



INTRODUCTION

The Bologna context

The Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999 by 29 European ministers responsible for higher education. This set in motion the most significant European cooperation process ever to take place in the field of higher education. Reforms have now affected countries within and beyond Europe, and the number of official signatory countries has risen to 47 with Kazakhstan the most recent state to join (Budapest/Vienna 2010).

The chart below outlines the main milestones of the Ministerial Conferences within the Bologna process up to 2009. It illustrates that several main themes can be followed throughout the first decade. These include a common degree system, a European system of credits, mobility, cooperation in quality assurance, national qualifications frameworks, lifelong learning, employability and the social dimension of higher education.

The Leuven Communiqué (2009) sets the agenda for the new decade, with a new target for mobility in 2020, and clear goals for the other main action lines. These goals and objectives are all addressed in the report, and the combined analysis across the seven chapters aims to present a picture of the current reality of the European Higher Education Area.

The Bologna process 1999 – 2009

Mobility of students and teachers	Mobility of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff	Social dimension of mobility	Portability of loans and grants Improvement of mobility data	Attention to visa and work permits	Challenges of visa and work permits, pension systems and recognition	Benchmark of 20 % by 2020 for student mobility
A common two-cycle degree system	Easily readable and comparable degrees	Fair recognition Development of recognised Joint degrees	Inclusion of doctoral level as third cycle	FQ-EHEA adopted National Qualifications Frameworks launched	National Qualifications Frameworks by 2010	National Qualifications Frameworks by 2012
		Social dimension	Equal access	Reinforcement of the social dimension	Commitment to produce national action plans with effective monitoring	National targets for the social dimension to be measured by 2020
		Lifelong learning (LLL)	Alignment of national LLL policies Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	Flexible learning paths in higher education	Role of higher education in LLL Partnerships to improve employability	LLL as a public responsibility requiring strong partnerships Call to work on employability
Use of credits	A system of credits (ECTS)	ECTS and Diploma Supplement (DS)	ECTS for credit accumulation		Need for coherent use of tools and recognition practices	Continuing implementation of Bologna tools
	European cooperation in quality assurance	Cooperation between quality assurance and recognition professionals	Quality assurance at institutional, national and European level	European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance adopted	Creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)	Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA
Europe of Knowledge	European dimensions in higher education	Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area	Links between higher education and research areas	International cooperation on the basis of values and sustainable development	Strategy to improve the global dimension of the Bologna process adopted	Enhance global policy dialogue through Bologna Policy Fora
1998	1999	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009

Sorbonne
Declaration

Bologna
Declaration

Prague
Communiqué

Berlin
Communiqué

Bergen
Communiqué

London
Communiqué

Leuven/Louvain-
la-Neuve
Communiqué

Report Outline

This integrated report has been prepared for the European Ministerial Conference in Bucharest, Romania, on 26-27 April 2012.

The report describes the state of implementation of the Bologna Process in 2012 from various perspectives and with data collected in 2011. It provides both qualitative information and statistical

data and covers all main aspects of higher education reforms aiming at a well-functioning European Higher Education Area.

The report has been developed as a fully collaborative exercise between the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) and Eurostat, Eurostudent and Eurydice, commonly referred to within the process as "the data collectors".

Qualitative information was gathered through a questionnaire addressed to BFUG members which was submitted, after consultation with all relevant national actors, by the Bologna representatives in 45 countries between January and May 2011. Information for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Russia is partial due to non completion of the questionnaire. The questionnaire covered all topics addressed in this report with the exception of mobility. Information on mobility was gathered by the BFUG Mobility Working Group, in cooperation with the data collectors in autumn 2010. The reason for this earlier collection is that the information was required to enable the mobility working group to elaborate a strategy for mobility in the EHEA.

The report is based mainly on official information about legislation, regulations and national policies, which is complemented by statistical data collected by Eurostat and survey data from the European student population provided by Eurostudent. Eurostat data is extracted from the UOE, LFS and EU-SILC data collections. Moreover, Eurostat undertook a specific data collection for the Bologna countries that are not part of regular data gathering exercises. Eurostudent data is taken from the Eurostudent IV dataset which is analysed in detail in Eurostudent, 2011 Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe.

The work of the data collectors has been overseen by the Bologna Follow - up Group, and specifically by a working group established to guide all aspects of this reporting process. The group has been co-chaired by Germain Dondelinger (Luxembourg) and Andrejs Rauhvargers (Latvia). Close collaboration has also been established with the BFUG working groups on mobility, social dimension, international openness, qualifications frameworks and recognition. Contact was not developed with the Working Group responsible for monitoring Transparency Tools as it was agreed that this topic was beyond the scope of the report.

The report is divided into seven thematic chapters that each has an introduction presenting the relevance of the topic in the Bologna process, the work of BFUG working groups, and an outline of the chapter contents.

1. CONTEXT OF THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Introduction

The 47 signatory countries in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have to implement policies in very different contexts. This first chapter of the report sets the scene for the coming comparison showing the differences in countries that are united in the EHEA. It provides an understanding of the different structures, sizes and conditions under which higher education institutions function.

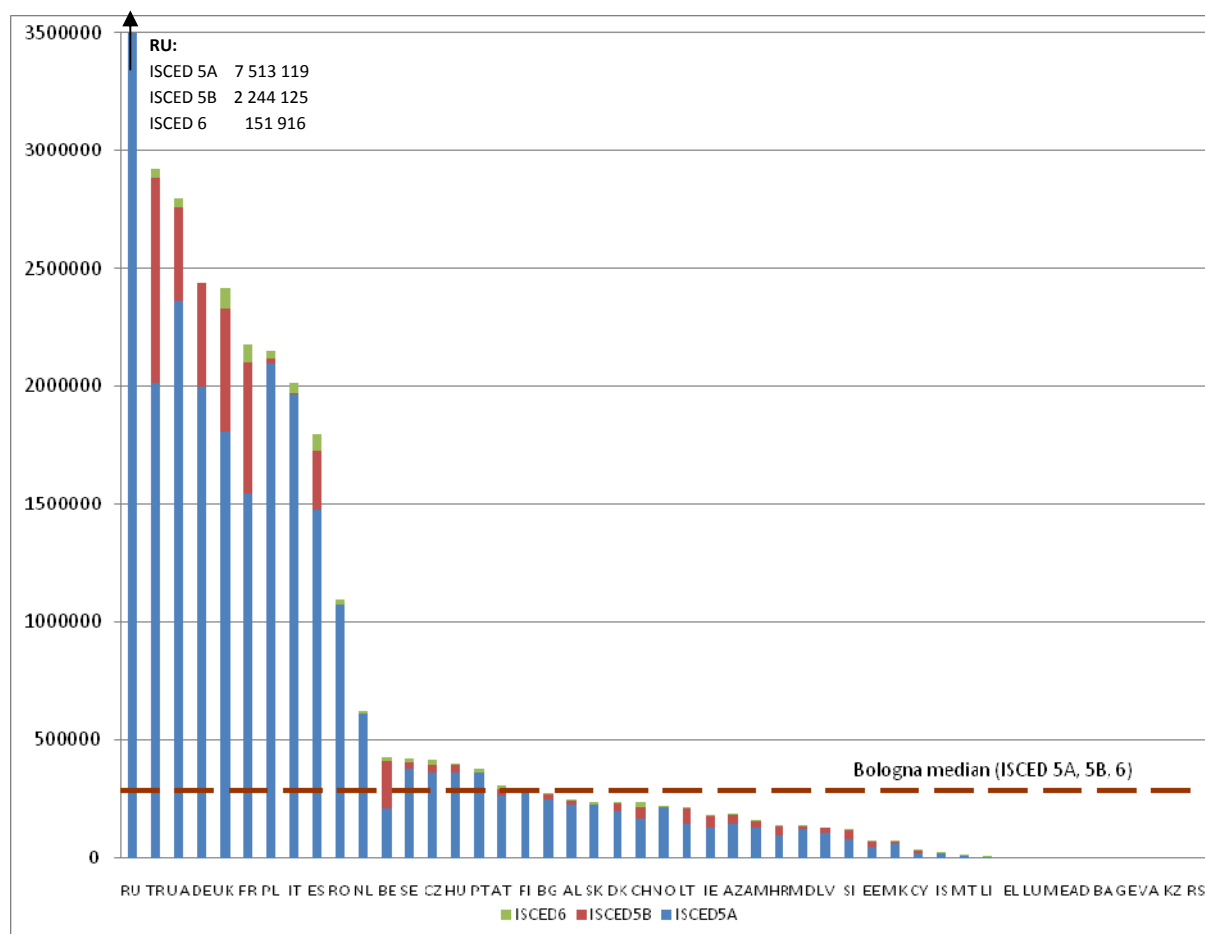
Chapter outline

The structure of the chapter is the following. First, it looks at the size of the student population in the Bologna countries as well as the changes in the number of students enrolled in tertiary education in a five-year period between 2003 / 2004 and 2008 / 2009. It also examines whether demographic projections are taken into account in higher education steering documents. Second, the chapter categorises higher education institutions and shows the diversity in the different countries. Finally, it compares the level of public expenditure on higher education in the EHEA region, as well as its changes between 2003 and 2008.

1.1. Student population

The size of the student population is very diverse in the 47 countries of the EHEA region. Total numbers shown in Figure 1.1 vary between 754 in Liechtenstein and 9.909.160 in Russia (academic year 2008 / 2009). Russia alone takes up more than 25 % of the student population of the whole EHEA region, while students from the five countries with the highest number of tertiary education students (Russia, Turkey, the Ukraine, Germany, and the United Kingdom) represent more than 50 %. This illustrates well the diversity of contexts within the EHEA.

Figure 1.1: Number of students enrolled in tertiary education by ISCED level, academic year 2008 / 2009



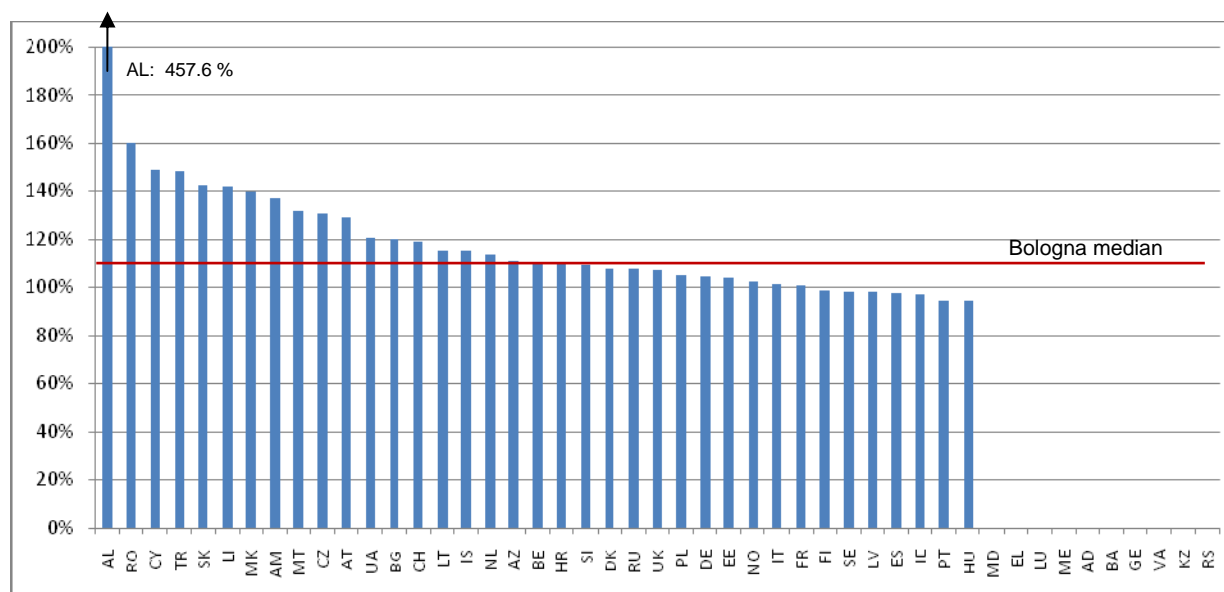
Notes: Reference year for Albania is 2009/2010.

The Bologna median was calculated as the median of the number of enrolments in tertiary education as a whole (i.e. ISCED 5A, 5B and 6) of the Bologna countries for which data was available.

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other Bologna countries

Concerning the change in the total student population between 2003 / 2004 and 2008 / 2009, the picture remains rather mixed (see Figure 1.2). There was a slight decline in student numbers in seven countries in these five years, while the number of students grew considerably in Albania. Romania, Cyprus and Turkey also registered an increase of more than 40 %. In general, student population increased by more than 10 % in half of the Bologna countries.

