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The Return to Europe:

Exploring the Process of Europeanisation of
Higher Music Education in Georgia

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Abstract

The Georgian Higher Music Education sector has undergone major changes since the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility[1] was established for study and training opportunities between the Erasmus+ programme and partner countries in 2015. *This thesis explores the Europeanisation processes of Georgian Higher Music Education by analysing the responses of higher music education institutions to the opportunities and challenges of EU-funded programmes.*

Considering the theoretical framework, Three Pillars of the Institutional Theory, developed by sociologist William Richard Scott, this research is built on the assumption that institutions influence organisations and encourage organisational change. Through the research strategy of the holistic single case study and Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire as the main unit of analysis, the thesis explores Europeanisation as a grassroots response to the EU-funded programmes.

The research findings indicate that the Erasmus+ and other EU-funded programmes have significantly progressed the Europeanisation of higher music education. Increased number of international mobilities, changes in academic programmes and study environments, as well as the development of new administrative and academic practices, have fostered the process. Europeanisation, in the context of Georgian Higher Music Education, is understood in relation to *the Return to Europe*.[2] It embodies both the *return* to the European cultural family and a *turn* toward Europe to adjust and implement its modern-day standards and policies.

Keywords: Europeanisation, Erasmus+, Georgia, Higher Music Education, Higher Music Educational Institutions, International Credit Mobility, Tbilisi State Conservatoire

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[1] ''Mobility opportunities in the field of higher education to individuals and organisations from other parts of the world. Through "International Credit Mobility" - ICM for short - European HEIs can set up mobility agreements with partners worldwide to send and receive students and staff.''
Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility: Handbook for Participating Organisations, 2022, p.4

[2] The concept of the Return to Europe in this thesis echoes the foreign policy tenet of the Central and Eastern European countries aiming to join the European Institutions in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union.

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List of Abbreviations

AEC	European Association of Conservatoires
CBHE	Capacity Building in Higher Education
CCSI	Culture and Creative Sectors and Industries
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EIT	European Institute of Innovation & Technology
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
MusiQuE	Music Quality Enhancement
NCEQE	National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (Georgia)
HME	Higher Music Education
HMEI	Higher Music Educational Institution
ICM	*Erasmus+* International Credit Mobility
NA	*Erasmus+* National Agency
NEO	National Erasmus+ Office
TAFU	Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film University of Georgia
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies
TSC	Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoi

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Area, Aim of the Research and Research Questions

On the 4th of March 2022, Georgia applied for membership in the European Union.[3] However, the country's pro-European and pro-Euro-Atlantic orientation and the willingness to align with so-called European standards, including in higher education, have been declared long before. Georgia joined the Bologna process in 2005 and is a part of EHEA.[4] Notably, Higher Music Education in Georgia has undergone a vast number of changes since the Erasmus+ opened to the third countries not associated to the programme in the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework.[5] The National Erasmus+ Office in Georgia, based on the EU Commission statistics, assess Georgia as the leading Erasmus+ ICM partner.[6] The broad opportunities developed the ways for the Georgian Higher Education, as well as Culture and Creative Sectors[7] to attract European funding programmes and thus foster the Europeanisation process.

This study analyses the responses of Georgia's Higher Music Education sector to the impact – challenges and opportunities – of the EU-funded programmes. Through analysing the experiences and processes at higher educational institutions, the thesis **aims** to explore the Europeanisation processes of the Georgian HME. The initial perspective is that there are developments in various directions when it comes to organisational change, and both encouraging possibilities, as well as challenges and gaps need to be addressed. Since the higher music education field in Georgia is dominated by one institution – Vano Sarajishvili

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[3] EU Commission. 2023. Enlargement profile: Georgia
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/georgia/
[4] EHEA - European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process. Country Profile: Georgia https://ehea.info/page-georgia
[5] EU-Commission. 2013. Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020
https://www.europarl.europa.eu/greece/resource/static/files/multiannual-financial-framework-2014-2020.pdf
[6] In 2021 Georgia was ranked 6th among 141 partner countries participating in the Erasmus+ ICM.
Tamar Lortkipanidze and Nino Urushadze. 2021. National Erasmus+ Office Georgia. *Erasmus+ Mobility in times of Pandemics: Experience of Georgian Universities* p.2
http://erasmusplus.org.ge/files/publications/Research%20Projects/ENG/COVID-IMPACT%20(2021).pdf
[7] Georgia also participates in the Creative Europe Programme of the EU, as it became the first EU neighbourhood country to join the programme in 2015. The programme participation includes: ''Culture'' and ''Cross Sectoral'' strands and the ''Talent & Skills'', ''European Festivals and Festival networks'', and ''Audience development and Film education'' actions (part of ''Media'' strand)'' https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/crea/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_crea_en.pdf (EU-Commission, Creative Europe Programme Participation 2023)

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Tbilisi State Conservatoire,[8] a holistic single case study is chosen as the general research strategy.

Considering the aim of the study, the main **research question** is formulated as follows:

How does the Georgian Higher Music Education sector respond to the opportunities and challenges of EU-funded programmes in order to foster Europeanisation?

Additional **research questions** are:

- What is the impact of EU-funded programmes in Higher Music Education in Georgia?
- How does the Europeanisation of Georgian higher music education progress in relation with the internationalisation of the sector?

Several methods have been used, including surveys, participant observation, individual interviews and focus groups. All these methodological tools, which will be elaborated on later in the thesis, constitute integrated parts within one holistic and focused single case study.

The Europeanisation process is explored from the bottom-up perspective, which means that the voices and actions of the stakeholders within the Georgian Higher Music Education sector are the main subjects of interest. Ulrich Teichler, professor at the University of Kassel, provides his definition of Europeanisation as the "regional version of either internationalisation or globalisation, which is frequently addressed when reference is made to cooperation and mobility, but beyond that to integration, the convergence of contexts, structures and substances."[9] Like Teichler, Marijk van der Wende refers to Europeanisation as a phenomenon that is often described as internationalisation "on a regional scale."[10] She defines internationalisation in higher education as a "systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the

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[8] The institution accounts for more than 2/3 of all BA and MA level and 100% of all PhD level music-specialised student population in Georgia. It is the only music-specialised institution classified as a university under Georgian law.
Nana Sharikadze. 2018. Georgia - National Overview. Higher Music Education. European Association of Conservatoires. Accessed 24 March 2023. https://aec-music.eu/members/national-overviews/georgia/

[9] Ulrich Teichler. 2003. The Future of Higher Education and the Future of Higher Education Research. Tertiary Education and Management Volume 9, p.180.

[10] Marijk C. van der Wende. 2004. Introduction. On cooperation and competition: national and European policies for the internationalisation of higher education. Bonn: Lemmens. p.10 In Anneke Luijten-Lub (2007). Choices of Internationalisation: How Higher Education Institutions Respond to Internationalisation, Europeanisation and Globalisation. PhD diss. University of Utrecht, NL, p.30

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globalisation of societies, economy, and labour markets."[11] Beyond those definitions, this study considers the *Return to Europe* – as the guiding concept for Georgian higher music education. It embodies both the *return* to the European cultural family and the *turn* toward Europe to adjust and implement its modern-day standards and policies.

Besides Tbilisi State Conservatoire, collected data from two other major Georgian arts institutions, Apolon Kutateladze State Academy of Arts (Arts Academy) and Shota Rustaveli State University of Film and Theatre (TAFU), is also examined as additional sources of relevant information. Analysing the responses from these HEIs will create a knowledge for a comprehensive understanding of the context for the Europeanisation of the sector. Those three arts-specialised institutions, TSC, Arts Academy and TAFU, constitute the only universities financed under the Ministry of Culture, Sport, and Youth of Georgia[12]; they have similar profiles and therefore are valuable for making the additional comparison.

1.2 Disposition of the Thesis

The structure of this thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1 starts with introducing the problem area, the aim, and the research questions (1.1), followed by the explanation of the disposition (Section 1.2). In this chapter introduction to the relevance of the topic, target group and audience is presented (Section 1.3). The last section (1.4) is a brief and summarising presentation of the research design, including the theoretical framework and methodology of the research, defining variables,[13] overall research challenges and limitations.

Chapter 2 focuses particularly on the theoretical framework. Sections 2.1 and 2.2 examine the *institutional theory* as the study's theoretical basis, while Section 2.3 contextualises the phenomenon of Europeanisation in Higher Education.

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[11] Marijk C. van der Wende. 1997. Missing links: The relationship between national policies for internationalisation and those for higher education in general. National policies for the internationalisation of higher education in Europe. Högskoleverket Studies. Högskoleverkets skriftsterie. National Agency for Higher Education, p.19

[12] Ministry of Education of Georgia. Authorised institutions. https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=1855&lang=eng, Accessed on 24 March 2023

[13] A variable refers to "a person, place, thing, or phenomenon" that one tries to "measure in some way" in the research, and it "should be outlined in the research introduction." URL: https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide Accessed on 24 March 2023

Chapter 3 introduces the research strategy and methods. Section 3.1 presents the case study as the general research strategy. Furthermore, the methodological tools for the data collection and analysis, such as a) surveys, b) participatory observation, c) qualitative interviews and focus groups, d) thematic categorisation, are listed in Section 3.2. The last section (3.3) of Chapter 3 discusses validity and reliability.

Chapter 4 presents the topic's background from the perspective of EU-Georgia relations (Section 4.1), and the following section (4.2) overviews the case of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

Chapter 5 is the central chapter of this research. It starts with presenting the main findings of the statistical overview (Section 5.1). Analysis of the process of Europeanisation in the framework of *Three Pillars of the Institutional Theory* is discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3. The following section (5.4) presents the challenges facing the Europeanisation of the HME sector in Georgia, and Section 5.5 draws a comparison with other Arts HEIs for the completion of the research.

In **Chapter 6**, the conclusions are drawn, and the answers to the research questions are summarised clearly. This chapter will also give recommendations and implications for future research in the final section (6.2)

1.3 Relevance and Audience of the Research

Georgia is a small eastern European country with a population of just above 3.7 million.[14] However, the famous European classical music stages are not unfamiliar to Georgian musicians and artists. Many Georgians regularly perform in prestigious opera theatres and concert halls across Europe.[15] As Georgia prepares for EU membership, the position of the culture and arts as an exporting sector for the country is increasing, which is relevant now, at a time when that field is gaining more significance in the EU under the Ursula von der Leyen presidency.[16] The Commission broadly supports making the cultural sector one of the priorities for EU sustainability, fostered by implementing various cultural programmes and

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[14] National Statistics Office of Georgia. 2023. Population. https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/41/population accessed on 24 April 2023

[15] It takes Mezzo-Soprano Anita Rachvelishvili (https://www.anitarachvelishvili.com/bio) and Pianist Khatia Buniatishvili (http://www.khatiabuniatishvili.com/) to mention the least.

[16] An example of that is establishing EIT Culture and Creativity as the newest Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in 2022. https://eit.europa.eu/eit-community/eit-culture-creativity

encouraging artists and creative workers. The present study is relevant based on the current political, cultural, and social developments both in Georgia and in Europe at large.

The Commission's Opinion published on 16 June 2022 approves the European perspective for Georgia and asks the Council to grant the EU membership candidacy to the country once the 12 priorities outlined in the Opinion are addressed.[17] The European aspirations are also embodied in the Georgian Constitution.[18] On 2 February 2023, the Commission published its analytical report on Georgia's alignment with the EU acquis, in which Chapter 26 is about alignment in the Area of Education and Culture. The Commission states that "Georgia is moderately prepared in the Area of education and culture. The education system in Georgia is broadly aligned with the EU objectives."[19]

Folk music and polyphonic music creation in Georgia have ancient roots. However, higher music education and formalised educational system in classical music has historically been dominated by the influence of the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union.[20] Since regaining independence in the early 1990s, and especially during the last decade, higher education in Georgia has been transforming rapidly,[21] and as part of this research, I am exploring the progress that the Georgian HME has made towards Europeanisation.

The Audience of the research

I argue that this thesis may be interesting for those working and researching higher music education, internationalisation, and Europeanisation. Furthermore, researchers and students in cultural policy and cultural and creative sectors and industries may also find the present study to be of great interest. This study will contribute to the field of European Studies due to at least two reasons: (a) by focusing on the potential candidate EU member state – Georgia, and (b) by analytically exploring how the cultural and artistic dimensions are relevant to Europeanisation and the perspectives of EU enlargement. Moreover, the thesis

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[17] EU Commission. 2022. Factsheet: European Commission Opinions on the EU Membership applications. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/factsheet-european-commission-opinions-eu-membership-applications_en
[18] Constitution of Georgia. 1995. ''Article 78 – Integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. The constitutional bodies shall take all measures within the scope of their competencies to ensure the full integration of Georgia into the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.'' Constitutional Law of Georgia No 1324 of 13 October 2017 – website, 19.10.2017
[19] EU Commission. 2023. Commission Analytical report on Georgia's alignment with the EU acquis. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/commission-analytical-report-georgias-alignment-eu-acquis_en
[20] Nana Sharikadze. 2018.
[21] Norberto Pignatti. 2019. Higher Education Reform in Georgia: Challenges and Opportunities. Policy Report. ISET Policy Institute, p.9

addresses the field of higher music education and, therefore, will be interesting for stakeholders and researchers at higher music institutions, primarily in Georgia but also in Europe as a whole.

1.4 Research Design, Variables, and Limitations

This research will navigate with a general research strategy of case study and the institutional theoretical framework, specifically, the widely used Three Pillars of Institutional Theory developed by institutionalist William Richard Scott.

Theoretical Framework: Selection Overview

As mentioned above, this thesis is based on the responses, experiences, and processes at HMEIs. When studying and analysing higher education and organisational changes, the institutional theory has been widely used and "proven its worth."[22] The main reason behind this choice is the general research question. Because responses of HMEIs are central to this study, the theoretical approach will also frame the analysis of organisational change. Anneke Lujten-Lub suggests that "organisations are assumed to be influenced by institutional pressures from the environment of the organisation and internal to the organisation. These influences should be interpreted as both facilitating and constraining organisational behaviour."[23] W. Richard Scott's Three Pillars are regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive. The regulative pillar comprises formulating laws, rules and regulations, and standards.[24] The normative pillar constitutes social norms, values, and traditions.[25] Scott defines the cultural-cognitive pillar as "the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and creates the frames through which the meaning is made."[26]

General Research Strategy: Selection Overview

The single case study has been chosen as the general research strategy for this thesis. The development of case study methodology is often associated with social scientist Robert K.

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[22] Luijten-Lub. 2007, p. 50

[23] Ibid. 51

Anneke Luijten-Lub is a Dutch scholar, currently at the University of Utrecht, who has used institutional theory in higher education research in her PhD dissertation on internationalisation and higher education policy.

[24] William Richard Scott. 2014. Institutions and Organisations: Ideas, Interests, and Identities. Fourth Edition. Stanford University. SAGE Publications, Inc., ISBN 978-4522-4222-4 p.59

[25] Ibid. 65

[26] Ibid. 67

Yin.[27] Within research, a phenomenon is studied, considering a broader context using different sources.[28] It helps to ensure that the case is not studied in one way but more comprehensively, considering different aspects and contexts.

The exploratory type is chosen for this thesis, as it is used when there are no clear results in the situation we have selected, so we try to better understand and explore the process.[29] This thesis will be a holistic single case study. This type of case study is used to conduct research on one single case, which is extensive, however, has a single unit of analysis.[30]

Variables:

The case study methodology suggests defining the variables[31] of the research: "The process of examining a research problem … is often framed around methods of analysis that compare, contrast, correlate, average, or integrate relationships between or among variables."[32] Jennifer R. Ledford, Justin D. Lane, and David L. Gast, who study the field of Education and Research Methods, discuss variables in a single case methodology and offer extensive measurement proposals.[33] Authors suggest that "some behaviours can occur at any time during a measurement occasion, while others depend on specific antecedent events."[34] The variables in this thesis are defined according to the classification provided by the professor in International Relations, Sophia Petriashvili:

- Independent variable, *a phenomenon that influences the result[35]* - HME responses to EU-funded projects and their efforts of Europeanisation;
- The dependent variable, *a result[36]* - The progress of Europeanisation of the Georgian HME sector;

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[27] Yin's scholarly work "Case study research: Design and Methods" is widely cited within social and political sciences.

[28] Robert K. Yin. 2018. Case Study Research: Design and Methods. SAGE Publications, Sixth Edition. Los Angeles, p. 3-25

[29] Ibid. 8-9

[30] Yin. 2018. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, p. 6-7

[31] The process of defining the variables is provided in the writing guide by the University of Southern California: https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide

[32] Ibid.

[33] See Jennifer R. Ledford, Justin D. Lane, David L. Gast "Dependent Variables, Measurement, and Reliability" in Ledford, J.R., & Gast, D.L. (Eds.). 2018. Single Case Research Methodology: Applications in Special Education and Behavioral Sciences (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315150666

[34] Ibid. abstract

[35] Sophia Petriashvili. 2019. Handouts for Research Design Course in International Relations

[36] Ibid.

