



Evaluation of scholarships to the College of Europe and the Euro- pean University Institute as well as associated collaborative ties

Final report for State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)

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Executive Summary

Object of the evaluation: SERI scholarships to EUI and CdE

On an annual basis, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SBSI) awards four-year doctoral scholarships for the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence (Italy) and one-year graduate scholarships for the Bruges (Belgium) or Natolin campus (Warsaw, Poland) of the College of Europe (CdE). SERI offers doctoral scholarships for research at the EUI to no more than six PhD students at a time and four graduate scholarships each academic year for studies at the CdE. With both scholarship programmes, SERI seeks to achieve three main goals: *firstly*, support outstanding young scholars and researchers; *secondly*, encourage participation in platforms that address the challenges of European integration; and *thirdly*, help strengthen relations between Switzerland and the EU.

SERI commissioned *Interface Politikstudien Forschung und Beratung AG* to conduct an evaluation of these two scholarship programmes to assess scholarship design, implementation and impact. The evaluation *methodology* is based on interviews, an online survey of current and former scholarship holders and a comparison of Swiss EUI and CdE scholarship programmes with those of other countries.

These scholarships are awarded to two institutions that enjoy an excellent reputation at both national and international level. There are hardly any equivalent alternatives to the EUI and the CdE in Europe. The scholarship award procedure is well designed. The only issue seems to be that the scholarship amount for doctoral studies at the EUI is too low. The award procedure and selection process at both institutions are clear and transparent.

In terms of implementation, there seems to be a low level of awareness among the target groups of the existence of these scholarships. SERI's current approach of channelling information via international relations officers (IROs) and university study coordinators has not enabled the information to adequately reach target groups. There has been excessive scattering and loss of information. At the same time, SERI's advertising resources are limited, which prevents targeted promotion of the scholarships.

Impact at individual level

Studies at the EUI or the CdE are a significant reference in the curriculum vitae of the scholarship holders and thus the scholarships have a strong positive impact. Moreover, the training enabled the acquisition of specific expertise that greatly advanced their careers in academia (EUI) as well as in business and government (CdE). It is particularly worth noting that scholarship holders were also able to establish a network of contacts with people in the EU during the training.

Achievement of goals from a quantitative and qualitative standpoint

In awarding the scholarships, SERI has set ambitious goals for itself (see first paragraph). On a *qualitative level*, these goals have been reached without question. To a large extent, former EUI scholarship holders remain within the academic system and pursue their careers there. Moreover, both the EUI and CdE train specialists with expertise in European and EU affairs, 60% of whom currently hold jobs that are closely linked with Swiss-EU relations.

On a *quantitative level*, however, the goals are not being achieved. The number of scholarships is too low. In addition, the Confederation does not adequately benefit from the knowledge, skills and networking of former scholarship holders. Very little is known about the CdE within the Federal Administration, which explains why scholarship holders are not in demand and receive no special consideration in the application process.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation, we recommend *increasing scholarship amounts*, especially to the EUI, in order to enhance their appeal. Furthermore, there is a need for *greater efforts to raise awareness* about the scholarships. This can be done in a number of ways: first of all, university professors in the relevant disciplines (primarily law, economics, political science) could approach their students directly; secondly, information could be passed through the alumni network; thirdly, civil society organisations could be asked to spread information; finally, Switzerland could delegate the awarding of scholarships to third parties, as Germany and Austria have done. Another important thing to consider is that the three goals currently set for these scholarships are overly ambitious. If these goals are to be maintained, then the number of scholarships should be increased. If this is not possible, then these goals should be revisited.

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1. Findings, conclusions and recommendations

1.1 Introduction

Each year, the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) awards scholarships to students who wish to write a dissertation at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence (Italy). A total of six doctoral scholarships to the EUI are available, covering a period of four years. SERI also offers one-year graduate scholarships to holders of a Master's degree who wish to study at the College of Europe (CdE) in Bruges (Belgium) or Natolin (Warsaw, Poland). A total of four graduate scholarships to the CdE are available each year.