Figure 1.2: Change in the total number of students enrolled in tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) between 2003 / 2004 and 2008 / 2009

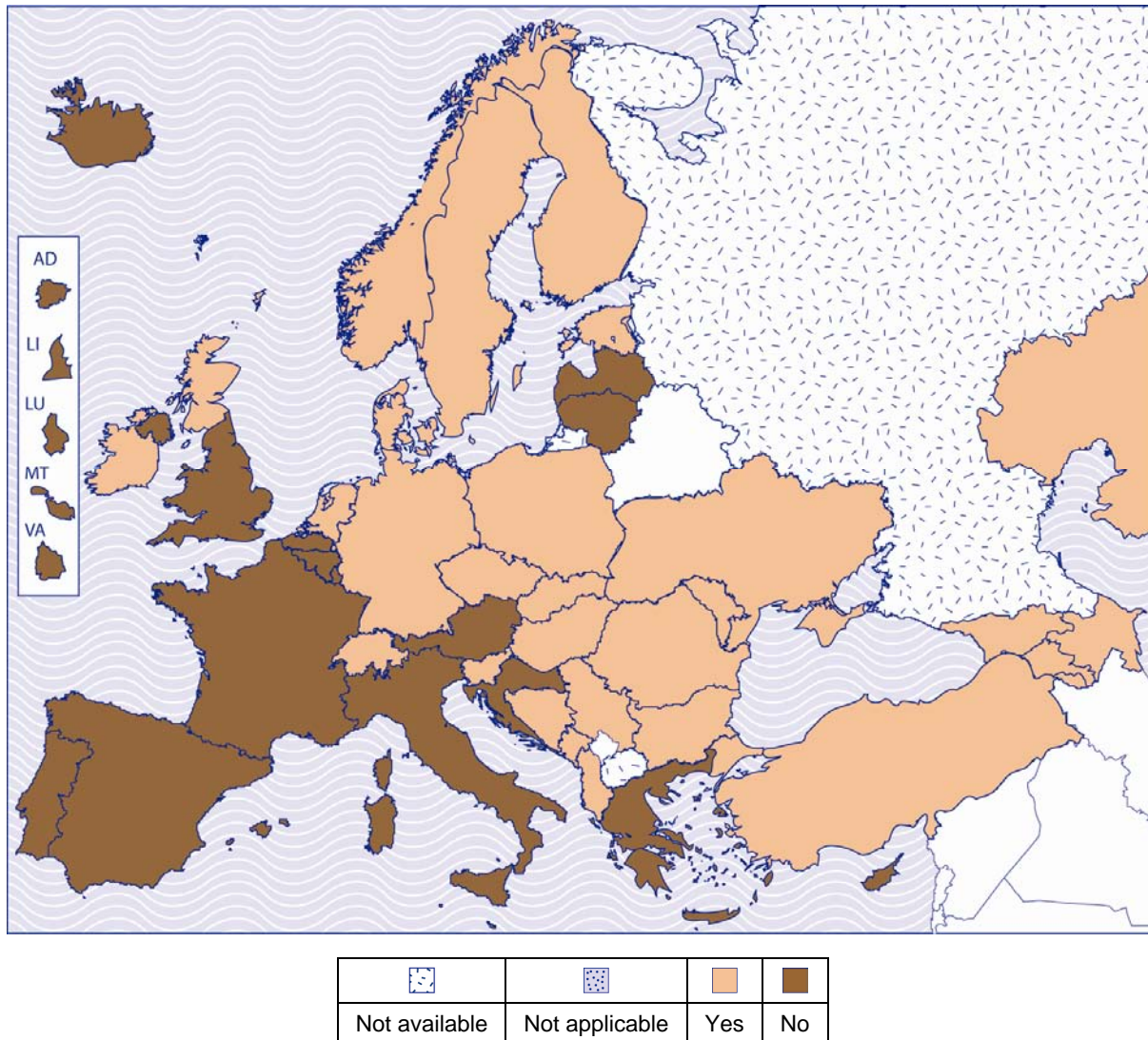


Notes: Albania: from 2003/2004 to 2009/2010.

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other Bologna countries

Certainly, changes in the student population partly depend on general demographic changes. Figure 1.3 shows that in almost 60 % of countries, steering documents for higher education explicitly take account of demographic projections.

Figure 1.3: Do steering documents for higher education policy explicitly take account of demographic projections for your country?



Source: Eurydice

1.2. Higher education institutions

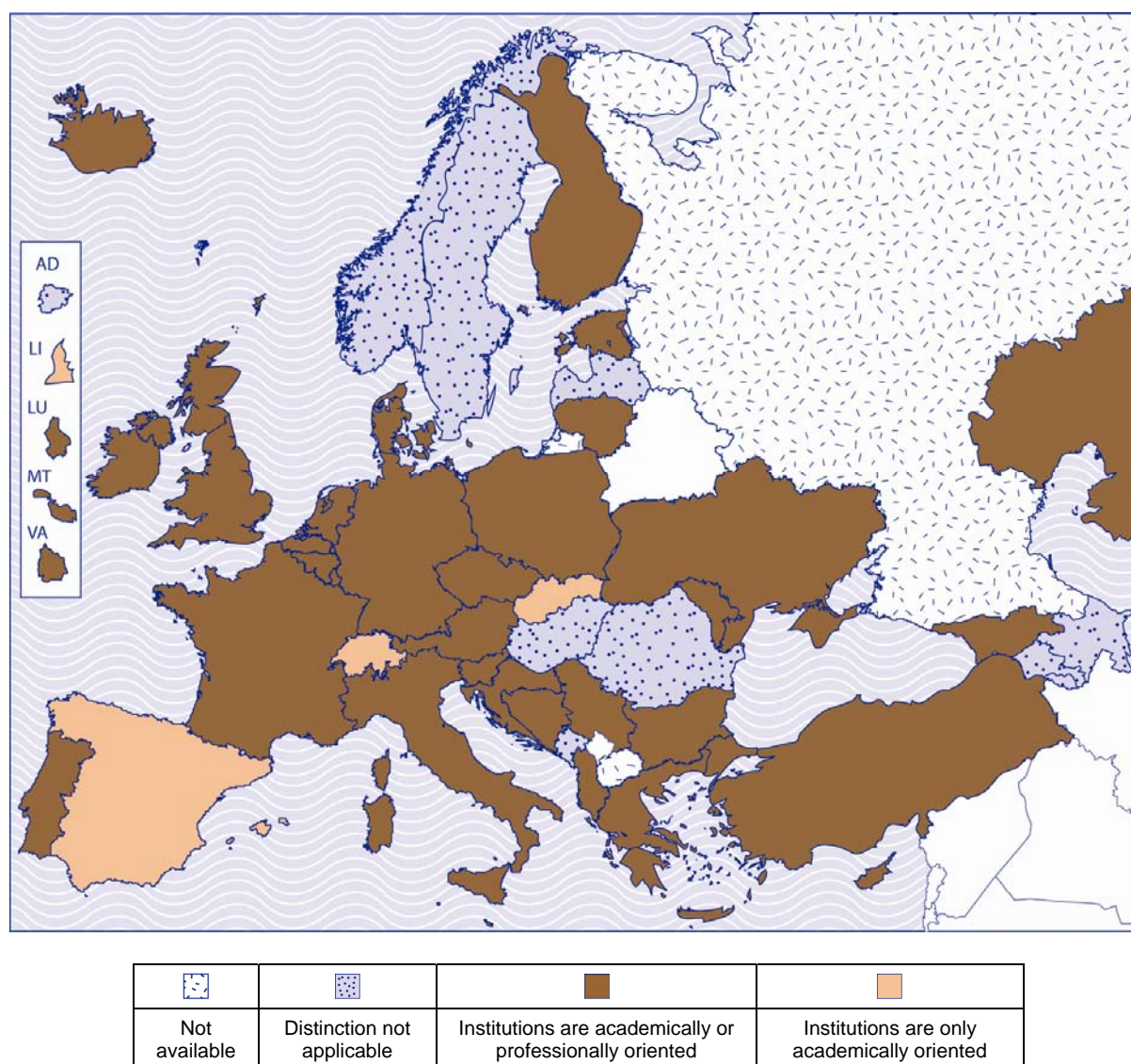
The type and number of higher education institutions also vary among the Bologna countries. HEIs can be academically or professionally oriented; can be publicly or privately founded and funded; or there might be other distinctions applied in a given country context.

Figure 1.4 shows the countries in which the distinction between academically and professionally oriented institutions applies. This distinction refers to the institutions and not to the programmes: in many cases, both academically and professionally oriented institutions can offer academic and professional programmes; or else, there might be no distinction between institutions, but there could still be a difference between the orientations of the study programmes. Nevertheless, sometimes the presence of a distinction between the institutions is not clear-cut. For example, in many countries, old

differences between academically and professionally oriented institutions still exist formally, but – partly due to the Bologna process – actual differences are diminishing or have ceased to exist altogether. Therefore, data shown on Figure 1.4 should be interpreted with caution.

According to Figure 1.4, there is at least a formal distinction between academically and professionally oriented higher education institutions in the majority countries. All HEIs are considered academically oriented in four countries (Spain, Slovakia, Liechtenstein and Switzerland), while this distinction does not apply in eight countries.

Figure 1.4: Types of HEIs: academically or professionally oriented

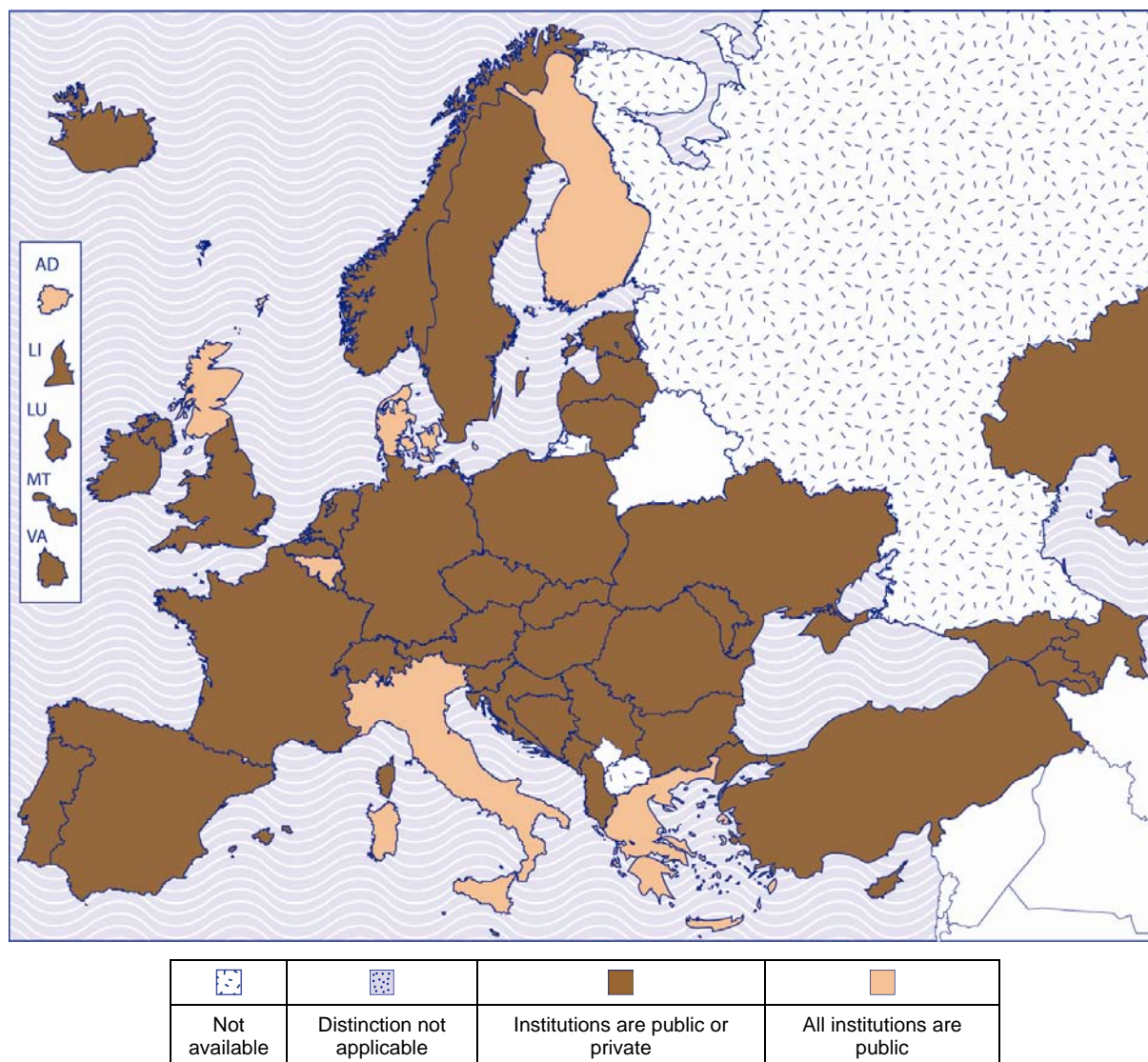


Source: Eurydice

Another possible distinction to be made is between public and private higher education institutions. This distinction refers mainly to the source of funding: whether HEIs are financed from public or private sources. This also means that privately founded HEIs funded mainly by the state or from public sources are considered as public institutions here.