- Antecedent variable, *an event that strengthens the connection between independent and dependent variables[37]* - the Bologna process and Opening of the Erasmus+ programme to the non-associated third countries;

- Intervening variables*, a phenomenon that helps to explain the correlation between other variables[38]* – Institutional, both supranational and national influences on the HME sector.

Limitations

The single case research strategy has several limitations, which need to be considered as "defining the boundaries of the case:"[39]

John W. Cresswell, best known for his mixed methods research, suggests defining the *Time and Place* of the research.[40] The limitation is adjusted from the timeframe of Georgia joining the Erasmus+ programme as partner, eligible country in 2015 until the period of writing this thesis. As Robert K. Yin puts it: "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context."[41] It is a "distinctive form of empirical inquiry."[42]

Another limitation is *Time and Activity,* as defined by the professor of education, Robert E. Stake in his book *The Art of Case Study Research*.[43] As Tbilisi State Conservatoire remains a dominant institution in the field in Georgia, it is relevant to explore the Europeanisation responses of the HME sector from the lens of stakeholders at TSC. The rationale for a holistic single case study is that it is widely *representative* and a *typical[44]* — reflective of the experience of a large organisation.

The methodology chapter (3) will present other scholars working on the case study research. The following Chapter Two will overview the theoretical framework.

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Yin. 2014. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 5th Edition. SAGE Publications, ISBN 978-1-4522-4256-9 p.34

[40] Creswell. 2010. Mapping the Developing Landscape of Mixed Method Research in SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research ed. By Tashakkori, Abbas; Teddlie, Charles. SAGE Publications, p. 45-69

[41] Yin. 2014. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, p. 16

[42] Yin. 2014. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, p. 14

[43] Stake. 1995. The Art of Case Study Research. SAGE Publication. Inc. ISBN-0-8039-5767-X pp. 3-25

[44] Ibid.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Theory: Introduction

Institutional theory constitutes an increasingly popular set of analytical assumptions embodied in a rapidly "growing body of academic literature"[45] which has covered an extensive number of academic research in the field of higher education.[46] This research seeks to understand the organisational changes by exploring the role of EU-funded projects in higher education. Institutional theory has been deemed as a relevant framework for it. *Three Pillars* developed by W. Richard (Dick) Scott was chosen to explain the organisational change and impact of EU-funded programmes on Georgian HME. W. Richard Scott is an "organisational sociologist who has concentrated his work on studying professional organisations, including educational organisations."[47] This theory is an appropriate approach for explaining deeper context and complex processes. Luijten-Lub cites Dacin et al. that the "Institutional theory has risen to prominence as a popular and powerful explanation for both individual and organisational action"[48] and it can help to indicate factors that influence how organisations change or "respond to change."[49]

Royston Greenwood, a professor at the University of Alberta and others,[50] divide institutional theory's development in organisation studies into three stages: a) old, b) new, and c) different new perspectives. Researchers argue that the new type originated at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s. According to scholars at Tampere University in Finland, Yuzhuo Cai and Yohannes Mehari, compared to *old* institutionalism, which considers that the organisation is embedded in the local community, *new* institutionalism accentuates the concept of the organisational field.[51]

[45] Mark Hanson. 2001. Institutional Theory and Educational Change, Educational Administration Quarterly Vol. 37, No. 5

[46] See: Hanson. 2001; Luijten-Lub (2007); Scott (2014)

[47] Scott. 2014. Institutions and Organisations, p. 345

[48] Dacin, M. T., Goodstein, J., & Scott, W.R. 2002. Institutional theory and institutional change: introduction to the special research forum. Academy of Management Journal, 45(1), 45-57

[49] Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices in Internationalisation, p. 50

[50] See Royston Greenwood, Christin Oliver, Kerstin Sahlin, & Roy Suddaby (2008). The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism. Sage Publications Ltd, ISBN: 1412931231

[51] Yuzhuo Cai and Yohannes Mehari. 2015. The Use of Institutional Theory in Higher Education Research. Theory and Method in Higher Education Research, Volume 1, 125 Emerald Group Publishing
ISSN: 2056-3752/doi:10.1108/S2056-375220150000001001

W. Richard Scott[52] suggests that institutions "consist of cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour. They are transported by various carriers — cultures, structures, and routines — and operate at multiple jurisdiction levels."[53]

Based on the theory as well as organisational memory and learning, Mark Hanson, professor in Higher Education and Management, suggests three types of change, those are "homogenisation (where one school adjusts its composition to look like other schools), evolution (where first steps into the unknown territory are taken), and reform (where significant transfiguration takes place)."[54] Further will be discussed the correlation with the three pillars of institutional theory in the analytical and discussion chapter (5).

2.2 Three Pillars of Institutional Theory

Within this thesis, Three Pillars of Institutional Theory developed by sociologist W. Richard Scott is conceptualised both as stimuli for organisational change and indicators for the classification of those changes, as they both influence and determine how HME organisations respond to EU-funded projects and drive the process of Europeanisation through "homogenisation, evolution, or reform," as Hanson puts it.[55]

Those three pillars of institutions are analytical elements for explaining and understanding institutions. I have described how Richard Scott defines the pillars earlier, and further, I will follow the interpretation of Scott's pillars by other scholars. The regulative pillar has a "stabilising role"[56] and refers to rules and regulations. Like Scott, Hanson summarised the regulative pillar as a set of formulations of laws, rules and regulations, and standards.[57] Many scholars have used Scott's three pillars of institutional theory as a guiding theoretical framework for their work. One of them is Tatiana Kostova from the University of South Carolina, who defines Scott's Normative Pillar as "social norms, values, beliefs and assumptions that are socially shared and carried out by individuals."[58] In the Academy of

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[52] "Scott can be regarded as a new institutionalist" Ibid, 125
[53] Richard Scott. 1995. Institutions and organisations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, p. 33
[54] Mark Hanson. 2001. Institutional Theory and Educational Change. Educational Administration Quarterly 37:5, p. 637-661
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid, 646
[57] Ibid
[58] Tatiana Kostova, 1997, *Country institutional profiles: concept and measurement*, Academy of Management Proceedings, Vol. 1997 No. 1, p. 180

Management Journal, Lowell W. Busenitz and others refer to the *cultural-cognitive pillar* as "cognitions and actors' generally shared perceptions of what is typical or taken for granted."[59] Those definitions echo the perspective in which the collected data is analysed – designing and framed into thematic categories.

Various scholarly works on this theory are valuable, but I focus on W. Richard Scott's original book *Institutions and Organisations*. Here author defines different dimensions of pillars: the basis of compliance, the basis of order, mechanisms, logic, indicators, affect, and the basis of legitimacy.[60] Accordingly, organisations (HMEIs in this thesis) are influenced by those dimensions.

	Regulative	*Normative*	*Cultural-Cognitive*
Basis of compliance	Expedience	Social obligation	Taken-for-grantedness Shared understanding
Basis of order	Regulative rules	Binding expectations	Constitutive schema
Mechanisms	Coercive	Normative	Mimetic
Logic	Instrumentality	Appropriateness	Orthodoxy
Indicators	Rules Laws Sanctions	Certification Accreditation	Common beliefs Shared logics of action Isomorphism
Affect	Fear Guilt/Innocence	Shame/Honour	Confusion/Certainty
Basis of legitimacy	Legally sanctioned	Morally governed	Comprehensible Recognizable Culturally supported

Figure 1. Scott's Three Pillars of Institutions[61]

Based on Scott's assumptions Luijten-Lub writes that "even though organisations may be confronted with the same or similar environment, not all experience these influences the same way or will respond the same way. This means that organisations are, at least to some extent, responsive to their institutional environment."[62] This assumption will guide me to indicate that even though Georgian higher education can be influenced by similar pressure and stimulus as others, "to some extent, the case of each institution should be regarded as its own, as the unique body responds to its environment."[63] This assumption is another reason

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[59] Busenitz, L.W., Gomez, C. and Spencer, J.W. 2000. *Country institutional profiles: unlocking entrepreneurial phenomena*, Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 43 No. 5, pp. 994-1003
[60] Scott. 2014. Institutions and Organisations, p. 60
[61] Ibid, p. 60
[62] Luijten-Lub. 2007. The Choices in Internationalisation, p. 54
[63] Ibid

why the cases of two additional HEIs are explored in this thesis, in order to determine whether the holistic single case study of Tbilisi State Conservatoire be regarded as sui generis[64] or part of the trend within the arts sector.

In the following section, I will contextualise the concept of Europeanisation in Higher Education and overview the Return to Europe discourse in the HME sector in Georgia.

2.3 Contextualising Europeanisation in Higher Education

Political Scientist Jarle Trondal describes Europeanisation in higher education and research as the interrelation between two processes,[65] that is "both the emergence of supranational policies at the EU level and national convergence towards these policies."[66] Trondal suggests that Europeanisation in Higher Education is "transformational change,"[67] which implies both developments of "supranational policies" and "national adaptation" of these policies. Of course, there is no one absolute definition of Europeanisation. In this thesis, Europeanisation in higher music education is discussed as a bottom-up process, "transformational change". It is understood as convergence that "reflects differences between domestic and EU policy, accompanying domestic adaptational pressures"[68] but for the wider picture, one should consider how higher education in Georgia has been operating since the country restored independence in 1991.[69]

For contextualisation, when discussing Europeanisation in the countries that aspire the membership in the EU, the concept of the *Return to Europe* comes into the picture in many cases. *The Return to Europe* throughout the 1990s was the developing theme in Central and Eastern Europe. Exiting the Soviet influence was contrasted with the journey of re-joining, *returning to Europe*.[70] In the Georgian context, similar discourse emerges.[71] In her speech

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[64] Cambridge Dictionary: Sui Generis - not like anything or anyone else; unique. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sui-generis

[65] Jarle Trondal. 2002. The Europeanisation of Research and Higher Educational Policies: Some Reflections. Scandinavian Political Studies, 25, p. 333 https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.00075

[66] Ibid.

[67] Ibid, 335

[68] Ibid

[69] See publications by National Erasmus+ Office in Georgia: Recommendations on Higher Education and research internationalisation. 2021; 15 Years of Bologna Process in Georgia: Achievements, Challenges, Recommendations (2020); Analysis of Development and Implementation of the Authorization Mechanism for Higher Education Institutions (2019) etc. http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/publications

[70] See Elsa Tulmets. 2014. East Central European Foreign Policy Identity in Perspective: Back to Europe and the EU's Neighbourhood. Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan ISBN 978-1-349-33195-6

[71] On political demonstrations in Tbilisi, one often sees posters with phrases: ''Back to Europe''; ''Back home, to Europe''; ''We are Europe'' – See picture: https://netgazeti.ge/news/617591/

at the ANMA — Association of Nordic Music Academies Forum in 2019, the rector of Tbilisi State Conservatoire discussed how the institutional mindset influenced the positioning of HMEIs on the map and stressed that convergence between Georgian Higher music education system and that of European was inevitable.[72]

Luijten-Lub presents four scholarly definitions of the concept of *internationalisation* in higher education:[73]

	Knight	Van der Wende	Scott	Marginson
Internationa-lisation	Internationalisation in higher education as "the process of integrating and international or intercultural dimension into the research, teaching and services functions of an institution of higher education" (1994: 7) Internationalisation at the national, sector, institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating any international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education (2003b: 2)	Internationalisation in higher education as "including any systematic, sustained effort aimed at making higher education (more) responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalisation of societies, economy and labour markets" (1997: 19)	"Internationalisation reflected – and maybe still reflects – a world order dominated by nation states" (1998a: 126). "Universities are nation institutions, created to fulfil national purposes" (1998a: 113).	"The term 'internationalisation' describes the growth of relations between nations and between cultures " (2000).

Figure 2. Definitions: Internationalisation

In his definition of internationalisation, Simon Marginson, a professor in Higher Education at Oxford University, gives a simple, clear meaning to the concept, and he puts "the growth of relations" in its foundation.[74]

German scholars Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse describe Europeanisation as "the various ways in which processes and policies emanating from the European level influence policies, politics, and politics at the domestic level."[75] In contrast, this thesis does not intend to measure the scale of Europeanisation or alignment with EU acquis communautaire but to explore the processes and progress that the institutions and HME sector have made. In Chapter 3, I will present the methods in detail.

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[72] Nana Sharikadze. 2019., notes from ANMA speech.
[73] Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices in Internationalisation, p. 26
[74] Ibid.
[75] Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse. 2003. When Europe hits home: Europeanization and domestic change in The SAGE Handbook of European Union Politics. Third Edition. Ed. By SAGE Publications Knud Erik Jorgensen, Ben J. Rosamond & Mark Pollack.

3. Methodology

3.1 General Research Strategy: Overview and Relevance

The outcomes of the qualitative empirical research should be comprehensive, and it should include both "an objective representation of the gathered data as well as researchers' interpretation and reflective description of findings."[76] In order to study a phenomenon or process within the context using different sources and data, the *case study* has been one of the most widely used research strategies, especially in the social and political sciences fields. In the introduction chapter, I presented Robert K. Yin's contribution to the methodology. In this overview, I will also go through other prominent scholars who contributed to the case study research methodology.

Bedrettin Yazan from the University of Alabama compares the approaches to the case study methods between Yin and other compelling authors on qualitative case research — Sharan B. Merriam and Robert E. Stake. Merriam, who has worked on case study applications in higher education, defines it as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit."[77] Stake produces four characteristics of the case study (holistic, empirical, interpretative and emphatic) and similarly to Yin, focuses on the connections and correlation between the phenomenon and context.[78]

The interpretation and contextualisation are the essential part of the case study. A case study is usually used when researchers seek answers to *WHY or HOW* questions.[79] Therefore, the research questions are formulated accordingly.

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[76] John W. Creswell. 2013. Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches. Los Angeles, CA. SAGE Publications, p. 44

[77] Sharan B. Merriem. 1998. Qualitative research and case study applications in education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, p. xiii in Benedith Yazan. 2015. Three Approaches to Case Study Methods in Education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. The Qualitative Report, 20(2), 148. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol20/iss2/12 Accessed on 24 March 2023.

[78] Benedith Yazan. 2015. Three Approaches to Case Study Methods in Education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake, p. 134-135

[79] Ibid. 4

Yin distinguishes two different types of designs. Those are single and multiple case studies.[80] The single case study can be holistic – with a single 'unit of analysis' or embedded with multiple units of analysis. Multiple case studies can be viewed as comparative case studies, where various cases are analysed and compared.[81] The *holistic single case study* of one HMEI (Tbilisi State Conservatoire) was selected for this case because it is an exceptional and unique case and, at the same time, largely representative of the research topic.

Robert E. Stake makes a distinction between *intrinsic* and *instrumental* types of cases. Intrinsic type is used when the case is the focus of the research and analysing the case is the priority interest of the research. In contrast, *instrumental* is usually used to study larger phenomena or processes, and the case is used to explore the issue in interest.[82] For this thesis, I have chosen the *exploratory* type developed by Robert K. Yin, and the motivations are explained below. Other types that Yin discusses are *explanatory* and *descriptive*.[83]

The relevance of choosing the exploratory type rather than other types developed by Yin or Stake is that the objective of the research lies in the aim of the research. The Europeanisation phenomenon of HME in Georgia is not yet explored, and it is a researcher who seeks to understand, study, and analyse through stakeholders' responses. The case of the chosen institution – Tbilisi State Conservatoire, is hereby used to investigate, illustrate, demonstrate, and widen the understanding of the issue.

In the following section, I will discuss and present all the methodological tools that were selected in order to answer the research questions.

3.2 Methodological tools: Selection, Data Collection, Analysis

When it comes to case studies, there are multiple methods that researchers can use for their research. Empirical research provides many ways to obtain relevant data and gather information. For conducting the case study, the researcher should develop a wide-ranging understanding and profound answers to the issue discussed. The data collection for this thesis was conducted by using several complementary methods.

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[80] Yin (2018). Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 27-35
[81] Ibid, 51-53
[82] Stake. 1995. The Art of Case Study Research, pp. 16-20
[83] Yin. 2014. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, p. 30

Before moving forward with the concrete methods, I will present how written *documentation and statistics* have been selected and collected. I was looking for official letters, policy documents, development strategies, international bilateral agreements, inter-institutional memoranda, study plans, guides, international mobility guides, minutes of meetings, administrative documents, as well as archival service and organisational records. Those documents complement the data collected by other methodological instruments. The goal is to a) understand how knowledge and perceptions are transformed from responses to surveys and interviews in official policy papers and statistics and b) how these policy documents influence the responses of the interview/survey/observation subjects.

Similar desk-research and statistical review have been presented in the research on the impact of CBHE[84] projects conducted by the National Erasmus+ Office in Georgia.[85] The statistical overview in the NEO Report inspired me to include a similar section in my thesis.

