



**green**  
**erasmus**

# Sustainable Internationalisation at Higher Education Institutions

Online Survey Report 2021

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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# Introduction

Within the framework of the Erasmus+ funded project Green Erasmus, we conduct a research on good practices of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the field of sustainable internationalisation.

## Objective

To provide analysis of the **good practices, opportunities, and challenges** of HEIs toward ensuring a sustainable internationalisation.



# Description of the study

- ▶ Qualitative online survey
- ▶ Date of survey: 25.05.2021 - 31.06.2021
- ▶ Anonymous online survey shared through link
- ▶ Target Groups
  - ❑ International Relations staff members
  - ❑ Leadership
  - ❑ Teachers/Professors
  - ❑ Sustainability staff members
- ▶ 5 main parts
  - ❑ Attitudes and Beliefs
  - ❑ HEI's sustainability strategy
  - ❑ HEI's contribution to sustainable internationalisation
  - ❑ HEI's contribution to sustainable transportation
  - ❑ HEI's contribution to sustainable operations

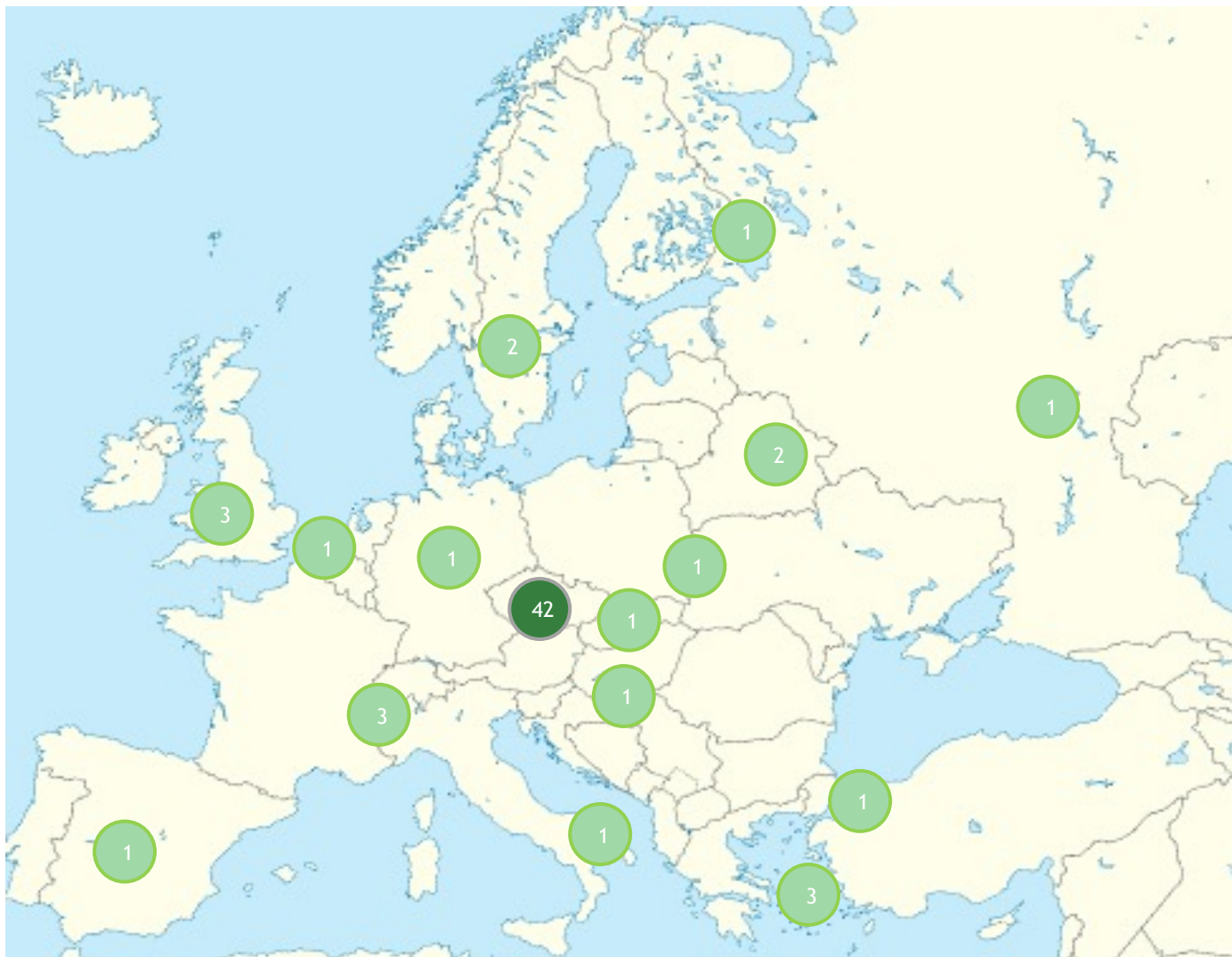


## Other remarks on the survey

- ▶ A combination of open and closed questions
- ▶ Sample size after validation - 165
- ▶ Number of questions: 33
- ▶ Geographical scope: 16 countries indicated
- ▶ Strong over-representation of HEIs from Germany: 50%
- ▶ Strong over-representation of International Relation Officers target group: 60%
- ▶ Some questions allowed to skip the answer
- ▶ Questions from the student survey (IO1) used to allow comparison with staff opinion



## Geographical distribution



93 not  
indicated



# Results analysis



## Key Findings

- ▶ The majority of the staff consider themselves **very/moderately informed about environmental issues**.
- ▶ Most of the respondents mention the **need for funding** to promote a stronger commitment.
- ▶ The majority of the **HEIs have environmental strategy**, but most of the **staff don't know if it was implemented successfully**.
- ▶ The majority of the staff indicate **the leadership support** and **the financial support** as **crucial for the success** of the (international) environmental sustainability strategy.
- ▶ Almost half of the respondents say that no specific environmental actions for international students exist.
- ▶ Sustainable internationalisation is most often implemented at HEIs' global strategy, rather than the internationalisation strategy.
- ▶ 1/3 of the respondents say that **IRO does collaborate** with the working group responsible for the **sustainable internationalisation strategy at HEIs**.