Figure 1.5 shows the countries in which the distinction between public and private institutions applies. As the figure shows, there are both public and private HEIs in the vast majority of the Bologna countries. However, the weight of private institutions might differ within a country. Whereas some countries have more private institutions than public ones, in several others the number of private institutions is fairly small in comparison to public HEIs. All institutions are primarily publicly funded in seven education systems (Andorra, Belgium (French-speaking Community), Denmark, Greece, Finland, Italy and the United Kingdom (Scotland)).

Figure 1.5: Types of HEIs: public or private



Source: Eurydice

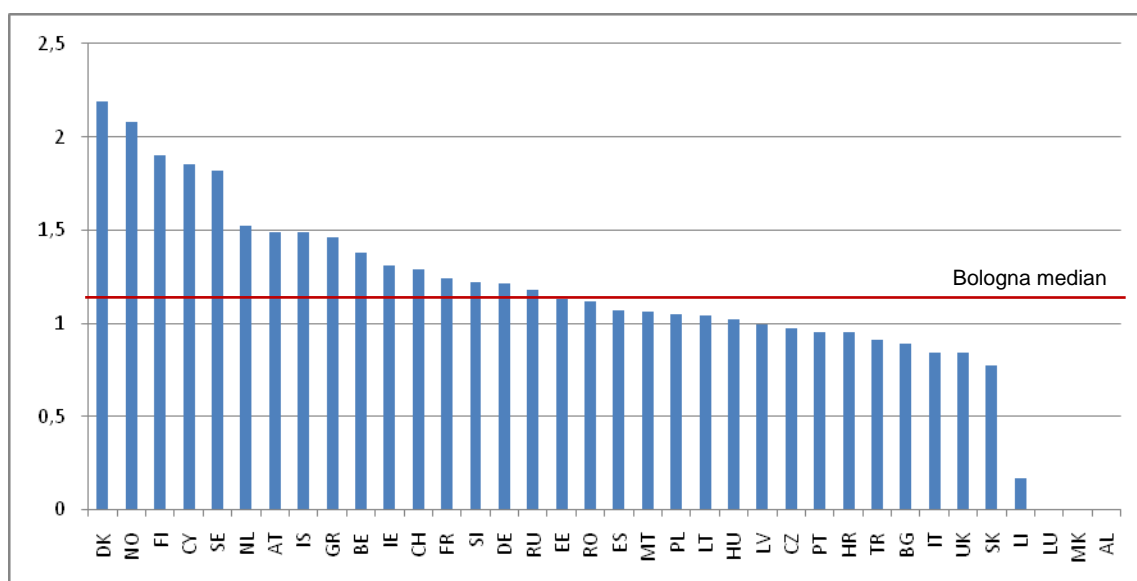
1.3. Public expenditure on higher education

Since European higher education institutions are funded predominantly by public sources, it is also interesting to compare public expenditure on higher education in the EHEA region. This is especially true in light of the economic crisis, which has had a significant impact on the levels of public funding (EACEA/Eurydice, 2011b). According to the Eurydice report on the *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe*, several countries introduced budgetary cuts from 2008/09 to 2009/10. These cuts were the most severe in Ireland, Latvia and Iceland (EACEA/Eurydice 2011b, p. 41). However, from 2009/10 to 2010/11, higher education spending increased in the majority of countries, partly due to the adoption of stimulus packages. Nevertheless, some countries, notably Greece, Ireland and Iceland made major budget cuts in that year (EACEA/Eurydice 2011b, p. 42).

Taking a cumulative approach (adding together all cuts from 2008 onwards), the European University Association (EUA) reports even more severe cuts in higher education budgets (EUA, 2011a). According to the report and the EUA website, major cuts have been felt in Greece, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Hungary, the United Kingdom and Iceland. In addition, several other countries have experienced at least moderate cuts (EUA 2011a, p. 2-4; EUA, 2011b).

Against this background, this section compares tertiary education expenditure in EHEA countries based on Eurostat indicators. One indicator of public spending on tertiary education is the public expenditure per GDP ratio. This indicator "represents the share of available income generated in an economy which is allocated to higher education" (Eurostat & Eurostudent 2009, p. 75). As Figure 1.6 shows, in 2008, annual public expenditure on higher education was highest in Denmark and Norway in comparison to the countries' GDP (more than 2 %). This annual public expenditure was the lowest in Liechtenstein (0.17 % of GDP). Half of the countries spent more than 1.13 % of GDP on higher education, while the other half spent less.

Figure 1.6: Annual public expenditure on tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) as a % of GDP, 2008

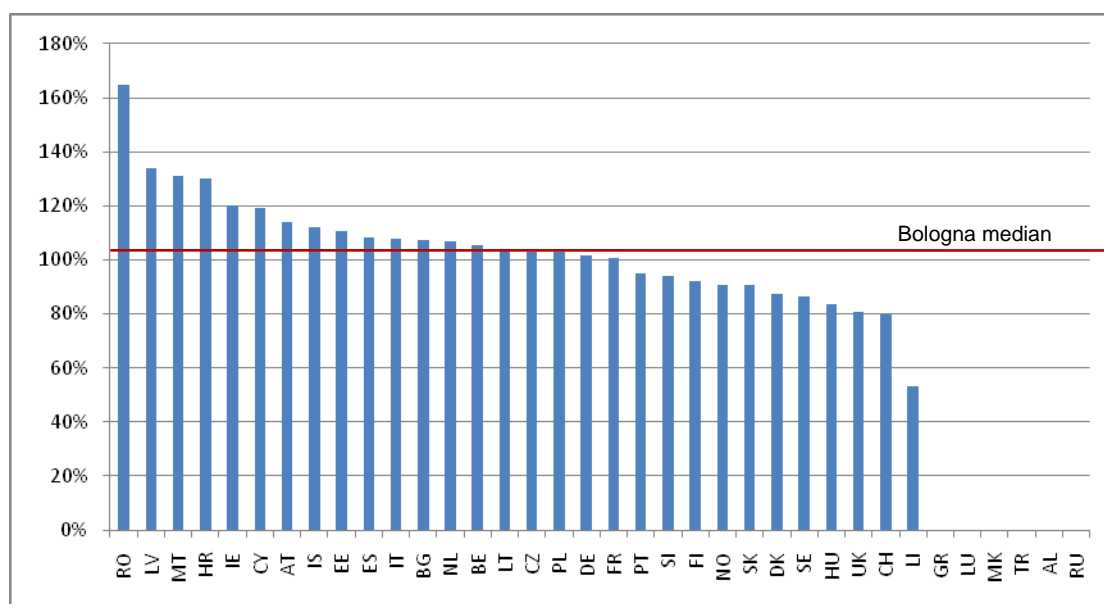


Notes: Russia: 2009; Romania and Liechtenstein: 2007; Turkey: 2006; Greece: 2005

Source: Eurostat

The changes in this annual spending per GDP ratio can also be examined (see Figure 1.7). Between 2003 and 2008 the annual expenditure per GDP ratio increased in more than half of the countries where data is available. The growth rate was the highest in Romania (more than 60 %). As Figure 1.2 showed, the number of students enrolled in tertiary education grew considerably in Romania in this period, which can partly explain this expenditure jump. The growth rate of public expenditure was also over 30 % in Latvia, Malta and Croatia, while the largest decrease of annual expenditure was in Liechtenstein (the public expenditure per GDP ratio in 2008 was just over half of its 2003 value). The median for the Bologna countries is a slight increase in annual public expenditure per GDP (around 3.5 %).

Figure 1.7: Growth rate of public expenditure on tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) as a % of GDP, 2003 to 2008



Notes: Romania and Liechtenstein: from 2003 to 2007

Belgium (2003): Expenditure excludes independent private institutions and the German-speaking Community.

Denmark (2003): Expenditure of post secondary non-tertiary level of education is partially included in upper secondary and tertiary level of education.

Ireland (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

Spain (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

Cyprus (2003): Including financial aid to students studying abroad.

Lithuania (2003): Public transfers to other private entities are not available.

Portugal (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available. Imputed retirement expenditure is not available. Expenditure at regional and local levels of government is not available.

Romania (2003): Expenditure at local level of government is not available.

Slovakia (2003): Expenditure of ISCED 5B is included in under upper secondary level of education.

United Kingdom (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available. Adjustment of GDP to the financial year that is running from 1st of April to 31st of March.

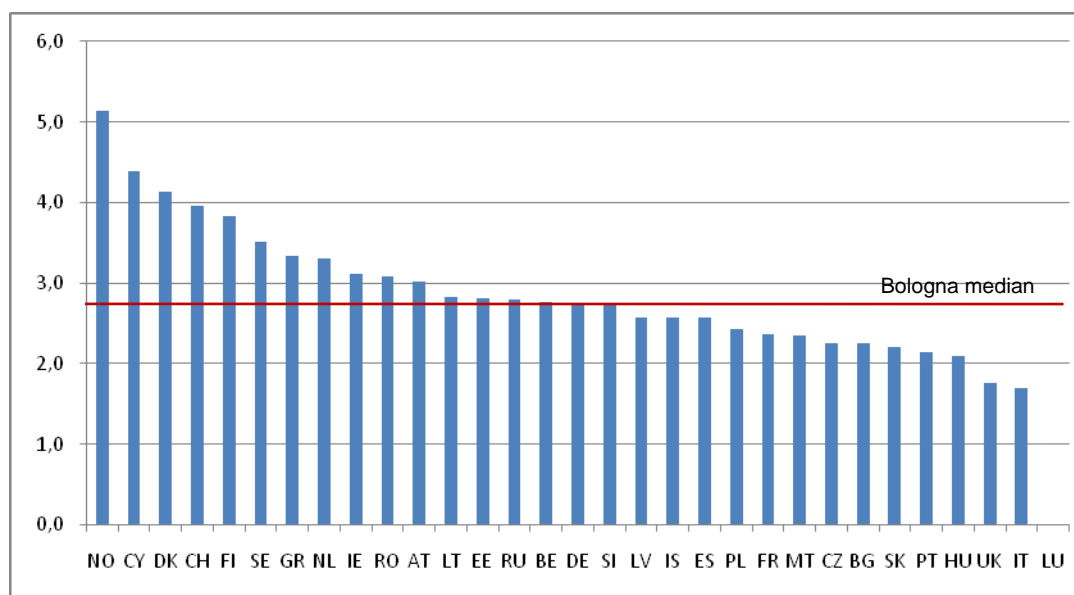
Croatia (2003): Public transfers to other private entities are not available. R&D expenditure is not available. Scholarships and other grants are not available.

Iceland (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

Source: Eurostat

Public expenditure on higher education can also be compared to other national expenditure. Figure 1.8 shows annual public expenditure allocated to tertiary education as a percentage of total public expenditure. The countries with the highest share of tertiary education spending are Norway (5.14 %), Cyprus (4.38 %) and Denmark (4.13 %), while the countries where the smallest percentage of the budget is allocated to higher education in comparison to other countries are Italy (1.69 %) and the United Kingdom (1.76 %). Half of the countries spend more than 2.76 % of their budget on tertiary education, while the other half spends less.

