
The Dimension of Higher Education in the Strategic Partnership between Brazil and the European Union: The Case of the Sciences without Frontiers Program (2007-2016)¹

A Dimensão da Educação Superior na Parceria Estratégica entre o Brasil e a União Europeia: O Caso do Ciências sem Fronteiras (2007-2016)

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Abstract: The bilateral relationship between Brazil and the European Union began in 1960. In 2007, it reached a new level with the establishment of a strategic partnership between the two international actors. As a result, bilateral ties were strengthened in several sectors, such as renewable energy and the promotion of human rights. The various documents produced during this partnership indicated higher education and technological and scientific cooperation as important vectors of approximation, in addition to a vast field of convergence of interests and values. Therefore, this article has the general scope of presenting the evolution of the relations between Brazil and the European Union from 2007 to 2016. The specific objectives are: (a) to examine the evolution of the theme of the internationalization of higher education in summit meetings between Brazil and the European Union from the beginning of the Brazilian-European strategic partnership (2007) until the end of the Dilma Rousseff administration (2016); and (b) to carry out a case study on the role of the European Union in the Science Without Borders program, from its creation in 2011 to 2016, that is, from the beginning to its total shutdown. The methodology adopted was historical-descriptive, through the analysis of primary sources, such as Brazilian and European official data and documents, and a survey of specialized bibliographies on the topic. A final analysis shows the success of the bilateral cooperation in the area of internationalization of higher education, driven by this strategic partnership.

Keywords: Brazil; European Union; Strategic Partnership; Education; Science without Borders.

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Resumo: A relação bilateral entre Brasil e União Europeia teve início no ano de 1960. Em 2007, o relacionamento galgou a um novo patamar com o estabelecimento de uma parceria estratégica entre os dois atores internacionais. Com isso, existiu o fortalecimento dos laços bilaterais em diversos setores, como energias renováveis e promoção dos direitos humanos. Os diversos documentos produzidos ao longo dessa parceria indicaram a educação superior e a cooperação tecnológica e científica como vetores importantes de aproximação, além de um vasto campo de convergência de interesses e valores. Diante desse cenário, o presente artigo tem como escopo geral apresentar a evolução das relações entre Brasil e União Europeia de 2007 a 2016. Os objetivos específicos são: (a) examinar a evolução da temática da internacionalização da educação superior nas reuniões de cúpulas entre Brasil e União Europeia desde o início da parceria estratégica brasileiro-europeia (2007) até o fim do governo Dilma Rousseff (2016); (b) fazer um estudo de caso sobre o papel da União Europeia no programa Ciência Sem Fronteiras, desde sua criação em 2011 até 2016, ou seja, do início à sua paralização total. Para tanto, optou-se pelo método histórico-descritivo, por meio da análise de fontes primárias, como dados e documentos oficiais brasileiros e europeus; foi feito também um levantamento de bibliografias especializadas sobre o tema. Em análise final, observa-se o êxito da cooperação bilateral na área de internacionalização da educação superior, impulsionado pela parceria estratégica.

Palavras-chave: Brasil; União Europeia; Parceria Estratégica; Educação; Ciência sem Fronteiras.

1. Introduction

The internationalization of higher education is increasingly present in the contemporary world, whether due to the increase in the transnational flows of information, people, goods and services – a phenomenon also called “globalization” – or because of the economic valorization and political appreciation of the knowledge produced by the academic community in the information age, or even due to the development of a global market in the area of higher education (Azevedo, 2015; Amal, Borges, 2015). Nevertheless, the internationalization of research and higher education is increasingly seen as a vector for generating income and wealth in contemporary society (creative economy) and facing global challenges, expressed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the UN.

Among the main players in this scenario are the United States, Australia, the People's Republic of China, Canada, India, Brazil and members of the European Union (EU). Each of the actors has an international strategy, with a view to expanding their participation and power in this arena. For example, in the European Union (EU),

internationalization goes beyond academic mobility, as it covers all the transversal development of higher education and encompasses all areas of research, teaching and extension, aiming not only to benefit the academic community, but also to strengthen the European integration project through the effects of spill-over to other economic, social, cultural and political sectors (Hass, 1970).

The promotion of educational reforms by European Union participants (such as the Bologna Process, 1999) has generated important changes, such as the reorganization and encouragement of the internationalization of European higher education via programs financed by European funds such as Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus+, both in the field of international academic mobility and in the creation of joint undergraduate and graduate programs or European educational consortia, among other actions (Costa, 2017).

For its part, Brazil also formulated policies for implementing the internationalization of higher education, led by the Coordination for Improvement of Higher Level Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*, CAPES) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (*Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico*, CNPq). Both agencies encourage and finance the internationalization of education through scholarships and support for joint international projects, among other initiatives (Maués & Bastos, 2017).

In recent years, the main Brazilian program for the internationalization of higher education was the “Science Without Borders” (SwB), which started in July 2011 and ended in July 2016. This program aimed at the expansion and innovation of science and technology in Brazil, by expanding the flow of international outgoing mobility of students and researchers. To this end, the Ministry of Education, through CAPES and CNPq, established cooperation agreements with numerous state and private entities (Miranda & Bischoff, 2018).

SwB served approximately 93,000 Brazilian researchers and students, at a cost of 13.2 billion Reais invested by the Brazilian National Treasury (Marques, 2017), with the European Union being the main destination for these academics. According to the Control Panel of SwB (2016), the countries of the European Union received 44,747 beneficiaries until January 2016, that is, approximately 50% of the scholarships

granted by the program.

The European option of SwB must be understood within the strategic partnership between Brazil and the European Union (from 2007 to the present day). In this high-level political dialog, Brazil's and the European Union's authorities raised the level of interlocutions with thematic forums, periodic meetings and the creation of a vast agenda with various themes, such as the fight against poverty and the promotion of regional cooperation, among several others (Tomazini, 2019).

Education – especially higher education –, development and cooperation in the areas of science and technology are present on the agendas of the representatives of both parties. The importance devoted to the area of higher education was highlighted in the Joint Declaration of the 5th Summit, in 2011, in the city of Brussels, when the topic was definitely introduced on the agenda of this partnership (Espósito & Espindola, 2019).

As stated earlier, this article aims to: (a) examine the evolution of the internationalization of higher education in summits between Brazil and the European Union since the beginning of the Brazilian-European strategic partnership (2007) until the end of the Dilma Rousseff administration (2016); and (b) carry out a case study on the Science Without Borders program from its creation in 2011 to its total shutdown in 2016.

Two assumptions are highlighted: (a) Brazil and the European Union are important partners; however, with the evolution of the strategic partnership, there was a change in the focus of the relationship, from themes such as disarmament and peace promotion to others such as education and promotion of human rights (Saraiva, 2019), and (b) education – especially higher education – played an important role in strengthening bilateral ties (Espósito & Espindola, 2019). However, with the end of the SwB program and the resizing of the Erasmus and Horizon 2020 programs, among others, the educational dimension lost its initial impetus; in addition, the Brazilian political-economic crisis (2015-2018) affected the dynamics of the partnership.

Despite this loss of momentum in the bilateral relations, it can be said that the constitution of the strategic partnership between Brazil and the European Union, in 2007, took cooperation to a new level, creating channels and instruments for the realization of dialog, such as the Partnership Instrument (PI). New topics were discussed, such as the

internationalization of higher education and the governance of global themes (Cravinho, 2017; Tomanzini, 2017; Espósito & Espindola, 2019), generating a process of feedback of the partnership, with the inclusion of new actors, such as universities and funding agencies, and spilling over to other topics, such as human rights, which ended up strengthening asymmetric interdependence and creating a complex network of bilateral cooperation (Tomanzini, 2018).

