner causes of domestic political arrangements determine the outer results of the world and the bigger opened relations, the better results are obtained. Economic success is more accepted than territorial conquests, also the creation of trades and liberal democracies increase a peaceful way of living. Liberal theories of international relations have increased since the end of the Cold War (Burchill, 1996 ).
<b>Realism</b>	"It seeks to describe reality, solve problems and understand the continuities of world politics". Realism emphasises that theoretical research is still vital. Important affairs like causes of war, and the conditions of peace, security and order are still guiding the teaching of International Relations and realism take these concerns and apply them on its international theory (Burchill, 1996).
<b>Rationalism</b>	Rationalism contributes to understand the relationship between human rights, sovereignty and intervention in politics. Rationalists have analysed issues of society that have not been studied so much by the realists. They have argued that the theory of international relations is "incomplete if it ignores claims that international society is fundamentally unjust". International order is something rationalism is principally concerned to study (Linklater, 1996).
<b>Marxism</b>	Marxism has always been distressed about capitalist globalisation and international inequality. Marxism contributes to the theory in the aspects of: The materialist conception of history, analysis of production and class. For Marxism "the global spread of capitalist modernity is the backdrop to the development of modern societies and the organisation of their international relations" (Linklater, 1996).
<b>Critical Theory</b>	Critical theory has made some contributions such as heightening awareness of the connection between knowledge and politics; also "analyses the changing ways in which boundaries of community are formed, maintained and transformed" (Devetak, 1996).
<b>Postmodernism</b>	Postmodernism has made many contributions to the study of international relations: 1. Through its genealogical method it seeks to expose the connection between knowledge, political power and authority. 2. Through the textual strategy of deconstruction it seeks to problematise all claims to epistemological and political totalisation. 3. Rethink the concept of the political without invoking assumptions of sovereignty and reterritorialisation (Devetak, 1996).
<b>Constructivism</b>	Has its origins in the United States of North America. Its rising proclaims an international relations scholarship more practice-oriented, historical and sociological. Constructivism reintroduced history as discipline of empirical investigation, also constructivists have reimagined the social as a constitutive domain, and emphasised the variability of political practice (Reus-Smith, 1996).

Source: Own Creation

**Table 4. Learning theories**

<b>Social cognitive learning</b>	The social cognitive theory explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns, while also providing the basis for intervention strategies (University of Twente, 2016) Evaluating behavioral change depends on the factors environment, people and behavior. SCT provides a framework for designing, implementing and evaluating programs.
<b>Observational learning</b>	Observational learning explains learning as a continuous interaction between cognitive, behavioral and environmental influences (BPS, 2011).
<b>Constructivism</b>	Constructivism is a theory that asserts that knowledge can only exist within the human mind. Constructivists proclaim that persons construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences (Batthacharjee, 2015)
<b>Control theory of motivation</b>	Control Theory is the theory of motivation proposed by William Glasser and it contends that behavior is never caused by a response to an outside stimulus. Instead, the control theory states that behavior is inspired by what a person wants most at any given time (Funderstanding, 2011)
<b>Behaviorism</b>	Behaviorism is a theory that operates on a principle of stimulus and its response. All behavior is caused by external stimulation, so all behavior can be explained without the need to consider consciousness or internal mental states (Funderstanding, 2011).

Source: Own creation

After an evaluation of the theories above, one of international relations is taken and another of learning theory is also taken in order to continue the research and create the analysis. The first is liberalism and the second is the social cognitive theory.

## 10. Review of the empirical literature

Up next it is presented a table that gather all the information obtained about empirical literature created by other people interested on the issue of the Erasmus Mundus program.

**Table 5. Review of the empirical literature**

<b>Article or research</b>	<b>Source/authors</b>	<b>Theory implemented</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Results/contributions</b>
The european space of higher education and the promotion of academic cooperation mobility with Mexico (Translated from spanish).	Stockwell, Nathalie; Bengoetxea, Endika; Tauch, Christian.	The social cognitive theory is used. The reason is because environment, people and behavior take a great part of the equation when mobility programs take part. About international relations theories, liberalism is the one that comes trough; open borders create	Analytical-descriptive research made with information obtained with primary and secondary sources.	A great contribution is made by this article which just does not describe the rising of the cooperation relations between Mexico and the EU but it also describes how the Erasmus Mundus program was born as a successor of the succesful Erasmus program and it releases some statistics about Mexican students; for example: 342 mexican students were selected until 2010.