Figure 1.8: Annual public expenditure on tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) as a % of total public expenditure, 2008

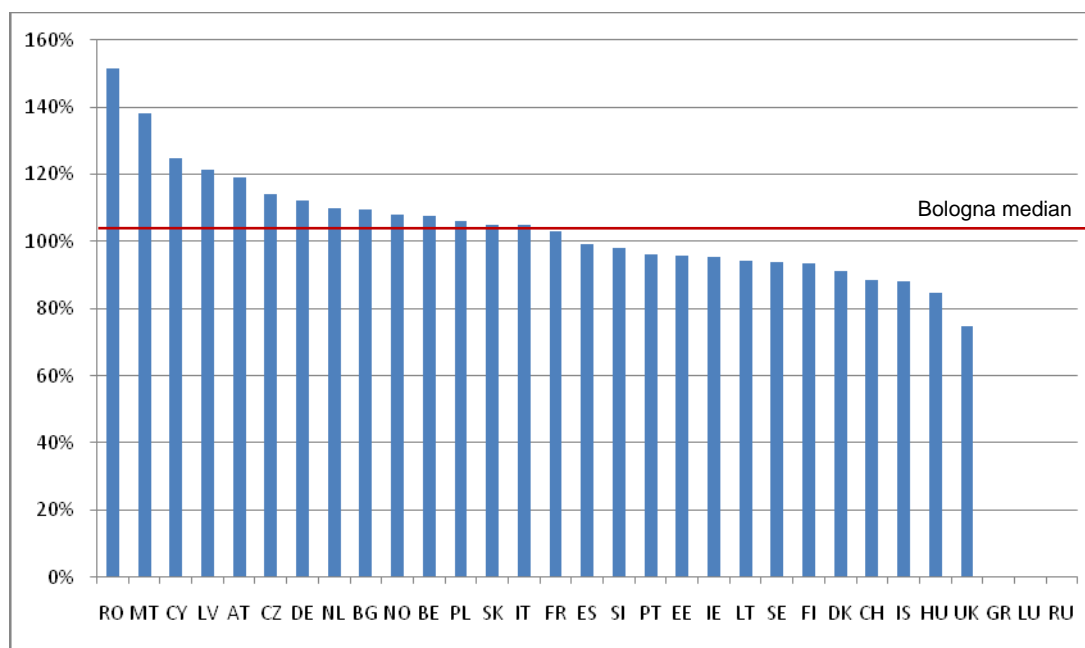


Notes: Russia: 2009; Romania: 2007; Greece: 2005

Source: Eurostat

Concerning the change in the annual public expenditure on higher education per total expenditure ratio, the Bologna median again indicates a slight increase between 2003 and 2008 (around 3.8 %). In this period, the share of annual expenditure on tertiary education increased in the majority of countries, with the highest increase being again in Romania (more than 50 %). The share of higher education expenditure in the total budget decreased the most in the United Kingdom between 2003 and 2008 (see Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9: Growth rate of public expenditure on tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) as a % of total public expenditure between 2003 and 2008



Notes: Romania: from 2002 to 2007

Belgium (2003): Expenditure excludes independent private institutions and the German-speaking Community.

Denmark (2003): Expenditure of post secondary non-tertiary level of education is partially included in upper secondary and tertiary level of education.

Ireland (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

Spain (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

Cyprus (2003): Including financial aid to students studying abroad.

Lithuania (2003): Public transfers to other private entities are not available.

Portugal (2003): Expenditure at regional and local levels of government is not available.

Romania (2003): Expenditure at local level of government is not available.

Slovakia (2003): Expenditure of ISCED 5B is included in under upper secondary level of education.

United Kingdom (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

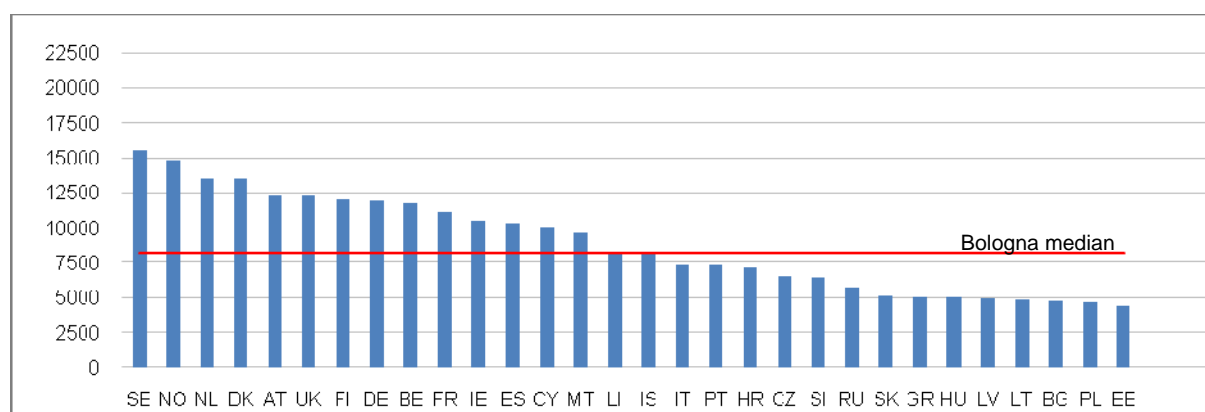
Croatia (2003): Public transfers to other private entities are not available. R&D expenditure is not available. Scholarships and other grants are not available.

Iceland (2003): Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.

Source: Eurostat

Finally, a third indicator of public spending on tertiary education is the annual total expenditure on tertiary educational institutions per full-time equivalent student. This indicator "reflects the financial investment of a country in relation to the size of the student population" (Eurostat & Eurostudent 2009, p. 77). According to Figure 1.10, the annual total expenditure per full-time equivalent student is the highest in Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Denmark (more than 13000 PPS Euros), and the lowest in Latvia Lithuania, Bulgaria, Poland and Estonia (less than 5000 PPS Euros). The median value for the EHEA region is 8191 PPS Euros.

Figure 1.10: Annual total expenditure on tertiary educational institutions (ISCED 5 and 6) per full-time equivalent student in Euros PPS, 2008



Notes: Russia: 2009; Ireland and Liechtenstein: 2007; Hungary: 2006; Greece: 2005

Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

1.4. Conclusion

EHEA countries have to implement reforms in very different contexts. Student numbers vary enormously. In addition, some countries face relatively big increases in the student population, which is decreasing in others. Differences also exist regarding the orientation and funding of higher education institutions. While in some countries all higher education institutions are funded primarily from public sources, there is a considerable proportion of private institutions in others. Finally, levels of public expenditure also vary in the EHEA region.

2. DEGREES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Introduction

The Bologna context

Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees with the aim of promoting European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system is among the core action lines of the Bologna Declaration itself. The Trends I report¹ prepared before the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 demonstrated the vast variety of higher education systems in Europe: bachelor-master systems in some countries; long (4-6 year) programmes leading to a diploma roughly equivalent to a master's degree in others; some systems having several levels not compatible with the bachelor-master systems. The main conclusion of the report, which was shared by the signatories of the Bologna Declaration, was that greater transparency and trust among higher education systems was needed if Europe's global attractiveness and competitiveness were to improve. Trends I also showed that there is a potential for convergence of European higher education systems to two cycles (bachelor-master) of a duration of 3-4 years and 1-2 years respectively with a pre-degree level existing in some countries.

The Bologna Declaration thus provides for the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles - undergraduate and graduate - and stipulates requirements for access to the second cycle: "Access to the second cycle shall require successful completion of first cycle studies, lasting a minimum of three years". Some countries had already adopted the two cycle structure by 2001 (Prague Communiqué, 2001). At their conference in Berlin in 2003 ministers concluded that comprehensive restructuring was under way and committed themselves to having at least started the implementation of the two cycle system by 2005 (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). Due to the importance of research as an integral part of higher education across Europe, ministers in Berlin also considered it necessary to go beyond the current focus on two main cycles of higher education and to include the doctoral level as the third cycle. Ministers also decided on the undertaking to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), asking the BFUG to explore how the shorter higher education may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework.

At the time of the 2005 Bergen conference of ministers, the Bologna degree system was being implemented on a large scale and more than half of the students were enrolled in two cycles in most countries. However there were still obstacles to access between cycles. While the following years saw some progress, the 2009 Stocktaking report nevertheless concluded that many first cycle graduates faced difficulties when seeking admission to the second cycle. Some of these difficulties were related to the reality that not all first cycle degrees provide direct access to the second cycle, and greater transparency was therefore recommended.

¹ Quote to Trends 1

BFUG Working Groups on Qualification Frameworks and Recognition...

The Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks has a mandate to take forward and make recommendations on the main policy issues related to qualifications frameworks. Meanwhile, this report focuses on the progress made in establishing national qualifications frameworks. Close cooperation between the Reporting Working Group and the Qualifications Frameworks Working Group has ensured that these complementary tasks have been taken forward in a clear and coherent manner.

The Recognition Working Group has the main purpose of following up on the recommendations of analysis of the national action plans on recognition with a view to make recognition of qualifications and credits more coherent across the EHEA, and to improve recognition with other parts of the world. Cooperation has been particularly easy to establish as Andrejs Rauhvargers, the Co-Chair of the Reporting Working Group is also the Chair of the Recognition Working Group and a co-author of this report.

Chapter outline

This chapter deals with the basic structures and tools of the Bologna Process and with recognition. The first section is devoted to the implementation of the three cycle degree structure. The second section covers the Bologna tools - National Qualifications Frameworks, ECTS, and Diploma Supplement. Section 3 covers the implementation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

2.1. Bologna structures

2.1.1. Structure and implementation of first and second cycles (BA and MA)

The commitment to adopt easily readable and comparable degrees and to establish a two cycle system are mentioned as the two first action lines in the 1999 Bologna declaration originally signed by 29 countries and now being implemented in the 47 countries constituting the European Higher Education Area. The stage of implementation of the two cycles has been an important indicator in all the three Bologna Stocktaking exercises in 2005, 2007 and 2009 as well as in the Bologna Process Independent Assessment in 2010. The overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA adopted in 2005 sets credit ranges: 180-240 ECTS credits for the first cycle and 90-120 credits with the minimum requirement amounting at least 60 credits at second cycle level.






This section considers how successful the implementation of the two cycles has been, as well as the typical models of the two cycle system that have emerged. It also analyses the situation regarding access between Bologna cycles as well as implementation of the third cycle and linking the short studies to first Bologna cycle.

Figure 2.1: Scorecard Indicator n°1 on the stage of implementation of the first and second cycle

[Insert Figure]²

2012	26	13	2	4	3
2009	31	10	3	3	1

Scorecard categories

-  At least 90 % of all³students are enrolled in a two-cycle degree system that is in accordance with the Bologna principles
 -  70-89 % of all students are enrolled in a two-cycle degree system that is in accordance with the Bologna principles
 -  50-69 % of all students are enrolled in a two-cycle degree system that is in accordance with the Bologna principles
 -  25-49 % of all students are enrolled in a two-cycle degree system that is in accordance with the Bologna principles
 -  less than 25 % students are enrolled in a two-cycle degree system that is in accordance with the Bologna principles
- OR**
- Legislation for a degree system in accordance with the Bologna principles has been adopted and is awaiting implementation

Indicator is defined as the share of students studying in the programmes belonging to the Bologna model (in %).

The above share of students was calculated from the (approximate) percentages of all students studying for a first and second degree enrolled in programmes outside the typical Bologna model, as well as the share of first cycle students who continue to study in a second cycle programme after graduation from the first cycle.

Source: Eurostat

Where Eurostat data was not available scores were **estimated** from results of the BFUG survey

Eurostat provides a single value for UK

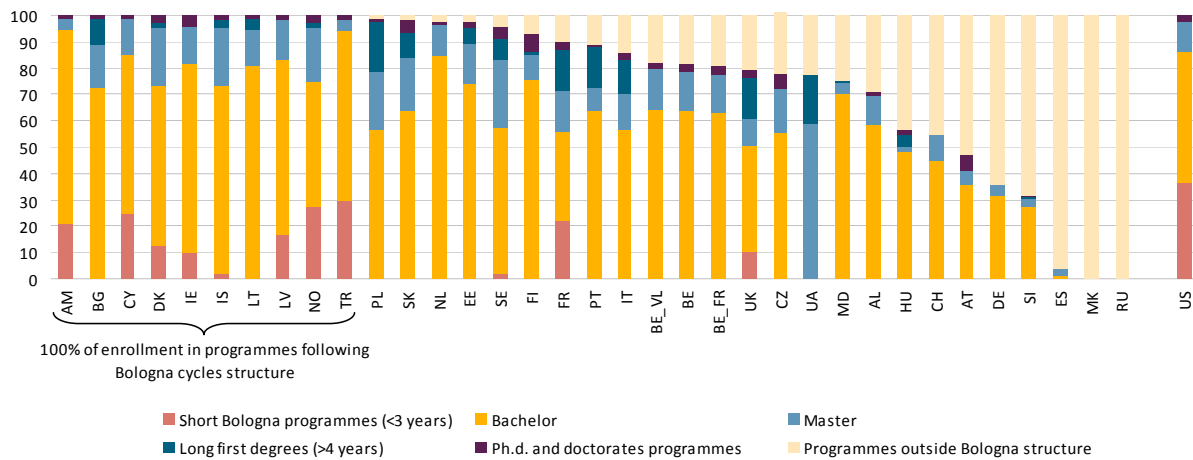
Close to two thirds of countries have more than 90 % programmes corresponding to the Bologna two cycle system. At the same time nearly all countries still have integrated long programmes in those fields which prepare for regulated professions and for which the EU directive 2005/36/EC and/or national legislation requires 5-6 years of studies: medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, architecture and veterinary medicine and to a lesser extent engineering, law, theology, psychology teacher training. More rare examples are arts (e.g. AT, BE-fr, DE, HR, PL, SE), sciences (UK-EWNI and UK-Sct), and others.