In addition, higher education is seen by European and Brazilian authorities as an important soft power instrument to create complex cooperation networks with a view to projecting the image and strengthening the State's position on sensitive issues, such as trade and agriculture, thus reducing eventual “costs” (trade offs) in complex international negotiations (Tomanzini, 2019; Cravinho, 2017). According to Menezes and Paiva (2019), this can be seen in Brazil's role in the recent signing of the trade agreement between Mercosur and the European Union.

For this work, the authors elected the historical-descriptive method (Lakatos & Marconi, 2001). To this end, several primary sources were examined, in particular Brazilian and European official data and documents, and a selected bibliography on the topic was used.

The authors also opted for Robert Keohane's (2001) and Nye's (2009) liberal-institutional theoretical approach, which presents important analytical tools, such as the idea of spill-over – overflowing cooperation for several fields, of complex interdependence, generating the strengthening of the cooperation, trust and mutual dependence ties – and soft power, subtle ways of projecting power and attracting other countries. In addition, the importance of topics such as health, environment and education in international relations was emphasized.

Nye (2004, p. 4) defines soft power as: “country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it”. This power is related to three main power sources: culture, political values and moral authority.

The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority) (Nye, 2004, p. 11).

Historically, universities and the internationalization process of higher education are important instruments of a State's soft power for actively promoting these three dimensions (Wojciuk, 2018, p. 343). Thus, the partnership between State actors – such as international funding agencies – and non-State actors, such as universities, are important to strengthen the sources of a State's soft power.

It is true that firms, *universities* [grifo do autor], foundations, churches, and other nongovernmental groups develop soft power of their own that may reinforce or be at odds with official foreign policy goals. *That is all the more reason for governments to make sure that their own actions and policies reinforce rather than undercut their soft power* [grifo do autor]. And this is particularly true since private sources of soft power are likely to become increasingly important in the global information age (Nye, 2004, p. 17).

Jane Knight (2003) defines the field of the internationalization of higher education as being “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education”. Maillard (2019) analyzes the importance of the elements of the international, intercultural and global dimension that refer to the various directions of internationalization, as well as of the elements which are characteristic of the world of interdependence in which countries live. Jane Knight (2004, 2018) and Hans De Wit (2013, 2011) indicate the importance of knowledge diplomacy in international relations:

Knowledge diplomacy involves the contribution that education and knowledge creation, sharing and use make to international relations and engagement. But knowledge diplomacy should be seen as a reciprocal process. Mutual benefits and a two-way exchange are therefore essential to the concept of international education and research as a tool of knowledge diplomacy (Knight & Wit, 2018, p. 3).

John Hudzik (2011) points out the importance of a “comprehensive internationalization” of the actors according to objectives, values and means. On his turn, Wit et al. (2015) expands the significance of the process to better adapt to contemporary reality:

The *intentional* process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, *in order to enhance the quality of education and*

research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society (Wit et al., 2015, p. 285)

Finally, Knight (2004, pp. 14-17) demonstrates that the strategy of internationalization of a higher education institution is conditioned by external factors, such as public policies and foreign funding, and also by internal institutional elements, such as the capacity of bureaucracy, which can lead the internationalization process either at home or abroad/cross-border education (Beelen & Jones, 2015). In the case of Science Without Borders, the option was abroad education, or outgoing mobility, which has higher costs but allows the beneficiary greater cultural, social and scientific immersion in the experience of mobility.

Soft power of higher education is exercised through influence on the intellectual and scientific life and through spreading ideas worldwide. Attraction of students and scholars from abroad to higher education institutions is considered to be an effective approach to cultivating individuals who will develop an understanding of a given country, and support for it. It also promotes mutual understanding between the countries which participate in an exchange... (Wojciuk, 2018, p. 345).

The selection of Science Without Borders (SwB) is due to the ambitious objectives of the program – such as granting 100,000 scholarships – as well as the amount of resources contributed to the action, of approximately 13 billion Reais. This action placed Brazil at the center of discussions on the internationalization of higher education and showed the importance of mobility in promoting soft power, as highlighted by Nye:

Soft power rests on some shared values. That is why exchanges are often more effective than mere broadcasting. By definition, soft power means getting others to want the same outcomes you want, and that requires understanding how they are hearing your messages, and fine-tuning it accordingly. It is crucial to understand the target audience... (Nye, 2004, p. 111).

The Science Without Borders program, being a relationship with a double meaning and with win-win characteristics, can also be characterized as knowledge diplomacy, since there was great convergence of objectives, interests and values between the parties.

In addition to the introduction and final considerations, this article is divided into three parts. The first presents the evolution of the strategic partnership between Brazil

and the European Union from 2007 to 2016. Thus, it is expected to present the vectors of this relation and the expectations of each of the partners. The second examines the theme of internationalization of education as an element of soft power in international relations, especially from the perspective of Brazil and the European Union. The third part analyzes the SwB Program within the context of the strategic partnership.

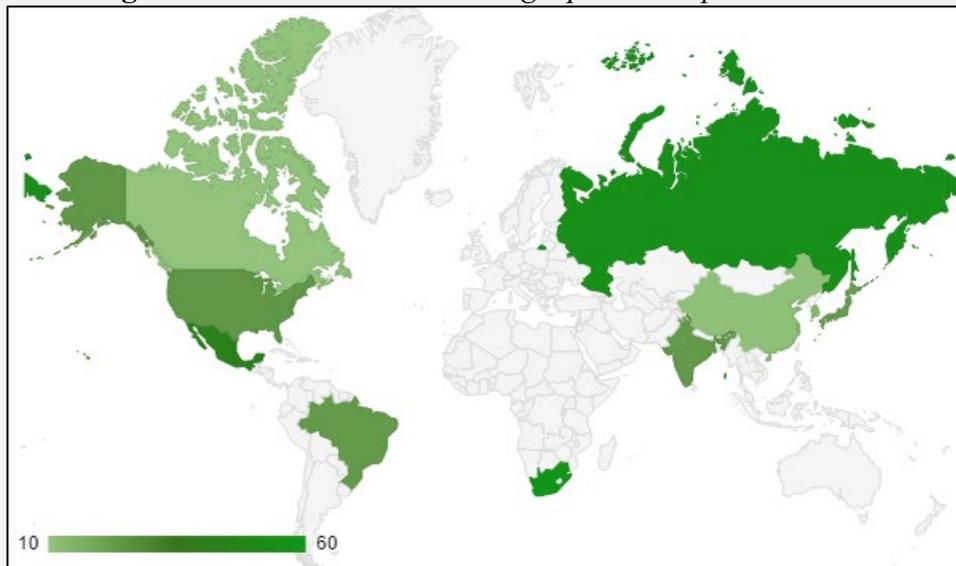
2. The evolution of the relations between Brazil and the European Union: A strategic partnership in construction

Despite the relations between the Brazilian Government and European countries dating back to the time of independence (Gueraldi, 2003) and containing strong economic, political and cultural ties, the relations between Brazil and the European Union began in the 1960s (Cunha, 2014).

Only in July 2007 a strategic partnership was formalized, given the growing importance of both actors on the international scenario (Gratius, 2018) and the convergence of interests and values (MRE, 2018). On the Brazilian side, the goal was to strengthen Brazil's proactive role in global politics in an international system in transition (Saraiva, 2018, p. 278). From a European perspective, Brazil and Mexico have an important role in the relations between Latin American countries and the European Union, either due to their economic weight or their political relations. Thus, in 2005, the European Commission published a "Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament", in which the importance and the need for a strategic partnership with Brazil and Mexico were emphasized for the construction of a "new" globalized world and a fruitful relationship between the European continent and Latin America (European Commission, 2005).