		more opportunities to exchange knowledge and culture.		40 academics participated until 2019 (Stockwell, Bengoetxea, Tauch, 2011).
Mobility program Erasmus: Intercultural competence acquisition motor (Translated from spanish).	Pozo-Vicente, Cristina; Aguaded-Gómez, José Ignacio.	Liberalism takes part because the internationalization introduces new aims, activities and actors.  Social cognitive theory is used, other idiosyncrasies allow that environment and social behavior change the own behavior.	Analytical-descriptive research made with information obtained with primary and secondary sources.	This research provides significant information to the development of intercultural competiveness: Studying abroad involves a complex process of acquisition and also application of knowledge, abilities and attitudes (Pozo-Vicente, Aguaded-Gómez, 2012).
Higher education internationalization: The Erasmus-Mundus network added value.	Abdelaziz, Bouras; Nopasit, Chakpitak.	Liberalism and social cognitive theories take part in this investigation.	Analytical-descriptive research made with information obtained with primary and secondary sources.	Highlight a specific internationalization case study between Europe and South-East Asia. It is said that the Erasmus Mundus program leads to achieving new competences such as skills, knowledge, understanding and abilities (Bouras, Chakpitak, 2015).
The Erasmus Mundus programme – A non-typical education opportunity for analysts.	Kamila Klimaszewska, Ph.D., Eng	Liberalism and social cognitive theories interfere in this investigation.	Analytical-descriptive research made with information obtained with primary and secondary sources.	The Erasmus Mundus program allow to world citizens to fulfil their desires of meeting other cultures (Klimaszewska, 2010).

Source: Own creation

The first results found were

- 1) A course of study recognized by all universities participating in the consortium.
- 2) Criteria for setting goals and achievement of the same.
- 3) At the time of recruiting candidates there are transparent procedures.
- 4) Active participation of the consortium teachers.

## 11. Contextual framework

The European Union came to light after World War II and it meant a total change in the world. Its relations with other countries took place, but the strong bilateral relationship





with the United Mexican States was established in the late nineties when the Global Agreement was signed. This bilateral relationship have created more opportunities available for those who know how and when to take it. Education development is one of these opportunities, several training and exchange programs have been made in order to improve the acquisition of knowledge, programs such as Marie Curie, Jean Monnet, ALFA, the European Research Council, among others, create better opportunities for those who participate in it (Delegation of the European Union to Mexico, 2016).

The program that this research focuses on is the Erasmus Mundus. The Erasmus program initiated in 1987 and it was just for the European Union students; since then more than two million people have enjoyed studying abroad. In 2004 the European Union starting the international version of its successful program and it was called Erasmus Mundus. From 2004 to 2010, 342 Mexican students have been selected being the United Mexican States the sixth country with more participation just after India, China, Brazil, Ethiopia and Russia (Stockwell, Bengoetxea, Tauch, 2011).

Several cooperation relations have been taking place in order to facilitate and make a progress in education. The Bologna Policy Forum is one of them; reinforce the association between the European Union partner countries and their higher education institutions. Since 2010 there has been an EU-Mexico cooperation in education and training. "The dialogue aims to encourage more higher education cooperation and mobility between EU and Mexico" (European Comission, 2016).

The academic and mobility cooperation have got a double function, first of all to improve quality in education and the professional and personal development of the beneficiaries and second of all, it opens a better intercultural understanding and have opened more collaboration approaches between people far beyond institutions (Stockwell, Bengoetxea, Tauch, 2011).

## 12. Research methodology

This is a longitudinal and quantitative investigation for the reason that it analyzes the results obtained in the period of time that goes from 2009 to 2014 which is the second phase of the program.

**Table 6. Methodology**

Variables	Definition	Indicator	Instrument	Operationalization	Source/data analysis
Bilateral Relations	The condition in which two countries behave towards each other and work together in order to achieve something.	Relations of cooperation in higher education	Primary sources Secondary sources	Reading agreements between nation-states and information about their relations of cooperation.	Descriptive statistics
Erasmus Mundus program	A a cooperation and mobility programme in the field of higher education that aims to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding between people and cultures through cooperation with Third-Countries (EACEA, 2015).	Second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program	Primary sources Secondary Sources	Reading information and statistics about the Erasmus Mundus program.	Descriptive statistics

Source: Own creation



It is also an analytical investigation, because it analyzes the cornerstone of bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union and other relations of cooperation over the last years.