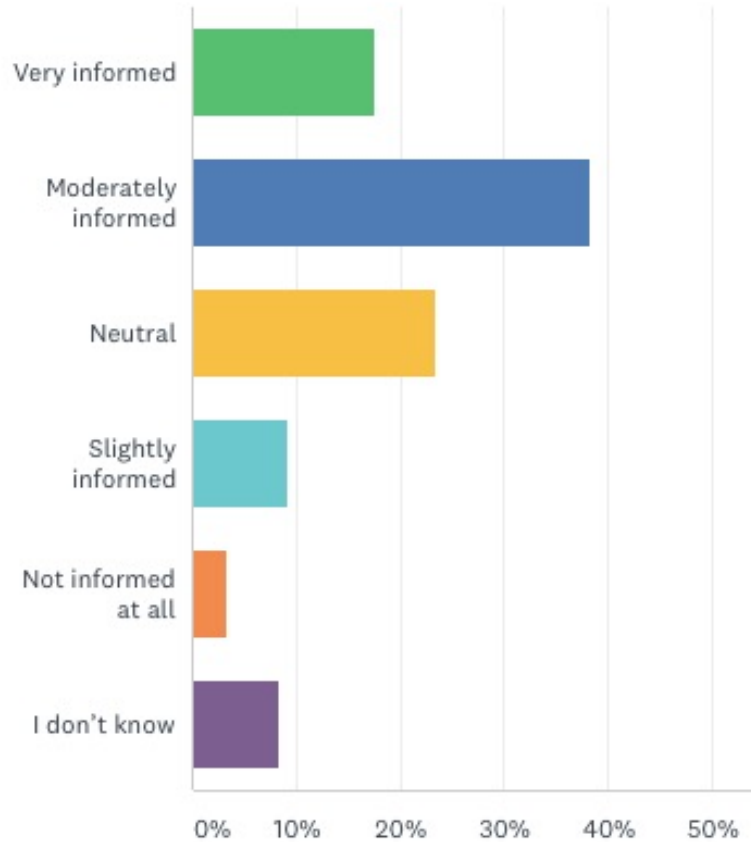


# Detailed analysis

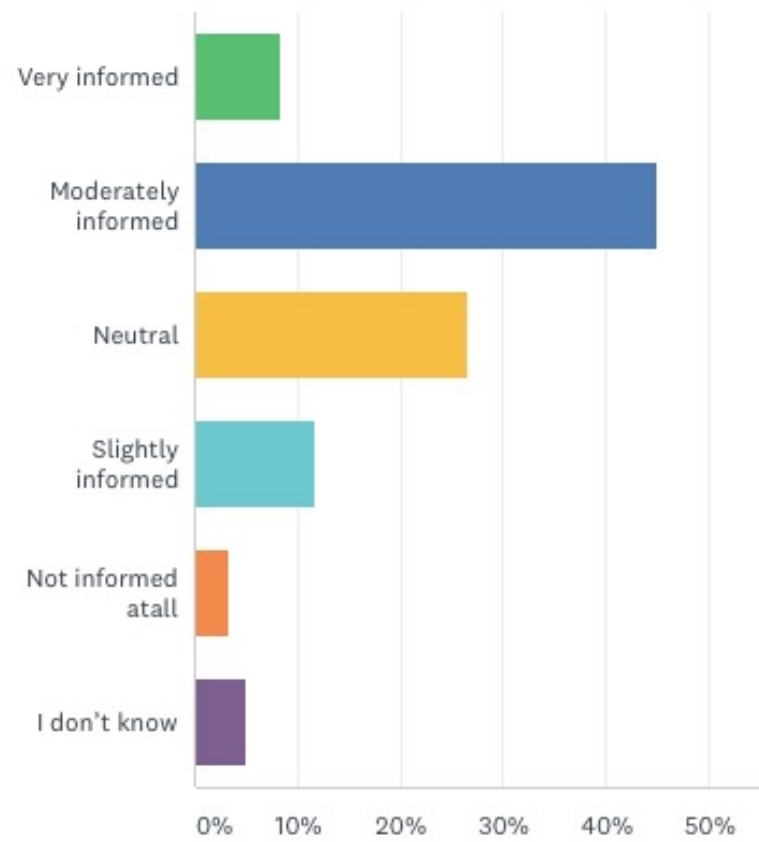


## Part I Attitudes and Beliefs

How informed do you consider to be on environmental issues?