A strategic partnership is a "singularized bilateral political relationship . . . that the European Union establishes with each of the members of a certain group of third countries, due to the importance of their role on the international scenario" (Barthelmes, 2008, p. 37). The European Union currently has ten strategic partnerships distributed around the world, composed of the following countries: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, and the United States (Cravinho, 2017).

Figure 1: *Countries with a strategic partnership with the EU*



Source: Tomazini (2018, p. 65).

The Brazil-European Union strategic partnership was formed at a time of building the Brazilian leadership in South America, driven by the successes of the Lula administration and the rise of leftist governments in the region (Saraiva, 2018, p. 279), which was called "pink tide" (Lambert, 2010). From this context, in the European perspective, Brazil would have many principles and values in common with the group, such as the fight against poverty and the search for the maintenance of democracy throughout the region. Furthermore, in the period from 1987 to 2006, Brazil had the countries of the European Union as its main foreign investors and commercial partners (Barthelmes, 2008).

With the creation of the strategic partnership, the political dialog between partners rose to a new level of interlocution on diverse topics. And not only through the annual summits at which the relationship is institutionalized, but also through regular meetings between senior officials, technicians and specialists, which took place both in Brazil and in the EU. Among the topics examined at the summits and in political relations are the following: promotion of peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, fight against poverty, promotion of regional cooperation and cooperation in the areas of science and technology (EU Delegation, 2016). The role of the business community must be highlighted during the Brazil-EU Political

Summits (Pereira & Juliano, 2019).

Since 2007 the European Union has become the second market for Brazilian exports, only behind China and ahead of the United States. Brazil is the thirteenth market for exports from the European Union. On the one hand, Brazil is the fifth largest investor in the European Union; on the other hand, the European Union is the largest foreign investor in Brazil (Apex, 2017). Table 1 presents the evolution of the trade chain between Brazil and the European Union from the 2000s to 2017, and shows a continuous growth until the economic crisis in the second half of the second decade of the 2000s. Brazilian exports are centered on agribusiness; on its turn, imports from the European Union are concentrated in high-value manufactured products (Apex, 2017, p. 8).

Table 1: *Commercial exchange between Brazil and the European Union*

Year/month	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	RESULT	
	US\$ FOB (A)	US\$ FOB (B)	BALANCE (A-B)	TRADE CHAIN (A+B)
2000	55.118.919.865	55.850.663.138	-731.743.273	110.969.583.003
2001	58.286.593.021	55.601.758.416	2.684.834.605	113.888.351.437
2002	60.438.653.035	47.242.654.199	13.195.998.836	107.681.307.234
2003	73.203.222.075	48.325.566.630	24.877.655.445	121.528.788.705
2004	96.677.498.766	62.835.615.629	33.841.883.137	159.513.114.395
2005	118.529.184.899	73.600.375.672	44.928.809.227	192.129.560.571
2006	137.807.469.531	91.350.840.805	46.456.628.726	229.158.310.336
2007	160.649.072.830	120.617.446.250	40.031.626.580	281.266.519.080
2008	197.942.442.909	172.984.767.614	24.957.675.295	370.927.210.523
2009	152.994.742.805	127.722.342.988	25.272.399.817	280.717.085.793
2010	201.915.285.335	181.768.427.438	20.146.857.897	383.683.712.773
2011	256.039.574.768	226.246.755.801	29.792.818.967	482.286.330.569
2012	242.578.013.546	223.183.476.643	19.394.536.903	465.761.490.189
2013	242.033.574.720	239.747.515.987	2.286.058.733	481.781.090.707
2014	225.100.884.831	229.154.462.583	-4.053.577.752	454.255.347.414
2015	191.134.324.584	171.449.050.909	19.685.273.675	362.583.375.493
2016	185.235.400.805	137.552.002.856	47.683.397.949	322.787.403.661
2017	107.710.145.552	71.494.120.474	36.216.025.078	179.204.266.026

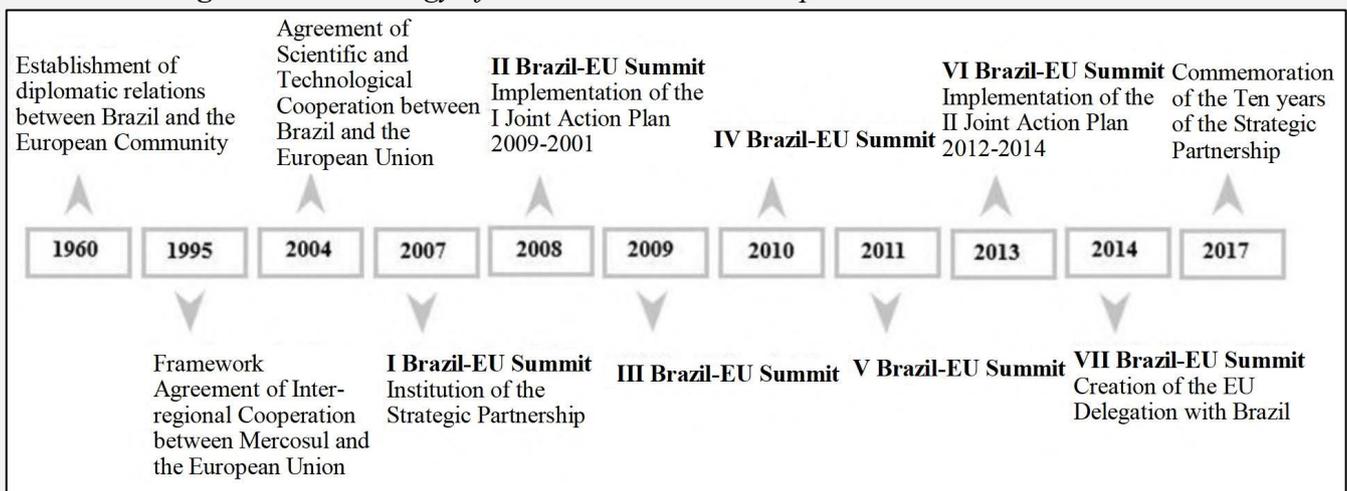
Source: MDIC (2020).

In the first summits, the focus was on an agenda of hard power⁴, with the main themes being security, peace and the arms issue, in addition to topics such as the environment and the fight against hunger. During the summits, this transition of the

⁴ Nye (2018) argues that, in this perspective, relationships are based on the use of coercion, that is, the agenda is focused on the instruments of actions such as the armed forces and security.

agenda between the themes of hard to soft power is analyzed, with focus for the fifth summit, in which the themes of soft power took on much greater proportions, with a focus on climate issues, higher education, combating global poverty and development of science and technology.

Figure 2: Chronology of the bilateral relationships between Brazil and the EU



Source: Brazil, 2019. Prepared by the authors based on information from the European Union Representation website (2019).

2.1. The evolution of the summit meetings in the strategic partnership between Brazil and the European Union (2007-2017)

In 2007, at the first summit meeting, an agenda was formulated with the following objectives: to strengthen political dialog, mainly on sectoral policies; to work together to address the most pressing challenges of global peace and security; to expand and deepen commercial and economic relations; to encourage exchanges between its peoples with the aim of greater understanding between both regions; and to implement a Joint Action Plan, to be developed during the second Brazil-EU summit (Eubrasil, 2007) (Pereira & Prado, 2015).

At the second Brazil-European Union Summit, held in the city of Rio de Janeiro on December 22nd and 23rd, 2008, economic issues and financial regulation were the main priorities on the agenda (EU Delegation, 2016). The topics covered were the following: the implementation of the I Brazil-European Union Joint Action Plan 2009-2011, in which both agreed to build a comprehensive strategic partnership by promoting peace and security through an effective multilateral system; strengthening the economic,

social and environmental partnership to promote sustainable development; promoting regional cooperation; promoting science, technology and innovation; promoting exchange between peoples (EU Council, 2008).