There are three equally important goals¹ in awarding these scholarships:

- *Support outstanding young scholars and researchers (innovation, creativity).*
- *Encourage participation in platforms that address the challenges of European integration.* The scholarships are intended to satisfy the need for specialists with expertise in European and EU affairs.
- *Help strengthen relations between Switzerland and the EU.* Contacts and networking with EU/EFTA member states should be reinforced in the process.

The scholarships described here have been awarded in their current form since the mid-1990s.² During this period, a total of 43 people received a doctoral scholarship to the EUI thanks to SERI funding and 116 people received a graduate scholarship to the CdE.

SERI commissioned *Interface Politikstudien Forschung und Beratung AG* to evaluate the two scholarship programmes. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the design, implementation and impact of the scholarships and to identify future development potential. With this aim in mind, Interface conducted a total of 21 structured interviews with experts at higher education institutions, EUI and CdE admissions officers, and SERI staff responsible for reviewing scholarship applications. Documents and data were also analysed. A key element was an online survey of all current and former scholarship holders since the 1990s. In addition, Switzerland's scholarship programmes to the EUI and CdE were compared with those offered by Germany, Austria and Luxembourg.

1.2 Brief summary of key findings

Swiss scholarships to the EUI and CdE differ in terms of their target group: Swiss doctoral scholarships to the EUI are primarily intended to support young scholars and researchers from Swiss universities and cover a period of four years. Swiss graduate scholarships to the CdE, on the other hand, are intended for holders of a Master's degree who wish to

¹ As indicated by SERI in its mandate.

² SERI has been awarding scholarships for doctoral studies at the EUI since the mid-1990s and for graduate studies at the CdE since the mid-1970s. However, data for the CdE are only available from 1996 onwards.

enter the labour market and acquire specific expertise in European and EU affairs and gain an understanding of the associated legal and political aspects. Graduate scholarships to the CdE cover a one-year Master's degree programme and fall under the category of continuing education from the Swiss perspective. Due to these fundamental differences, we will present the main findings for these two university institutes separately.

1.2.1 Findings on doctoral scholarships to the EUI

We first discuss the design, implementation and outputs of the scholarship programme before going on to present our observations regarding the impact of these scholarships.

■ Scholarship design

Most of the experts and (former) scholarship holders interviewed found the current scholarship *design* to be satisfactory. The doctoral scholarship is awarded to the EUI, a research institution with an excellent academic reputation, which ensures high-quality training. According to the experts interviewed and over four-fifths of the (former) scholarship holders surveyed, the EUI is a unique research institution in Europe. The EUI is identified as the right institution for these scholarships. Furthermore, almost without exception, all respondents stated that Swiss doctoral scholarships to the EUI should definitely continue to be offered. In principle, the awarding of scholarships also makes sense in light of the three goals that SERI has formulated.

Despite the considerable amount of exceedingly positive feedback on the scholarship design, there are two points that drew mounting criticism: *Firstly*, the number of scholarships is deemed too low in relation to the stated goals of the scholarship programme. The interviewees felt that awarding four scholarships per year would be better than the current situation. *Secondly*, both EUI admissions officers and most of the (former) scholarship holders interviewed consider the scholarship amounts to be too low. It is not possible, however, to compare the SNF doctoral scholarship amounts in Switzerland with doctoral scholarships to the EUI as the cost of living in Florence, Italy is lower than in Switzerland. Nevertheless, scholarship holders still have to pay certain Swiss-level costs even during their stay in Florence (e.g. costs incurred during visits to Switzerland during the period between classes).

■ Award procedure and communication

Respondents gave a generally positive assessment of the *award procedure*: The EUI's selection of doctoral candidates is described as transparent and systematic, but also rigorous. The selection process is nevertheless deemed reasonable given the exclusive nature of the training and the limited amount of space available on the EUI campus in Florence. SERI's formal selection criteria are also considered clear and justified. The only criticism related to the considerable time and energy involved in the selection process for such a small number of scholarships.