The reviewed documents include the internationalisation strategies of HMEI,[86] institutional development strategy,[87] Erasmus+ programme guide - the International Credit mobility part,[88] Culture Strategy 2025[89] developed by the Ministry of Culture of Georgia in 2018 and the newly approved 2022-30 Strategy for Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia.[90]

Additional documents were provided by the HMEIs, such as ICM project proposals and ICM project final reports. The study was conducted by reviewing and analysing the information after collecting the documents. The review of project websites,[91] Facebook pages,[92] statistics regarding international mobilities, involvement in both Erasmus+ and other EU-funded

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[84] Capacity Building in Higher Education – Erasmus+ Key Action 2 action: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/capacity-building-higher-education

[85] National Erasmus+ Office Georgia. 2021. CBHE Impact Study Georgia 2021. National Report. http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/publications

[86] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. International Relations Strategy 2018-2025. https://tsc.edu.ge/en/int-strategy/ Accessed on 25 March 2023

[87] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Strategic Development Plan 2018-2024. https://tsc.edu.ge/misia/ (only in Georgian) Accessed on 25 March 2023

[88] EU Commission. Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2023 (Version 3, 04.04.23) https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-programme-guide, pp. 87-104 Accessed on 25 March 2023

[89] The Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia (2016) Culture Strategy 2025. https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/qpr/final-culture-strategy-2025-eng.pdf Accessed on 25 March 2023

[90] The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (2022). The Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia for 2022-2030. https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=7755&lang=eng Accessed on 25 March 2023

[91] i.e., BodySounddiVision Project between TSC and Italian Universities: https://www.slmc.it/events/body-sound-division-in-tbilisi/?lang=en

[92] i.e., TSC Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/TbilisiConservatoire

projects, and information about alumni international activities[93] also provided good insight for the analysis. The review findings will be presented in Section 1 of Chapter 5, creating a basis for the analytical discussion.

The following documentation has been studied:

. Statistics – obtained through e-mail from Tbilisi State Conservatoire:

- Number of inter-institutional bilateral agreements;
- Memberships of the umbrella, specialised organisations;
- Number of Erasmus+ partners involved in ICM projects;
- Staff mobilities (2017-2022);
- Student mobilities (2017-2022);
- Student language test results (unidentifiable);

2. Policy and other Documents obtained from TSC:

- Strategic Development Plan (2023-2027) and Logical Framework annexe;
- Internationalisation Strategy (2018-2025);
- Yearly Report from International Office (2021, 2022);

In the following sub-sections, I will present the chosen methods in detail.

3.2.1 Surveys

Using online surveys for research on higher education is widespread. Online surveys as data collection methods have become increasingly popular since the early 2000s.[94] "A survey instrument is any series of pre-defined questions intended to collect information from people, whether in person, by internet, or any other media."[95] Joel R. Evans and Anil Mathur, researchers at Hofstra University in New York, present the ways for survey distribution online. One of the ways is sending an e-mail to respondents with a Uniform Resource

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[93] The organisation provided all these statistics/information via e-mail and/or questionnaire.
[94] Van Selm, M., Jankowski, N.W. Conducting Online Surveys. (2006) Quality and Quantity 40, p. 435 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-005-8081-8
[95] Don D. Dillman, editor. Mail and Internet Surveys. 2nd ed. New York. John Wiley and Sons, Inc. In Andrew W. Phillips. 2016. Proper Applications for Surveys as a Study Methodology. West J Emerg Med. 2017 Jan; 18(1), pp. 8–11. Published online doi: 10.5811/westjem.2016.11.32000

Locator (URL) hyperlink as an invitation to a web-based survey.[96] Lorinda Minnaar and Jan Heystek, academics in Education, write that online surveys "may enhance the validity, reliability and quality of their research data, results and findings and ultimately the success of their studies."[97] The survey is viewed as a rather objective outlook. The influence during the filling-in process is lower as the online survey participant is not directly in contact with the researcher.

As part of this thesis, three different online surveys were created. One is the survey for the institutions (TSC, TAFU and Arts Academy).[98] The surveys were sent via e-mail to the international offices of respective organisations. International offices of those organisations were chosen as the main subjects of the survey regarding organisations as they are mostly responsible for the internationalisation progress.

The other two surveys were designed for students at TSC. Considering that this thesis concentrates on a holistic single type, the focus is laid on the responses from TSC. Both online surveys were optionally anonymous and sent simultaneously via e-mail to all TSC students' university e-mails:[99]

- For those who have already completed their mobilities in the Erasmus+ programme countries or associated countries to the programme or participated in any international activities abroad through TSC;[100]
- For those who have not yet participated in Erasmus+ and/or other international activities via their HMEI.[101]

The survey was filled in by 119 students: 31 with international experience and 88 without. The number of participants is 25,05% of the total student population at TSC. Questions were designed with the research theory in mind and to correspond to the general research question. Surveys were done by using Google Forms. The analysis has been done through thematic categorisation, which will be explained in sub-section 3.2.4.

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[96] Joel R. Evans and Anil Mathur. 2005. The value of online surveys. Hofstra University. Internet Research · DOI: 10.1108/10662240510590360 · Source: DBLP p. 198

[97] Minnaar, Lorinda, and Jan Heystek. 2016. ''Online Surveys As Data Collection Instruments in Education Research: A Feasible Option?'' South African Journal of Higher Education 27 (1). https://doi.org/10.20853/27-1-233, p. 163

[98] See Appendix 1.

[99] Participants could choose whether or not to display their identity in the survey.

[100] See Appendix 2.

[101] See Appendix 3.

3.2.2 Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups

In his case study strategy, Robert Yin defines six sources of evidence – documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations and physical artefacts. Besides *documentation*,[102] which I presented above, *interviews* and *participant observations* have been chosen as "sources of evidence" for this thesis.

According to Yin, the strength of qualitative interviews is insightfulness, as it provides an explanation and clearly voices personal views. However, it has limitations in inaccuracies due to poor recall or response bias.[103] The case study usually uses interview types that are rather *fluid* than *rigid*.[104] Sociologist Robert S. Weiss classifies those *fluid* interviews as "intensive", "in-depth", "unstructured interviews."[105]

"A Companion to Qualitative Research"[106] gives detailed guidance on qualitative research methodology. Christoph Hopf, Harry Hermans and Christianne Schmidt present a) *Qualitative Interviews: An Overview*, b) *Interviewing as an Activity* and c) *Analysis of Semi-structured Interviews*, respectively. I have been inspired by Christianne Schmidt's thematic categorisation and coding methods.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann, one conducts "an interview to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena."[107] In contemporary qualitative research, semi-structured interviews appear to be the most widespread approach, as dialogues can allow more discussion on topics chosen by the researcher.[108]

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[102] Yin. 2014. Case study research, p. 106
[103] Ibid.
[104] Hubert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin. 2011. Qualitative Interviewing: The art of hearing data. SAGE Publications. Third edition. https://methods.sagepub.com/book/qualitative-interviewing
[105] Robert S. Weiss. 1994. Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies. Free Press, pp. 207-208
[106] Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff and Ines Steinke (ed.) 2004. A Companion to Qualitative Research. Translated by Bryan Jenner. SAGE Publications pp. 203-214, pp. 253-259
[107] Steinar Kvale, Svend Brinkmann. 2009. InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. SAGE Publications in The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research, ed. Patricia Leavy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 286-287
[108] Svend Brinkmann. 2014. ''Unstructured and Semi-Structured Interviewing,'' in The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research, ed. Patricia Leavy. New York. Oxford University Press, pp. 286

Focus group interview is a widely popular method in qualitative research in education and social sciences.[109] They are "compatible with qualitative research paradigm"[110] and are conducted "by inviting individuals to participate in a forum where their diverse opinions and perspectives are desired."[111] The diverse experiences and responses were my primary interest for this study.

I have chosen a semi-structured style while conducting individual interviews. Both individual interviews, as well as focus groups, were conducted online. The time range of individual and focus group interviews, which were instructed in Georgian, was 30-90 minutes. Multiple interviews have been organised, including:

- Focus group interview with TSC students: 7 participants;[112]
- Focus group interview with TSC teachers, Session 1: 10 Participants;[113]
- Focus group interview with TSC teachers, Session 1: 4 Participants;[114]
- Focus group interview with TSC teachers, Session 1: 8 Participants;[115]
- Individual Interview with the representative of HEI administration/management at TSC;[116]
- Individual Interview with the representative of HEI administration/management at TAFU;[117]
- Individual Interview with the representative of HEI administration/management at Arts Academy;[118]
- Individual Interview with a student from TAFU;[119]
- Individual Interview with a teacher from TAFU[120]

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[109] See, i.e. "Focus Group Interviews in Education and Psychology" By Sharon Vaughn, Jeanne Shay Schumm, Jane M. Sinagub. 1996, SAGE Publications; Karen O'Railly. 2012. Ethnographic Methods.
[110] Ibid, p. 13
[111] Ibid, p. 15
[112] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 4.
[113] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 5.
[114] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 5.
[115] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 5.
[116] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 6.
[117] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 6.
[118] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 6.
[119] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 4.
[120] For Interview Guide and Questions – see Appendix 5.

Participants for the HEI management have been chosen by HEIs themselves as they delegated an interviewee for the research. Participants for focus groups were chosen voluntarily.[121] The first group of teachers included both junior and senior, affiliated, and non-affiliated academic staff and invited teachers who could join the group and participate in the discussion regardless of international experience – participation in Erasmus+ activities. This approach provided lively conversations and openness. The second and third focus groups solely focused on different faculties in order to receive more detailed information about attitudes, changes and impacts and the state of Europeanisation on their specialities. Teachers' second group constituted those with international experience of mobility programme participation from the faculty of composition and musicology, including the former rector of the HMEI, currently the head of Music Technology direction. The third group consisted of the teachers and accompanists from the Performing Arts faculty.

Interviews and focus groups have been transcribed for thematic categorisation. In her suggestions on the analysis of semi-structured interviews, Christianne Schmidt also provides a guide on establishing analytical categorisation. Schmidt provides five stages for analysis: a) formation of analytical categories; b) assembly of categories into the guide for coding; c) coding; d) quantifying surveys of material, and e) case interpretation.[122]

The following sub-section presents *Participant Observation,* and in sub-section 3.2.4, I will discuss the thematic categorisation.

3.2.3 Participant Observation

Participant observation is one of the six sources of evidence for case study research provided by Robert Yin.[123] During participatory observation, a researcher is not just a passive observer. One might even "assume a variety of roles within a fieldwork situation and may participate in the actions being studied," which might include "serving as a staff member in

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[121] As a researcher, I sent an e-mail to corporate university accounts of academic staff and students at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, to which both staff and academic staff could reply and confirm their participation. In total, 22 teachers and 7 participated in the focus group interviews. Even though student participation in focus groups was low, a large number of filled-in surveys (119 individual responses) compensated for the lack of involvement.
[122] Christine Schmidt The Analysis of Semi Structured Interviews in Uwe Flick, Ernst von Kardorff and Ines Steinke (ed.). 2004. A Companion to Qualitative Research. Translated by Bryan Jenner. SAGE Publications pp. 203-2014, pp. 253-259
[123] Yin. 2014. Case Study Research, p.106

an organisational setting" and "being a key decision maker in an organisational setting."[124] According to Karen O'Raelly, who has extensively worked on ethnographic methodology, participant observation is *time-consuming*, and she gives a distinction between *insider* and *outsider* observers.[125] As the researcher, I have been *an insider* at TSC – I was already familiar with the surroundings and circumstances, so the time for customisation was saved.

Participatory observation at Tbilisi State Conservatoire – the unit of observation for my holistic type of single case study was conducted during my visits to Georgia in March and April 2023. I have spent 12 days participating in everyday administration and educational and cultural processes at TSC and could interact with many students and staff. I also participated in the discussion about the Europeanisation of Georgian HME[126] and besides students, had an opportunity to meet both middle level as well as the top management team of the institution. The notes have been made both during and mostly after observations.

3.2.4 Thematic Categorisation

All collected data, such as data from primary sources: from interviews, surveys, and participatory observation, as well as documentation and statistics, have been analysed through analytical/thematic categorisation based on theoretical propositions.

Robert K. Yin suggests four general strategies for analysing the collected data for the case study, one of which is "Relying on Theoretical Propositions."[127] This strategy assumes that the theoretical framework should guide the case study analyses. Yin states that as the original objectives and design of the case study should have been adjusted with the theoretical framework, it is likely to base the analysis on theoretical prepositions.[128] Accordingly, my interview and focus group questions and the structure of the analytical discussions are based on the Three Pillars of Institutional Theory developed by W. Richard Scott. In this thesis, a theory is a central guiding element for interpreting the collected data. That is why the

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[124] Ibid, p. 115

[125] Karen O'Reilly. 2012. Ethnographic Methods. Oxfordshire, England; New York, New York: Routledge, 2005 Second Edition. ISBN: 9780203864722 pp. 92-94

[126] An event regarding the Europeanisation of the Georgian HME was organised at the TSC Recital Hall on 28 March 2023. Participants discussed the state of internationalisation, and the top management team presented their view for future development.

[127] Yin. 2014. Case Study Design, pp. 133-136

[128] Ibid, p. 136

categories have been developed through regulative and normative/cultural-cognitive pillars when discussing challenges and opportunities brought by EU-funded programmes.

Robert Yin also provides analytic techniques for analysing the collected data in case study research.[129] He proposes different *logic models* as techniques, one of which is the *firm- or organisational-level logic model*. This type of logic model "traces events taking place in a single organisation"[130], in this thesis at Tbilisi State Conservatoire. This analytical technique is taken as complementary to thematical categorisation based on the theoretical framework and analyses the changes, perceptions and attitudes through the responses and voices at the HMEI.

The following section discusses validity and reliability; this is the final section before the central chapters of this thesis.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

Before moving on further with the research findings and analytical discussions, I must address my researcher role. I completed my first cycle of studies (BA in Performance Studies, Piano) at Tbilisi State Conservatoire and then worked at the international office. Therefore, my background and preemptive assumptions might be the influential factor when it comes to the interpretation of the results. To meet the "criteria in order to reflect the data accurately," which is the prerequisite for the validity of the research,[131] I have chosen several complementary methods and relied heavily on the theoretical framework when addressing the case. Therefore, I addressed the possible concerns by diversifying the sources, as well as data collection methods. In addition to that, besides TSC, I have collected data from other universities to draw more comprehensive and complete conclusions.

The surveys and questionnaires are sent to persons that bring diverse data to the research. The interviews are conducted with those who hold various academic or administrative positions at those institutions. Interviewees vary by gender, age, and experience. However, the voluntary nature of participation in the interviews and focus groups might still have

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[129] Ibid, pp. 143-170
[130] Ibid, p. 159
[131] Helen Noble and Joanna Smith. 2015. Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research, Evid Based Nurs 18 no. 2. https://ebn.bmj.com/content/18/2/34. P. 34 Accessed on 25 March 2023

diminished the representativeness of the study, as it might have been dominated by active and loud voices and less representative of sceptical responses.

Methodologists and higher education scholars Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon Guba have extensively written about trustworthiness in research.[132] According to them, credibility – which Andrew K. Shenton refers to as the validity of qualitative research, is "one of the most important factors for establishing trustworthiness."[133]

Reliability in research is understood as "consistency, stability, and repeatability" in order to produce credible findings[134]. In holistic single-case studies, the challenge is to address the possibility of *inference*. The term is explained in *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* by Gary King et al. as "the process of using facts we know to learn something about facts we do not know."[135]. Luijten-Lub, in her dissertation, suggests that "as many as possible observations" should be done to avoid the risk of an "indeterminate" research design.[136] Once again, this confirms the relevance of choosing multiple complementary research methods for conducting the case study.

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[132] See Yvonna S. Lincoln, Egon G. Guba (1994) Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 105–117). Sage Publications, Inc.

[133] Andrew K. Shenton. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. Education for Information Journal 22, p. 64

[134] H.I.L. Brink. 1993. Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research. Curationis 16, no. 2. https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/curationis.v16i2.1396 p. 35

[135] "...It turns out that the precise rule is that one fact cannot give independent information about more than one other fact. More generally, each observation can help us make one inference at most"
Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p. 119 in Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices of Internationalisation, p. 72

[136] Ibid.