IRO department

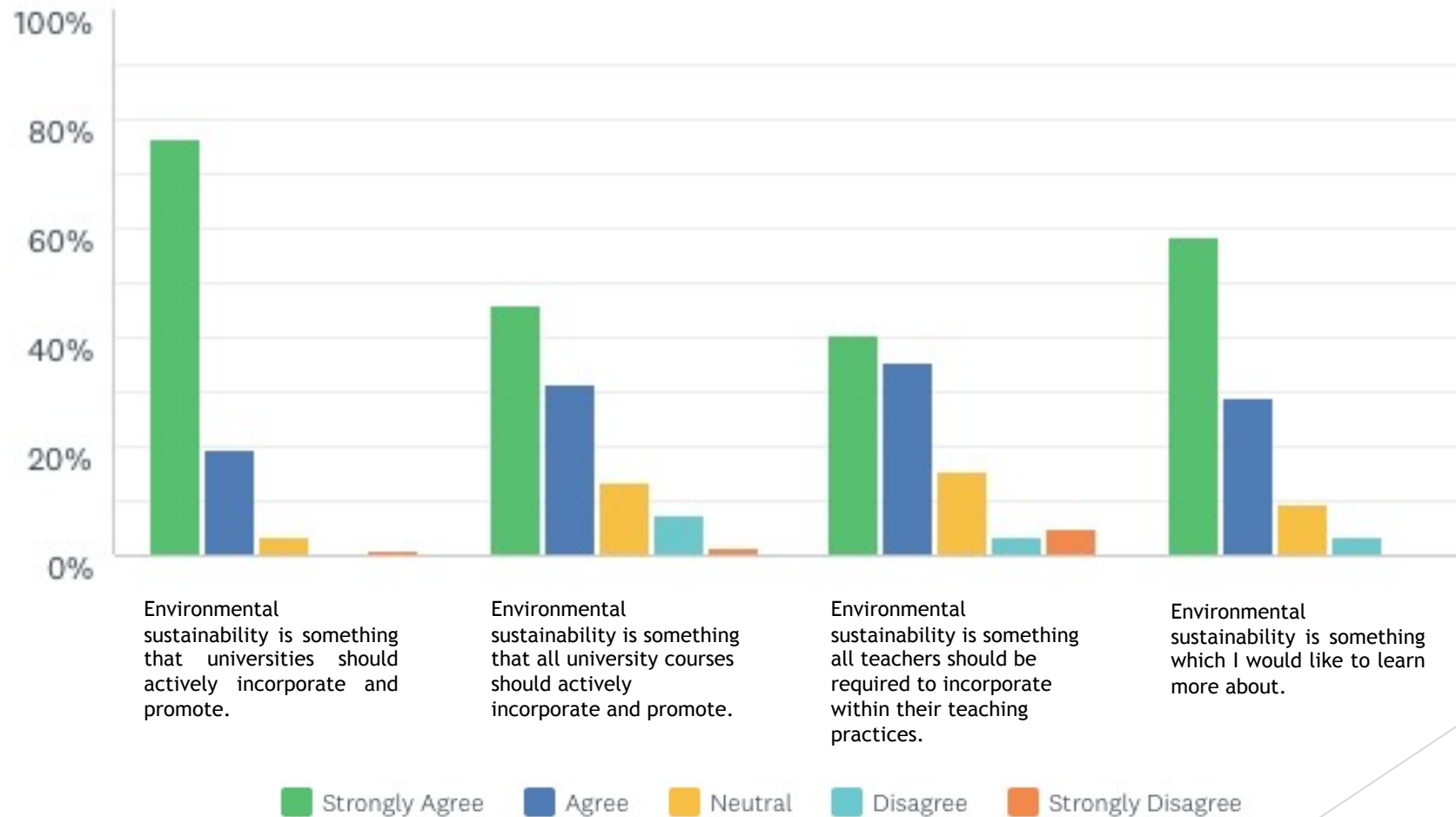


Other departments



## Part I Attitudes and Beliefs

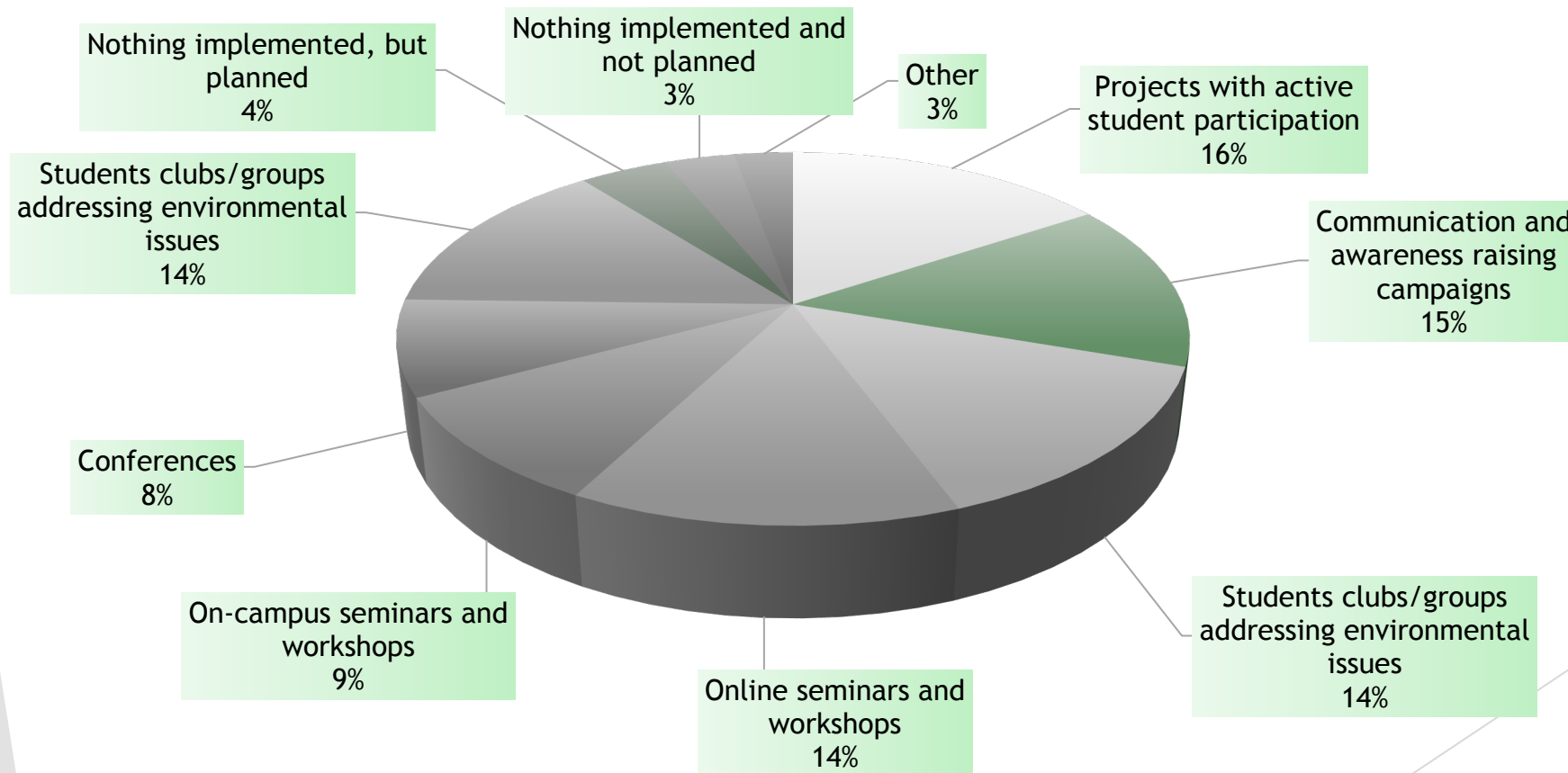
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?





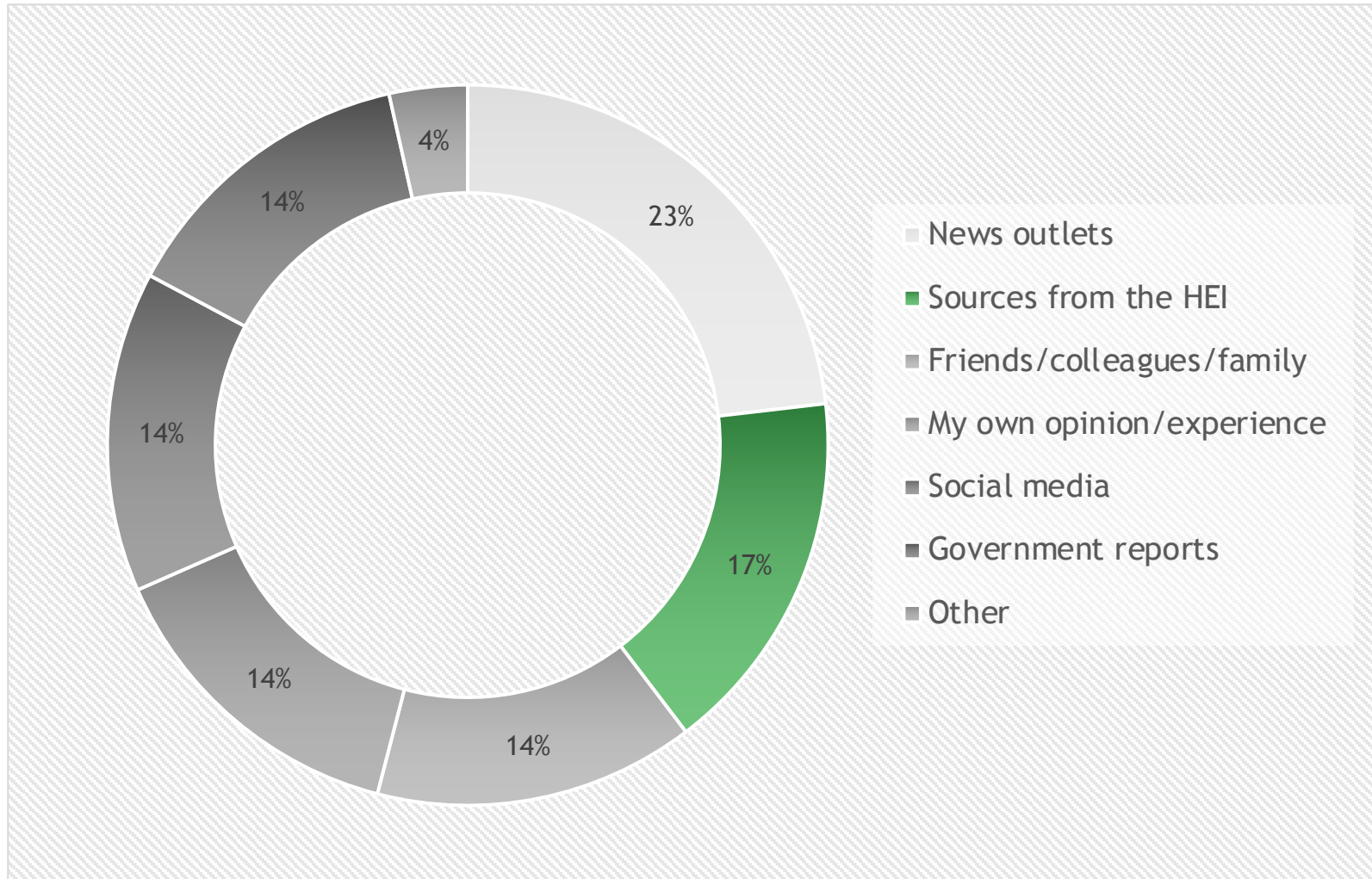
## Part I Attitudes and Beliefs

Are you implementing communications/behaviour change initiatives/actions on environmental sustainability issues within your institution and which ones?



## Part I Attitudes and Beliefs

Which are your main sources of information on environmental issues?