In some countries, especially in AD and ES but also AT, DE, ES, HR and SE, the share of students enrolled in programmes corresponding to the Bologna two-cycle system is relatively low. This is either because the legislative changes stipulating a transfer to Bologna structures were adopted relatively late, or the deadlines to set the reforms in practice were set relatively late. In these countries implementation of practical reforms has thus started relatively recently and it will still take some years for the students enrolled under the previous system to graduate.

² Will be inserted soon

³ "All" = all students who could be involved in 2-cycle system i.e. NOT those in doctoral programmes and NOT those in short HE programmes. Students of ALL study fields are taken into account

Figure 2.2: Percentage of students enrolled in programmes following the Bologna 3 cycles structure, by cycle (academic year 2008/2009)



Source: Eurostat

Figure 2.2 illustrates that 10 of the 33 countries for which data is available had all students enrolled in programmes following the Bologna cycles structure. At the other extreme, 4 countries, AT (47 %), DE (36 %), SI (31 %) and ES (4 %) had less than half of their students following programmes within the Bologna cycles structure. In 2 countries, MK and RU, programmes were in 2008 still not following the Bologna cycles structure.

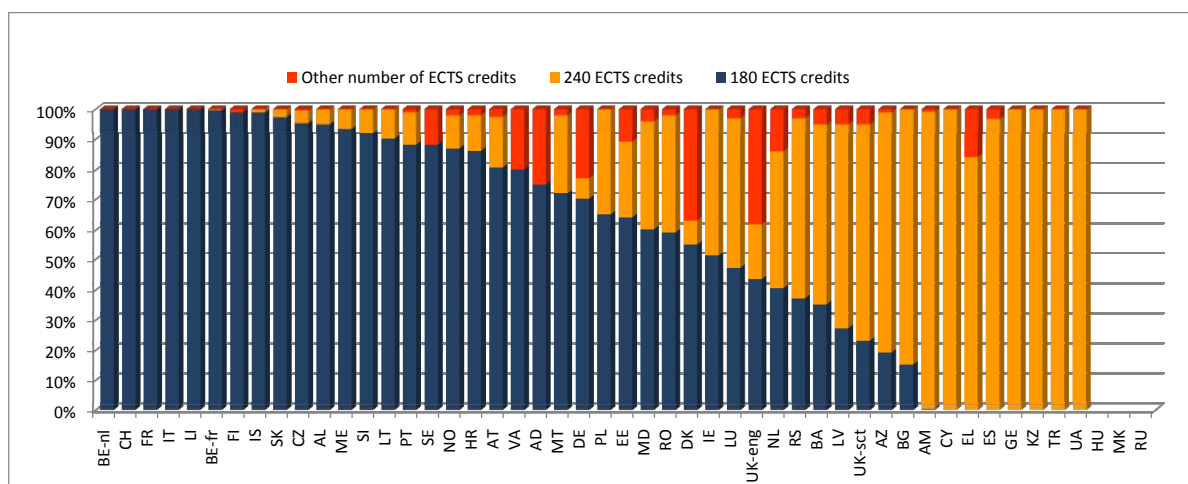
Short (less than 3 years) programmes existed in 11 countries, with enrolments representing between 2 % (in IS and SE) and 30 % (in TR) of total student numbers. This marks a very significant difference with the US system, where 37 % of students were enrolled in programmes of less than 3 years.

In more than three quarters of the countries there are long programmes covering the first two cycles. The percentage of students enrolled in this type of programmes ranged from 1 % (in FI and MD) to 19 % (in PL).

Most common models and typical credit ranges of ECTS in the first cycle

Figure 2.3 shows the share of programmes having a workload of 180 ECTS, 240 ECTS credits or another number of credits. Data on the share of students enrolled in these programmes have also been collected. They confirm the same trends and have therefore not been presented separately.

Figure 2.3: Share of first cycle programmes having workload 180 ECTS credits, 240 ECTS credits or other number of credits, academic year 2010/2011



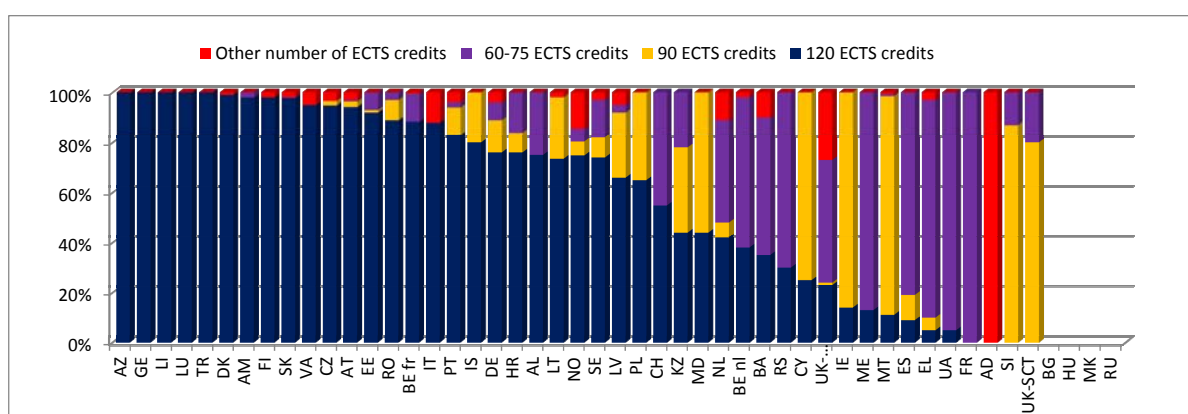
Source: BFUG questionnaire

There is no single model of first cycle programmes in the EHEA: most countries have a combination of 180 ECTS and 240 ECTS and another duration in the first cycle. A unique 180 ECTS bachelor model exists only in BE-nl, CH, FR, IT and LI but the 180 ECTS model dominates (more than 75 % of programmes) in more countries (AD, AL, AT, BE-fr, IS, CZ, HR, LT, ME, NO, PT, SE, SI, SK and VA).

A unique 240 ECTS model is found in AM, CY, GE, KZ, TR and UA and is prevailing in more than 75 % of programmes in a number of countries (AZ, BA, BG, EL, ES, and LV). NL should also be added to this group, because while the share of programmes of 240 ECTS programmes is around 45 %, the share of students in this model is 70 %.

Most common models and typical credit ranges of ECTS in the second cycle

Figure 2.4: Share of second cycle (master) programmes with workload 60-75, 90, 120 or other number of ECTS credits, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

In the second cycle (Figure 2.4), the 120 ECTS model is the most widespread, being present in 40 countries. It is the only model in 6 countries (AL, AM, AZ, LI, LU, TR,) and is used in more than 75 % programmes in a further 17 countries⁴. The 60-75 ECTS model is present in 27 countries. It is the only model in FR and dominates in a further 8 countries. The 90 ECTS model is less widespread: while it is present in 22 countries in only in five of them (CY, ES, MD, IE, SI, UK-sct) does it represent 50 % or more programmes. In 17 countries there are also programmes with a workload other than 60-75, 90 or 120 ECTS credits. However, with the exception of AD, these programmes do not exceed 10 % of provision. The above tendencies were also confirmed by the data on shares of students enrolled in second cycle programmes.

There is no single model of both first and second cycle programmes in the EHEA: in the first cycle most countries have a combination of 180 ECTS and 240 ECTS and/or another duration. In the second cycle the most common model is 120 ECTS. In other words, the 180+120 ECTS credits ("3+2") is the most widespread but a number of other combinations are also present in EHEA.

Programmes outside the typical Bologna models

31 countries⁵ confirm the existence of degree programmes outside the typical Bologna 180-240 ECTS first cycle model. Typically these are integrated/long programmes leading either to a first or a second cycle degree and which in some countries can still be better characterised by duration in years rather than credits. In most of these countries the programmes outside the Bologna first cycle model are in the fields of medicine, dentistry, nursing and midwifery and in most cases involve 1-8 % of the student population. In addition to the above fields of studies integrated programmes are also mentioned in engineering, (FR, HR, LT, PT,) architecture, (AL, NO, PT, RO, SE) theology,(DE, LT, MT, NO;) teacher training, (DE, RS, SE) arts (DE, PL) and law (PL).

The typical length of integrated programmes leading to regulated professions is usually chosen according to the requirements of national legislation and the EU directive 2005/36/EC in the EU/EEA countries. In general it is 300-360 ECTS/5-6 years depending on the regulated profession in question. Some countries also mention shorter programmes which either prepare for certain professions or are intermediate qualifications in programmes leading to a first cycle degree. The length of such programmes can vary between 60 ECTS/1 year to 180 ECTS/3 years. The most common length of short cycle programmes seems to be 120 ECTS credits/2 years. This has been mentioned by 6 countries (AD, BE-fr, DK, HR, NO and SE).

In some countries the percentages of students enrolled in integrated programmes are very high – 90 % in ES, over 80 % in AD and AL, and over 70 % in VA.

Deviation from the typical Bologna models also takes place in some cases where programmes leading to regulated professions are rearranged into first and second cycles. In those cases the combined length of the first and second cycle is usually chosen according to the requirements the particular professions. As a result, in BE-fr, BG, CZ, DK, FI, IS, LU, UA and UK some second cycle programmes are longer than usual - up to 180 ECTS credits mainly in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, architecture, law or theology.

⁴ AT, AZ, BE fr, CZ, DE, DK, EE, FI, GE, HR, IS, IT, LV, NO, PL, RO, VA

⁵ AD, AL, AM, AT, AZ, BE-fr, CH, CZ, DK, DE, EE, EL, FI, GE, HR, IE, IS, IT, KZ, LI, LT, LV, MT, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, TR, VA

Access to the next cycle






The Bologna Declaration emphasises that the first cycle degree is a requirement for access to the second cycle. In the Berlin Communiqué of 2003 ministers responsible for higher education clarified that “First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies”. Yet, two years later in Bergen ministers admitted that, “there are still some obstacles to access between cycles” and in 2007 in London that, “efforts should concentrate in future on removing barriers to access and progression between cycles.”

Figure 2.5: Scorecard Indicator n°2 on access to the next cycle, academic year 2010/11

[Insert Figure]⁶

2012	30	9	3	3	1
2009	42	2	4	0	0

Scorecard categories

-  All first cycle qualifications give access⁷ to several second cycle programmes and all second cycle qualifications give access to at least one third cycle programme without major transitional problems⁸
-  All first cycle qualifications give access to at least one second cycle programme and all second cycle qualifications give access to at least one third cycle programme without major transitional problems
-  There are some (less than 25 %) first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle and/or some second cycle qualifications that do not give access to the third cycle
-  A significant number (25 - 50 %) of first and/or second cycle qualifications do not give access to the next cycle
-  Most (more than 50 %) first and/or second cycle qualifications do not give access to the next cycle **OR** there are no arrangements for access to the next cycle

Access to the next cycle is defined as the right of qualified candidates to apply and to be considered for admission (definition used in the Lisbon Recognition Convention). The indicator measures the percentage of first cycle programmes that give access to at least one second cycle programme. Scoring criteria are given in the table below.