4. Background and Thematic Overview

4.1 EU Presence in Georgian Higher Education

Georgia applied for membership in the European Union after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.[137] The Commission's Opinion published on 16 June 2022 approves the European perspective for Georgia and asks the Council to grant the EU membership candidacy status to the country once the 12 priorities in the Opinion are addressed.[138] The European aspirations are also embodied in the Georgian constitution as its Article 78 states that "the constitutional bodies, within the scope of their powers, must take all measures to ensure the complete integration of Georgia in the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization," this article refers to Georgia's integration in the "European and Euro-Atlantic structures".[139]

Despite the recent democratic backsliding,[140] Georgia and the EU and Georgia have enjoyed close relations throughout the years: Georgia is part of the Eastern Partnership, an initiative that groups six countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood;[141] The country signed the Association Agreement with the EU, that has been in force since 2016.[142] Article 358 of the Association Agreement states that "the Parties shall cooperate in education and training to intensify cooperation and dialogue, including dialogue on policy issues, seeking approximation to relevant EU policies and practices. The Parties shall cooperate to promote lifelong learning, encourage cooperation and transparency at all levels of education and training, with a special focus on higher education."[143] Georgian citizens have benefited from

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[137] EEAS. Georgia-EU Relations. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia_en#eu--georgia-relations Accessed on 20 April 2023

[138] EU Commission. 2022. EU Commission Opinions on Membership Applications. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3790

[139] Georgian Constitution. 1995. Article 78. https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/view/30346?publication=36 Accessed on 20 April 2023

[140] See: Korneli Kakachia and Bidzina Lebanidze (2023). Georgia's Slide to Authoritarianism https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/89260 Accessed on 20 April 2023;
Gia Nodia. 2022. Taking the Road Away from Europe - How Far Could Georgia Go (and Can it be Reversed)?
Publisher: CEPS.EU https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/CEPS-Explainer-2022-02_Taking-the-road-away-from-Europe-how-far-could-Georgia-go-.pdf

[141] EEAS. Eastern Partnership. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eastern-partnership_en Accessed on 20 April 2023

[142] See full text: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830(02)

[143] Official Journal of the European Union. 2014. ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT between the European Union, the European Atomic Energy Community, their Member States, and Georgia. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22014A0830(02) L 261/122 Chapter 16. Article 358.

visa-free travel to the EU since 2017.[144] To enhance relations and fulfil the EU aspirations, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova formed the Association Trio format, a tripartite configuration for cross-country regional cooperation in 2021.[145]

Regarding education and research, Georgia has been involved in programs funded by the European Union in the field of higher education since 1995. The country has been a member of the European Higher Education Area since 2005[146] and has also ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention.[147] The EU Commission analytical reports on Georgia's alignment with the EU acquis state that "Georgia has already made significant advancement on the key commitments of the European Higher Education Area. This is a useful basis for full engagement in EU higher education policy and transnational cooperation."[148]

In the higher education sector, according to the "Recommendations – Higher Education and Research Internationalisation in Georgia 2030" produced by the Erasmus+ National Centre in 2021, the concept of internationalisation is understood as "attracting international students and staff, joint projects/activities with international partners, involvement in international programmes, support of the implementation of joint MA and PhD programs and joint supervision practices by international and local professors."[149] In Chapter 5, among other discussions, I explore how the internationalisation of Georgia's higher music education can be compared with Europeanisation, how financial contribution dominance of the EU fosters Europeanisation of higher education in addition to the context of the *Return to Europe.*

Furthermore, the current European Commission, led by Ursula von der Leyen, defined its priorities, and the President herself presented New European Bauhaus - as an initiative that

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[144] Statement by Commissioner Avramopoulos on the Council adoption of visa liberalisation for Georgia (2017) https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_17_363 Accessed on 20 April 2023.

[145] EURACTIV Special Report. 2021. The Association Trio in Action. https://en.euractiv.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/special-report/The-Associated-Trio-in-action-Special-Report-1.pdf

[146] Bologna process – Country Profile, Georgia: https://ehea.info/page-georgia Accessed on 20 April 2023

[147] More about the convention on the website of the Council of Europe: https://www.coe.int/en/web/higher-education-and-research/lisbon-recognition-convention

[148] EU Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (2023). Commission Analytical report on Georgia's alignment with the EU acquis. https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/commission-analytical-report-georgias-alignment-eu-acquis_en Accessed on 20 April 2023

[149] Erasmus+ National Centre Georgia. 2021. ''Recommendations – Higher Education and Research Internationalisation in Georgia 2030'' http://erasmusplus.org.ge/files/publications/Research%20Projects/ENG/Recommendations%20on%20Higher%20education%20and%20research%20internationalization.pdf p. 10

Since the beginning of 2022, National Erasmus+ Office in Georgia is not been fully operating as the permanent head and staff of the office are not appointed. Therefore, the latest documentation dates from Georgian NEO date 2021

"has led to an explosion of creativity across the Union,"[150] thus making inclusion, culture, creativity, and innovation – as well as dialogue and interdisciplinarity focus of the near future. European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT), a body of the EU, drew attention to Cultural and Creative sectors and industries, establishing the 9th KIC for Culture & Creativity in 2022.[151]

These developments, as well as the enhanced activities of the Creative Europe Culture Strand, drive changes on a national level too. The Culture Strategy 2025, developed by the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia in 2016, sets the internationalisation of culture as one of its strategic goals. The objective states that the "internationalisation of the cultural sector helps the development of culture increases the nation's export capacity, and empowers its image."[152] Its tasks include "Ensur(ing) that legislation of the cultural sector is harmonised with ratified international norms and its convergence with the EU laws" and "help(ing) creative industries in creating co-funding opportunities and developing co-production through international programmes, such as Creative Europe, Eurimage, the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme, Creative Cities Network - UNESCO, etc."[153] – Notably, mostly EU-funded programmes. The following objective is declared in the 2022-2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia: "The government will promote the internationalisation of all levels of education, as well as scientific research and innovation"[154] and assesses that the "Erasmus+ program has achieved positive results in higher education" in Georgia.[155]

4.2 Tbilisi State Conservatoire: A Brief Outline

Tbilisi State Conservatoire (TSC) is the first HEI in the Caucasus region (founded in 1917[156]) and the only centre of higher music education and research in Georgia. Tbilisi State

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[150] Ursula von der Leyen. 2020. A New European Bauhaus: Op-ed Article.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/AC_20_1916 Accessed on 20 April 2023
[151] More about KIC Culture and Creativity: https://eit.europa.eu/eit-community/eit-culture-creativity
[152] Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia (2016). Culture Strategy Georgia 2025.
https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/qpr/final-culture-strategy-2025-eng.pdf p. 22
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. 2022. 2022-2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=7755&lang=eng p. 33
[155] Ibid.
[156] "It was Alioz Mizandari, the first Georgian piano virtuoso to achieve international recognition, who, together with Kharlamp Savaneli, a prominent Georgian conductor, founded the first music school in 1874, which was turned into a higher education institution in 1886 and that later became Tbilisi State Conservatoire in 1917"
Gvantsa Ghvinjilia. 2021. "The 19th Century Musical Life in Georgia and Russian Tsarist Policy" in
Aleksandra Pijarowska et al. (eds). Music - The Cultural Bridge: Essence, Contexts, References. The Karol Lipinski Academy of Music in Wroclaw. Wroclaw. 2021 p. 42 ISBN 978–83–65473–23–3

Conservatoire has the leading role in shaping higher music education in Georgia as it accumulates the majority of students pursuing their degree in music performance and education.[157]

TSC prides itself as it attracts a wider audience through international festivals and competitions and the series of concerts exclusively made by the students as well as international and national scientific and cultural events; According to TSC, its "students annually perform in more than 500 events ranging from class concerts, jazz and chamber music as well as student orchestra performances and staged operas."[158] TSC has two faculties: the Faculty of Music Performance and Composition and Musicology. TSC has been a member of AEC – Association of European Conservatoires since 2006 and an associate member of ANMA – Association of Nordic Music Academies since 2021.

The Department of International Relations at TSC is the main office for internationalisation, which was established directly after Georgia's independence was regained in 1991.[159] Since then, the IR Office has shaped the TSC internationalisation policy, establishing and deepening ties with European and international HEIs and other cultural or educational organisations. TSC has focused on international mobility projects and international networks. Since 2015 it started participating in various Erasmus+ projects, especially ICM: a range of international collaborations with the HMEIs across program countries, mobilities of students and staff, research cooperation, and capacity building of the institution.[160] TSC has Erasmus+ partnerships with 3 out of the Top 10 HMEIs in the field of performing arts worldwide,[161] including MDW – The University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Norwegian Academy of Music, and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.[162]

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[157] AEC – Country Institutional Profile: https://aec-music.eu/members/national-overviews/georgia/ Accessed on 20 April 2023

[158] Tbilisi State University. HERD Project. - The very first CBHE project involving Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Institutional Profile: https://herd.tsu.ge/ka/page/30 Accessed on 20 April 2023

[159] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. International Department Overview: https://tsc.edu.ge/en/international-dep-en/

[160] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. International Partners: https://tsc.edu.ge/en/partners/

[161] QS Ratings in Performing Arts: https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2023/performing-arts

[162] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. International Partners: https://tsc.edu.ge/en/partners/

5. Analysis and Discussion

This chapter will start with a statistical overview of the current state of internationalisation at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, considering international partner institutions, memberships in specialised umbrella organisations, Erasmus+ ICM and other EU-funded projects, non-EU funded international projects, numbers of student mobilities. The overview will create a basis of knowledge for the following analysis of collected data in resemblance with the institutional pillars – the theoretical framework of this thesis:

- The regulative pillar corresponds to the rules and regulations, existing criteria, and practise for the involvement in international projects and activities.

- The normative pillar corresponds to organisational knowledge, norms, attitudes and traditions.

- The cultural-cognitive pillar corresponds to the impact of the projects on the mindset and organisational culture of the institution.

5.1 Statistical Overview

This section overviews the data provided by the Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Due to insufficient access to data from the TSC website or other relevant sources, I also rely on provided data from the HMEI through filled-in surveys and e-mail exchanges.

Funding in education and educational activities increased sufficiently after 2015 via opening the Erasmus+ for non-programme countries.[163] The EU funded projects, not only the ICM but also CBHE[164] and before that, the TEMPUS[165] projects have contributed to the development of the educational sector. Georgian HEIs have participated in 37 CBHE projects, according to NEO Georgia, during 2014-2021 and before that, participated in 77 TEMPUS projects during 1995-2013.[166]

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[163] Erasmus+ for higher education in Georgia. 2019. Factsheet. https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/factsheets/neighbourhood/georgia_erasmusplus_2019.pdf
[164] CBHE – Capacity Building in Higher Education: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-2/capacity-building-higher-education
[165] TEMPUS Programme: http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/a9d0aebd-d66e-40d6-a63c-9476fc30e984.0002.02/DOC_2
[166] NEO Georgia. 2021. CBHE Impact Study Georgia. http://erasmusplus.org.ge/en/publications p. 6

Today, Tbilisi State Conservatoire has a wide range of international partner HMEIs considering its total number of students. The main partners remain institutions with ties with TSC even before ICM implementation. The launch of ICM in 2015 has strengthened and made it easier to foster continued cooperation with those European HMEIs.[167] The work that was done before the Erasmus+ opened to the third countries benefited TSC in establishing KA107 projects[168] already when the first call of ICM opened. According to a teacher, who is also one of the top decision-makers at TSC, "the school had started preparing for the mobilities even before the Erasmus+ started thinking of making it possible for countries like Georgia."[169]

Currently, there are 39 active partnerships in place, those partnerships cover 16 out of 33 Erasmus+ programmes or associated countries, and in addition, five countries where partnership agreements either expired and need to be renewed or signing of the agreement is in progress. That makes up 63.3% of the programme/associated countries. Other institutions that TSC has bilateral partnerships with include those from Azerbaijan, Canada, Israel, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Switzerland, Ukraine, the UK, the US and Uzbekistan.

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[167] There are 23 active ICM projects in 2023 and only one active other EU-funded project involving TSC. There have been around 15-20 active ICM projects yearly since 2015, while only 1 CBHE project has been completed as a partner. TSC Erasmus Partners: https://tsc.edu.ge/geo-erasmus/

[168] KA107: Key Action 107 International Credit Mobility – projects financed via external budget between the Erasmus+ programme and Partner Countries. Since 2022 KA171 has been the equivalent of KA107.
See ICM Handbood 2022: https://www.utbyten.se/program/erasmus-international-credit-mobility/for-beviljade-projekt/for-beviljade-projekt-2021-2027/dokument-for-projekt-beviljade-2022/

[169] Participant 1. Focus group interview. TSC. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023
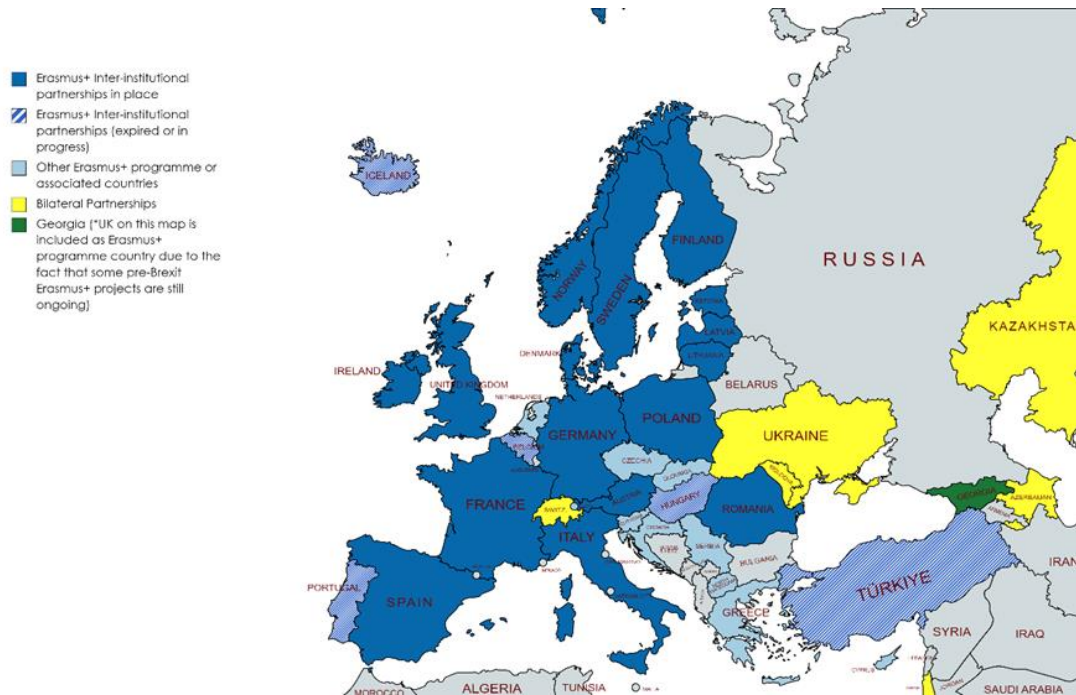
Figure 3. Erasmus+ Institutional Partnerships – TSC

Because of the lack of resources and bilateral programmes, except with Israel, no physical mobility or physical exchanges have been so far realised from any of the HMEIs from non-Erasmus+ programme/associated countries. "TSC is focused solely on the Western institutions and this is only a good sign in this geopolitical situation."[170]

For exploring the internationalisation progress in the statistical overview, the model developed by Jane Knight has been considered.[171] Knight suggests Institutional-level program strategies for internationalisation, which Luijten-Lub displayed in her work.[172] These activities complement each other and constitute parts of holistic wholeness.

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[170] Participant 2. Teacher. Focus group interview. TSC. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023
[171] Jane Knight is affiliated with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and has worked extensively in higher education and internationalisation. See: https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/lhae/higher-education-program/faculty Accessed 24 March 2023
[172] Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices in Internationalisation, p.90

| Programme activities	Examples
Academic programmes	Student exchange programmes
	Foreign language study
	Internationalised curricula
	Area or thematic studies
	Work/study abroad
	International students
	Teaching/Learning process
	Joint/double degree programmes
	Cross-cultural training
	Faculty/staff mobility programmes
	Visiting lecturers and scholars
	Links between academic programmes and other strategies
Research and scholarly collaboration	Area and theme centres
	Joint research projects and publications
	International conferences and seminars
	International research agreements
	Research exchange programmes
	International research partners in academic or other sectors
Domestic and cross-border activities	*Domestic*
	Community-based partnerships with NGOs or public/private sector groups
	Community service and intercultural project work
	Customised education and training programmes for international partners and clients
	Cross-border
	International development assistance projects
	Cross-border delivery of education programmes (commercial and non-commercial)
	International linkages, partnerships and networks
	Contract-based training and research programmes and services
	Alumni abroad programmes
	Student clubs and associations

Figure 4. J. Knight. Institutional-level program strategies for internationalisation

Even though TSC is the major organisation in the context of the HME sector in Georgia, the institution itself is small compared to the multi-profile HEIs; hence the expectation that TSC is engaged in all activities Knight develops is not high. However, the significance of international activities vis-à-vis the size of the Conservatoire is evident.

A big part of the programme activities, classified by Jane Knight, constitute academic programmes, namely, student exchange programmes, faculty staff mobility programmes, and visiting lecturers and scholars at TSC. According to the annexe Logical Framework to the Strategic Development Plan of TSC approved by the Academic Council of the institution in 2023, 30% of TSC students have participated in student short- and/or long-term mobilities, and 25% of staff have participated in short-term exchanges. The goal for 2025 is 35%, and

for 2030 — 50%.[173] For comparison, the goal of involvement in international mobilities for the Norwegian Academy of Music is 50% for 2025,[174] which makes TSC also close to the threshold that prominent European academy has.[175] Considering that Norway is the associate country of the Erasmus+ programme, the TSC goal of 50% by 2030 can be considered ambitious. "Small institutions can be ambitious, we can be more flexible and that should be taken as an advantage,"[176] said one TSC representative in the interview.