Primary sources such as dictionaries, books and scientific journals and secondary sources such as articles and researches are used in order to obtain all the desired information. The source and data analysis are made by descriptive statistics that allow to create a good description of the particular objects that in this case are the bilateral relations and the Erasmus Mundus program emphasizing its second phase.

### **13. Analysis result**

In order to analyze the results obtained, first of all it is going to be described the first variable which is bilateral relations and its indicator, relations of cooperation in higher education, and secondly the second variable, the Erasmus Mundus program and its indicator, the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program, is being described.

About the bilateral relations and their relations of cooperation it is said that the Global Agreement signed in Brussels on December 1997 is the cornerestone of the bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union. This agreement has provided for both of them a reinforcement in trade issues, cooperation and political dialogue. The respect for human rights is a vital factor to take in count on this agreement and also it is based on democratic principles.

To enhance this agreement there are also a Joint Councils at Ministerial level every two years; Joint committees at a highlevel officials that take place once a year; a Joint parliamentary committee which gathers twice a year and also a EU-Mexico Civil Society Forum was established to encourage dialogue in civil society in order to have richer relations in political dialogue, cooperation and trade (Delegation of the European Union to Mexico, 2015).

Relations of cooperation in the matter of education are expressed by the implementation of the three principal educational programs held by both, the United Mexican States and the European Union, these programs are: The Erasmus Mundus program; this program give several scholarships for those who want to study a master or doctoral degree in the European Union and another parts of the world. 380 mexican people have been benefitted by this program during the period 2004-2011. The AIBan program which was finished in 2010 financed 592 mexican students. And the ALFA III program which had its final fase and its objective was to create development in the Latinamerican region (EEAS, 2011).

To analyze the second variable, the Erasmus Mundus program, and its indicator, its second phase, several number of tables and graphics are shown describing the number of mexican applications that had this program in its second fase of existing which goes from 2009 to 2014. There are two categories to consider in the Erasmus mundus program. The category A are for those people that haven't been living in the European Union for more than 12 months. The category B is for those who already spent 12 months living in the European Union (EACEA, 2013).

**Table 7. Mexican applications in category A**

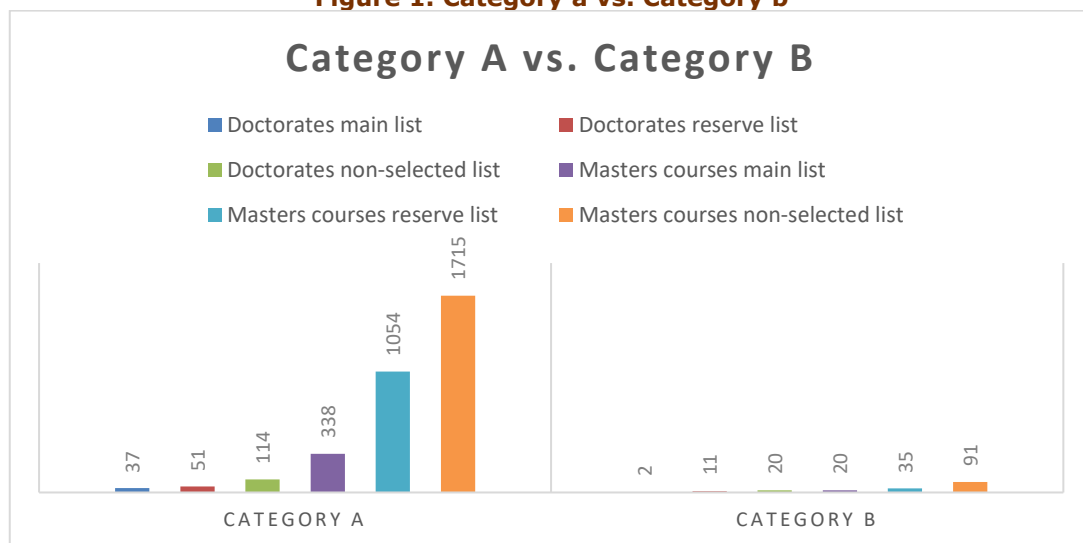
Time frame 2009/14	Doctorates main list	Doctorates reserve list	Doctorates non- selected list	Masters courses main list	Masters courses reserve list	Masters courses non- selected list	Total
2009/10	13	9	2	89	171	198	482
2010/21	3	3	14	69	177	196	462
2011/12	10	6	18	63	247	642	986
2012/13	4	23	38	62	226	348	701
2013/14	7	10	42	55	233	331	678
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>338</b>	<b>1054</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>3309</b>