Source: BFUG questionnaire

In the vast majority of countries all first cycle programmes theoretically give access to the second cycle. Yet, in 9 countries, there are either some (less than 25 %) first cycle qualifications that do not give access to the second cycle (AL, ME, SE and UA) or some second cycle qualifications that do not

⁶ Will be inserted soon

⁷ Access : the right of qualified candidates to apply and to be considered for admission (definition used in the Lisbon Recognition Convention)

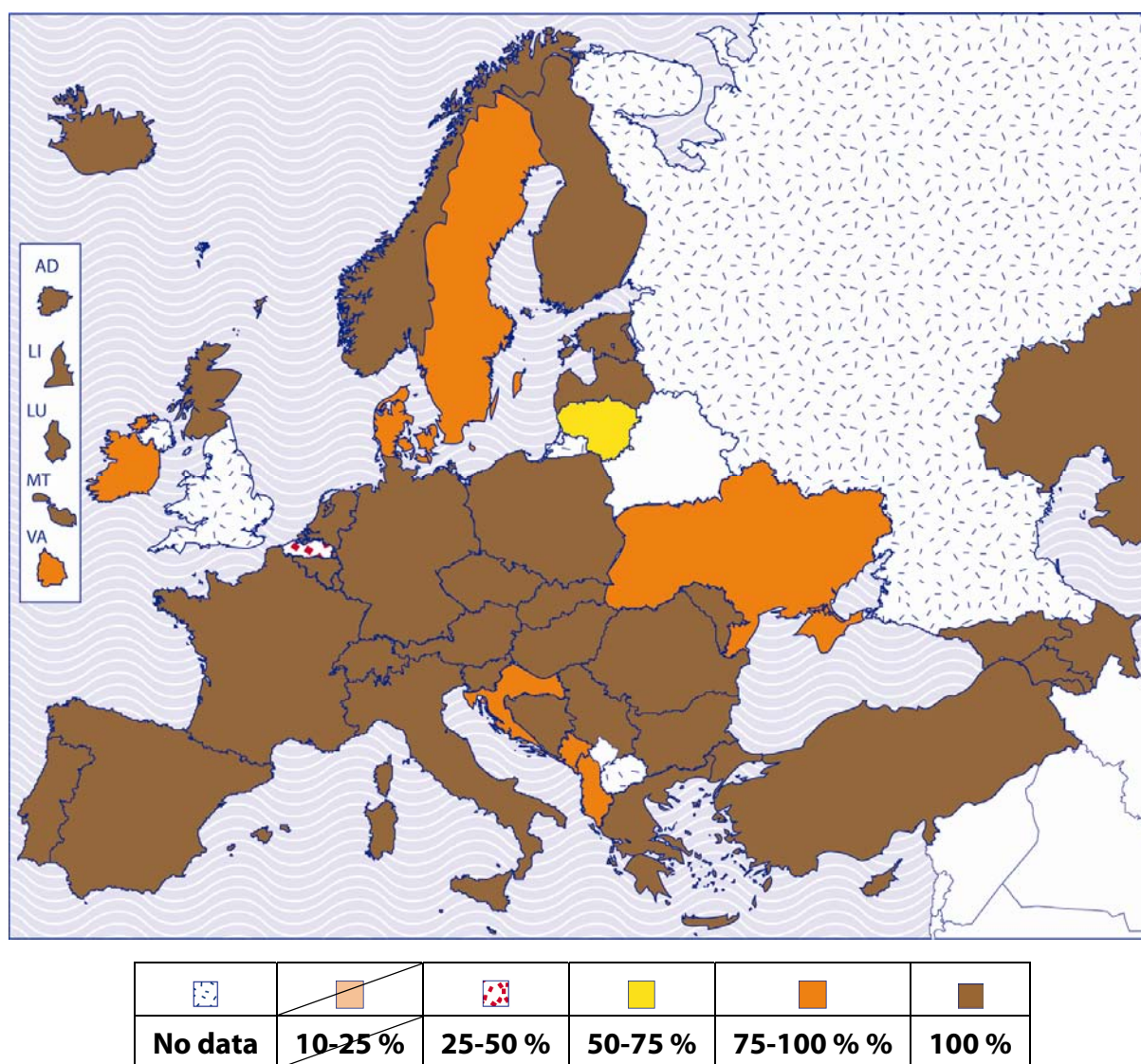
⁸ Compensatory measures required for students coming from another study field will not be counted as “major transitional problems”

give access to the third cycle (AT, BE-fr, CY, IS, MT RS). In DK, HR and VA less than 25 % qualifications do not give access both from first to second and from the second to the third cycle.

In IE, MT and LT a significant number (25 - 50 %) of first and/or second cycle qualifications do not give access to the next cycle. Finally, in Be-nl more than 50 % first cycle qualifications do not provide access to the second cycle.

In the vast majority of countries all second cycle programmes qualify the graduates for direct access to third cycle studies. In 11 countries AT, Be-fr, CY, DK, HR, IE, IS, ME, MT, RS, VA this is not the case for all second cycle programmes, but still for 75-100 %. In IE and ME the share of such programmes is 50-75 %. In addition to second cycle graduates with master degrees, the holders of long integrated programme qualifications (300 and more ECTS credits) are also admitted.

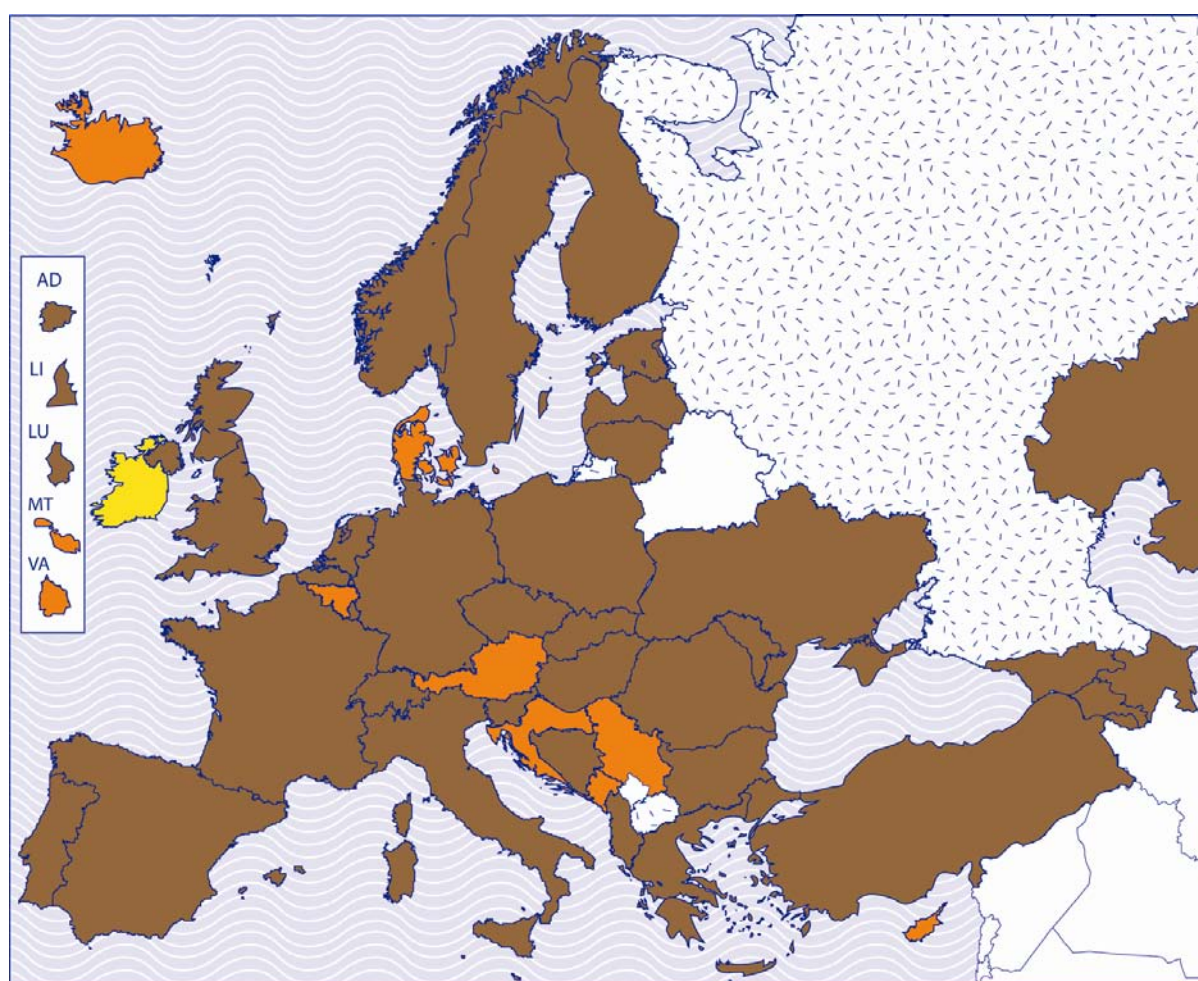
Figure 2.6: Share of first cycle programmes give access to at least one second cycle programme, academic year 2010/2011









Source: BFUG questionnaire

Countries have mentioned several reasons why not all first cycle programmes give access to the second cycle, and this is often related to a binary differentiation between "academic" and "professional" programmes. For instance, in Denmark a professional bachelor's programme may not be considered as preparation to any master programme and in that case there are bridging programmes to facilitate access to the second cycle. In BE-nl only academic oriented bachelor programmes give direct access to at least one second cycle programme. Those finishing a professional oriented bachelor programme may apply to get access but have to do a bridging programme. In Ireland ordinary bachelor degrees do not provide access to the second cycle.

Figure 2.7: Share of all second cycle programmes that give access without further studies to third cycle studies, academic year 2010/2011



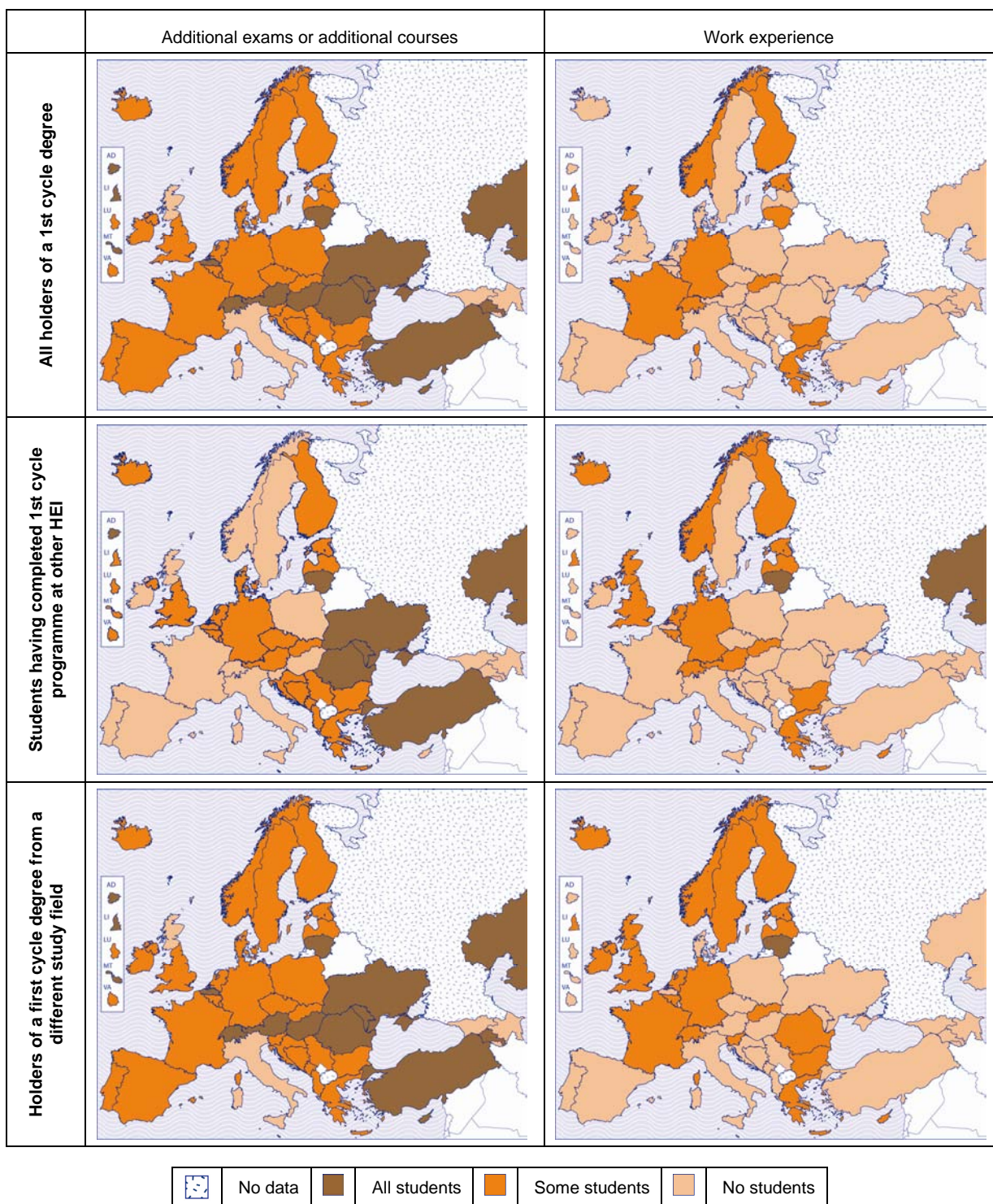
					
No data	10-25 %	25-50 %	50-75 %	75-100 %	100 %

Source: BFUG questionnaire

Regulation of progression between first and second cycle

When it comes to practical measures, access to the next cycle require sitting additional examinations, taking additional courses or have a mandatory work experience, see Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: Requirement to sit exams or take additional courses for holders of a first cycle degree to access a second cycle programme, academic year 2010/11



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Requirement to take additional examinations or courses. Despite the general tendency towards easier access to the next cycle, it is nevertheless commonplace to find additional courses or examinations being required of some or all students. In 10 countries - AL, AD, AZ, GE, KZ, MD, RO, RU, TR, UA all students have to sit entrance exams or to take additional courses even if they follow in the same field of studies. In a further 20 countries some students have to do so.