Below is the chart of ICM projects involving Georgian HEIs in the field of Music and performing arts field. Notably, only TSC participates in all those projects from Georgia, which strengthens the motives behind selecting a single case study strategy. The list of projects is geographically diverse, and those partner HMEIs are mostly prestigious in their respective countries.[177] The detailed list of Erasmus+ projects, indicating the names of partner HMEIs, can be seen in Appendix 7.
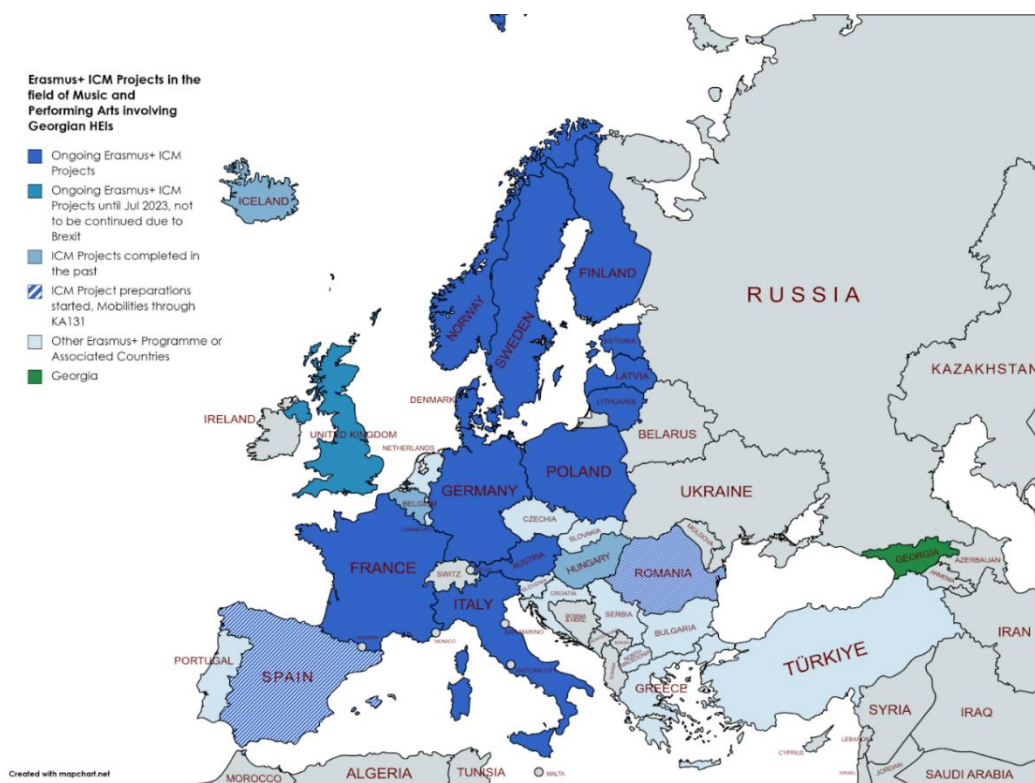
[173] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Strategic Development Plan. https://tsc.edu.ge/misia/ (In Georgian only) Accessed on 20 April 2023

[174] Norwegian Academy of Music. International Activity 2018-2025. Goals and Ambitions. https://nmh.no/en/about/international Accessed on 20 April 2023

[175] According to QS Ratings, the Norwegian Academy of Music is on TOP10 of HEIs in Performing Arts education. https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2023/performing-arts

[176] Participant 3. Teacher TSC. Focus group interview. TSC. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023

[177] Many partner institutions from QS TOP50 ratings: https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/university-subject-rankings/2023/performing-arts
TSC Institutional partners: https://tsc.edu.ge/en/partners/

Figure 5. Erasmus+ ICM Projects in the Field of Music and Performing Arts involving Georgian HEIs

The number of international students at TSC, in contrast with the outgoing student mobilities, is relatively low. There is just one incoming Erasmus+ mobility student compared to every six outgoing Erasmus+ mobility students.[178] The percentage of regular international students is just 1%.[179]

Figure 6 shows the mobilities of administrative and academic staff from TSC to Erasmus+ programme countries, which shows a significant increase in the last two years.[180]

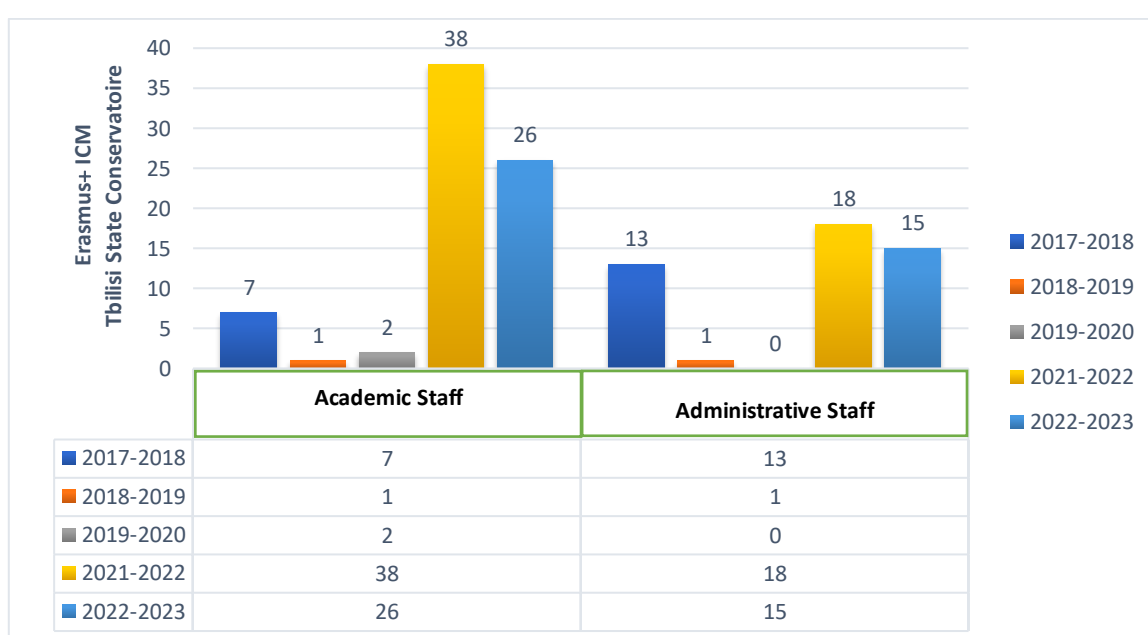|	Academic Staff	Administrative Staff
2017-2018	7	13
2018-2019	1	1
2019-2020	2	0
2021-2022	38	18
2022-2023	26	15

Figure 6. Erasmus+ ICM Staff teaching and training mobilities. TSC 2017-2023

To summarise the chapter, TSC has a broad range of international partners from most of the Erasmus+ programme countries. The trend is that the number of outgoing mobilities is increasing, while the challenge remains to attract international students to study at TSC.

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[178] Statistics from TSC International Office: Active Inter-institutional agreements: 39; Ongoing Erasmus+ ICM projects: 23; Erasmus+ student mobility. 2022: 30% of the total number; Erasmus+ staff mobility. 2022: 27% of the total number of staff.
2021-2022: 56 TSC staff to Erasmus+ programme countries; Spring 2023: 41 Erasmus+ programme country staff to TSC; Spring 2023: 28 TSC staff to Erasmus+ programme countries; 2022-2023: 43 TSC student to Erasmus+ programme countries.

[179] Those are the student who are students who pay full tuition fees for foreign nationals. Those with dual citizenship are not included in the percentage. During interviews, there were cases when Georgian students with ethnic minority backgrounds were paradoxically regarded as foreign students. This created a discourse for lack of inclusion, although as part of this thesis, the issue has not been addressed deeper.

[180] Statistics from TSC international office. Provided to Author in April 2023.

Considering the size and capacity of the HMEI, the current number of projects and plans can be regarded as ambitious.

The following section will closely explore the analysis of the empirical data obtained via various methods presented earlier in the methodology chapter. The analysis is applied to thematic categories developed within the framework of three institutional pillars: regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars. In the context of higher education, normative and cultural-cognitive pillars are interconnected[181] and/or it is complex to distinguish them from each other by a clear line. Therefore, the analysis concerning the institutional pillars has been divided into two rather than three parts. William Richard Scott acknowledges that the distinction between the pillars, as analytical elements, is not always "strict" and "inter-pillar communication is possible."[182]

5.2 Responses Connected to Institutional Pillars: Regulative

The following sections consider the voices from 3 groups: students, academic staff, and top management/administration. The responses have been collaborated and analysed through the perspective of the *Three Pillars.* As said, the regulative pillar focuses on rules, regulations, laws, policy papers and other official documentation. In the context of the Europeanisation of Higher Education, the institutions' responses are exposed to two interconnected processes – national and supra-national, in this case, EU-level stimuli and policy directions.

The international impact of the rules and regulations has two critical dates that need to be considered. Those are a) the Bologna process – and the Bologna declaration, which Georgia signed in 2004 and joined in 2005,[183] and b) Erasmus+ opening to the wider world in 2015.[184]

National policies, rules and regulations have been consequential when adopting the institutional strategic development plan at TSC. Georgia's Culture Strategy 2025, as well as

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[181] Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices in Internationalisation, p. 52

[182] W. Richard Scott. 2001. Institutions and organisations (2nd [thoroughly rev. and expanded] ed. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications, pp. 69-70 In Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices in Internationalisation, p. 52

[183] European Higher Education Area. Country profile. Georgia https://ehea.info/page-georgia Accessed 20 April 2023

[184] The central quality assurance body NCEQE became part of ENQA in 2021. The National Quality Assurance body is a member of a pan-European body, which makes Georgian higher education more exposed to European standards and priorities. According to NCEQE – ''The external quality assurance mechanisms, procedures and standards implemented in Georgia comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).''
https://eqe.ge/en/page/parent/581/umaghlesi-ganatlebis-khariskhis-uzrunvelqofa

the Higher Education Strategy 2022-2030, have been the critical policy documents that influenced the development plan of TSC, which was developed in 2023 and is based on the 2018-2023 Strategic Development Plan.[185]

TSC has been a member of the AEC – European Association of Conservatoires since 2006 which boosted the institution's international involvement in different activities. The International Accreditation Body MusiQuE is the music-specialised accreditation body which was first established by the AEC in 2014, although later separated from it and nowadays positions as an independent and reliable structure for obtaining international accreditation of the music-focused programmes.[186] According to the TSC Strategic Development Plan, 30% of the programmes should be accredited internationally by MusiQuE by 2025, and 85% should receive international MusiQuE accreditation by 2030. MusiQuE accreditation's importance was evident during administration and academic staff interviews. "Quality in achieving academic excellence has always been a central value in higher education."[187]

TSC administration member explained that MusiQuE accreditation will contribute to "raising awareness about TSC and fostering the initiatives and development of joint educational programs with international universities; It will help attract international students, strengthening the institution's sustainability and raising its international status. International accreditation will increase international cooperation, extend the international network, and bring new opportunities and additional resources."[188] TSC strives for "extending international network" and "sustainability,"[189] however, this comes with its challenges, which will be addressed in section 5.3.

Below is the discussion that focuses on what is being done through ICM projects and mobilities for studies, training or teaching. Those activities can be considered part of the university's Europeanisation through the internationalisation strategies with funding from

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[185] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Strategic Development Plan. https://tsc.edu.ge/misia/ (In Georgian only) Accessed on 20 April 2023

[186] MusiQuE. Organisational Structure: https://musique-qe.eu/about-musique/organisation-structure/partner-organisations/aec/ Accessed on 20 April 2023

[187] Schwarz, S., Westerheijden, D.F. 2004. Accreditation in the Framework of Evaluation Activities: A Comparative Study in the European Higher Education Area p.4 In Schwarz, S., Westerheijden, D.F. (eds) Accreditation and Evaluation in the European Higher Education Area. Higher Education Dynamics, vol 5. Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-2797-0_1

[188] Staff member. TSC Administration. Interviewed by Author. Recording. Online Interview. 10 March 2023.

[189] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Strategic Development Plan. https://tsc.edu.ge/misia/ (In Georgian only) p. 16 Accessed on 20 April 2023

Erasmus+ projects. I will explore five regulative pillar strategies that TSC uses to respond to the opportunities created by the EU programmes. Those are:

- "Critical Friends";
- Working groups;
- Programme and study environment development;
- AEC events and cultural activities abroad;
- Orchestra projects.

TSC *Critical Friends* is a format developed at TSC with consultations from the Sibelius Academy, University of Arts Helsinki. *Critical Friends* format is a tool for TSC to evaluate its study programmes and the environment through its international *friends,* who write a report with suggestions for further development at the end of the evaluation. Two rounds of *critical* external evaluation by the Sibelius Academy administrative and academic staff have already been concluded, one in 2019 and another in 2022.[190] The first round of evaluation was conducted in person at TSC and online, where Sibelius Academy experts organised several rounds of interviews and focus groups. Their reports allow TSC to evaluate its study environment and alignment with European standards without spending internal financial resources. The work by critical friends – international experts is done through European funding. The relations between Sibelius Academy and TSC is of goes back to 2008.[191] Sibelius Academy experts are also expected to participate in the preparation activities for the MusiQuE accreditation, which according to the teacher-interviewee, "will give TSC additional benefit for the international recognition."[192] The biggest ICM project between TSC and Erasmus+ programme countries is implemented with the Sibelius Academy and has a budget of 260,000 EUR, which amounts to 48 mobilities of individuals.[193]

Since Nana Sharikadze took over her position as rector of TSC in late 2019, many institutional changes have occurred at TSC. These include the introduction of *Working Groups,* which gave a place to the discussions at TSC by involving many students – including those with international experience participating in Erasmus+ programmes. Working groups devised concrete recommendations that the administration considered in

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[190] "Critical Friends" Report obtained from TSC. 2022.

[191] Tbilisi State Conservatoire. International Partners: https://tsc.edu.ge/international-partners/ Accessed on 20 April 2023

[192] Focus group 2. Interviewed by Author. Recording. Online Interview. 11 March 2023.

[193] For project details, see Appendix 7.

their decision-making process. Recommendations covered topics like modernising the scholarship-award system, modernising faculties and directions, curricula, rebranding of TSC, modernising orchestra projects, etc. Roughly every second student and every third teacher involved in various working groups had some type of international experience in participating in EU-funded projects. One of the students, a member of the working group at the faculty of the Performing Arts, stated that "those working groups strengthened their sense of belonging. However, because of the disproportional disposition of the students and teachers, the students' voices sometimes were not fully heard. Generally, more involvement is a sign of inclusion, a positive development."[194] The working groups can be considered an example of how EU-funded projects indirectly influence bringing new ideas to the decision-making body through students and staff participating in those programmes and contributing to the institution's development.

Europeanisation of *curricula and study programmes* was desired by students and staff who have real-life European experiences funded by the EU programmes. Some examples are the introduction of studio classes, performance coaching and body mapping courses, as well as the revision of the music theory course.[195] The introduction of these courses is one of the results of ICM; curricula were adopted from Scandinavian institutions and discussed with Finnish and Swedish professionals during the Erasmus+ mobilities. The model for establishing a single music theory course instead of the three separate – music polyphony, music harmony and music analysis courses was taken from the Lithuanian Music and Theatre Academy – symbolically and strategically, as the baltic states are good examples for Georgia in the transition period.[196] A teacher at TSC in the focus group stated that even though the change was not easy to implement, the "results indeed trumped the efforts."[197]

Many scholars have addressed *internationalisation at Home* since its introduction in 2001 by Crowther and others.[198] It usually refers to the internationalisation of curriculums, teaching and learning processes,[199] as well as attracting foreign students, who bring their

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194 Student 1. TSC. Focus group interview. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023

195 Studio classes are a well-established phenomenon both in Europe and in the US. Studio classes are forums or seminars for performers, where students play for each other, giving them analytical abilities to assess each others' performances. Body mapping course concern both the physical and mental health of the musicians. Performance coaching gives students self-management and independent decision-making skills, tackling and discussing contemporary challenges and opportunities for musicians.

196 The transition from Soviet to European education models.

197 Participant 4. TSC teacher. Focus group interview. TSC. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023

198 See: Beelen, J., Jones, E. 2015. Redefining Internationalisation at Home. In: Curaj, A., Matei, L., Pricopie, R., Salmi, J., Scott, P. (eds) The European Higher Education Area. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20877-0_5

199 Ibid, p. 55

culture and diversity, which gives locals different international experiences at their home university. This is defined by Beelen and Jones, who have worked on higher education topics extensively as *campus internationalisation*.[200] Because TSC has only a few regular international students, the impact of those students on organisational structure is relatively low. *Internationalisation at Home*, however, is reached by the increased number of international activities within the university premises. TSC teacher from Performing Arts faculty, in the discussion during participatory observation mentioned that "even though there are not many international students, it feels like always something is going on, probably the reason is the big social media coverage of international concerts and other activities."[201] An example can be the hosting of international panel series about "Freedom in Music Education"[202] and introducing the EDI[203] the working group aims to bring the study environment closer to European conservatoires and music academies that aim to make their institutions more equitable, diverse, and inclusive. In 2022 6 staff members of TSC did their Erasmus+ mobilities at the University of Limerick, where they were introduced to the EDI work that their Irish counterpart was doing.