Source: Own creation

**Table 8. Mexican applications in category B**

Time Frame	Doctorates main list	Doctorates reserve list	Doctorates non-selected list	Masters courses main list	Masters courses reserve list	Masters courses non- selected list	Total applications
2009/10							
2010/11	0	1	1	7	10	9	28
2011/12	0	4	4	3	7	72	90
2012/13	1	2	10	6	7	4	30
2013/14	1	4	5	4	11	6	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>179</b>

Source: Own creation

**Figure 1. Category a vs. Category b**

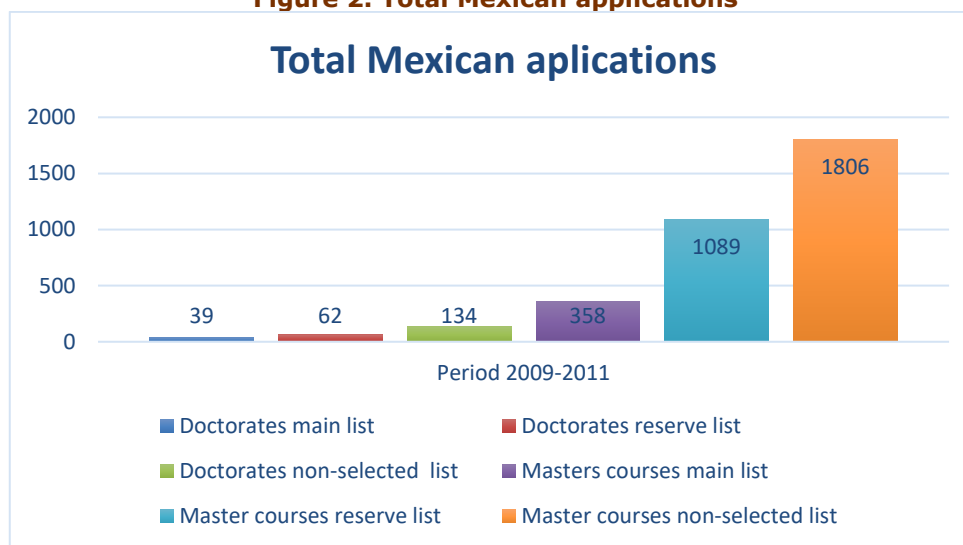
Source: Own Creation

The data of Figure 1 shows after making a total of 3488 applications, the expected contrast between category A and category B while there are 3309 (95 %) applications in A there are just 179 (5%) in B.

**Table 9. Total mexican applications**

Time frame 2009/14	Doctorates main list	Doctorates reserve list	Doctorates non- selected list	Masters courses main list	Masters courses reserve list	Masters courses non- selected list	Total applications
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>1089</b>	<b>1806</b>	<b>3488</b>

Source: Own creation

**Figure 2. Total Mexican applications**

Source: Own creation

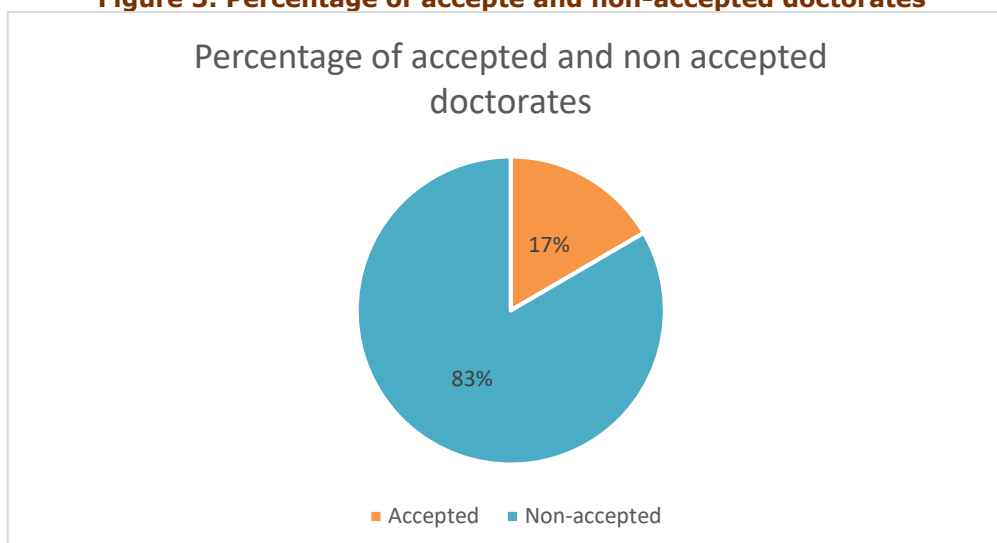
Figure 2 shows the number of applications and their state on the list. The total Mexican applications are 3488. A great percentage of non-selected list is shown: 52%

To continue this research the number of non-accepted applications is not just taking the non-selected list, but also the numbers of the reserve list because their confirmation is just not given.