On October 6th, 2009, the third summit, held in Stockholm, discussed issues such as the implementation of the Joint Action Plan and global, regional and international issues, such as technological development, the environment and trade (EU Council, 2009).

As of December 1st, 2009, the Brazil-European Union relations were governed by the Lisbon Treaty. As a result, the other regular meetings started to be organized by the Presidents of Brazil and the European Council, and the subsequent summits, held in the cities of Brussels and Brasília, followed the same model.

On July 14th, 2010, in Brasilia, the fourth Brazil-European Union Summit was held. Once again the importance of building the 2008 Joint Action Plan was discussed. Issues such as the commitment to the fight against arms and drug trafficking and sustainable development were addressed, among other topics (EU Council, 2010). There was also the creation of sector dialogs, to strengthen cooperation, and bilateral conversations between various sectors, in addition to the provision of a budget of up to 30 million Euros to finance projects of common interest (Sector Dialogs, 2020).

The fifth meeting of this partnership took place on October 4th, 2011 in the city of Brussels. On that occasion, the authorities stressed the importance of the summits for deepening political dialog in the face of global challenges, and, among other topics, addressed issues related to higher education, technological development and innovation, academic mobility and sustainable development (EU Council, 2011).

They emphasized their shared view on the crucial role of higher education, academic cooperation and mobility, as well as scientific research, technology and innovation, to promote rapid and sustainable growth and increase productivity and employability. They decided to strengthen EU-Brazil dialog and cooperation in these fields, based on existing policy instruments and programs, such as Erasmus Mundus and Marie Curie and the "Science without Borders" mobility scheme in Brazil. They also decided to launch a platform for dialog and exchange to promote academic mobility and cooperation between Brazil and the EU (Council EU, 2011, p. 2).

On January 24th, 2013, the sixth Brazil-European Union summit took place in Brasília. At that meeting, the 2012-2014 Joint Action Plan was implemented. Those present expressed their satisfaction with the partnership and with the progress in more than 30 areas of different sector dialogs and also showed enthusiasm for the growing bilateral relationship and the consequent increase in trade and investment flows between both parties (MRE, 2013).

In bilateral cooperation, the European Union invested 61 million Euros, distributed as follows: support for sector dialogs (9.15 million Euros); academic cooperation (30.5 million Euros); Center for European Studies (3.05 million Euros); and promotion of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development (18.3 million Euros) (Tomanzini, 2018). The largest amount of investment in academic cooperation occurred through the granting of scholarships from the Erasmus Mundus program, in operation in that same period (Tomanzini, 2018).

On February 24th, 2014, at the last summit of this partnership, three topics dominated political dialog: the first was economic and job growth, mainly due to the agreements aimed at bilateral-regional negotiations between Mercosur and the European Union; the second was the building a common agenda for global challenges (climate change, energy, human rights, among others); and the third was the proposal to build more solid cooperation on foreign policy and security (Brussels News, 2014).

During this period, Brazil started to be considered a middle-income country for the EU, which meant that the financing of the bilateral relationship would no longer be through development cooperation, but through the Partnership Instrument (PI). Cooperation is based on joint public policies in the multilateral and bilateral environment of sectors of common interest. To this end, the following projects considered relevant for the continuity of the relationship were immediately analyzed: bilateral cooperation of the sector dialogs, the Jean Monnet Program and the actions of public diplomacy (Tomanzini, 2018).

Thereafter, European financing started to be developed through a specific regional fund. Between 2014 and 2020, nearly 805 million Euros were allocated to Latin America, with Brazil being the preferred partner. The resources were distributed in the following manner:

163 million Euros were allocated to higher education under Erasmus+ [emphasis by the authors]; 300 million Euros are earmarked for environmental sustainability and climate change; 215 million Euros will be allocated to projects related to sustainability and inclusive growth for human development; 42 million Euros are intended to support good governance, accountability and social equality initiatives; 70 million Euros will be allocated to security and development projects; 15 million Euros will be allocated to support measures (Delegation Brazil, 2016).

In the bilateral relations between Brazil and the European Union, the area of education played an important role, as both opt for a strategy aimed at strengthening soft power (Pinheiro & Candeas, 2012; Geraldi, 2006) and multilateralism to the detriment of hard power. Thus, the theme of education, especially the internationalization of higher education, was important in the bilateral agenda between 2011 and 2016.

The topics related to international cooperation in higher education, research and innovation were always present in the different joint statements issued after each summit; however, the relevance given to these topics increased since 2011. An example is the Joint Declaration of the 5th EU-Brazil Summit of October 4th, 2011. In this statement, the Brazilian Government's Science without Borders (SwB) program, the Erasmus Mundus program, the 7th Framework Program for Technological Research and Development (7FP) and the EU's Marie Curie Actions are seen as instruments of political action to boost and implement cooperation between the two regions. The active involvement of higher education institutions and the teaching staff in the implementation of the High Level Political Dialog is another aspect highlighted in this document (Maia & Carvalho, 2014, p. 19-20).

However, what were the reasons that led the internationalization of higher education to gain a very important role in Brazilian-European relations?

3. The internationalization of higher education in the relations between Brazil and the European Union

On the one hand, in Brazil, President Dilma targeted as one of the thirteen main guidelines of her government the expansion of investment in research and development and in scholarships in strategic sectors – such as biofuels and nanotechnology – in order to transform the country into a “technological and scientific economy” (Brazil, 2011). This was also expected to reduce the scientific and technological gap that still segregates

Brazil from more developed nations, in addition to improving the training of human resources in the country (Manços & Coelho, 2017, p. 56). During an official visit to the United States, President Dilma Rousseff was very impressed by the breadth of initiatives, such as the “100 k Strong in the Americas”, created to strengthen academic mobility flows. She also saw the potential of joint initiatives for educational exchanges in science as a tool of the Brazilian foreign policy and soft power (Manços & Coelho, 2017, p. 56; Menezes & Paiva, 2019). This is clear in the presidential speech:

We are sure that, after the first hundred thousand, another hundred thousand will follow, and we want to open the scientific and technological training and the environment necessary for innovation to many Brazilians, because we depend on this massive training to create this kind of critical mass environment, which is essential for inventions, for discoveries and for this immense adventure of the human being that is to overcome oneself systematically.

I know our challenges are great, and Brazil is a complex country. I know we need, simultaneously, to face our historic debts, such as extreme poverty and the guarantee of raising the competitiveness of our society, our economy, through science, technology and innovation (Brazil, 2011b, n.p., emphasis by the authors).

According to Saraiva (2018, p. 279), Brazilian policy makers identified the partnership with the EU as an instrument to strengthen the country's prestige and international recognition on the international stage. One of the vectors of this relationship is the engagement in science and technology. Since 2004, there has been a Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement, whose objective is to increase investments and transfer of technology and innovation. In fact, during the V Brazil-European Union Summit in October 2011, one of the most emphasized themes was the strategic importance of increasing educational cooperation in higher education to promote flows of academic modalities and the construction of scientific, technological, and joint innovation research studies between Brazilians and Europeans. To achieve this goal, the parties decided to deepen their relations based on existing programs, such as Erasmus Mundus and Erasmus+, developed by the European Union, and the Science without Borders project created by Brazil (EU Council, 2011).

One of the goals of the European Union is to be a “civil power”, that is, an effective actor in the multilateral arena, with an emphasis on the area of soft power to

defend its values and interests. Therefore, it is observed that higher education is seen as an important instrument of power projection for the Europeans (Costa, 2017). Thus, the European engagement in the internationalization of higher education, both inside and outside the European bloc, is vital for this international insertion strategy. By the way, the Strategy Europe 2020 document places the internationalization of higher education as one of the main goals.