ICM projects have been catalysts for TSC's involvement in international events. TSC rectors and IRCs have been actively attending the activities of the AEC.[204] Erasmus+ ICM projects with the institutions in the AEC event host country have been covering participation and other expenses for TSC staff. Considering the low budget and lack of financial resources – the ICM projects have provided stability regarding the continual mobility of students and staff and increased their professional skills or career path via networking possibilities. It has been ICM projects that involved TSC in global events and festivals, such as the GLOMUS network,[205] of which TSC has been part since 2015 and then a host of GLOMUS CAMP in 2019.[206] The ICM participation and collaborations with the Nordic and Baltic countries brought associate membership to the Association of Nordic Music Academies in 2021.[207] TSC students have done traineeships for the organisation of Siena Jazz Workshops during

[200] Ibid, 63.

[201] Social media coverage, mostly Facebook web-page is considered as the main source of information together with emails at TSC. Participant observation by author. March 2023.

[202] a 6-event series with participants from ten countries, which I organised together with the international office at TSC as well as the Malmö Academy of Music. See: https://www.mhm.lu.se/artikel/interpreting-freedom-music-education

[203] EDI – Equality/Equity, Diversity, Inclusion

[204] The AEC Annual Congress and International Relation Coordinators Annual Meetings have been a place for networking and developing new project ideas for TSC, which provided many new partners to the institution.

[205] GLOMUS Network partner institutions: https://www.glomus.net/partner-institutions

[206] GLOMUS Camps: Georgia 2019 https://www.glomus.net/glomus-camps

[207] TSC. Tbilisi Conservatoire became an associate member of ANMA. https://tsc.edu.ge/en/tbilisi-conservatoire-became-an-associate-member-of-anma/

2021 and 2022 and have participated in opera productions, concerts, festivals and other cultural activities throughout Europe.

TSC has modified the orchestra project model from a semester course to a 10-day intensive production. With this model, it is possible to invite international conductors with Erasmus+ funding to lead the student orchestra during project weeks.[208] TSC administration representative who has worked on the programme modification process stated during a discussion with me that "some changes were not taken as a progressive step, rather radical move because of the fast speed of new developments and a possible lack of transparency and communication, although changes in orchestra projects were broadly welcomed."[209]

To conclude this section, significant changes can be explained with the regulative pillar of institutional theory: the Bologna process and Erasmus+ opened broader possibilities, and ICM projects contributed not only to the mobilities of individuals but also to institutional development. Five types of activities ("Critical Friends"; Working groups; Programme and study environment development; AEC events and Cultural Activities abroad; Orchestra projects) have been discussed and analysed. These developments show that with the EU funding and indirect or direct influence of EU programmes and projects, TSC has developed in various ways and fostered Europeanisation.

The following section will explore the organisation's responses to the impact and influence of EU-funded projects and present them in terms of the normative and cultural cognitive pillars.

5.3 Responses Connected to Institutional Pillars: Normative & Cultural-Cognitive

"The main institutional elements in these two pillars are (changing) norms, values, and traditions, influenced by internationalisation"[210] and corresponding to this thesis –

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[208] Inviting the Latvian conductor in September 2022 to conduct the TSC Student Orchestra for their first orchestra project and financing the mobility via the ICM project between TSC and Latvian Music Academy makes a case for distributing the EU-funds not only regular mobilities but for the experiences for the all-orchestra instrument students to work with European professionals.

[209] During participatory observation, I had an opportunity to talk to many personnel working at TSC as part of the administrative staff. Valuable conversations were held with the quality assurance office and research department staff.
[210] Luijten-Lub. 2007. Choices in Internationalisation, p. 79

Europeanisation. Accordingly, the identity, traditions, and values were explored by analysing the data collected through surveys, interviews, focus groups and observation.

When it comes to the attitudes to the EU-funded programmes and the Europeanisation path of the HMEI, a pro-European stance of the management is evident. Pro-Ukrainian symbols such as flags on webpages and in the concert halls,[211] , as well as general attitudes in conversations, are somewhat in contrast with the position of the Government of Georgia, which maintains the "unpopular pro-Russia policy."[212] TSC student choir, as well as staff, recorded the Ukrainian Anthem already on 25 February 2022 and published it publicly.[213] During my participatory observation, I asked about the planning of the recording; the staff member from the communications office was especially proud when discussing the process and organisation. TSC also recorded Beethoven's "Ode an die Freude," the European anthem, which was also published on its Facebook page with the title "Europe is our choice, Europe is our home"[214] in the aftermath of the Tbilisi Protests during March 2023.[215] These acts constitute the general attitude of the institution to its European orientation, at least among the interviewed and surveyed students and staff.

Below I will present some answers by TSC students from surveys that are indicators of their perceptions, knowledge, and attitude towards European projects and TSC international activities. I will display some charts for data visualisation.

One hundred nineteen students participated in the surveys. Out of students with no international experience (88 students – Group A), 83% of them (73 students) said that they consider participating in the EU-funded international mobility programmes at some point in their studies, while among those students who filled in the survey (31 students – Group B) and have already done their Erasmus+ studies abroad, 93% would again participate in EU-funded projects if possibility occurs.

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[211] TSC website greeting: Solidarity to Ukraine. See: tsc.edu.ge/en

[212] Arshan Bazrani. 2023. Who is running Georgia? Politico Opinion. https://www.politico.eu/article/who-is-running-georgia-tbilisi-ukraine-russia-war-vladimir-putin-sanctions-georgian-dream/ Accessed on 26 April 2023
This contrast is also visible in the latest IRI polls, in which an "all-time high" 89% of Georgians "fully" or "somewhat" supported the pro-European orientation. See: https://www.iri.org/news/iri-georgia-poll-finds-support-for-eu-accession-high-weariness-of-russian-presence-lack-of-faith-in-political-parties/

[213] TSC student choir joined by TSC academic and administrative staff performing Ukrainian Anthem, 25 February 2022 https://www.facebook.com/TbilisiConservatoire/videos/1370060703443943/ Accessed on 20 April 2022.

[214] https://www.facebook.com/TbilisiConservatoire/videos/3404205999818797/

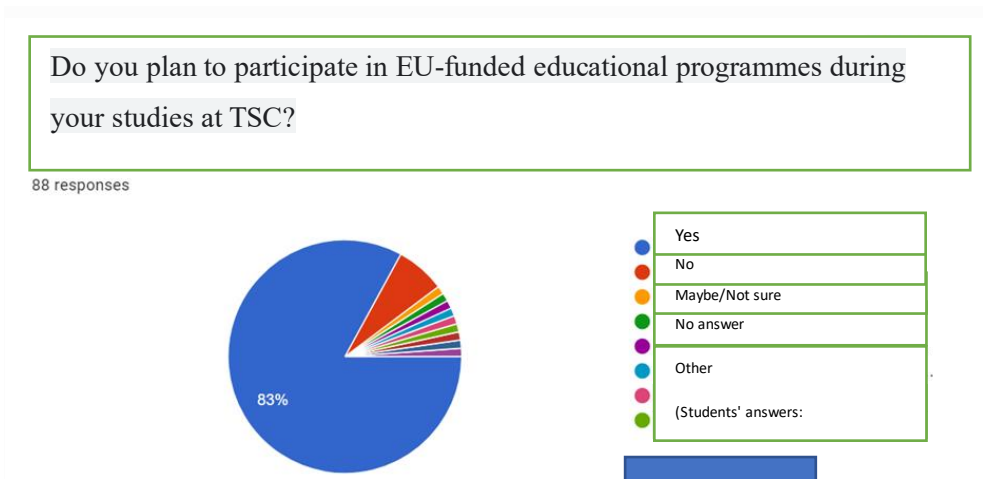[215] More on Tbilisi March Protests: Paul Kirby. 2023. Georgia drops 'foreign agents' law after protests. BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64899041 Accessed on 20 April 2023

Do you plan to participate in EU-funded educational programmes during your studies at TSC?

88 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe/Not sure
- No answer
- Other
- (Students' answers:

83%

Figure 7. Europeanisation Survey: Chart 1

Would you be interested in participating in other Erasmus+

31 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe/Not sure
- Other - Student's Answer
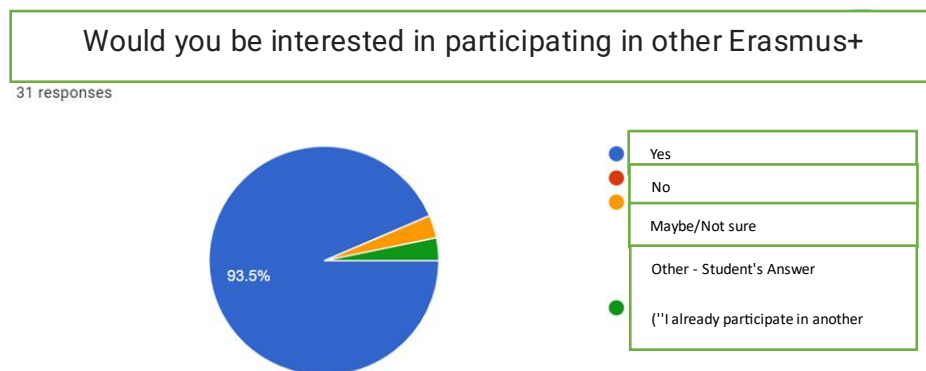- (''I already participate in another

93.5%

Figure 8. Europeanisation Survey: Chart 2

100% of Group B students would suggest to their friends/classmates to participate in EU-funded international activities, and 92% of Group A students would do the same.

Another pattern also emerged from the survey: I asked students to assess the TSC internationalisation efforts and whether it was developing in the *right direction*: 63% of Group A students answered positively, and 28% did not have a position. Only two students (2,3%) stated that the TSC has not progressed in the "right direction."

Among Group B, no student stated that the institution was developing in the wrong direction.
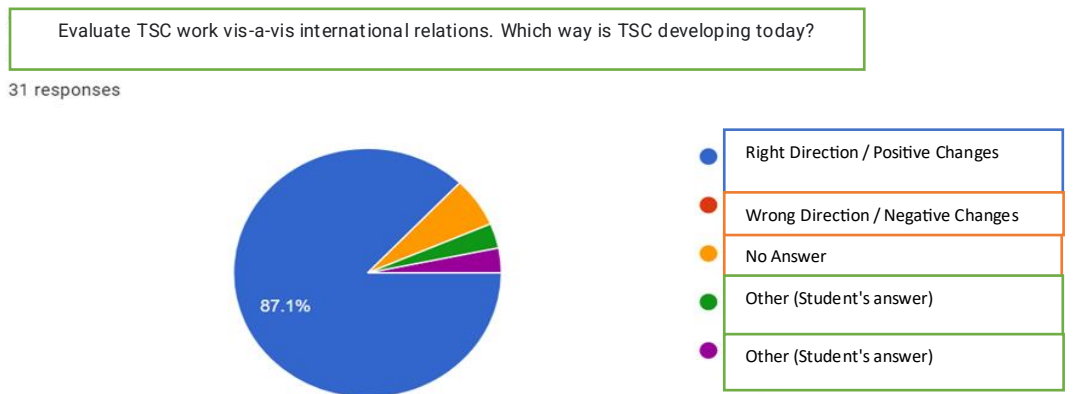
Figure 9. Europeanisation Survey: Chart 3

I also asked students whether their choice would still be European institutions if TSC had more partners and opportunities in other destinations. 88,6 and 96,8% of Group A and B students, respectively, answered "yes."[216]

I asked those students from Group A what they thought would be the negative side of EU-funded mobilities. Forty-four (50%) answered that there would be "no negative side" to their possible international mobilities. Other answers included "the need for additional semester" (23 students) and "recognition of credits" (29 students).

Figure 10. Europeanisation Survey: Chart 4
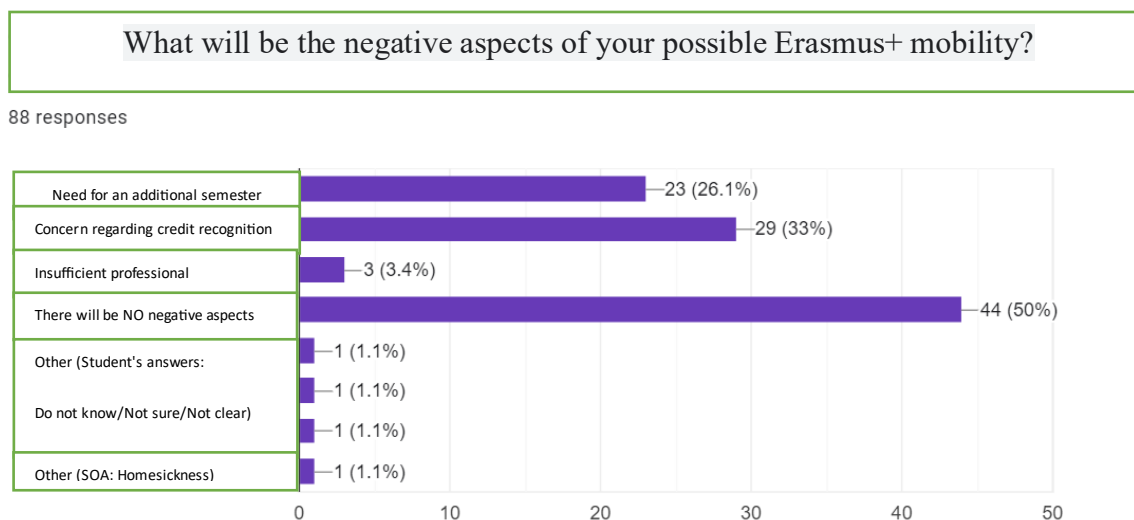
One could ask what the reason behind this positive attitude towards Europeanisation is. The questionnaire was answered voluntarily by those students who wanted to participate. One

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[216] Survey for TSC students with international experience (i.e. Erasmus+ studies). Question 12
Survey for TSC students with no international experience (i.e. Erasmus+ studies). Question 14

can suspect that those would be the students who are most actively involved in the study environment and ecosystem of the institution. Indeed some students are less proactive and less encouraged to participate. However, because of the large number of participants (25,05% of the total student population), one may state that a significant representation characterises the results. As a researcher, I note that the survey cannot be enough to comprehensively understand the research question. Hence it is complementary, which is why multiple methods were used and discussed in terms of institutional pillars developed by Richard Scott.

Regarding attitudes towards Europeanisation, most students and teachers participating in the focus groups and interviews did not even question the rightness of the Europeanisation path. Discussions mostly led to debating the nature of international activities.

Another category drawn from the collected data is associated with the achievements of ICM projects that influence the *traditions* and *values* of the organisation and bring Europeanisation into practice.

According to a prominent Georgian musicologist who also participated in the focus group interview, Georgian music education has "always been Europe-oriented. Georgia was looking for ways to get closer to European space during the whole millennium. Before Russia, there was classical Roman and Greek influence. For example, after the fall of the Soviet Union, many Central Asian countries needed to find their identity. They were choosing multi-vector policies. For Georgia, it was clear which was the natural way forward – the way to the West."[217]

One example of Europeanisation in practice is the examination panel filled with international professionals. TSC has a yearly tradition of inviting European teachers and lecturers to become jury members of final and entrance exams. Those European teachers act as external evaluators and the head of the jury panel for the TSC graduate students – which brings a sense of transparency and equity in the eyes of both students and teachers.[218]

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[217] Representative, HEI expert-musicologist, interview by Author. 2023. *Focus group interview. Recording.* (11 March).

[218] However, some challenges come with this system. Some international teachers are not used to the assessment system that is in place in Georgia, and the evaluation grades are radically different from their Georgian counterparts. However, the move is widely understood as a step forward, especially for students who sometimes complain about the

The cultural-cognitive pillar refers to shared conceptions. W. Richard Scott mentions sets of institutionalists, like Berger, DiMaggio, Goffman, and others. He writes that all those scholars "stress the centrality of cultural-cognitive elements, the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality."[219] I categorised three dimensions to analyse those conceptions: macro, meso and micro. Three-level analyses are widely discussed in social sciences. Portuguese researchers Sandro Serpa and Carlos Miguel Ferreira give profound reflections and discussions.[220] Eddie Hartman from Potsdam University suggests the divisions between "macro level perspectives on society and culture, the meso level of organisations and groups, and the micro level of individual identity, motives, and cognition."[221]

The micro dimension is the dimension of individuals – in the TSC case, the rectors and the heads of international offices and their relations and strategies with colleagues and partners in Europe. Because of the time limitation of this thesis, I will shortly review the last three rectors/administrations at TSC. Manana Doijashvili (Rector 2001-2011, vice-rector 2011-2022) has been the central figure in establishing contacts with many prominent international competitions and music academies. It was during her rectorship TSC became an active member of AEC. Rezo Kiknadze (TSC Rector, 2011-2019), a German citizen, western-educated composer, is often associated with the establishment of the music technology[222] and jazz programmes at TSC. Nana Sharikadze, a current rector since 2019, has before been the head of the international office for 12 years. Still, many at TSC equate establishing international programmes to her work at the international department. She is often presented as someone with a solid international profile who fostered the internationalisation of the HMEI.

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assessment criteria. In 2023, TSC is hosting 26 international teachers from its European partner HMEIs for the exam season in May-June; those teachers' intake means more than 30,000 EUR expenditure from the Erasmus+ programme.

To tackle the issues with assessment, the ICM project student participants are not chosen by TSC staff. The European partner institutions select them, so the process is devolved and delegated to the Erasmus+ programme countries.