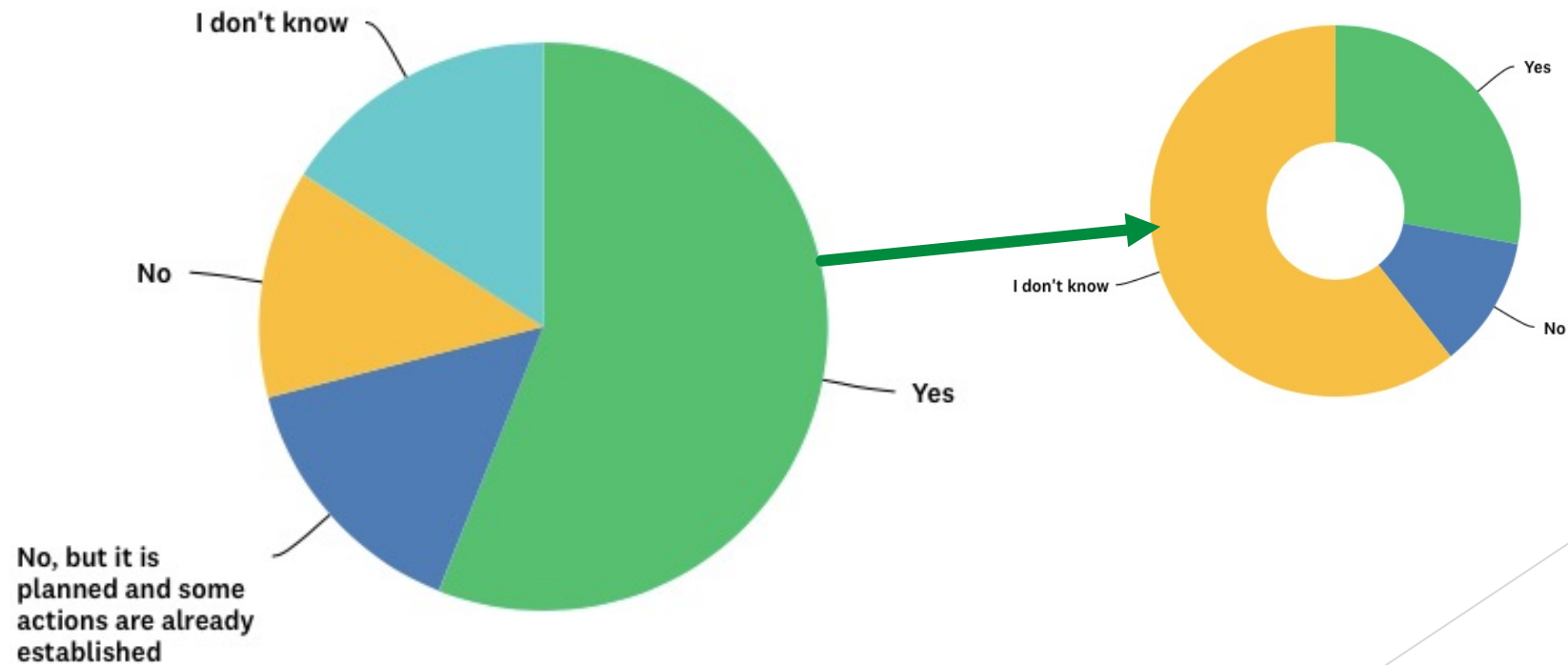




## Part II HEIs contribution to sustainability

Does your institution have a sustainability strategy or is sustainability mentioned in your institution's overall strategy? (e.g. commitment to net zero, carbon reduction targets)

Answered: 100 Skipped: 65





## Part II HEIs contribution to sustainability

Have you met any barriers and what were they?



Administrative  
and financial  
barriers



Lack of time  
and human  
resources



Human factor:  
change of  
mindset and  
habits needed



Avoiding  
flights



Difficult to  
assign  
responsibility  
for the  
sustainability  
goals at top  
level



## Part II HEIs contribution to sustainability

### Key success factors of sustainability strategy

- ▶ Financial support
- ▶ Leadership support
- ▶ Establishment of consulting committee on sustainability
- ▶ Institutional and personal commitment
- ▶ Raising awareness on environmental sustainability
- ▶ Dedicating more time on strategy implementation
- ▶ Increased offer and participation of students and staff in projects and actions on environmental sustainability



## Part II HEIs contribution to sustainability

### Examples of environmental sustainability commitments

- ▶ Mapping the sustainability (SDGs) actions/strategies across the whole university
- ▶ Awareness-raising among students and staff on sustainable renovation of university facilities
- ▶ Add the sustainability to the internationalisation strategies
- ▶ Develop a sustainability network within the HEI
- ▶ Make sure to connect the actions with the needs and ideas of the target groups
- ▶ Motivate outgoing students to use train rather than plane
- ▶ Give incoming students ideas how to act more sustainably and inform about habits in the host country (waste separation, deposit system etc)





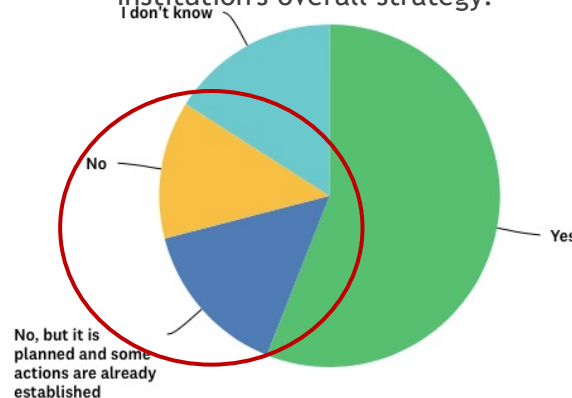
## Part II HEIs contribution to sustainability

What are the main barriers to implement sustainability at your institution?

### Lack of:

- ▶ resources (human, funding, time)
- ▶ support of leadership
- ▶ transparency on roles and responsibilities
- ▶ efficient communication and coordination
- ▶ definition of sustainability/understanding
- ▶ collaboration between faculties
- ▶ motivation
- ▶ other priorities

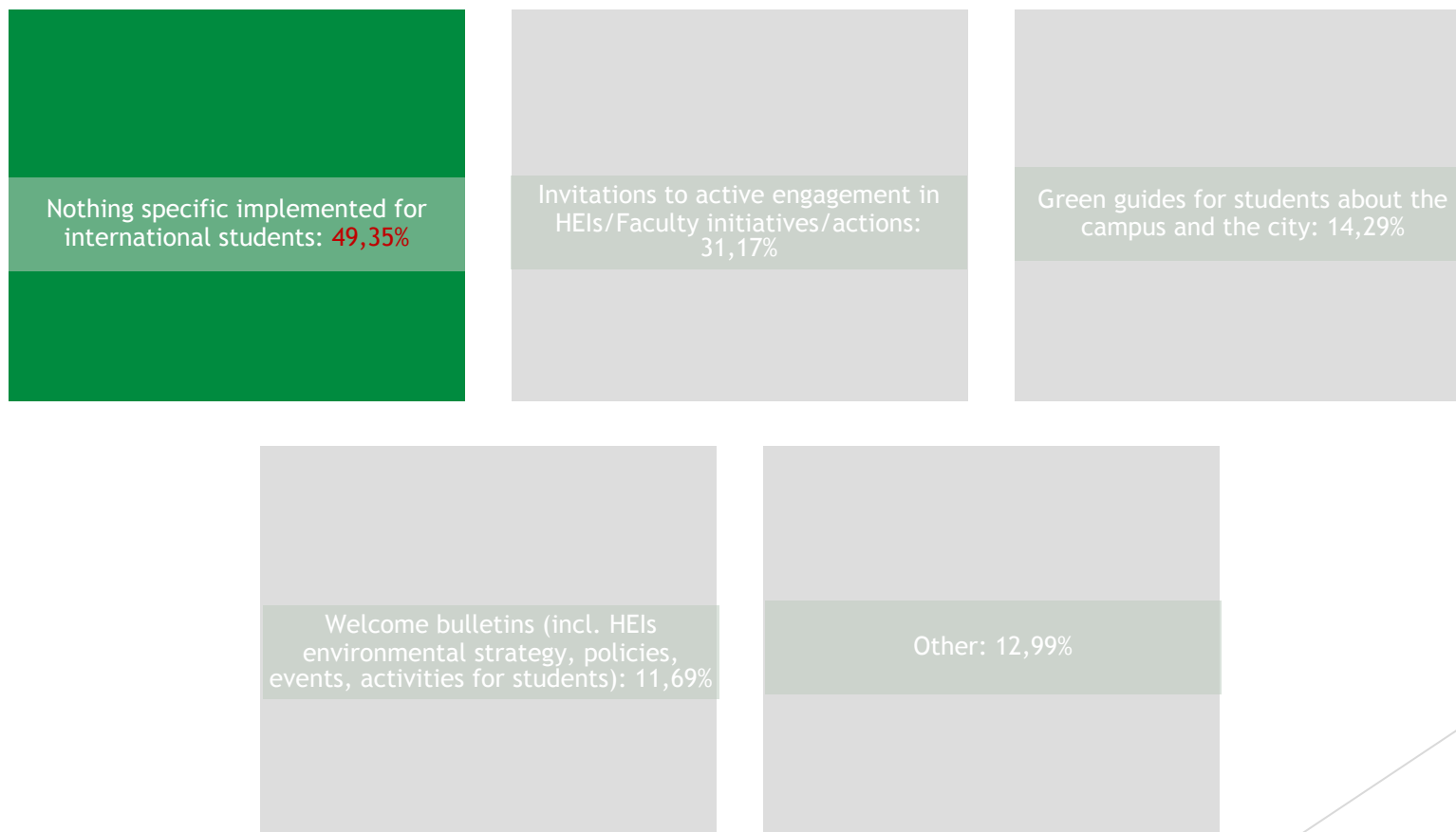
Does your institution have a sustainability strategy or is sustainability mentioned in your institution's overall strategy?





## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

What specific environmental sustainability focused engagement activities/actions are you implementing for international students?





## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

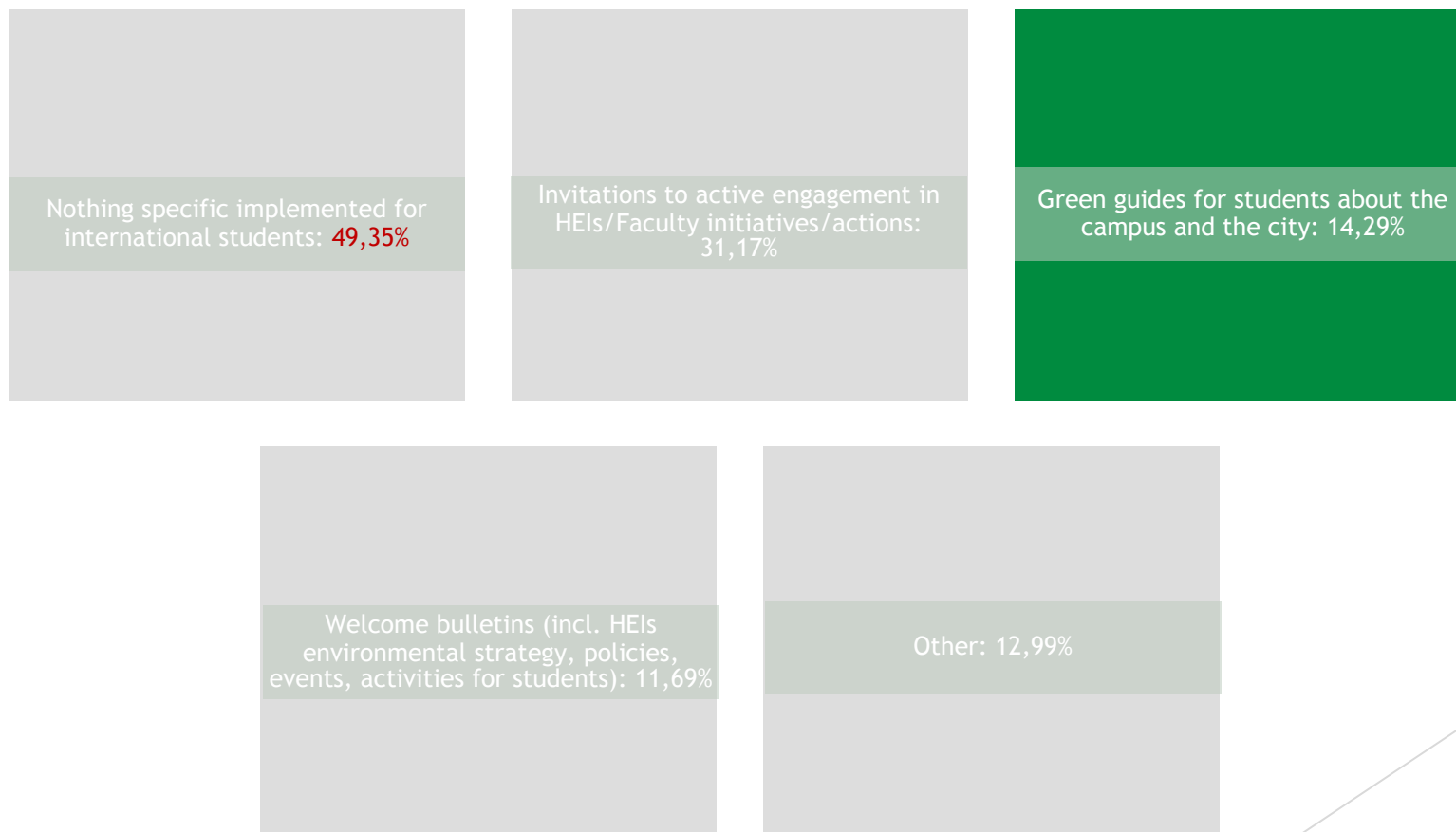
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## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

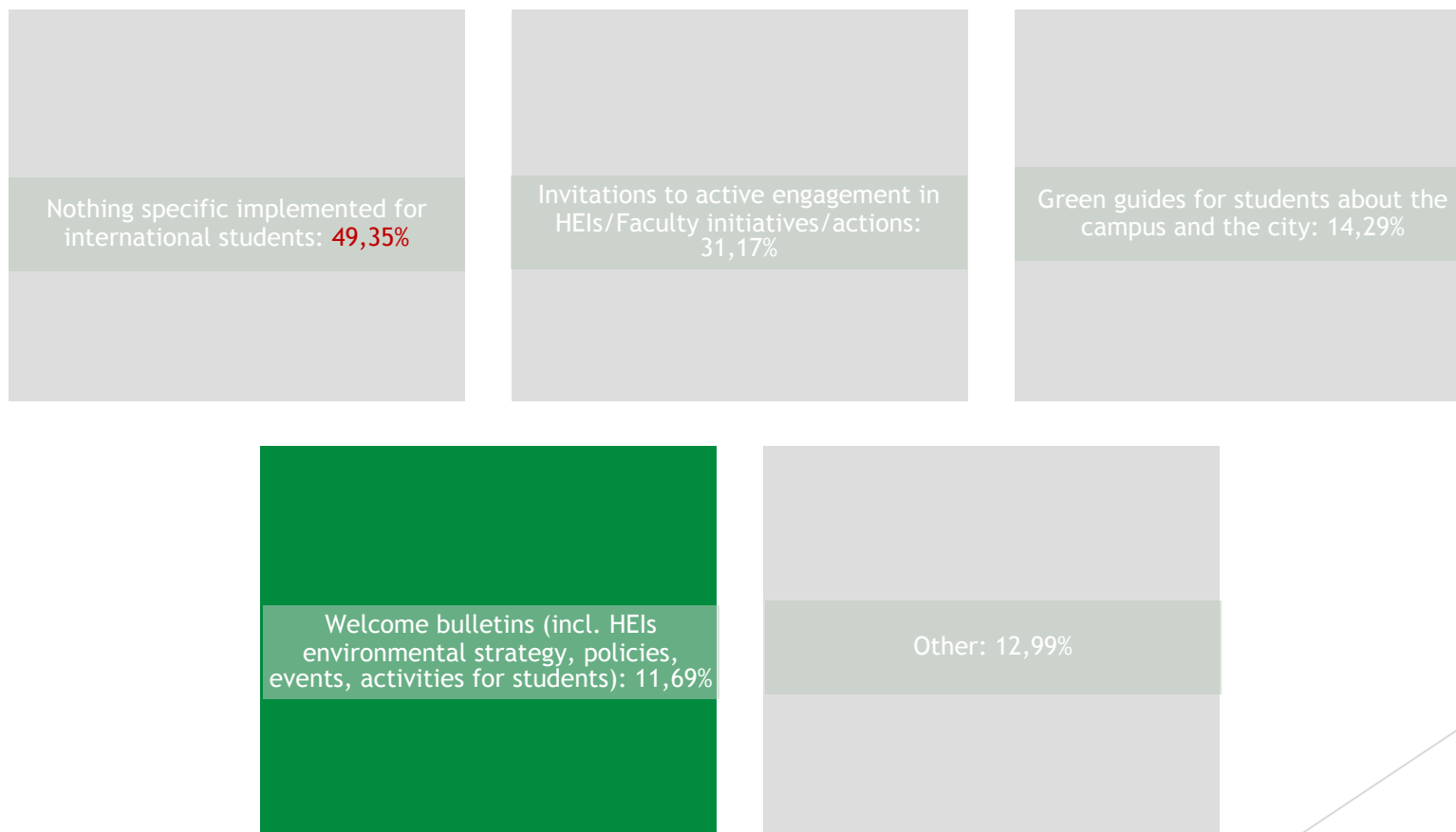
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## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