There was also criticism of *information and communication*. Students in Switzerland do not know enough about the EUI and the corresponding doctoral scholarships. The EUI also does some promotional work, but due to limited resources, it has to rely on the offices responsible for awarding scholarships in the individual countries (e.g. SERI in the case of Switzerland). For its part, SERI mainly channels information through university communication offices. As a result, information becomes scattered and lost in the process. Our survey of (former) scholarship holders shows that only a small proportion of the target groups are reached. If information is to reach the target groups more effectively, it must be provided to students directly via university chairs and professors. In addition, both conventional (newsletters) and modern communication channels (social media) can be used to ensure that the target groups receive more information about the scholarships.

| **Output: growth in the number of applications and awarded scholarships**

Since 1994, SERI has almost always managed to award the full number of doctoral scholarships to the EUI. There is demand for these scholarships and the volume of applications is even increasing. The number of formally valid applications, however, varies greatly.

Given the current volume of applications, it would be possible to award more doctoral scholarships to the EUI than is currently the case. The number of formally valid applications also makes this feasible. The only question is whether the campus in Florence is large enough to accommodate more students from Switzerland. In addition, we do not know whether the EUI would even want to accept more doctoral students from Switzerland. With EU enlargement to the east, greater consideration is being given to a growing number of countries and to prospective students from outside the EU. Several of the experts interviewed suggested that, despite this obstacle, the number of Swiss doctoral scholarships to the EUI could potentially be increased. These experts felt that the quality of students and the willingness of professors to supervise dissertations are decisive factors in rendering a favourable decision, regardless of the students' nationality. EUI admissions officers involved in selecting doctoral candidates confirmed these assertions.

| **Impact of scholarships at both individual and institutional level**

We draw a distinction between the impact of doctoral scholarships to the EUI on the recipients themselves (individual level) and the impact of these scholarships on the institutions where the recipients currently work (institutional level).

How much of an impact did the scholarships have at *individual level*? Overall, quite a big one. Our analyses (based on both the interviews and the online survey) show that the EUI has always been, and remains, a highly desirable location for Swiss doctoral candidates in the social sciences, political science, law, economics and history. Studying at the EUI offers an enticing opportunity to complete a PhD in an international and stimulating research environment (professors and fellow students). A PhD at the EUI equips students with relevant knowledge and skills that pave the way for a successful academic career. Holding a PhD from the EUI also brings value to a student's curriculum vitae. And finally, the EUI offers an excellent opportunity for international networking and interaction between scholars. In the online survey, at least 90 percent of the former scholarship holders surveyed gave largely positive feedback regarding individual impact.

How much of an impact did the scholarships have at institutional level? The online survey showed that most of the former scholarship holders (around 60%) remain in the higher education sector after their time at the EUI. Former scholarship holders therefore help to strengthen research institutions in Switzerland. Some of the alumni have also become tenured professors. In addition, a large number of EUI alumni who no longer work in academia remain actively involved in European and EU affairs. This has a positive effect at institutional level and benefits the organisations where the former scholarship holders work. The knowledge gained at the EUI can effectively be applied in the workplace.

1.2.2 Findings on graduate scholarships to the CdE

We first discuss the design, implementation and outputs of the scholarship programme before going on to present our observations regarding the impact of these scholarships.

| Scholarship design

As with doctoral scholarships to the EUI, feedback on the design of graduate scholarships to the CdE was exceedingly positive. The vast majority of (former) scholarship holders and experts interviewed at the CdE consider both the scholarship amount and the *duration of funding* to be adequate. The CdE as an institution enjoys a solid reputation in Switzerland and is unrivalled as a source of professional expertise in European and EU affairs and knowledge of European institutions. Nearly all of the (former) scholarship holders interviewed in the online survey state that the studies at the CdE are unique. Survey respondents at both the EUI and the CdE also concurred with the interviewed experts on the absolute necessity of maintaining these scholarship programmes. Very few of the (former) scholarship holders interviewed would have studied at the CdE without a graduate scholarship. The only criticism pertained to the number of scholarships: Given the ambitious goals set by the federal government, this number is clearly too low.