[219] Scott. 2014. Institutions and Organisations, p.67

[220] See: Sandro Serpa and Carlos Miguel Ferreira. 2019. Micro, Meso and Macro Levels of Social Analysis. International Journal of Social Science Studies Vol. 7, No. 3; May 2019 ISSN 2324-8033 E-ISSN 2324-8041 Published by Redfame Publishing URL: http://ijsss.redfame.com pp. 120-124

[221] Hartmann, Eddie. 2017. Violence: Constructing an Emerging Field of Sociology. International Journal of Conflict and Violence 11:1-9. doi:10.4119/UNIBI/ijcv.623 p.1

[222] Music Technology programme development, the creation and equipment of the music technology studio, renovation of the library and development of a brand-new music education programme have also been possible by funding from projects between TSC and the Norwegian Academy of Music.

The meso dimension is the institutional involvement and ties with European HMEIs. In this dimension, faculty members, students, teachers, and programmes are concerned and generalised as those who create *institutional connections*. One might argue that because of the strong international profile of the top management, the overall picture is that the Conservatoire is very well-connected to the European network of conservatoires within the HME sector. However, when one explores the picture deeper, the reality is somewhat. Since the TSC is a small organisation, the decision-making team is also small, and those involved in international activities are also a handful of people from the administration. These circumstances bring us to the situation where a minimal number of people have contact with their European colleagues. Sometimes, the top management team establishes and maintains ties with different European stakeholders. Under the new administration/rectorship,[223] which might not be as internationally driven and as pro-Europeanisation as the current one. The question remains, how strong is the organisational structure? Will it maintain the level of international engagement and not limit it to the individuals but spread it to the grassroots in the organisation?

The third macro dimension is the national commitment and ties between Georgia and the countries of partner institutions. I argue that because of Georgia's democratic backsliding in the past years and rhetorical distancing from the EU by the current Georgian Government,[224] there is a risk of reducing the national-level encouragement for fostering Europeanisation. Suppose TSC would like to continue a strong international presence and steady process of Europeanisation. In that case, it might need to strengthen ties with the European partners and promote sustainable cooperation, especially on the meso level.

To conclude this section, the micro/individual dimension is unstable because of the possible change of the rector and administration. At this moment, the macro dimension is also uncertain due to political instabilities. Therefore, the meso dimension – an institutional level – can play a role in maintaining values, norms and traditions, going back to Scott's pillars.

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[223] The next rector elections are scheduled for October 2023.

[224] See: Korneli Kakachia and Bidzina Lebanidze. 2023. Georgia's Slide to Authoritarianism https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/89260 Accessed on 20 April 2023;
Gia Nodia. 2022. Taking the Road Away from Europe - How Far Could Georgia Go (and Can it be Reversed)? Publisher: CEPS.EU https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/CEPS-Explainer-2022-02_Taking-the-road-away-from-Europe-how-far-could-Georgia-go-.pdf

In the following section, I will present the challenges to the Europeanisation of the HME sector.

5.4 Responses Connected to Institutional Pillars: Challenges

The following thematic category identified is the *Challenges to Europeanisation*, which is also discussed in the frame of the *Three Pillars* theory.

The challenges in the regulative pillar – are mainly related to the non-associated status of the Erasmus+ programme. Even though some features of the Erasmus+ programme have been made available for the third-country institutions not associated to the programme, the reality remains that most Erasmus+ opportunities are still unavailable for third countries.[225] This barrier brings challenges, especially to small HMEIs, like TSC. ICM projects require a more complex application, and the chances of getting financing are relatively lower in cases of KA171, while Erasmus+ programme/associated countries typically get KA131 applications easily approved. The fact that third-country institutions cannot themselves be the coordinators in KA171 projects makes them dependent on the organisations from programme countries. This dependence in many cases at TSC is healthy, based on cooperation and coordination, although there are cases where EU+[226] institutions are positioned as senior partners where TSC needs to follow their lead.[227]

Even though 23 active ICM projects and 44 students' mobility in 2022-2023 seems quite a lot for the institution with a student population of just 465, TSC staff is sure that access to more Erasmus+ features would open more opportunities.[228]

Regarding normative and cultural-cognitive pillars, the challenging proficiency of English language skills is discussed, and the pattern is apparent both within students and the staff, especially the academic personnel. During focus groups with teachers, it was clear that the context they viewed TSC Europeanisation efforts was not that they were hesitant to more

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[225] Third countries are non-associated to the Erasmus+ programme, except for EU27 and six associated countries: Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye.
https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-a/eligible-countries
[226] EU+: EU Member States and third countries associated with the Erasmus+ Programme
[227] Some institutions that partner with TSC also hesitate to form the inter-institutional agreement for the KA171 projects and instead sign the form for KA131 forms only. The reasons behind this are that they do not want to spend more time writing separate KA171 application, which is financed from EU external funds, when they can already send their students and staff from KA131 EU internal funding. This difference contributes to the lack of engagement and more work for third-country institutions like TSC to search for additional partners. The networking events, such as those organised by the AEC, are used for exploring new partnership possibilities.
[228] TSC Administration Representative. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 10 March 2023

international and European engagement, but instead they could not sufficiently participate in the EU-funded programmes because of the challenges related to the lack of foreign language proficiency.[229] Students stated that the experience would have been better if they could understand the local languages.[230]

In the answers to the survey, more than 50% of students without international experience (Group A) stated that their language skills are Fluent or Very good. In contrast, others referred to Good or Moderate language skills.
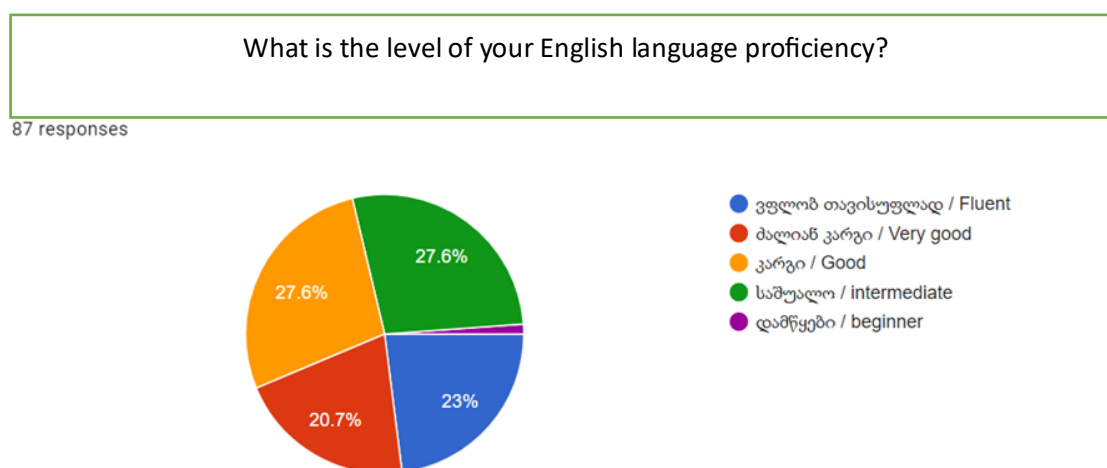

What is the level of your English language proficiency?

87 responses

- ● ვფლობ თავისუფლად / Fluent
- ● ძალიან კარგი / Very good
- ● კარგი / Good
- ● საშუალო / intermediate
- ● დამწყები / beginner

Figure 11. Europeanisation Survey: Chart 5[231]

TSC has intensified English language teaching in its study programmes. If the language courses were elective subjects for BA-level students, with the new programmes approved in 2021, the English language courses would be obligatory for all BA-level students. This development can be the result of increased interest in international activities. The teachers expressed their wish for language training courses for academic staff at TSC.[232]

Regarding language skills, the percentage of English-language proficiency among TSC students with Erasmus+ experience (Group B) is, not surprisingly, higher.

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[229] Not only the English language but also a lack of German, French and Italian language skills for singers and piano accompanists.

[230] Focus group with students. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 10 March 2023

[231] TSC offers students to take language tests during exam sessions organised by Tbilisi State University twice yearly. The approved test results, written in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Turkish, can be used for the eligibility criteria for Erasmus+ mobility participation. Interestingly the results of the students are improving yearly basis. However, the students who pass the 71% threshold for the B2 level are still relatively low (30%), according to the figures provided by TSC.

[232] Focus group with teachers. Conducted by Author. 11 March 2023

What is the level of your English language proficiency?

31 responses

Legend:
- ვფლობ თავისუფლად / Fluent
- ძალიან კარგი / Very good
- კარგი / Good
- საშუალო / intermediate
- დამწყები / beginner

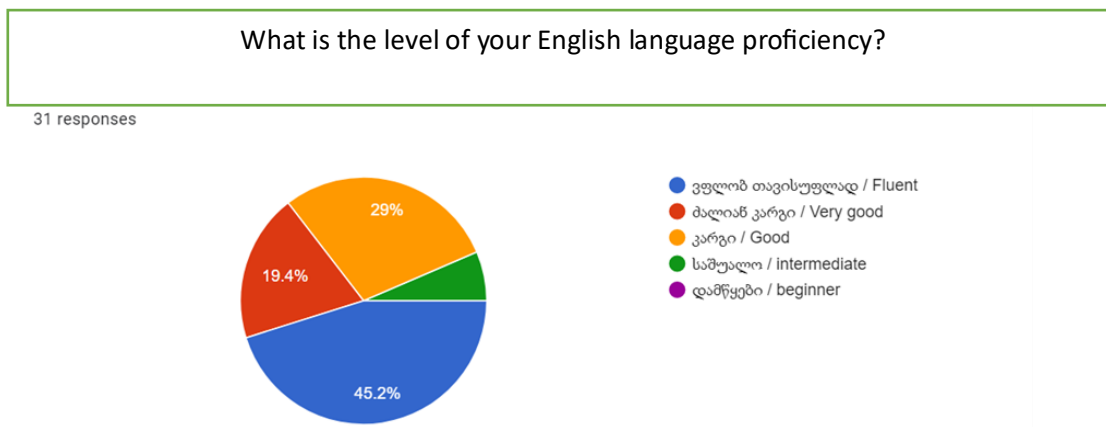Chart values: 45.2%, 19.4%, 29%

Figure 12. Europeanisation Survey: Chart 6

The staff and the students also identify the communication and information dissemination challenges. During responses received from the questionnaire, focus groups, and individual interviews, the participants often stated that they would like to participate in Erasmus+ projects because "they have heard" that the quality of education is good. Almost all of them did not know the difference between programme and partner (non-associated) countries – the main reason why TSC does not have access to coordinate the projects independently. Many of the teachers are dependent on the decisions and initiatives of the administration rather than independently collaborating with their colleagues abroad. Fewer initiatives contribute to the lack of institutional cooperation that was discussed within the micro-meso dimension of partnerships in the previous section.

Europeanisation efforts are often seen as "having more international projects,"[233] however, the initiatives from teachers or even students are not tangible. The context generally laid that only the administration – rectorate, international office- should offer all the international opportunities to academic staff and students. Indeed this approach is not sustainable for fostering Europeanisation.

However, there are some teachers – who might be *hesitant* when it comes to participation in European opportunities. Those teachers did not participate in individual interviews with me or focus groups. Information about their attitudes was collected through participatory observation and via those who collaborated in my interviews. According to interview/focus group participants, those *hesitant* teachers even urge their students not to participate in Erasmus+ projects. I was interested in why this could be a problem. Was it because they did

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[233]Focus group participants. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023

not like so-called European education standards or did not see the need for internationalisation? My initial assumption was that because of their Soviet education, they were sceptical of Europeanisation. Although I was repeatedly assured by many who participated in focus groups that those *hesitant* staff members do not want to participate in international activities because of a) their lack of English language proficiency and b) "the possibility of losing some part of their salary after a student leaves for the exchange period."[234]

The solution provided is the long-term one. To bridge the salary gap, the TSC should recruit international students who would do their exchange studies in Tbilisi while Georgian students are abroad, although attracting foreign students seems challenging.[235]

To conclude the section, analysing the data showed that the challenges can be both associated with regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive pillars. Being a non-associated country to the Erasmus+ programme causes the lack of access to many programmes and, especially, denies the HME sector the possibility to coordinate projects. Therefore they are dependent on partners in the EU. The lack of language proficiency also remains a challenging issue, as does the knowledge about EU-funded programmes and other opportunities. Some teachers hesitate to foster new collaborations and are sceptical of international activities. Therefore, more work is needed to achieve progress in that direction.

In the next section, I will discuss the similarities and differences between the case of other Arts HEIs – the aim is to determine whether the holistic case of TSC is *sui generis* or whether one can generalise the Europeanisation processes within the HME sector to Higher Arts Education in Georgia at large.

5.5 Comparison with other Arts HEIs

Apolon Kutateladze Tbilisi State Academy of Arts (Arts Academy)[236] and Shota Rustaveli State University of Film and Theatre of Georgia (TAFU)[237] have been chosen as additional units of analysis to draw a picture of Europeanisation in the Higher Music Education sector.

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[234] Focus group participant. TSC teacher. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023
[235] Lack of English-language programmes; lack of international accreditation; Political instability; Lack of awareness about Georgia, to name a few.
[236] See more: Tbilisi Arts Academy: International News https://art.edu.ge/aceng/index.php?do=cat&category=6-1 Accessed on 20 April 2023
[237] See more: TAFU: http://www.tafu.edu.ge/wm.php?page=home_en

Even though neither Arts Academy nor TAFU specialised in Music, both organisations are interesting for comparison with TSC for the following reasons:

- TSC, Arts Academy and TAFU are the only three higher music education universities that are financed under the Ministry of Culture of Georgia – those are only arts HEIs that, according to Georgian law, qualify as *universities* (in contrast with *teaching universities*) as all three offer BA, MA as well as PhD studies;[238]

- Like TSC, Arts Academy and TAFU are specialised arts institutions and not multi-profile universities and can be regarded in the same context of higher arts education.

The data was collected from both Arts Academy and TAFU – via various methods explained in Chapter 3.

According to the data presented by Arts Academy, the university is three times as big as TSC, with around 1700 students, 270 administrative staff and 107 academic staff, and invited teachers – 215. At TAFU, currently, there are 661 students, 63 academic staff and, 28 invited teachers, 172 administrative staff. The number of Academic staff at TSC is 92.[239]

Even though the numbers of students and administration at TSC are lower than at Arts Academy and at TAFU, the number of mobilities is comparable only with Arts Academy and higher at TAFU.[240] I note that the key is not in the numbers, and if one looks only at the statistical overview, TSC can be regarded as an exceptional case. However, this thesis is interested in the institutions' responses to Europeanisation through EU-funded projects, both regulative and normative and cultural-cognitive. The approaches, values and attitudes happen to be similar. As a teacher interviewee from TAFU told me, "There is no question whether we want to foster Europeanisation. It is only about resources and finances that hinder our efforts to achieve more".[241]

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[238] Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. Authorised Institutions.
https://mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=1855&lang=eng Accessed on 20 April 2023
[239] The HMEI provided the figures via e-mail exchange and questionnaire due to the lack of information on the websites. Unfortunately, It was impossible to get the figures from the Ministry of Culture or the Ministry of Education of Georgia within my limited timeframe.

[240] The number of ICM projects that TAFU has implemented is seven since 2015, and only two student mobilities have been completed, while five are ongoing. There have been 31 ICM projects at Arts Academy until 2021, 2018-2022. Seventy-two student mobilities have been conducted, 59 outgoing and 36 incoming staff mobilities. This is in clear contrast to numbers from TSC that were presented in the earlier sections.

[241] Individual Interview with TAFU teacher. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 18 March 2023

The administration proactively finds European partners and projects at TAFU and Arts Academy. Most funding for international projects comes from the EU; therefore, internationalisation is generally understood as coming closer to European standards and deepening cooperation with European institutions. Similarly, the figures favoured the EU funding when finding out the state of Europeanisation compared to internationalisation at TSC. Therefore, internationalisation efforts mainly were in sync with the progress of Europeanisation. During the interview with the teacher from TAFU, the interviewee said that the European path is not only about funding or the high quality of education in European countries but "we feel it,"[242] as if (s)he was echoing the concept of the *Return to Europe*.

Both universities noted challenges similar to those at TSC – less funding because of the non-associated status of the Erasmus programme, lack of English language proficiency, and lack of awareness about Georgian culture in Europe. Both HEIs expressed their wish for further cooperation with European institutions. The Arts Academy has already produced an internationalisation strategy, while TAFU has not.

TAFU is still in the early stages of the process. An interviewee from the TAFU administration thanked the current rector at TSC for her advice and suggestions regarding internationalisation.[243] While new staff members are being recruited, there is no structural organisation of international mobilities or international opportunities, information delivery is somewhat unclear, and students are not used to receiving information about, for example, mobilities. At Arts Academy, similarly to TSC, information meetings are held with students regularly, information on the website is published about the application process, and e-mails are used for opening the calls for applications.

Even though all three universities operate with different organisational structures and speeds, the attitudes and approaches to Europeanisation are generally positive. TSC, Arts Academy and TAFU represent small universities that try to enrich their students' experiences by offering international opportunities. Yet, work on clarity, information dissemination and a more structured approach are needed at all three organisations.