**Table 10. Total of accepted and non-accepted students**

	Accepted	Non-accepted	Total applications
Doctorates	39	196	235
Masters courses	358	2895	3253
Total	397	3091	3488

Source: Own creation

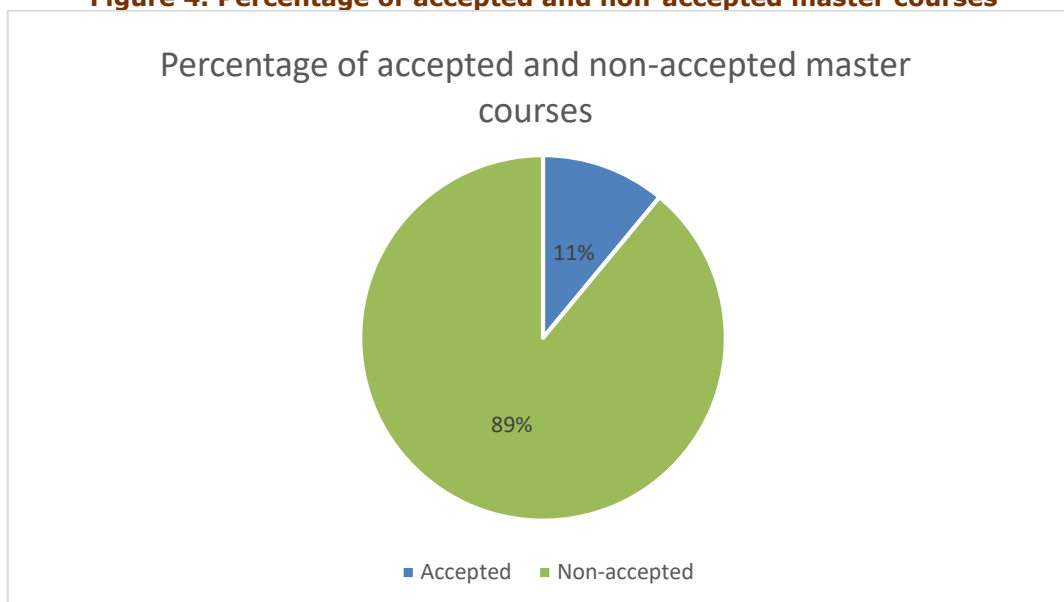
**Figure 3. Percentage of accepted and non-accepted doctorates**

Source: Own creation



Figure 3 shows that the 83% (196) of applications are non-accepted while just the 17% (39) are accepted.

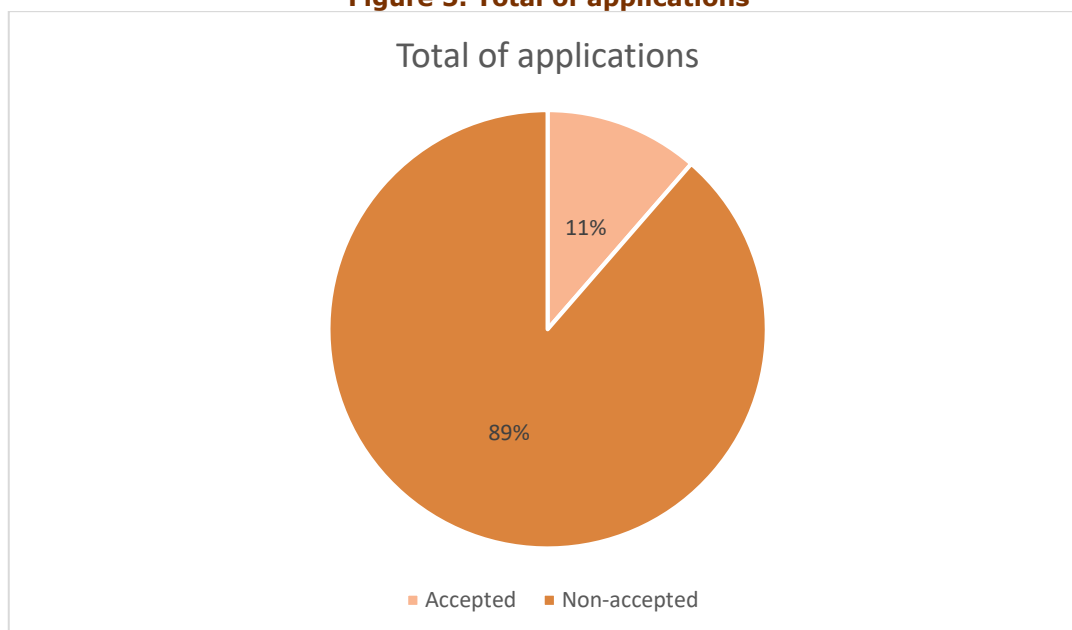
**Figure 4. Percentage of accepted and non-accepted master courses**