The aim is to enhance the performance and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education institutions and raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU, combining both excellence and equity, by promoting student mobility and trainees' mobility, and improve the employment situation of young people.

At EU level, the Commission will work:

– *To integrate and enhance the EU's mobility, university and researchers' programmes (such as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and Marie Curie) and link them up with national programmes and resources.*

– *To step up the modernisation agenda of higher education (curricula, governance and financing) including by benchmarking university performance and educational outcomes in a global context (European Commission, 2010, p. 11, emphasis by the authors).*

In 1999, the European bloc launched the Bologna Process, an intergovernmental and supranational program whose scope is the elevation and harmonization of European higher education within all its affiliated countries (European Commission, 2018). To achieve this, the program encouraged national education reforms and the creation of a single common framework that promotes academic mobility and common teaching, research and extension programs. The aim was to make European educational institutions more attractive, competitive and accessible to researchers from around the globe. Furthermore, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was established, through which 48 European countries are committed to:

... introducing a three-cycle higher education system, consisting of undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees; ensuring the mutual recognition of qualifications and periods of learning abroad completed at other universities; applying a quality assurance system in order to reinforce the quality and relevance of learning and teaching (European Commission, 2018).

One of the initiatives was to reduce bureaucracy in the process of

internationalization of higher education by reducing rules and restrictions on visas and the validation of student credits, as well as the development of government programs for student financing, such as full and partial scholarships, to facilitate mobility, among other actions. Among the various projects in the field, the most important are the Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus and Horizon 2020 programs.

Erasmus+ is scheduled to run from 2014 to 2020. The program aims to support projects, partnerships, events and mobility in the areas of education, training, sports and internships, among others, both between institutions in European countries and in partner countries. The program was developed by the European Parliament of the EU and the European Commission. The execution is the responsibility of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) in Brussels and the National Agencies (NAs), located in each of the countries participating in the program (European Commission, 2017). The budget is approximately 16.5 billion Euros, distributed among higher education training projects, Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees and Jean Monnet⁵ Activities, among others (European Commission, 2017).

Erasmus Mundus aims to encourage European education through academic mobility, in addition to strengthening the bonds between other European countries and their partners. This program can be divided into two phases: the first, from 2004 to 2008, was more specific, so that non-European students could take a master's degree at European universities; the second started in 2009, and is in progress. The goals are as follows: to expand the program's actions, to enable high-level master's and doctoral scholarships at European institutions for citizens of partner countries, and to create an international institutional consortium for the promotion of European higher education (European Commission, 2017).

The Brazilian participation in the Erasmus+ Program, from 2015 to 2018, corresponds to 22% of the Latin American regional budget (European Commission, 2018). Table 2 shows the data of this participation, by category, in the Erasmus programs.

⁵ Jean Monnet Actions aim to promote the excellence of higher studies on the European Union worldwide and are organized by higher education institutions (European Commission, 2018).

Table 2: *Brazilian participation in the Erasmus+ program*

Brazil in Erasmus+ Projects	2016	2015	2014
Total of Brazilian projects selected	64	57	60
Total of Brazilian EMJMDs ⁶	10	11	5
EMJMD scholarships acquired by Brazilian citizens	77	85	40
Total of Brazilian CBHE ⁷ projects selected	6	7	8
Total of Jean Monnet Projects selected in Brazil	4	4	0

Source: European Commission, 2018.

Horizon 2020 is the EU largest research and innovation program. It aims to increase European excellence in scientific areas, industrial leadership and the search for solutions to European and global social challenges, and has the participation of EU member countries and their partners. The program budget is 80 billion Euros for the period between 2014 and 2020.

EU funding covers 100% of the eligible costs for all research and innovation activities. For the innovation activities, funding generally covers 70% of the eligible costs, but can be up to 100% for non-profit organizations. The eligible indirect costs (for example, administration, communication and infrastructure costs, office supplies) are reimbursed by applying a flat rate of 25% of the eligible direct costs (those that are exclusively associated with the implementation of the activity) (European Union, 2014, p. 25).

Currently, 201 Brazilian projects participate in the program, with a European contribution of approximately 12 million Euros, which corresponds to 0.03% of the total budget (H2020 Projects, 2020). With the success of the program in Brazil, the Steering Committee of the "EU-Brazil Cooperation Agreement in Science and Technology" announced a new program in April 2019, Horizon Europe, scheduled to start in 2021 (European Commission, 2019).

Thus, the European Union, due to the strategic partnership with Brazil, opened great possibilities for Brazilian institutions in the areas of higher education, science and technology (Carvalho & Maia, 2015), providing an opportunity for development and reinforcement of cooperation with a view to expanding knowledge in the indicated fields. Increased competitiveness, innovation and economic growth were elements emphasized

⁶ Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMDs).

⁷ Training courses in higher education (CBHE).

and highlighted at the VI Brazil-European Union Summit (Colucci, Costa & Silva, 2015).

Brazilian higher education is the responsibility of the federal, state and local governments, both in federal and private institutions. The State, through the National Education Plan (*Plano Nacional da Educação*, PNE), pursuant to article 214 of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, determines the national strategy for higher education (Brazil, 1988).

The Ministry of Education (MEC) is responsible for establishing the national education policies, as well as funding, guiding and supervising the entire network through several agents, such as: Office of Higher Education (*Secretaria de Educação Superior*, SESU), Office of Higher Education Regulation and Supervision (*Secretaria de Regulação e Supervisão da Educação Superior*, SERES), National Education Council (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*, CNE), National Commission for Higher Education Assessment (*Comissão Nacional de Avaliação do Ensino Superior*, CONAES), National Institute for Education Studies and Research (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais*, INEP) and the Foundation for the Coordination for Improvement of Higher Level Personnel (*Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior*, CAPES).

The Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication (*Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia, Inovação e Comunicação*, MCTIC) also plays an important role in higher education by funding research and innovation, mainly through its agency associated with the National Council for Scientific and Technological Research and Development (*Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico*, CNPq) (OECD, 2018).

On its turn, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministério das Relações Exteriores*, MRE), through the Division of Educational Themes (*Divisão de Temas Educacionais*, DCE), keeps a close relationship with higher education, as this division is responsible for matters within the scope of international educational cooperation. In addition, the DCE monitors the implementation of the programs offered by Brazil or other countries and is also responsible, together with the MEC and MCTIC, for maintaining the Exchange Program for Undergraduate Students (*Programa de Estudantes-Convênio de*

Graduação, PEC-G) and the Graduate Program (*Programa de Pós-Graduação*, PEC-PG) (MEC, 2018). Established in the 1960s, they aim to enable foreign students to carry out their studies in public and private Brazilian institutions. These are programs developed by the MRE and MEC together with public and private universities (MEC, 2018).

CAPES and CNPq are the main promoters of the internationalization of Brazilian higher education, through the funding of numerous transnational university partnerships, the offer of scholarships for researchers and the support of Brazilian research projects, among other investments in funding and capital.

CAPES is responsible for evaluating and promoting the expansion of *stricto sensu* graduation courses, expanding access and dissemination of scientific production, investing in the creation of high-level resources in the country and abroad and promoting international scientific cooperation, among other actions (CAPES, 2019). Currently, CAPES has 450 research projects only with international partners; its first partnership was signed 41 years ago with France; and today it has 77 partners abroad (InfoCAPES, 2019). For the execution of these cooperations, nearly 700 million Reais were invested in scholarships abroad between 2013 and 2017, in addition to a funding of more than 7.5 billion Reais in scholarships for SwB in the same period (CAPES, 2019). To this end, CAPES promoted new forms of internationalization: “CAPES develops projects for institutions to strategically plan internationalization, so that cooperation is not just mobility of students and teachers between countries” (InfoCAPES, 2019).