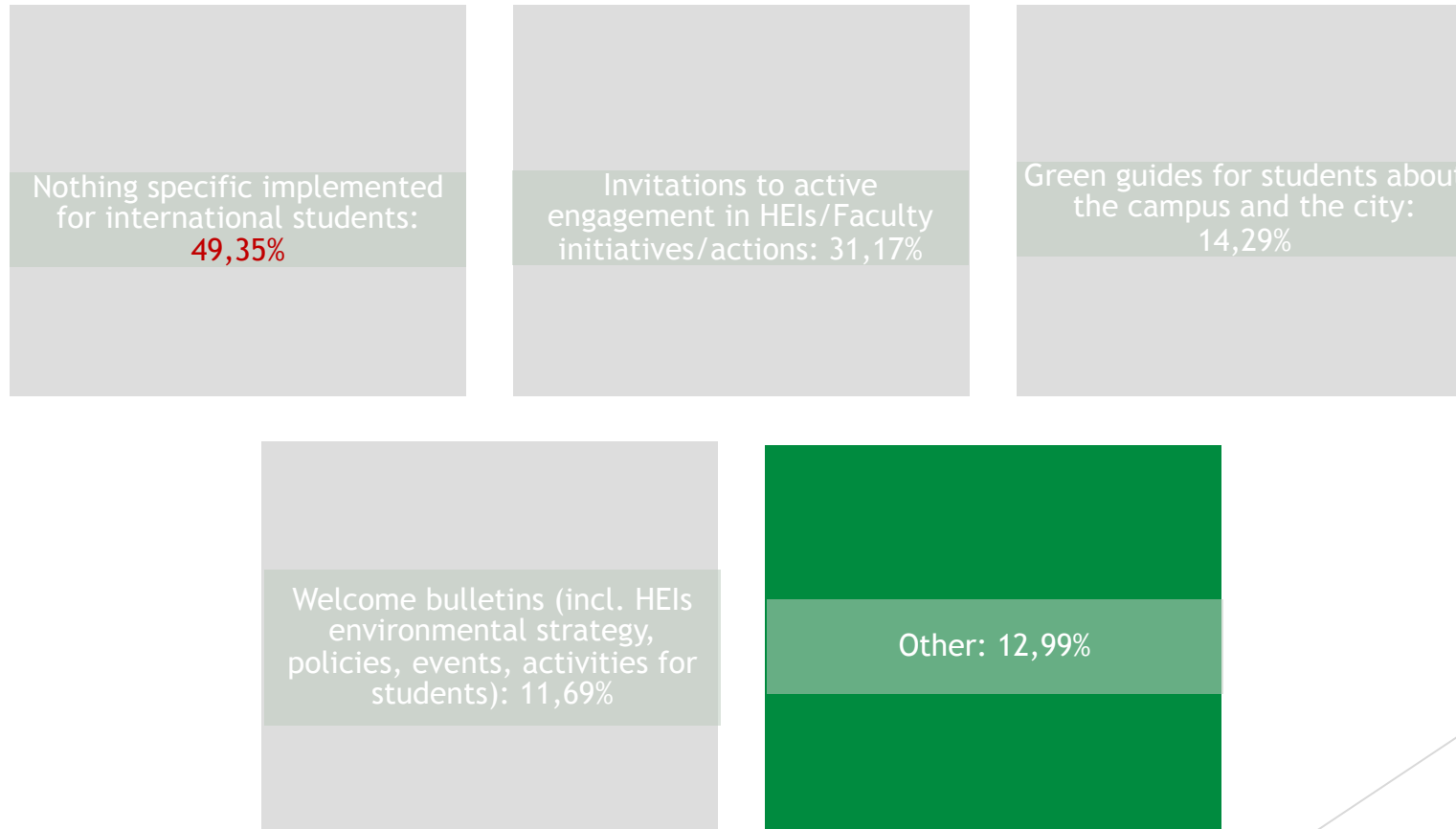
What specific environmental sustainability focused engagement activities/actions are you implementing for international students?





## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

What specific environmental sustainability focused engagement activities/actions are you implementing for international students?





## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

What specific environmental sustainability focused engagement activities/actions are you implementing for international students?

Other: 12,99%

- ▶ Organising meetings between the green students' groups and incomings students to introduce green initiatives on sustainable living on campus and in the city
- ▶ Offering fairs where student initiatives are able to present their goals and encourage international students to participate
- ▶ Offering a package or recycled home essentials to incoming students
- ▶ Posters and Social Media posts on relevant content in English



## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

Which of the following strategies embeds/mentions the sustainability of internationalisation?

Answered: 77 Skipped: 88



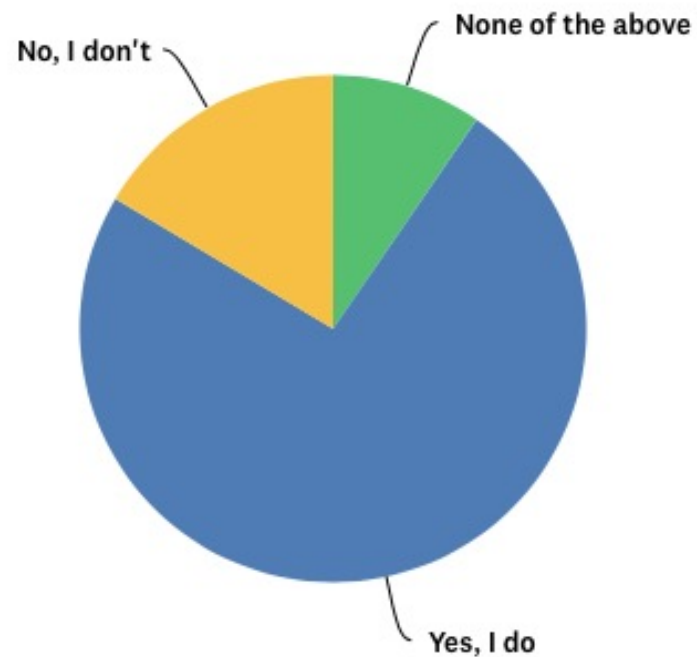
→ A separate strategy for sustainability that covers all areas of the HEI