Source: Own creation

It can be seen in Figure 4 that the 89% (2895) of applicants are non- accepted and just the 11% (358) are accepted.

**Figure 5. Total of applications**



Source: Own creation



Figure 5 shows that that in the time frame that goes from 2009 to 2014 just the 11% of applicants are accepted with the number of 397; while the 89% with 3091 aren't.

## 14. Conclusions

The current investigation has accumulated several information about the bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union; without these bilateral relations development in countries would not be as it is in the present and the United Mexican States is not the exception. Development in education has been made since the beginning of relations of cooperation between these nation-states. Academic exchange programs allow the development aforementioned in the moment that let other people go travel and study and acquire knowledge and experiences that would not be possible to acquire in their native countries.

In order to analyze the impact made by the Erasmus Mundus program in Mexico, there are presented tables and graphics that shown the quantity of Mexican applications in the period that goes from 2009 to 2014. 11% of Mexican applicants are accepted, that is a considerable number and it creates an impact; nevertheless, there are still so many things to do to decrease the number of non-accepted people in the next years. In order to do so, us as civilians can do something about it during the next Civil Society Forum.

## 15. Objectives fulfilment

The overall objective that is analyze if the implementation of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on the bilateral relations between the United Mexican States and the European Union is accomplished in the moment that it is shown an active participation from Mexican students; this participation strengthen the bilateral relations and impulse cooperation between nation-states.

The specific objective that is analyze if the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program has created a positive impact on relations of cooperation in higher education between the United Mexican States and the European Union in the years from 2009 to 2014 is also accomplished, from the moment a description about the program is given and then an active program is shown. This program creates a positive impact on relations of cooperation in higher education, it sustain that this kind of programs are a total success and other ones need to be developed in order to create more competitive people and knowledge.

## 16. Hypothesis confirmation

It is a fact that bilateral relations have created a positive impact by implementing the Erasmus Mundus program, it has created development in the field of education since its creation and it is a fact it will continue doing it as long as it lasts.

It is a fact that relations of cooperation in higher education have created a positive impact by implementing the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program; relations of cooperation emanated by diplomacy create programs such as Erasmus Mundus and these



kinds of programs create a positive impact in society; a progress in knowledge gain is made without any question.

## **17. Hypothesis comparison**

According to this research bilateral relations have created a positive impact by implementing the Erasmus Mundus program and the relations of cooperation in higher education have created a positive impact by implementing the second phase of the Erasmus Mundus program. There is a great likeness of these results with the other made by other persons and create a contribution for their conclusions; their results are described next: Studying abroad involves a complex process of acquisition and also application of knowledge, abilities and attitudes. The Erasmus Mundus program allow to world citizens to fulfil their desires of meeting other cultures.

## **18. Contributions**

This research contributions are: knowledge by realizing the importance of bilateral relations and its impact on the United Mexican States, it releases statistics that could be used for other people who aim to research an issue similar to this one. More people will know about the Erasmus Mundus program and they will know that several civil forums are opened for those who want to create an implication in trade, political dialogue and relations of cooperation.

## **19. Implications**

This research is helpful for those who want to know about the Erasmus Mundus program and its impact on society. It also creates a support for those who want to analyze the impact made by this program in its second phase. Several organizations and institutions can take the results of this investigation and take them and use them to make bigger researcher and of course, take this results as a matter of interest is necessary in order to realize that more opportunies to students have to be made.

## **20. Future research areas**

Future research aeras are about diplomacy, innovation and technology, international business, interntional relations. For more specific information, the JEL classification codes to consider are: F230, F510 and O300.

## **21. Limitations**

The existing limitations are first of all, the limited time to develop this research, actually ideas that could not been captured in this research will be made in next researches. Another limitation was the narrow scop of the information obtained





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