The CNPq, in its turn, encourages Brazilian scientific and technological production. The goal is to boost knowledge, innovation and sustainable development. This agency cooperates with numerous countries, especially in the formulation of joint projects and programs. According to data from 2018, the European countries with which the CNPq has a more intense partnership are the following: Germany, Belgium, Slovenia, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom. In 2017 alone, the CNPq made available nearly 80% of its budget for research and granting of scholarships for internationalization, which corresponded to approximately 1.11 billion Reais (CGU, 2017).

The process of cooperation in the internationalization of higher education between Brazil and the European Union was the work of a complex network created by several agents and institutions, with different funding sources, which fed back into bilateral ties and reinforced the strategic partnership between the two actors (Colucci, Costa & Silva, 2015). Carvalho and Maia (2014, p. 20) also point out the importance of the Strategic Forum for International Scientific and Technological Cooperation (SFIC) and the Brazil Initiative program in strengthening the strategic partnership.

The SFIC directly advises member countries and European Union institutions in the fields of science, technology and innovation through collection, analysis, planning and coordination of activities in ST&I. In 2012, with the help of diplomatic bodies and the representation of the European Union, the SFIC prepared the Brazil Initiative, whose objective was to take advantage of the synergies and possibilities opened up by the European Union and Brazil – in particular the Science Without Borders Program – and to strengthen the ties between authorities, (governmental and non-governmental) funding institutions, university networks, and teaching and research institutions, among others. To this end, the authorities carried out studies, supported capacity building projects, workshops, high-level meetings, participation in fairs, and preparation of material, among other initiatives (Maia & Carvalho, 2014, pp. 20-21).

4. The European Union's role in the Science without Borders (SwB) program (2011-2016)

The European Union's role in SwB must be understood within the political framework of the strategic partnership. On the one hand, the Brazilian political guideline of expanding outgoing mobility flows to create, through the training of human resources and participation in international research networks, the bases for technological advancement and promotion of national development; on the other hand, the European Union, with its experience in the internationalization process and with teaching and research institutions of recognized international excellence, had as one of its strategic goals the attraction of students and researchers of excellence in order to promote European institutions and values and boost the growth of the knowledge economy in the midst of the information society.

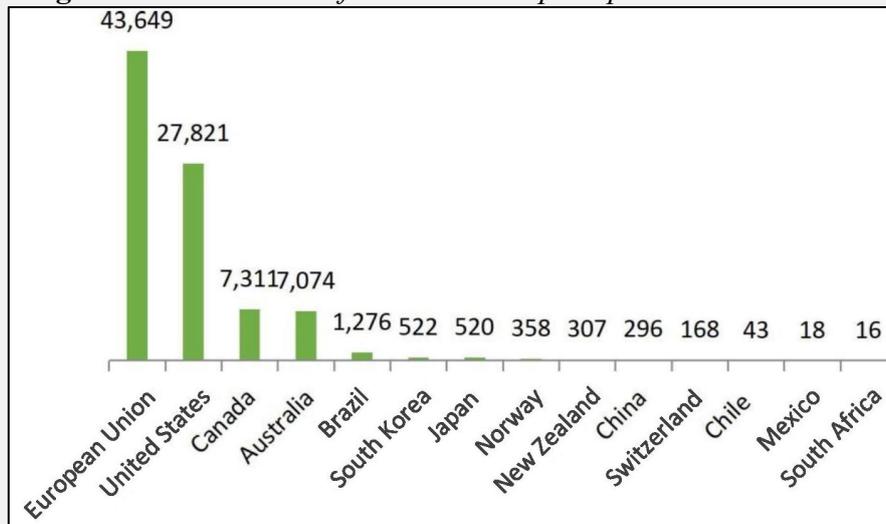
The Science Without Borders (SwB) Program was developed by the Brazilian government between 2011 to 2016. The initiative was jointly supported by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MCTI) and the Ministry of Education (MEC), assisted by organizations such as CNPq, CAPES and departments of higher education and technological education. The program was shut down in 2016, having officially ended its actions in 2017, amid heated political discussions.

According to Decree No. 7,624 of the Presidency of the Republic, the main objectives of SwB were the following: to encourage the expansion and consolidation of the internationalization of science and technology; to promote innovation and Brazilian competitiveness; to contribute to the process of internationalization of Brazilian higher education institutions and research centers; to encourage and improve applied research in the country, aiming at scientific and technological development and innovation; and to provide greater international visibility to academic and scientific research conducted in Brazil (Brazil, 2011).

To achieve these goals, the Science Without Borders program included specific teaching areas, such as: Engineering and other technological areas; Exact and Earth Sciences; Biology, Biomedical and Health Sciences; Computer Science and Information Technologies; Aerospace Technology; Drugs; Sustainable Agricultural Production; Oil, Gas and Mineral Coal; Renewable Energies; Mineral Technology; Biotechnology; Nanotechnology and New Materials; Technologies for the Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Disasters; Biodiversity and Bioprospecting; Marine Sciences; Creative Industry (focused on products and processes for technological development and innovation); New Technologies of Constructive Engineering; Training of Technologists (Brazil, 2011). The human sciences were placed in the background.

The focus of SwB was on the academic mobilities for undergraduate and graduate students, competitive educational systems and dynamic sectors of science and innovation; on the other hand, the program sought to spark the interest of foreign researchers so that they could move to Brazil or work together with Brazilian researchers. The initial goal was to fill up 101,000 scholarships in the four-year period and, according to its control panel, by January 2016, nearly 92,880 students had benefited from the program (SWB, 2016).

Figure 3: *Distribution of the scholarships implemented until 2016*



Source: Control Panel of the Science Without Borders Program, 2016.

Figure 3 shows the important role of the institutions in welcoming Brazilian students. Among the 28 Member States of the European Union, 17 were associated with the SwB program, with great positive effects on the bilateral relations, as this required an active engagement by State agencies (Colucci, Costa & Silva, 2015, p. 19-20). In fact, SwB mobility flows were negotiated directly between State representatives, in the top-down model; thus, the strategic partnership and the sector dialogs were essential for building trust among stakeholders and for dynamizing actions (Espósito & Espindola, 2019; Cravinho, 2019).

SwB was designed to offer opportunities directly to talented students in a fast and massive way. The mobility flows were centrally negotiated by the Brazilian government with representatives of the host countries, using a top-to-bottom approach, with very little participation from the Brazilian HEIs. Mobility ended up taking place without the involvement of the HEIs in the selection of students and identification of countries and institutions hosting fellows. In this sense, SwB is often considered a free-move program, in which the scholarship holder moves on an individual initiative without an institutional framework (Salvaterra, Filipini, Spadaro & Zicman, 2015, p. 13).

According to CNPq (2011), the European institutions were chosen according to the following criteria: (a) quality in teaching, according to the international rankings; (b) more affordable prices for academic tuition fees; (c) experience in the

internationalization process and academic culture close to that of Brazil; (d) finally, the representation of the European Union and the embassies of European countries did a good job of promoting their institutions and convincing the Brazilian authorities. In fact, several countries in the European bloc, such as Spain and Germany, have educational offices that are very active in Brazil in promoting European soft power (Miranda & Bischoff, 2018, p. 903).

University networks, both Brazilian – such as the Coimbra Group of Universities (*Grupo Coimbra de Universidades*, GCUB) and the Brazilian Association of International Education (*Associação Brasileira de Educação Internacional*, FAUBAI) – and European – such as the Coimbra Group (CG) and the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA) – played an important role in advocacy, in the definition of priority partners and in international educational cooperation (Colucci, Costa & Silva, 2015, p. 20). In addition, the EU-Brazil Cooperation Group was created, with the purpose of sharing and acquiring experience and disclosing cooperation opportunities (Maia & Carvalho, 2015).