| Award procedure and communication

The *selection and award procedure* at the CdE is deemed adequate. SERI's selection criteria for scholarships are stricter than those of the CdE, which also accepts Bachelor's degree students for admission (SERI requires a Master's degree). Nevertheless, most of the experts interviewed and (former) scholarship holders surveyed consider SERI's admission criteria to be a suitable and transparent way of ensuring high-quality applications. In general, both the selection and award procedure are rated as very positive. The only point of criticism mentioned by the experts interviewed was the *considerable workload* associated with the selection process. They felt that this workload was disproportionate to the small number of scholarships awarded. A minority of the (former) scholarship holders surveyed also felt that the requirements for the selection interview were unclearly formulated.

In line with our findings on doctoral scholarships to the EUI, most of the experts interviewed and the (former) scholarship holders surveyed felt that *communication* could be improved. As it does with EUI scholarships, SERI channels all information regarding graduate scholarships to the CdE to student advisors and international relations offices (IROs) of universities, which in turn provide this information to students. However, as the results of the online survey show, only a small proportion of the target groups is reached in this way. Although university professors and student peers are the greatest source of information, SERI has made little or no use of this communication channel.

| Output: Growth in the number of applications and awarded scholarships

Demand for graduate scholarships to the CdE remained strong until 2013/14 but then the volume of applications declined steadily. This trend is also reflected in the number of scholarships awarded, with the maximum number not fully utilised after 2016/17. In addition, the number of selected candidates who decided to turn down their scholarship has been increasing since 2001.

How to explain this decreasing demand for graduate scholarships to the CdE? Based on the interviews, it is possible that certain general conditions have affected the appeal of these scholarships over time: Interest in European politics seems to have dwindled in Switzerland in recent years. It is also very difficult for Swiss students to pursue a career in European organisations and institutions. Since studies at the CdE are especially designed for this purpose, the interest of potential candidates from Switzerland has fallen. Finally, the greater mobility of students, a growing number of Master's degree programmes and the declining importance of the LL.M. (which can be obtained at the CdE) in legal practice are probably additional factors explaining why Swiss students are showing less interest in graduate scholarships to the CdE.

| Impact of scholarships at both individual and institutional level

We draw a distinction between the impact of graduate scholarships to the CdE on the recipients themselves (individual level) and the impact of these scholarships on the institutions where the recipients currently work (institutional level).

The impact *at individual level* can be considered high. The following feedback from the interviews and surveys of graduates confirm this: studying at the CdE enables students to establish an international network of contacts, obtain a prestigious degree that opens up additional career prospects, acquire specific knowledge and skills relating to the functioning of European institutions and, in particular, European law.

At the same time, the survey of (former) scholarship holders revealed discontent with the fact that recruitment processes within the Federal Administration fail to ascribe any particular value to CdE training. Although the federal government finances the studies, CdE training is not a significant criterion in the selection of personnel for relevant positions within the Federal Administration. Respondents did not perceive this as an intentional policy but rather the result of a fundamental lack of awareness of the CdE within the Federal Administration.

Based on the interviews, the impact at institutional level is less clear-cut. According to the interviewees, the CdE plays an important role in preparing future managers for work within the Federal Administration (especially in the area of diplomacy) and in the private sector. Respondents also expressed their view that Swiss graduate scholarships to the CdE facilitate the training of specialists who can provide Switzerland with improved access to European institutions, especially the EU. This creates benefits for both the Federal Administration and the private sector, as the career paths of alumni show. About half of former scholarship holders currently work for the Federal Administration, universities, NGOs and supranational organisations that are actively engaged in European and EU affairs. These are all indications of the institutional impact of the scholarships.