All or some holders of a first cycle degree from a different HEI seeking access to second cycle studies have to sit additional exams or complete courses in AL, BE-fr, BG, CY, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR IE, IS, LI, LV, NL, NO, RO, SE, SI, UK-eng, UK-sct and VA. Moreover in the vast majority of countries all or some holders of first cycle degrees in a different field of study have to take additional examinations or to complete additional courses. In countries with a binary higher education systems e.g. BE-fr, BE-nl, DK and NL bridging courses or examinations are seen as widening access to further studies. Here the learning outcomes of the professional first cycle degrees may not be suitable for a second cycle programme and thus a bridging system opens a learning path for those students.

Requirement to have work experience. The requirement to have work experience is less common than bridging measures. In more than half of the countries there is no requirement at all for work experience for access to second cycle studies at all. In 21 countries: AL, BE-fr, BG, CH, CY, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR IE, IS, LI, LV, NL, NO, RO, SE, SI, SK UK-eng, UK-sct some applicants having a first cycle degree from another HEI or having it in a different field of studies may be required to demonstrate previous work experience. In 13 other countries - BG, CH, CY, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, LI, LT, NO, SK, UK-Sct - HEIs may require work experience for entering particular programmes. In several countries e.g. CY, DK, DE RO work experience is required only if the chosen master programmes are experience based (e.g. MBA). EE and FI state that work experience is mainly required for admission to master's programmes at professional higher education institutions.

Share of first cycle graduates who actually continue their studies in the second cycle. The formal possibilities to access studies in the next cycle have been monitored by the BFUG since the first Stocktaking report in 2005. For the first time, this report also looks at actual numbers of students moving from the first to the second cycle. The shares of the holders of first cycle degrees that actually continue studies in the second cycle differ greatly - see Figure 2.9. While in the majority of countries either 10-24 % or 25-50 % continue their studies in the second cycle, in AL, AT, CZ, DK, FR, HR, LU, SI, SK and UA the shares are higher - 75 - 100 %. The Czech Republic reports that the tendency has gone too far – with every student going on to the second cycle.

At the other end of the spectrum 0 - 10 % students continue in the second cycle in AD, KZ and UK-ewni.

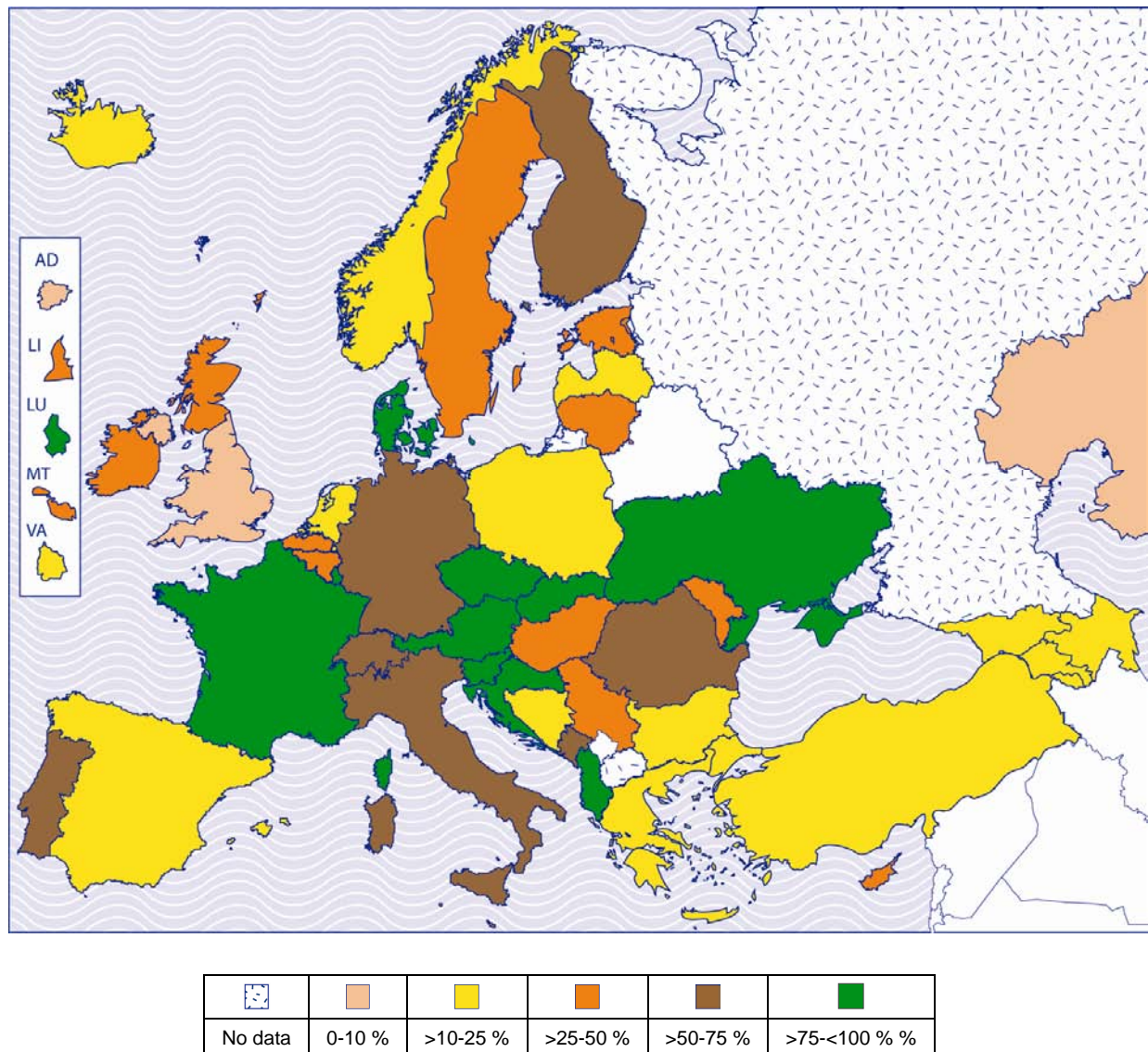
In AD and CY large cohorts of students take the second cycle abroad. In AT, Be-fr, DE, EE, ME, FI first cycle graduates from universities choose second cycle studies much more often than ones from professional HEIs who rather enter the labour market with their first degree. Other countries link the high share of students continuing in second cycle with the fact that the labour market still does not properly accept bachelor graduates (HR) or with shrinking employment possibilities caused by the economic crisis (IT).

The results of the scorecard indicator for access shows that access issues are still alive. There are obstacles and additional requirements for access both between the first and second and the second and third cycles. However, it should be clarified at policy level whether the additional requirements for

applicants with professional bachelor degrees seeking access to academic master programmes or vice versa should be seen as obstacles, or rather as widening access as some countries emphasize.

Although similar access requirements can be seen in most countries the actual cohorts of those going on to second cycle varies sharply- between 0-10 % students to 75-100 % students. Where there is a binary system, university bachelor degree holders more often go on to the second cycle.

Figure 2.9: Share of first cycle students continuing studies in a second cycle programme after graduation from the first cycle (within two years), academic year 2010/2011



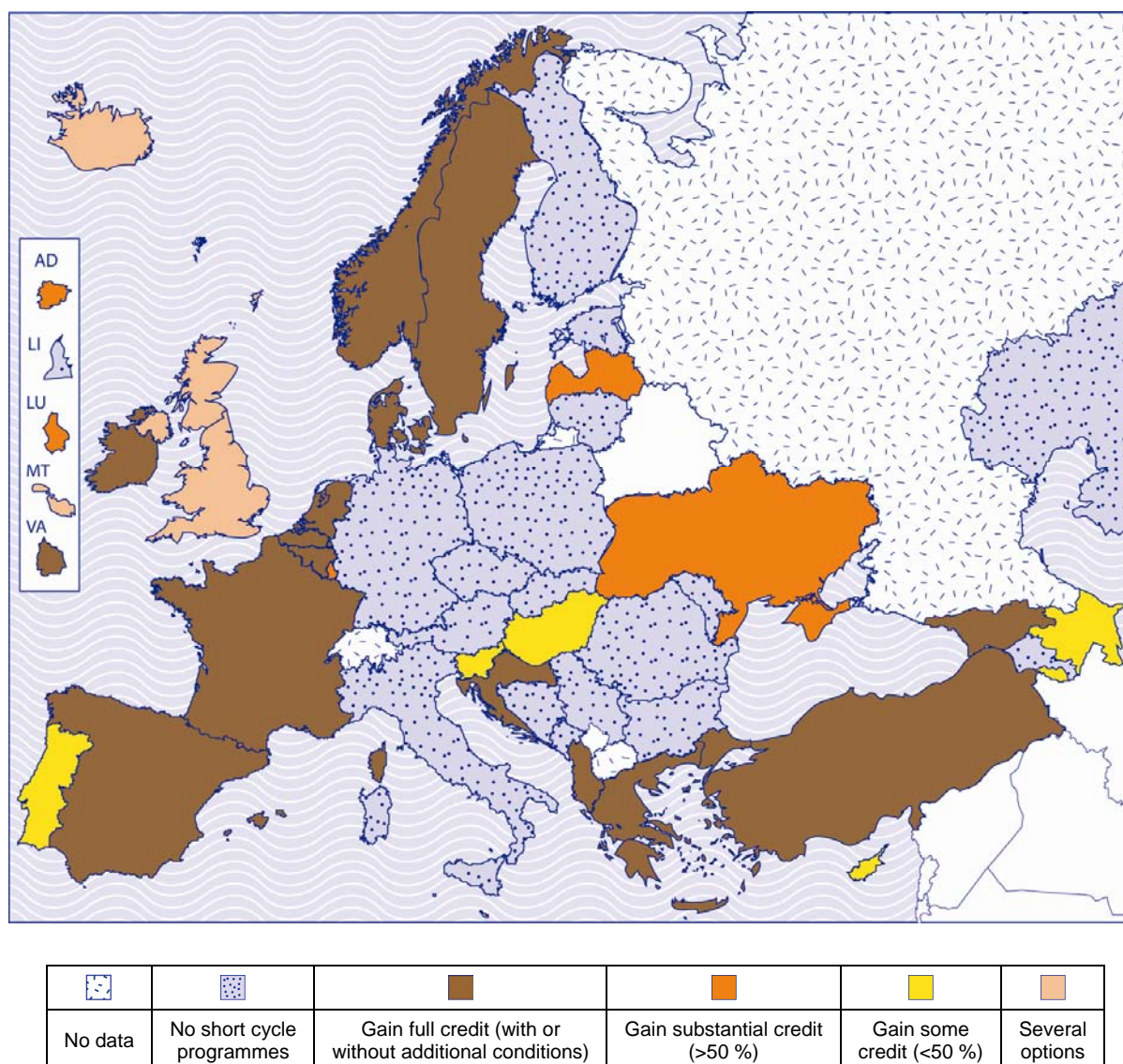
Source: BFUG questionnaire

2.1.2. Short-cycle Higher Education Programmes

In the 2003 Berlin Communiqué ministers asked for further exploration of, "whether and how shorter HEI may be linked to the first cycle of a qualifications framework for the EHEA" (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). Short programmes were accommodated in the EHEA Qualifications framework through

additional provision for a short cycle within or linked to the first cycle. All-in-all short cycle programmes linked to the first cycle exist in around half the countries AD, AZ, Be-fr; BE-nl; CY, DK, EL, ES, FR, GE, HR, IE, IS, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, SE, SI, TR, UA, UK-eng; UK-sct. Most of those countries consider the short cycle programmes as part of HEI, except for AZ, CY, EL, PT and SI which consider those programmes as part of tertiary education but not HEI. When continuing studies in a first cycle programme, in short cycle graduates often can have full credit, see Figure 2.10. In some countries full credit is granted but only when continuing in professional first cycle programmes. In NO and SE and in professional HEI in DK the short studies are built into the first cycle but e.g. in BE-nl, IS, LV and UK full credit is possible if there is agreement between the institution providing the short cycle programme and the institution where the bachelor programme is taught. In IS and UK there are several kinds of short cycle programmes with different possibilities for credit towards first cycle programme.