CNPq and CAPES were the main sponsors of scholarships at institutions of excellence abroad and in Brazil. The scholarships were divided into the following modalities: sandwich undergraduate, professional and technological education, full doctorate, postdoctoral, sandwich doctorate, professional master's degree for foreign visitor researchers and young talents. According to the SwB control panel (2016), among the total of scholarships implemented, approximately 78% were sandwich degree scholarships. Table 3 below shows the distribution of the mean costs per scholarship mobility:

Table 3: Mean cost of the SwB scholarships

Mobility	Amount (U\$)
Sandwich undergraduate degree	33.752,43
Full master's degree	38.288,00
Sandwich doctoral degree	33.461,51
Full doctoral degree	39.946,65
Post-Doctorate	35.329,14

Source: CCT, 2015.

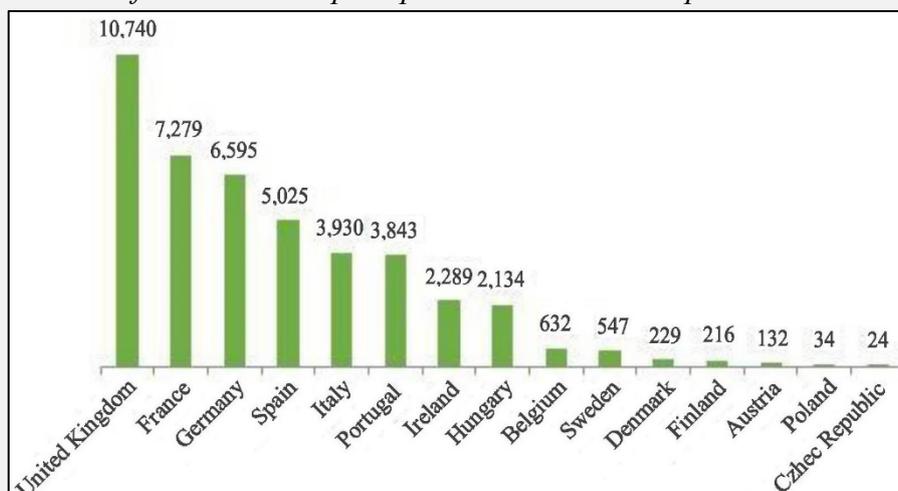
In addition to the CNPq and CAPES programs, some scholarships (approximately 20%) were funded by private institutions, such as:

Eletrobrás S.A, Vale S.S, Tim Celular, Shell, Petrobras S.S, Banco do Brasil, Caixa Econômica Federal, and Natura, among others. Until 2015, these institutions had cooperated with approximately 600 million Reais (net amount) and, during the period under analysis, there was an estimate of 1 billion Reais to be transferred in 2017 (Aziz & Martins, 2015).

Based on the difficulties of the SwB participants, in particular the lack of linguistic competence of many of them, in 2012 the Ministry of Education established the Language without Borders (LwB) program, developed together with the SESU and CAPES, with the aim of improving language skills and applying proficiency tests in other languages free of charge (Doringon, 2015).

As shown in Figure 4, approximately 50% of the scholarships implemented by the SwB program were mainly destined for institutions in the European Union countries. This success stems from the relationships already established in the field of internationalization of higher education, whether in previous cooperation in the Erasmus+ or Erasmus Mundus programs, or in other projects funded by CAPES and CNPq. In addition, during the V Summit of the Brazil-European Union strategic partnership, authorities on both sides agreed to stimulate the internationalization of higher education, science and technology through agents or programs in which these actors worked (such as SwB), with the final goal of stimulating academic mobility in their cooperation (EU Council, 2011).

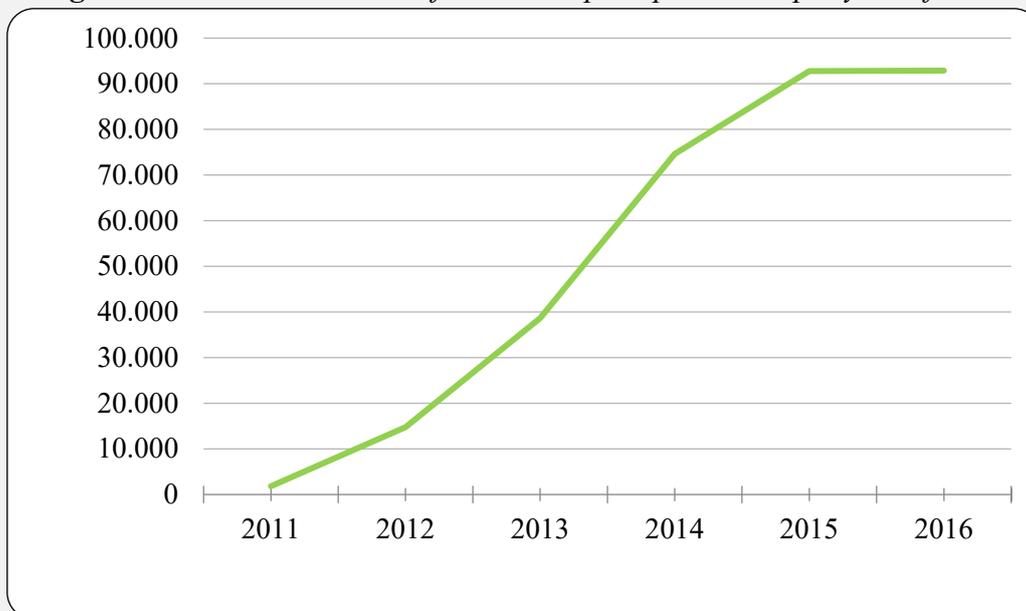
Figure 4:
Distribution of the scholarships implemented in the European Union countries



Source: Control Panel of the Science Without Borders Program, 2016.

The effectiveness of the Bilateral Agreement for Scientific and Technological (S&T) Cooperation of 2007 was another factor that increased and strengthened the flow of academic mobilities between Brazil and the European Union, and it is also necessary to consider the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programs, which, having been implemented before SwB, ensured that the mobility networks were already established. Finally, the strategic partnership between Brazil and the European Union created an enabling environment for educational cooperation in higher education and, thanks to SwB, the number of Brazilian students in international mobility has grown exponentially, as shown in Figure 5.

Figura 5: *Accumulated total of scholarships implemented per year of SWB*

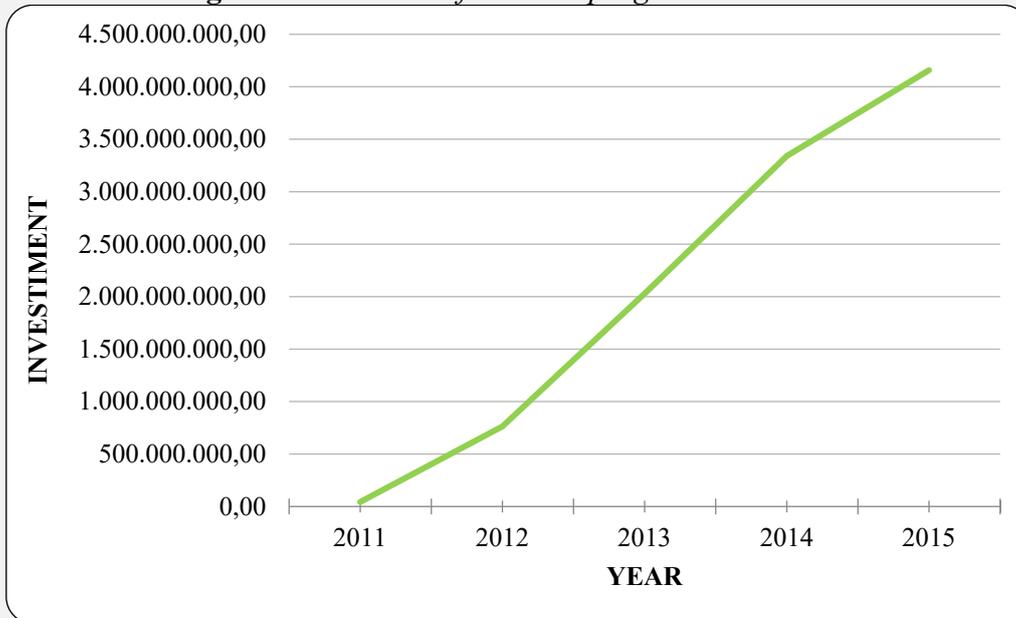


Source: Control Panel of the Science Without Borders Program, 2016.