1.2.3 Results of country comparison

We compared Switzerland's EUI and CdE scholarship programmes with those offered by Germany, Austria and Luxembourg. The results can be summarised as follows:

- With a few exceptions, Switzerland's *award procedure* closely resembles those of the countries considered in the comparison. Switzerland's procedure thus follows an established practice abroad.
- Generally speaking, Swiss and Luxembourg scholarship amounts are higher than those offered by Austria and Germany. In the case of doctoral scholarships to the EUI, the Swiss *scholarship amount* is 20% higher than those offered by Austria and Germany. In the case of graduate scholarships to the CdE, the Swiss scholarship amount is about 35% higher. The calculations for the EUI do not include family allowances and certain

insurance benefits paid by Austria and Germany, nor do they include monthly allowances to attend congresses and the travel allowances paid by Germany.

- Scholarship *implementation* is organised differently in Austria and Germany than in Luxembourg and Switzerland: In Austria, an outside agency is entrusted with awarding of scholarships to the EUI and the CdE. This agency manages other scholarship programmes and also acts as Austria's national agency for Erasmus+. In Germany, an outside agency is also responsible for awarding scholarships to the EUI and a civil society organisation has been entrusted with awarding scholarships to the CdE. In both Switzerland and Luxembourg, in contrast, it is the Federal Administration that is responsible for awarding the scholarships.
- The demand for doctoral scholarships to the EUI is high in Austria, Germany and Switzerland and there are no difficulties awarding the scholarships. Demand among students in Luxembourg for doctoral scholarships to the EUI has been low in recent years and as a result, not all available doctoral scholarships could be awarded in many cases. The situation is different for graduate scholarships to the CdE: while demand has been falling in Switzerland, it has remained either constant (Germany) or is growing again (Austria and Luxembourg).

1.3 Achievement of goals

As stated above, the Confederation seeks to achieve three goals with these scholarships. We therefore considered goal achievement in the light of our findings.

1.3.1 – Support outstanding young scholars and researchers (innovation, creativity) (Goal 1).

Swiss doctoral scholarships to the EUI have achieved this goal on a *qualitative* level. According to our surveys, strongly motivated and highly qualified students are selected and trained. Moreover, 60% of former scholarship holders remain in the academic system after completing their studies. This has a positive institutional impact on Switzerland's higher education sector. In the case of Swiss graduate scholarships to the CdE, the results are less visible: only 13% of former scholarship holders now work in higher education. It is worth mentioning, however, that CdE training focusses less on academic careers and more on professional practice, which explains the low percentage.

In *quantitative* terms, the number of young scholars supported is small: if we extrapolate the results of the online survey to the total number of former scholarship holders since the mid-1990s, we find that only 27 former EUI scholarship holders and 19 former CdE scholarship holders³ are still working in academia today. Measured against the number of dissertations completed in Switzerland in the fields of law, history, economics and political science, this is too small a proportion to have any quantitative significance.⁴ In other

³ This estimate should be taken with a grain of salt given the small sample size and the unavoidable self-selection when filling out the survey. However, given the very large difference between the number of EUI dissertations and the total number of dissertations at Swiss universities, this assertion remains valid for the purposes of comparison.

⁴ To put this into perspective, since 1998 (the year when the first Swiss scholarship holders obtained their PhD from the EUI), a total of 11,628 people in the social sciences and humanities, 5,419 in economics and 3,968 in law have obtained their PhD from Swiss universities (source: Federal Statistical Office (2022). Graduates of universities and institutes of technology by year, institution, group of fields of study, level of graduation and sex) <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/education-science/tertiary-higher-institutions.assetdetail.22985307.html>, Last checked on 6 June 2022.

words: Goal 1 has been achieved at a qualitative level; in order to produce a quantitatively significant impact, a larger number of scholarship holders is needed.

1.3.2 Encourage participation in platforms that address the challenges of European integration (Goal 2)

The scholarships are intended to intensify networking between Swiss specialists and their counterparts at EU institutions. At the same time, the aim is to train corresponding specialists to work in Switzerland. How effectively has this goal been reached? Our assessment is very similar to the one reached for Goal 1.