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[242] Individual Interview with TAFU teacher. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 18 March 2023

[243] Individual Interview with TAFU administration staff. Interviewed by Author. Recording. 11 March 2023

6. Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

In this thesis, I explored the process of Europeanisation by analysing the responses of the Georgian Higher Music Education sector to the challenges and opportunities brought by the EU-funded programmes. I answered the following research question: ***How does the Georgian Higher Music Education sector respond to the opportunities and challenges of EU-funded programmes in order to foster Europeanisation?*** and additional research questions:

- What are the challenges and opportunities of EU-funded programmes in Higher Music Education in Georgia?
- How does the Europeanisation of Georgian Higher music education progress in relation with the internationalisation of the sector?

The questions were answered from the perspective of the theoretical framework. W. Richard Scott's three pillars of institutional theory were chosen as the theory and Europeanisation in Higher Education was contextualised in correspondence to internationalisation.

The findings of the analysis on HME in Georgia through the holistic type of single case study on Tbilisi State Conservatoire were also compared with other arts-specialised Georgian HEIs, namely TAFU and Arts Academy. The collected data were analysed by identifying thematic categories, which were discussed from the perspective of the institutional pillars of Scott's theory. Challenges to Europeanisation were also analysed after the application of the theory.

The analysis showed that the Erasmus+ programme to the HME sector brought significant developments and changes. Those projects have contributed to increasing individual mobilities and successes and institutional development and internationalisation at home. With indirect or direct ICM funding, TSC has modified study programmes, created working groups, involved EU experts and professionals as external evaluators, and modernised its study environment.

The attitudes and perceptions of the HMEI are widely positive towards Europeanisation. The analysis of the surveys filled by more than 25% of the total student population showed strong support for more international engagement and fostering Europeanisation.

Challenges remain regarding the lack of resources, awareness and initiatives, as well as the lack of English language proficiency.

The comparison with other arts HEIs demonstrated the trend and optimistic view for Europeanisation in all three institutions. However, TSC can be regarded as the leading arts HEI regarding the number of projects and mobilities.

Because most of the funding comes from European donor programmes, internationalisation is often presented parallel to Europeanisation. However, the reasons behind fostering Europeanisation are more profound than simply a wish for high-quality education. The responses to the progress of Europeanisation resonate with the notion of the *Return to Europe* – Europe as mindset, freedom, and ideal.

6.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Working on this thesis has been the process of not only one-semester involvement in the higher music education sector in Georgia but years of experience studying at Tbilisi State Conservatoire, a prominent institution in the HME sector in Georgia and working at their international office and seeing the processes from within. However, during last semester I, as a researcher, tried to distance myself from my assumptions and relied on collected data analysis, producing various aspects that are interconnected and together constitute a holistic work.

The findings and discussion would not have been complete without my broader understanding of the context and complexity of the critical issues needed to answer the main research question. I believe that this study has the potential to expand. The potential lies in the research strategy.

Georgia has applied for membership in the European Union almost simultaneously with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. It will be relevant to study how the HEI institutions progress in their Europeanisation efforts in those Association Trio countries. Tbilisi State

Conservatoire in Georgia has established ties with four Ukrainian and one Moldovan HEIs, and those institutions as case study units could be relevant for further research.

There is another alternative that can be discussed further. In this research, I analysed Europeanisation from a bottom-up viewpoint. However, EU-funded programmes in Education and Culture can also be evaluated from a top-down perspective, studying the role of *Soft Power* and focusing on *identity formation* processes.

Cultural and Creative sectors and industries are becoming more and more relevant, and the EU is spending more resources promoting collaborations and networking. One can expect that the number of research in this sector will continue to increase.

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Appendix 1

Survey questions for higher education institutions
/Translation from Georgian/

Erasmus+ Project Participation and Impact

1. Your name and current position at HEI

2. Full Name of the HEI

3. Total number of students

4. Total number of administration staff

5. Total number of Academic staff

6. Total number of invited staff

7. Main department which coordinates Erasmus+ projects

8. Number of ICM projects since 2015. Please indicate completed and ongoing projects separately.

9. URL Link to your HEI website about ICM projects

10. List the countries that you collaborate with through ICM projects. Insert the total number here and upload the file indicating the host institutions below.

11. How many students participated in ICM projects for study mobilities since 2015? Insert the total number here and upload the file indicating the host institutions below.

12. How many students participated in ICM projects for the Erasmus+ traineeship since 2015? Insert the total number here and upload the file indicating the host institutions below.

13. How many academic staff members participated in ICM projects for teaching mobility since 2015? Insert the total number here and upload the file indicating the host institutions below.

14. How many administrative staff members have participated in ICM projects for training mobility since 2015? Insert the total number here and upload the file indicating the host institutions below.

15. Upload files here - you can upload up to 10 files: ICM partnerships, geographical distribution and statistics regarding student and staff mobilities (add file button)

16. Considering indicated European partner HEIs, with which partner institutions did your institution-initiated collaboration and project ideas?

17. Considering indicated European HEIs, which European HEI initiated collaboration and ICM project idea with your institution?

18. Do you think that Erasmus+ projects have an impact on students? *(Yes, No, other)*

19. If Yes, in which areas do you observe the impact?

a) Students' academic performance

b) Students' motivation

c) Students' employment rate

d) Graduate' rate for continuing studies abroad

e) Alumni employment rate

f) other

20. Do you think the impact of Erasus+ ICM projects is favourable on your HEI? *(Yes, No, other)*

21. If yes, on what aspects of ICM projects impact positively?

a) Development of the quality of teaching/learning

b) Professional development of academic staff

c) Professional development of academic staff

d) Student academic and professional development

e) Launch/development of new collaborations

f) Improvement of the work environment

g) Acceleration of internationalisation

h) Changes in the institutional environment

i) Authorisation and accreditation processes

j) HEI status and respect on the national level

k) HEI status and respect internationally

l) Raising students' interest in international mobilities

m) Raise of int. students interests re studying in GE

n) Improvement of the learning management process

o) Involvement in other Erasmus+ project

p) Expanding the international network

q) other

22. If NO, what is the reason behind the little or no impact of the ICM projects on your HEI?

a) Very few ICM projects

b) Lack of administration and coordination

c) Lack of support from top management

d) other

23. Do ICM projects have an impact on you? *(Yes, No, Other)*

24. If yes, please choose what impact ICM projects have on you.

a) Increased level of motivation and enthusiasm

b) Improvement of job contract terms

c) Job offers from other HEIs

d) Development of professional skills

e) other

25. What do you think is the impact of ICM projects on Georgian Higher Arts Education?

26. Do you think your HEI should continue participating in ICM projects? (Yes, No, other)

27. Does your HEI have experience participating in other Erasmus+-funded projects? (CBHE, EMJMD, JEAN MONNET projects)

a) Yes, CBHE projects

b) Yes, EMJMD projects

c) Yes, Jean Monnet projects

d) NO

28. If yes, please insert the project name, coordinator HEI, and the role of your institution (in case of many projects, please upload the file below)

29. Please upload the files here indicating Erasmus+ projects other than ICM (add file button)

30. Does your HEI have experience participating in other EU- funded projects? (e.i. Creative Europe and other programmes) *Yes, No, Other*

31. If yes, please insert the project name, coordinator HEI and the role of your institution (in case of many projects, please upload the file below)

32. Please upload a file here indicating EU-funded projects other than Erasmus+ (Add file button)

Appendix 2

Survey questions for TSC students with international experience (i.e. Erasmus+ studies)
/Translation from Georgian/

1. Name, last name (optional)

2. E-mail (optional)

3. Faculty

a) performing arts

b) composition/musicology

4. Direction, speciality

5. Programme/Year

BA I, II, III, IV; MA I, II; PhD I, II, III

6. Which type of Erasmus+ projects have you participated in?

a. study mobility b. traineeship c. both d. other

7. Mobility Dates (Academic year and semester)

8. Receiving Institution

9. What were the main reasons behind your Erasmus+ mobility?

10. What were the main reasons behind your Erasmus+ mobility to indicate EU HEI?

11. From the opportunities and information campaigns at the conservatory, what influenced your desire to study in Europe?

12. Would studying in Europe and at European institutions still be your choice if you had wider choices and opportunities from TSC?

a. Yes; b. No; c. other

13. What were the positive aspects of your Erasmus+ mobility experience?

a. Professional development

b. Expanding the network

c. Career Success

d. Prestige and popularity

e. There were no positive aspects

f. other

14. What were the negative aspects of your Erasmus+ mobility experience?

a. I was obliged to take an additional semester

b. My courses were not fully recognised

c. Lack of professional development

d. There were no negative aspects

e. other

15. Evaluate TSC work vis-a-vis international relations. Which way is TSC developing today?

a. Right way, positive changes

b. Wrong way, negative changes

c. I do not have a position on an issue

16. Would you suggest your fellow students participate in Erasmus+ projects?

a. Yes; b. No; c. Other

17. Would you be interested in participating in other Erasmus+ projects?

a. Yes; b. No; c. Other

18. What is the level of your English language proficiency?

a. fluent; b. very good; c. good; d. intermediate; e. beginner f. other

19. What is the impact of EU- funded projects on TSC?

20. How do EU-funded projects impact music education in Georgia?

21. What should be the dynamics of international activities at TSC?

a. more involvement in EU projects;

b. the current situation is satisfactory

c. international activities are not necessary

d. other

22. Additional Comment

Appendix 3

Survey questions for TSC students with international experience (i.e. Erasmus+ studies) /Translation from Georgian/

1. Name, last name (optional)

2. E-mail (optional)

3. Faculty

a) performing arts

b) composition/musicology

4. Direction, speciality

5. Programme/Year

BA I, II, III, IV; MA I, II; PhD I, II, III

6. What do you know about EU-funded educational programmes?

7. What is your attitude towards the Erasmus+ programme?

8. What are the main reasons behind your attitude towards EU-funded mobilities?

9. Do you plan to participate in EU-funded educational programmes during your studies at TSC?

a. Yes; b. No; c. Other

10. Which type of Erasmus+ projects do you plan to participate in?

a. study mobility b. traineeship c. both d. Other

11. In which country or institution do you want to do your international mobility?

12. What are the main reasons behind your choice?

13. What is the impact of opportunities and information campaigns at TSC on your attitude towards Erasmus+

14. Would studying in Europe and at European institutions still be your choice if you had more choices and opportunities from TSC?

a. Yes; b. No; c. Other

15. What do you think will be the positive aspects of your possible Erasmus+ mobility?

a. Professional development

b. Expanding the network

c. Career Success

d. Prestige and popularity

e. no positive aspects

f. Other

16. What do you think will be the negative aspects of your possible Erasmus+ mobility?

a. I was obliged to take an additional semester

b. My courses were not fully recognised

c. Lack of professional development

d. no negative aspects

e. other

17. Evaluate TSC work vis-a-vis international relations. Which way is TSC developing today?

a. Right way, positive changes

b. Wrong way, negative changes

c. I do not have a position on an issue

18. Would you suggest your fellow students participate in Erasmus+ projects?

a. Yes; b. No; c. Other

19. What is the level of your English language proficiency?

a. fluent; b. very good; c. good; d. intermediate; e. beginner f. other

20. What is the impact of EU- funded projects on TSC?

21. How do EU-funded projects impact music education in Georgia?

22. What should be the dynamics of international activities at TSC?

a. more involvement in EU projects;

b. the current situation is satisfactory

c. international activities are not necessary

d. other

23. Additional Comment

Appendix 4

Focus group topics/questions for students
/Translation from Georgian/

1. What do you know about EU-funded educational programmes?

2. What is your attitude towards the Erasmus+ programme?

3. What are the main reasons behind your attitude towards EU-funded mobilities?

4. Do you plan to participate in EU-funded educational programmes while studying at your university?

5. Which type of Erasmus+ projects do you plan to participate in?

6. In which country or institution do you want to do your international mobility?

7. What are the main reasons behind your choice?

8. What is the impact of opportunities and information campaigns at your university on your attitude towards Erasmus+

9. Would studying in Europe and at European institutions still be your choice if you had more choices and opportunities from your university?

10. What do you think will be the positive aspects of your possible Erasmus+ mobility?

11. What do you think will be the negative aspects of your possible Erasmus+ mobility?

12. Would you suggest your fellow students participate in Erasmus+ projects?

13. What should be the dynamics of international activities at your university?

Appendix 5

Focus group topics/questions for academic staff

/Translation from Georgian/

1. Knowledge & attitude towards EU-funded programmes;

2. Impact on teaching & learning process, study environment;

3. Impact on Higher (Music/Arts) Education sector;

4. Further recommendations

Focus group topics/questions for administrative staff
/Translation from Georgian/

1. Knowledge & attitude towards EU-funded programmes;

2. Institutional level impact:

a. Institutional & internationalisation strategy development;

b. Teaching & learning process, study environment;

c. Quality assurance and EDI (Equality, diversity, inclusion);

d. Authorization & accreditation processes;

e. Governance and funding.

3. Impact on Higher (Music/Arts) Education sector

4. Further Recommendations

Appendix 7

Erasmus+ projects, Tbilisi State Conservatoire:

concluded or ongoing during the last three years

Erasmus+ projects, Tbilisi State Conservatoire (concluded or ongoing during last three years)			
Type of funding programme	**Start and end date of the project**	**Role**	**Website**
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022 - 2025	Partner, Coordinator: University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna	https://www.mdw.ac.at/
KA220-ADU Cooperation Partnerships in adult education	2022 - 2024	Partner, Coordinator: Suiti Cultural Heritage Foundation	https://herd.tsu.ge/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Academy of Music in Luebeck, Germany	http://www.mh-luebeck.de/start/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2024	Partner, Coordinator: RAMA – Royal Academy of Music Aarhus/Aalborg, Denmark	https://musikkons.dk/en/rama-in-aarhus/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre	https://eamt.ee/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2024	Partner, Coordinator: Latvian Academy of Music	http://www.jvlma.lv/english/page/1012.html
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2024	Partner, Coordinator: Lithuanian Academy of Music	
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Sibelius Academy, University of Arts Helsinki	http://www.uniarts.fi/en/siba
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Norwegian Academy of Music	http://nmh.no/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Conservatorio di Adria, Italy	www.conservatoriobuzzolla.it

students and staff supported by external policy funds			
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Conservatorio di Parma, Italy	http://www.conservatorio.pr.it/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2024	Partner, Coordinator: Siena Jazz Academy, Italy	http://www.sienajazz.it/?lang=en
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2024	Partner, Coordinator: Saint Louis College Roma, Italy	http://www.saintlouiscollege.eu/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Conservatorio di Musica "Stanislao Giacomantonio" – Cosenza, Italy	https://www.conservatoriocosenza.it
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Academy of Music in Gdansk, Poland	http://www.amuz.gda.pl/
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Academy of Music in Wroclaw, Poland	www.amuz.wroc.pl
Erasmus+ KA171-HED - Mobility of higher education students and staff supported by external policy funds	2022-2025	Partner, Coordinator: Stockholm University of Arts, Sweden	http://www.uniarts.se/english/about-uniarts/university-college-of-opera
Erasmus+ Consortium, BSdV – Body Sound Division	2020-2023	Partner, Coordinator: Saint Louis College of Music, Rome, Italy	https://bsdv.it/beyond-europe/?lang=en
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2020-2023	Partner, Coordinator: Academy of Music in Krakow, Poland	https://www.amuz.krakow.pl/en/
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2020-2022	Partner, Coordinator: University of Limerick, Ireland	
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2020-2023	Partner, Coordinator: Universite Cot d'Azur, France	https://univ-cotedazur.eu/

Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2020-2023	Partner, Coordinator: Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	https://www.rcs.ac.uk/
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2019-2021/22	Partner, Coordinator: Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles	https://erasmusconservatoire.be/en/projects/international-projects/
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2019-2022/23	Partner, Coordinator: Royal Conservatoire, Birmingham City University	https://www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire
Erasmus+ Programme Capacity-Building projects in the field of Higher Education	2019 - 2022	Partner, Coordinator: Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University	https://herd.tsu.ge/
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2018-2020	Partner, Coordinator: Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Hungary	https://uni.lisztacademy.hu/
Erasmus+ KA107-HED - Mobility of higher education	2018-2021	Partner, Coordinator: University of Tartu	https://viljandi.ut.ee/en

Interview/Focus Group Participant Informed Consent Form

The working title of the Study: Europeanisation of Georgian Higher Music Education

Interviewer: Iveri Kekenadze Gustafsson

Course, Programme, University: EUHR18, Master of Arts in European Studies, Lund University

By signing the consent form, you confirm that:

• You have explained the purpose of the study.

• You consent *voluntarily* to participate in this study. You have the right not to answer all questions and withdraw from the interview/focus group at anytime.

• You agree that the interview/focus group is recorded.

• You understand that your data that can be identifiable will be

anonymised and confidential, although your HEI might be named.

• You understand that extracts from the interview can be quoted and presented as findings.

• By signing the form, you agree that the recording and the transcript will be

stored on a researcher's device and only accessible to the interviewer.

Signature of interviewee/focus group participant:

_____

Place & Date