## Part III HEIs contribution to sustainable internationalisation

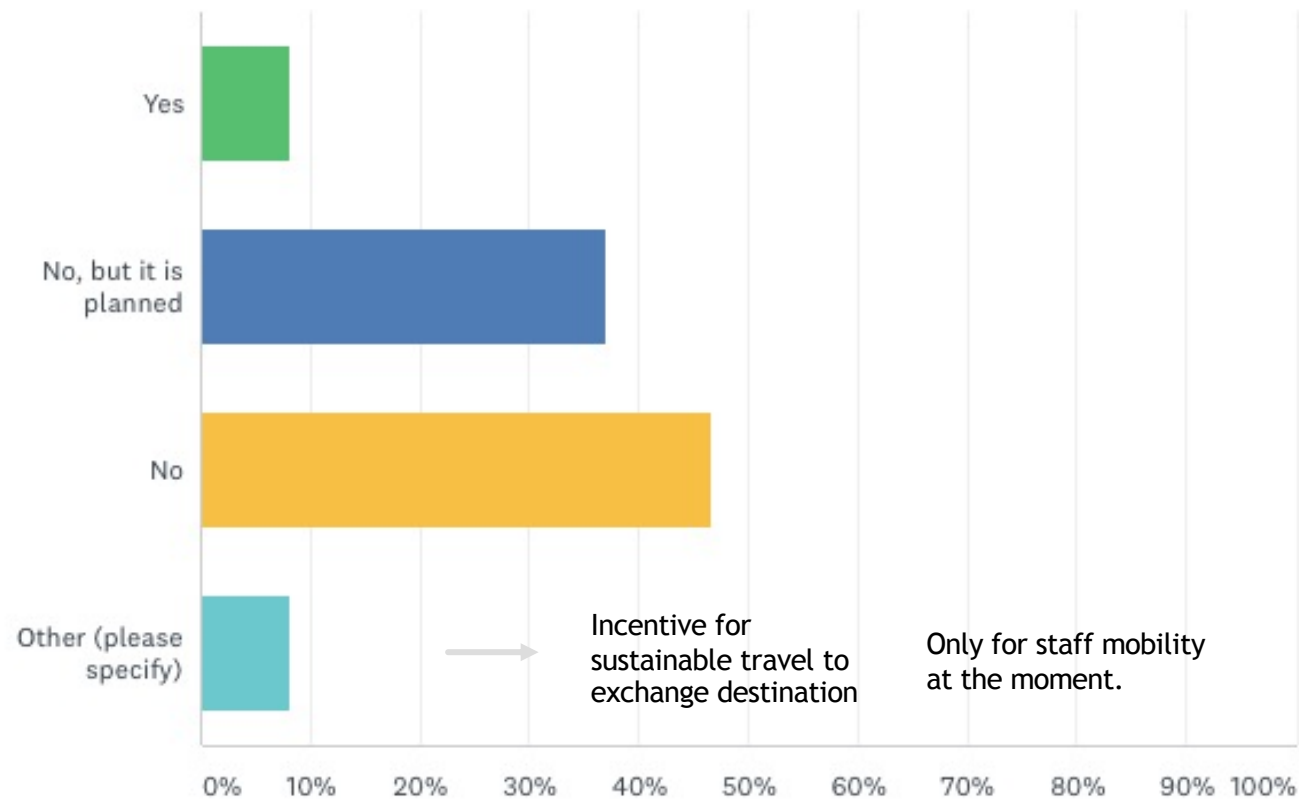
Do you consider that your staff and students are actively engaged in international activities?





## Part IV HEIs contribution to sustainable transportation

Has your institution implemented carbon offsetting measures to reduce the impact caused by transport-related carbon dioxide of your outgoing and incoming students?





## Part IV HEIs contribution to sustainable transportation

What sustainable modes of transport are available to get to your institution?



Bike  
(93,15%)



Public transport  
(93,15%)



Walking  
(87,67%)



Car sharing  
(57,53%)

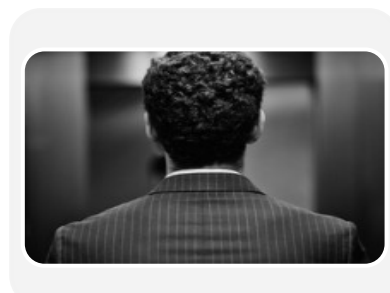


Other  
(8,22%)



## Part IV HEIs contribution to sustainable transportation

What sustainable modes of transport are available to get to your institution?



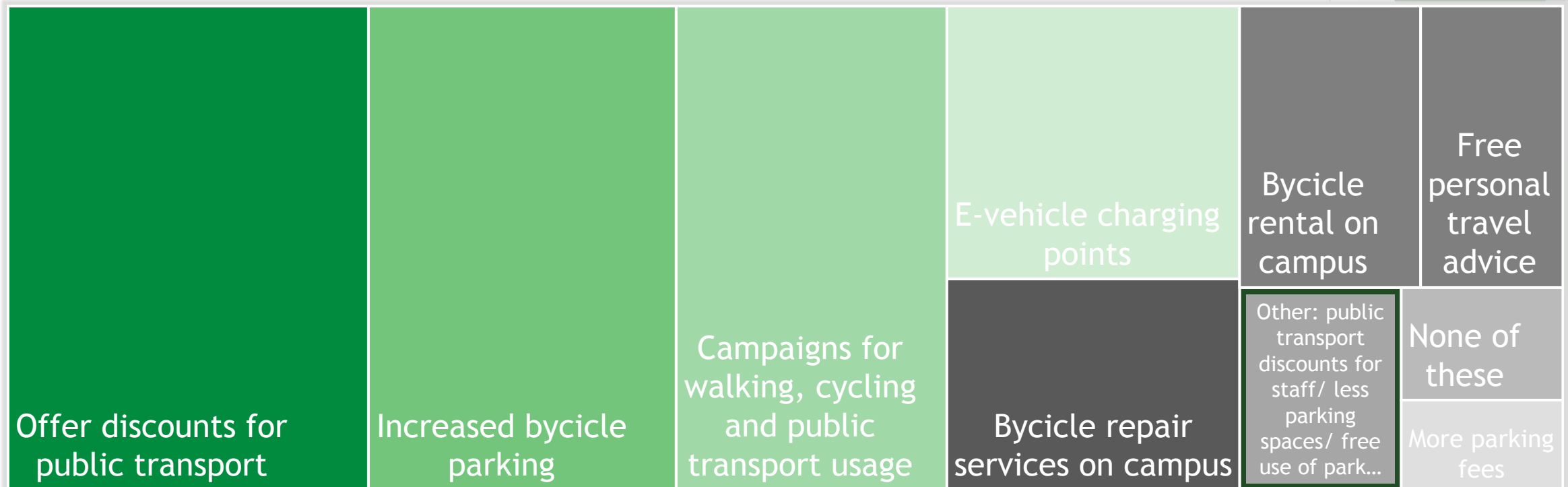
Other

8,22%

- ▶ University shuttle
- ▶ E-scooters
- ▶ Bike Sharing, sponsored by the HEI
- ▶ Free bike renting