If we consider achievement of goals on a *qualitative* level, our surveys show that former holders of a doctoral scholarship to the EUI and (to an even larger extent) holders of a graduate scholarship to the CdE have established networks of contacts with specialists in Europe. Furthermore, around 60% of former scholarship holders now work in jobs in Switzerland requiring European and EU expertise. These are strong indicators that this goal has also been reached in qualitative terms. In other words, the people who underwent training are successful on the specific labour market relating to Swiss, European and EU affairs. The online survey of (former) scholarship holders supports this finding: respondents rate the achievement of this goal as high.

Based on our data, we are unable to provide a reliable assessment of how *quantitatively* significant CdE and EUI training is in terms of networking between Switzerland and the EU. We also are unable to determine the impact that the absolute number of trained specialists has had. However, we can assume that a total of 138 trained individuals constitutes only a small proportion of those responsible for maintaining networking ties between Switzerland and the EU.

1.3.3 Help strengthen relations between Switzerland and the EU (Goal 3)

This is probably the most ambitious goal of the three. Our results lead to the following assessment: On a *qualitative* level, we have seen that the training provided at the EUI, and especially at the CdE, produces specialists who can positively influence Swiss-EU relations. First of all, both institutes have a strong reputation for the quality of their study programmes. Secondly, the vast majority of the (former) scholarship holders surveyed consider themselves to be competent in areas relating to Swiss, European and EU affairs. Most of the respondents (60%) also currently work in jobs that are closely linked to Swiss, European and EU topics. And finally, (former) scholarship holders themselves consider that they have achieved this goal to a high degree. On a qualitative level, therefore, the scholarships seem to contribute to achievement of Goal 3.

This positive result is tempered by our observations on a quantitative level. While there is every reason to believe that training has an effect on achievement of Goal 3 at individual level, it is very difficult to assess whether this effect is also quantitatively significant for Swiss-EU relations. Since the mid-1990s, around 230 people have been trained at the EUI and the CdE. Around 60% of these (138 people) hold jobs that are linked to European and EU affairs. To put this into perspective, this figure is smaller in absolute terms than the number of people working in the Europe Division of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). We therefore conclude that, in quantitative terms, this goal has not been reached. The absolute number of graduates is small compared to the ambitiousness of the goal.

1.4 Conclusions, overall assessment and recommendations

The results described above allow us to present conclusions in the form of a strength-weakness profile for the two scholarship programmes. Based on this, we provide an overall assessment and formulate recommendations.

1.4.1 Key strengths of the scholarship programmes

The two scholarship programmes have the following key strengths:

- Both the EUI and the CdE have a strong *reputation* and offer a high-quality syllabus. Both institutions have very rigorous admissions procedures, which ensures a stimulating and highly competitive environment.
- *Networking opportunities* are an important unique selling point of each institute. At the EUI, networking takes place primarily in academic circles, whereas at the CdE, it involves people in EU institutions and future European leaders.
- The focus of training at the EUI is on research activities. This training can be described as excellent. Studies at the EUI serve as a springboard for career progression. Many former students remain in research.
- At CdE, emphasis is placed on professional practice. The networking with EU institutions, particularly at the Bruges campus, can be described as unique. In addition to the studies themselves, students develop their language skills and interact with people from other EU countries. These are two strong selling points in favour of studies at the CdE. Studies at the CdE therefore greatly improve one's competitiveness on the EU labour market. Around half of the former scholarship holders at both institutes deal with European and EU topics in the workplace, which we consider to be a high percentage.