In line with this increase in mobility, in 2015 SwB ended up absorbing a large part of the federal budget applied to education, science, technology and innovation: 50% of the CAPES costing budget and 75% of the resources from the Post-Graduate Support Program (*Programa de Apoio à Pós-Graduação*, PROAP) and the Academic Excellence Program (*Programa de Excelência Acadêmica*, PROEX). In 2011, these costs were around 40 million Reais; in 2015, they reached more than 4 billion Reais (CCT, 2015). These numbers raised criticisms and questions about the quality of the expenditure, the return on investments and the lack of governance and control of

contributions (CGU, 2016). For this reason, in July 2016, the federal government made a major cut in the program of nearly 3 billion Reais per year. In April 2017, after 13.2 billion Reais invested, the MEC announced the end of the Science Without Borders program (Marques, 2017).

Figure 6: Evolution of the SwB program investments



Source: CCT, 2015.

According to Manços and Coelho (2017), SwB has a positive balance, as it articulated the entire National System of Science, Technology and Innovation (*Sistema Nacional de Ciência Tecnologia e Inovação, SNCTI*) to achieve the proposed goals, with relevant impacts on international collaboration, knowledge production, education and university curricula, among other achievements.

Regarding the panorama that preceded the creation of the Science without Borders program, the article sheds light on fundamental problems in the field of ST&I in the country, namely: (a) the deficit in the training of human resources in the field of basic sciences, engineering and other technological areas; and (b) Brazil's low scientific insertion on the international stage. Faced with these problems, SwB emerges as a – political – empowerment program implemented by President Dilma Rousseff and is inserted as one of the alternatives of public policy aligned with the strategy developed by the MCTI: the National Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy 2012-2015 (Manços & Coelho, 2017, pp. 76-77).

Due to its magnitude, SwB had a significant impact on the lives of the Brazilian scholarship students. In Europe, institutions also had to adapt to the sudden increase in the number of Brazilian students, the style of internationalization and the flow of funds from the Brazilian National Treasury (Colucci, Costa & Silva, 2015, p. 22). The authors also point out the need to strengthen institutional partnerships, build capacities and open new opportunities for cooperation (ibidem, p. 23).

Internationalization is clearly a universal topic of strategic importance for Europe and for Brazil. In both regions [emphasis by the authors], although with different levels of intensity, debates on internationalization have been triggered and fueled to a large extent by large-scale mobility programs, which work or have the potential to work as instruments to promote inter-institutional cooperation, recognition of studies, improvement of student support services and other aspects of the process of the internationalization of higher education institutions (Colucci, Costa, & Silva, 2015, p. 2).

In spite of these good results presented by the program, the criticisms centered on the lack of control over spending and the inconsistency of the returns, as a result of poor management and the lack of counterparts from the beneficiaries. According to Lingnau and Navarro (2018), the program had a much more discursive electoral strategy than a truly long-term educational proposal within a State and social project. According to Conceição and França (2015), the receiving institutions were much more favored than the beneficiaries of the program, and an example of this, according to these authors, is the full payment of high enrollment and tuition fees – nearly 50% of the expenses were used to pay charges at the receiving institutions – among other aspects.

Still with respect to the criticisms to SwB, Lignau and Navarro state: “We realize, the political/economic field, in the case of SwB, accentuates more evident power effects than the educational field” (2018, p.18). When observing the problems of Brazilian education, permeated by the most various issues (from lack of financial resources to barriers to the broad access of historically marginalized social groups and low educational quality of basic education), investing billions in outgoing internationalization without a deep, strategic, perennial and sustainable analysis becomes incoherent. Furthermore, at the apex of the program, the mean cost per scholarship student was five times higher than the per capita cost of the students from public universities in Brazil (Conceição & França, 2015). And, according to CGU (2018), the control and

governance mechanisms were weak, which prevented the verification of the true impacts for its target audience, that is, it was not possible to prove its effectiveness for all students of the Brazilian higher education system. The evaluation of the program is still an open and very controversial topic.

5. Final considerations

In recent years, the internationalization of higher education has gained prominence in the political, national and international agenda of several countries around the world, either as a soft power factor (Pinheiro & Candeas, 2012), or in the construction of knowledge diplomacy (Knight & Wit, 2018), or as a vector of development in the information society (Castells, 1999).

Throughout the text, the authors presented the evolution of the internationalization of higher education between Brazil and the European Union. This approach should be seen within the strategic partnership, in which authorities created a favorable environment for building trust, in a positive win-win relationship, which expanded aspects of complex interdependence, with the effect of overflowing for other sectors, themes (human rights) and actors (university networks, companies, among others) and improvement in the international image of these actors, which is commonly called soft power. However, as it is a reciprocal gain, many authors believe that the most appropriate concept is knowledge diplomacy.

The history of Brazilian-European relations herein presented shows that the internationalization of higher education has always been present in the meetings and joint documents, and gradually gained relevance in the bilateral agenda until it became one of the central themes of the meetings since 2011, mostly due to the launch of the Science Without Borders Program in the same year (Maia & Carvalho, 2014, p. 20-21). At all times, the authorities of both parties had committed themselves to strengthening the partner's presence in their actions and policies for the internationalization of higher education. Educational cooperation was recognized as an important spill over element for other sectors in the bilateral relations, such as the digital economy, human rights and sustainable development (Cravinho, 2017; Tomanzini, 2019; Espósito & Espindola, 2019).

After the formalization of the strategic partnership, Brazil started to have a privileged place in the higher education policies of the European Union, especially in the Erasmus+ and Erasmus Mundus programs. The European countries also started to play a central role in the process of internationalization of Brazilian higher education, especially in the Science Without Borders (SwB) program. The bilateral strategic dialog influenced the internationalization strategy of funding bodies and other actors: funding agencies, State agencies, networks of universities, researchers and other entities of the organized civil society. The results of this cooperation were positive and have repercussions until the present day, with its overflow to other areas (Colucci, Costa & Silva, 2015).

Despite the criticisms pertaining to budgetary and organizational difficulties – due to its magnitude and complexity – it is concluded that the SwB program has achieved good results by placing Brazil at the center of discussions on the internationalization of higher education (Manços & Coelho, 2017). From the perspective of the Brazil-European Union strategic partnership, the experience was also successful, considering the following: number of scholarships, approximately 50% in European Union countries; creation of perennial networks of researchers; special treatment in the higher education internationalization programs proposed by the EU; the Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020 programs; and consolidation of channels for mature political dialog between the parties. Finally, the Science Without Borders project showed that, with possible adjustments and improvements, there are enormous possibilities for educational cooperation between Brazil and the European Union States.

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