## Part IV HEIs contribution to sustainable transportation

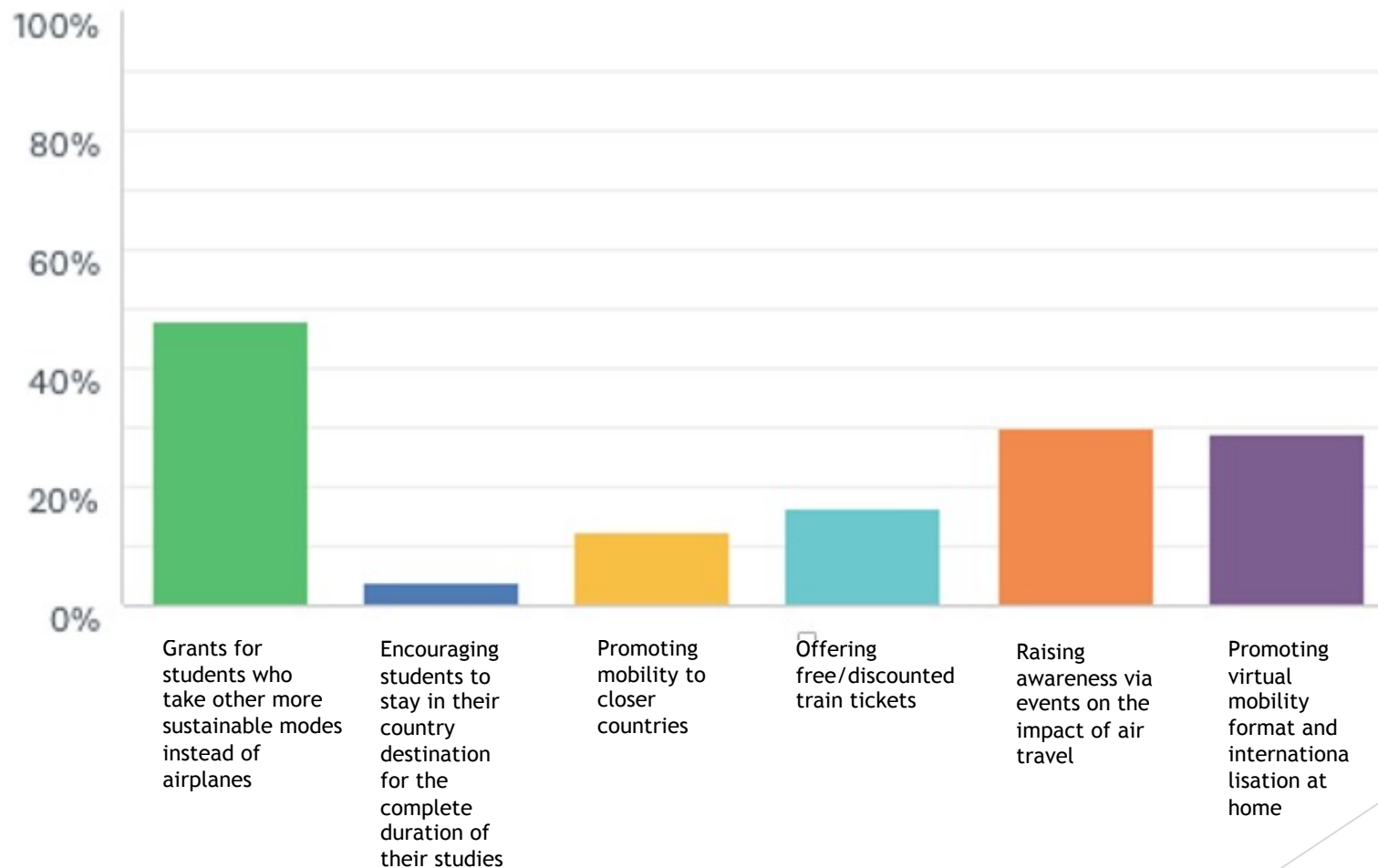
Do you implement any of the following initiatives to stimulate the use of sustainable modes of transport to get to your institution?





## Part IV HEIs contribution to sustainable transportation

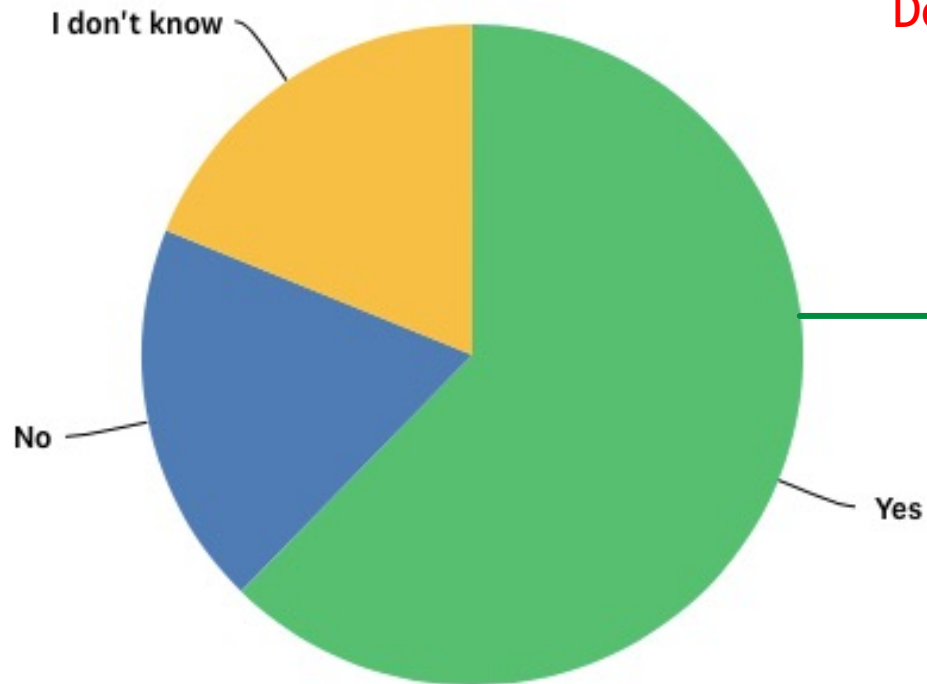
What initiatives/actions do you implement to reduce transport-related emissions from student mobility?



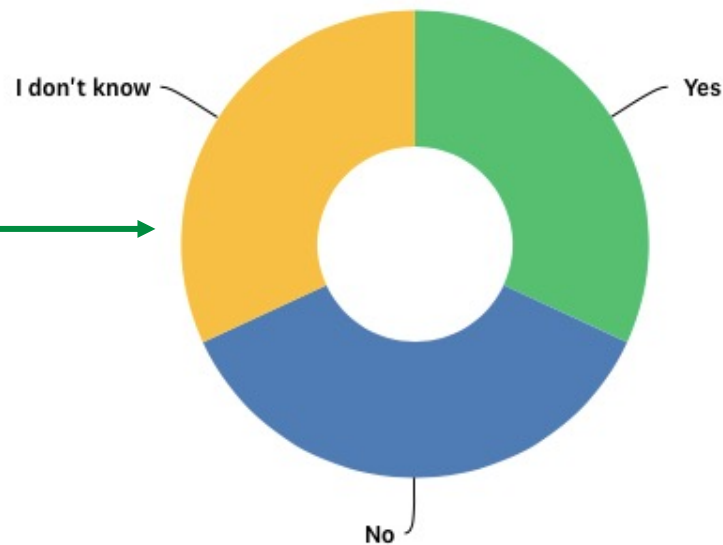


## Part V HEI's contribution to sustainable operations

Does your institution have a working group, department or person responsible for the institution's environmental sustainability?



Does it collaborate with the IRO department?





# Conclusion

## Success points



There is more and more awareness among staff and students



Approval by the leadership



Sustainability as THE leading topic within many institutions' strategies



The overall aim is for the universities to develop into a model institution for sustainable development





# Conclusion

## Recommendations



To analyse carefully the needs and ideas of the target groups (students/international students)



To have more commitment and support to the strategies and respective projects by the leadership



To find as many supporters, participants and multipliers as possible



To decrease the funding of short-distance flights and increase the funds for sustainable travel