1.4.2 Key weaknesses of the scholarship programmes

The two scholarship programmes have the following key weaknesses:

- First of all, in terms of the *level of awareness*, target groups in Switzerland are not familiar with study programmes offered by these two institutes and know little about available Swiss scholarships. The current measures taken to promote the scholarships through universities (i.e. IROs and study coordinators) result in a scattering and loss of information. Unlike Austria and Germany, Switzerland does not use external providers for promotional purposes.
- The Swiss scholarship amount to the EUI falls in the middle range compared with other European countries. However, it is lower than the scholarship amounts offered by Scandinavian countries, which have a similarly high purchasing power as Switzerland. The Swiss doctoral scholarship to the EUI is also lower in monetary terms than Swiss doctoral scholarships to universities in Switzerland.
- The CdE Master's degree is not very well known in Switzerland and has a minimal impact on employment prospects. It is also worth mentioning that the number of applications for a Swiss graduate scholarship to the CdE has declined in recent years.
- It is not possible for the three stated goals to be achieved on a quantitative level. There is a disconnect between the number of scholarships awarded at both the EUI and the CdE and the ambitiousness of the goals set. Moreover, these goals for the scholarships are the same for both institutes even though each institute has a very different focus (the EUI is more geared towards research, the CdE towards professional practice).

1.4.3 Overall assessment

In light of the foregoing, we draw the following general conclusion: There are few institutions in Europe that offer the same level of quality as the EUI and the CdE in their field. Both are appealing and competitive institutions in the European context. From this standpoint, we can confirm the merits of the scholarship programmes and the institutions selected for them. There is also no need to develop new collaborative agreements in the medium term. Both scholarships have a very high impact at individual level: studies at the EUI and CdE are a solid reference on the curriculum vitae of former scholarship holders. In addition, the training provided at both institutions allows students to gain knowledge and skills that help to advance their careers. And finally, scholarship holders at both institutions are able to establish networks of contacts with people in the EU. This generally glowing assessment is nevertheless tempered by the low level of awareness of these scholarships among target groups. In addition, the small number of scholarships also prevents the ambitious goals from being achieved in quantitative terms.

1.4.4 Recommendations

Based on the foregoing assessments, we have formulated eight recommendations that can help improve the implementation and impact of scholarships.

| Recommendation 1: *Increase the number of scholarships:*

The goals for these scholarships are ambitious: In awarding scholarships, SERI seeks to support outstanding young scholars and researchers, encourage participation in platforms that address the challenges of European integration and help strengthen relations between Switzerland and the EU. Measured against these goals, the number of scholarships is too low. In order to bring goals and achievements more closely in line, we formulate Recommendation 1 as follows:

- *Recommendation 1: We recommend increasing the number of scholarships at both institutes. If the number of scholarships cannot be increased, we recommend that the goals for these scholarships be scaled down accordingly.*

Switzerland cannot increase the number of scholarships without obtaining the approval of EUI and CdE decision-making bodies. While Switzerland is a full member of the CdE, it is not represented in the decision-making bodies of the EUI. This complicates implementation of Recommendation 1. Nevertheless, we feel that the quality of students from Switzerland will be a strong argument facilitating implementation of Recommendation 1.

| Recommendation 2: *Set more differentiated goals*

As described above, the two institutes differ greatly in terms of focus (research vs. professional practice) and address a different target audience. Currently, the goals set for Swiss scholarships to these two institutes do not adequately reflect these differences. This leads us to Recommendation 2, which is formulated as follows:

- *Recommendation 2: We recommend setting specific goals for the two scholarship programmes and aligning selection criteria with these goals. In the case of the EUI, the goal of scientific excellence should be given greater weight. In the case of the CdE, greater weight should be given to the goal of transferring knowledge to professional practice, which has a direct bearing on Swiss-EU relations.*

We are convinced that communication could also be facilitated through greater differentiation of goals, which should be highlighted when promoting the scholarships.

| Recommendation 3: Increase scholarship amounts

The academic reputation of the EUI in Europe is undisputed. Nevertheless, Swiss doctoral scholarships to the EUI compete with other academic support measures in Switzerland (doctoral scholarships) where scholarship amounts are higher. The doctoral scholarship amount that Switzerland offers for studies at the EUI is also lower than the amount offered by Scandinavian countries, which are comparable in terms of purchasing power. Recommendation 3 is thus formulated as follows:

- *Recommendation 3: We recommend increasing the scholarship amounts, especially to the EUI to bring them up to the level of Scandinavian countries. This can also be achieved by granting travel allowances and paying social insurance contributions.*

| Recommendation 4: adjust measures taken to promote the scholarships

Our evaluation showed that very little is being done to promote the scholarships, which results in too little information reaching the target groups. This is particularly important in view of the declining number of applications for graduate scholarships to the CdE. There is a need for intensification of efforts to promote the scholarships and a specific selection of information channels. We therefore formulate Recommendation 4 as follows:

- *Recommendation 4: More specific measures should be taken to promote the scholarship programmes. We suggest that professors in the relevant disciplines (primarily law, political science, international relations, interdisciplinary European studies, economics, history) approach students directly. Information about the institutions and scholarships should be made available at the institutes and in courses. The effectiveness of these measures may be further enhanced by enlisting civil society organisations (e.g. European Movement Switzerland, foraus) for promotion purposes. Likewise, the reach can also be extended via the alumni network and additional resources can be set aside for communication.*

| Recommendation 5: Adjust the content of awareness-raising measures

The surveys showed that the EUI and CdE are well known among insiders and enjoy a very solid reputation in these circles. However, the same cannot be said for awareness among the target groups. Students are not very familiar with the two institutions and are unable to situate them in an international context. This is especially true for the Natolin campus in Warsaw, which offers interesting study content for students from Switzerland but is practically unknown. Recommendation 5 is formulated as follows:

- *Recommendation 5: When promoting the scholarships to students, the specific importance and reputation of the EUI and CdE should be emphasised. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the study programmes and locations should be conveyed in a more targeted fashion. In this way, the reputation and strength of the institutions can be better utilized for promotional purposes.*

| Recommendation 6: Improve awareness on an operational level

SERI scholarship awarders and EUI and CdE admissions officers confirmed that data on former scholarship holders are available but need to be drawn from several different sources. Discussions and interviews with alumni also revealed that the contact details on the alumni network require updating. We consider this latter point to be a vital prerequisite in making more effectively use of promotional measures. This leads us to Recommendation 6:

- *Recommendation 6: We recommend that the database of former scholarship holders be systematically maintained and kept up-to-date, with due consideration for data protection. This would make it easier to maintain contacts with the alumni network and enable intensification of measures to promote the scholarships. Information events with former scholarship holders at universities, a successful approach already used in other countries, could be organised. Alternatively, a call for applications could be sent out to alumni.*

| Recommendation 7: Test implementation structures

At present, SERI's resources are too limited to make scholarships more widely known to a broad target audience. The question therefore arises as to how best to overcome this obstacle. One possibility would be to outsource implementation of scholarships to an institution that already handles the awarding of other scholarships or to an institution that focuses on Swiss-EU relations. In this way, synergies could be used and additional resources could be mobilised. From our perspective, the main option for SERI would be to outsource promotional activities. We formulate Recommendation 7 as follows:

- *Recommendation 7: Consideration should be given to delegating part of implementation (e.g. promotion of scholarships, preliminary review of applications) to an external agency (as is done with Austrian and German scholarships to the EUI and CdE) or to a civil society organisation.*

| Recommendation 8: Create bridges between CdE scholarships and the Federal Administration:

According to the surveys, former CdE scholarship holders hardly have any advantages when applying for jobs at the FDFA and SECO. This is because the scholarships are not well known within the Federal Administration and because federal employees are not encouraged to pursue training at the CdE. Currently, the Federal Administration does not derive much benefit from these scholarships, which are actually funded by the federal government itself. Recommendation 8 is thus formulated as follows:

- *Recommendation 8: The reasons why the CdE is not well known within the Federal Administration should be explored as an initial step towards raising awareness of the CdE. One way of doing this would be to link training at the CdE with an internship with the Federal Administration.*