2.10: Gaining credits towards bachelor programme in the same field for previous short-cycle studies, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

2.1.3. Third cycle programmes

The estimated share of second cycle graduates who go on to studies in the third cycle is in most countries either in the interval of 5-10 % or 10-15 %. The smallest shares are 0,8 % in MT and 3 % in UA and the highest shares are over 20 % (CH, EL, MD and RS) and even over 30 % - AT, FR.

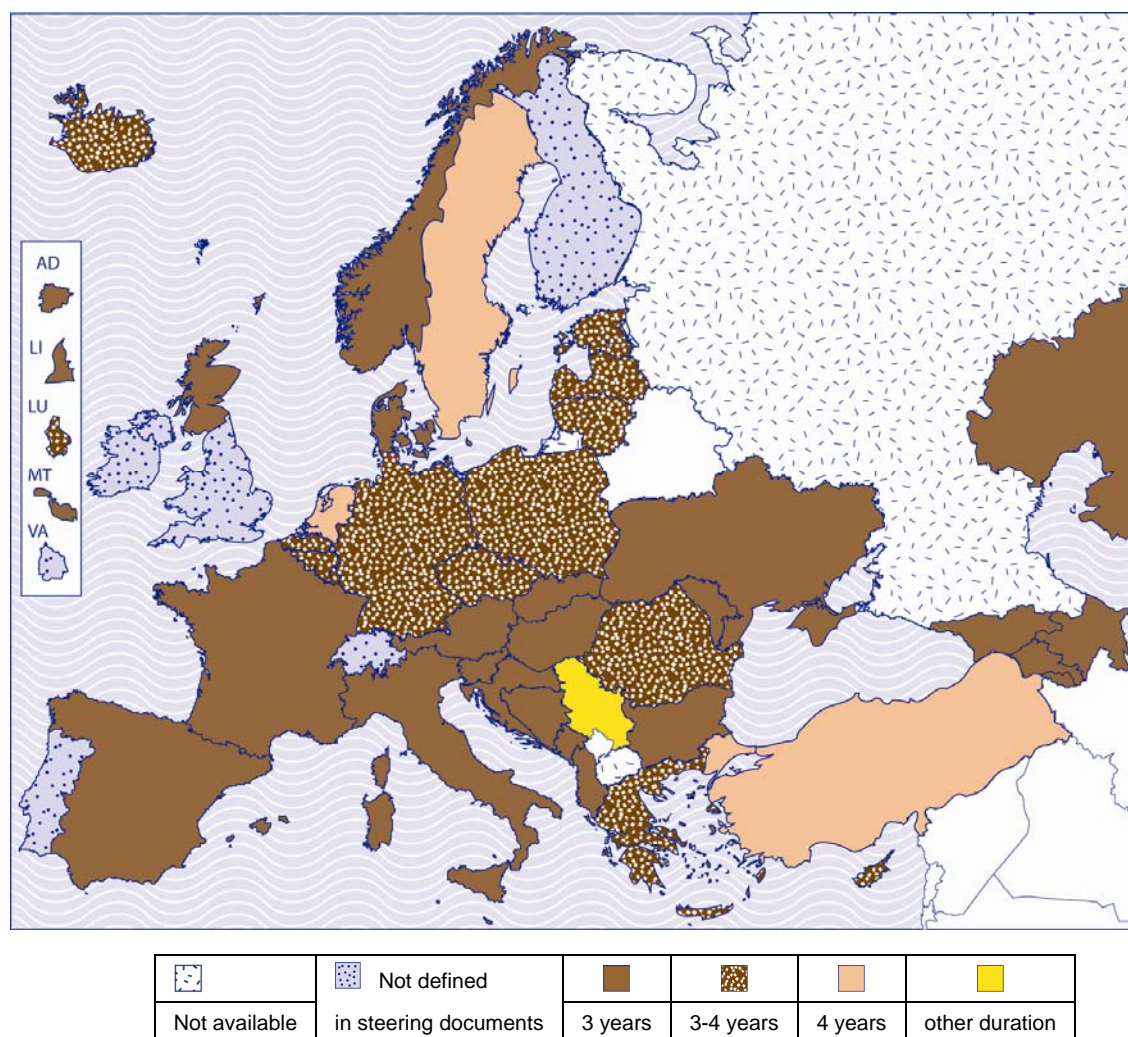
In some countries (e.g. CY, DE, DK, FI, IE, MT, NL, SE, TR, UK-sct) there are also possibilities for holders of first cycle degrees to enter third cycle programmes. Selection is based on certain criteria and an individual decision is required. In most cases only 0-2.5 % of first cycle degree holders are actually admitted to third cycle programmes. Doctoral studies for holders of first cycle degrees are often also longer, and may include acquiring a second cycle degree during the process (FI and partly DK).

In 9 countries (CY, DK, GE, HR, LI, ME, RS, SI and TR) all or most doctoral programmes are structured. In turn, 14 countries (AL, CH, DE, FI, FR, IE, LT, LV, ME, NL, NO, PL, PT and UK) characterize their situation as a mixture of structured doctoral programmes and traditional ones. Traditional supervision-based independent research dominates in 10 countries (AT, BA, BE-nl, CZ, IS, LU, MT, NL, SK VA.) in Be-fr r students first complete 60 ECTS credits and receive a certificate before starting supervised research while in UK-sct one of the options is to develop the doctoral programme after a one-year taught master course.

Doctoral schools appear to have seen a rapid development across the European Higher Education Area and now exist in 30 countries (AL, AT, BE-fr; BE-nl, CH, CY, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, IE, IS, IT, KZ, LI, LT, LV, NL, NO, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR, UA, UK-ewni, UK-sct, VA). In many cases doctoral schools are organised for training doctoral students within one discipline or a group of related disciplines (e.g. AT, BE, EE, DE, LV). In this way the individual specialisation of doctoral candidates in their subjects is accompanied by a cross-curricular study programme that aims to develop general competences. Another version of doctoral schools combines doctoral candidates who undertake research on a particular topic or theme and are trained by a team of scientists (AT).

NL and NO are examples of countries where large doctoral schools may be organised nationally in parallel with doctoral training at individual higher education institutions. In other countries doctoral schools are organised by universities themselves. In UK-ewni the main model is institution wide doctoral schools but in UK-sct depending on the size of institution doctoral schools may be either discipline-specific, or organised at faculty or institutional level. In several countries third cycle programmes may also lead to industrial or business-oriented doctoral degrees (DK), professional doctoral degrees (IE, RO and UK) or PhDs in the arts (SE). AZ has kept the two tier doctoral system where a second doctoral degree can be earned in 4-5 years of post-PhD research. As shown in Figure 2.11, the most typical prescribed duration of full-time doctoral programmes is 3 years while in 8 countries it is 3-4 years. 4 countries make no attempt to define or regulate the length of doctoral studies. Actual duration is estimated to be between 3 and 4 years in most countries.

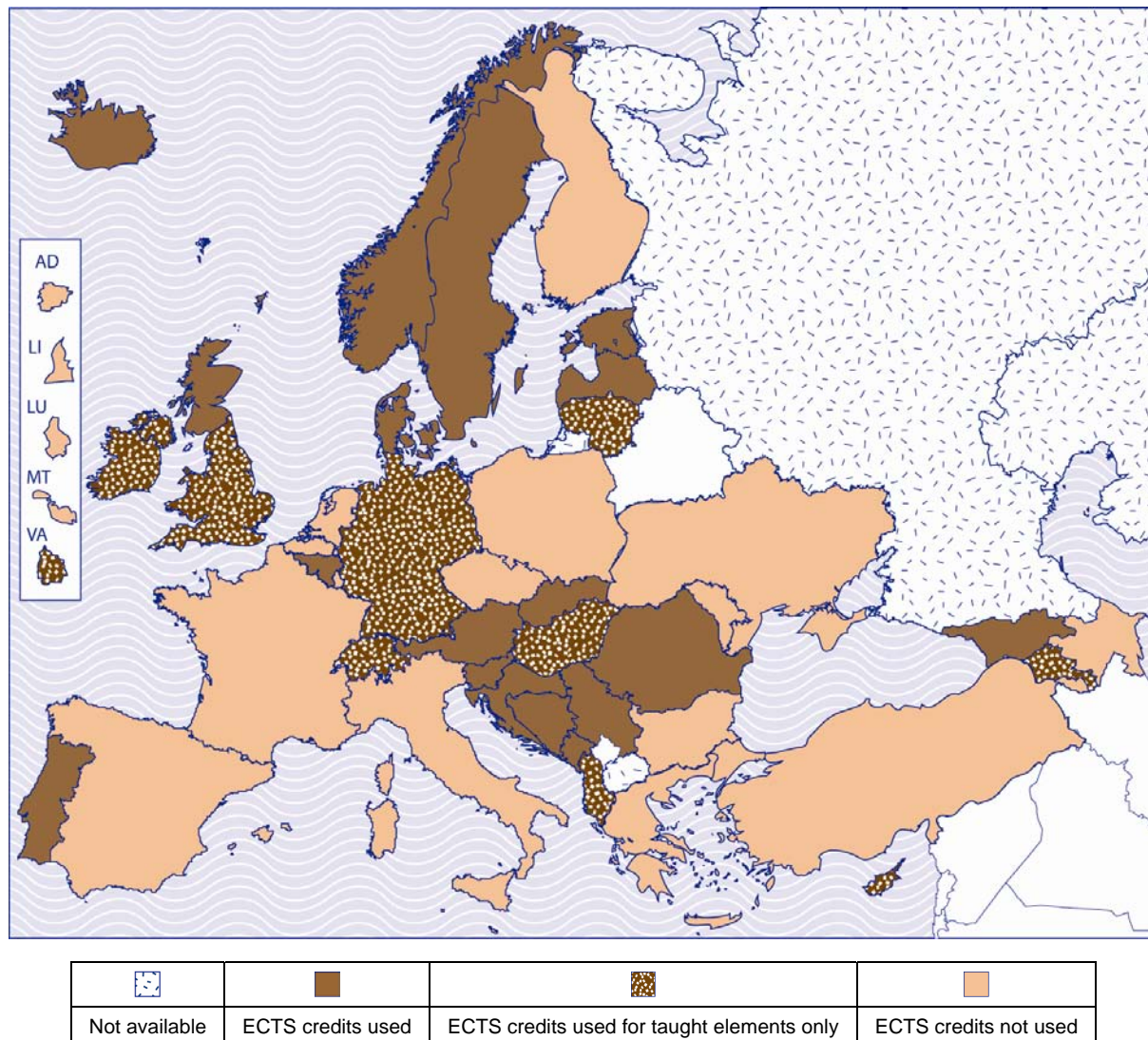
Figure 2.11: The length of full-time third cycle programmes defined in the national steering documents, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

All countries that have a qualifications frameworks include doctoral studies. The information submitted for this report also suggests that the use of ECTS in doctoral studies is growing over time. Currently 18 countries use ECTS for the whole doctoral studies and another 11 countries - for taught courses only. 18 other countries do not use ECTS in doctoral education. see Figure 2.12.

Figure 2.12: Use of ECTS credits in doctoral programmes, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Overall, the results suggest that the development of doctoral studies as the third cycle of studies is progressing. There are more countries where structured doctoral studies are the predominant model of doctoral training. Doctoral schools are being established at both institutional and in some countries also at national level and they follow no single model. Doctoral schools can be organised more as structures ensuring an organisational framework for structured doctoral studies (AT and IE, IT). Alternatively they may also be established to facilitate multidisciplinary studies, providing the necessary transversal skills, and/or a platform for cooperation of doctoral students. A third possibility is that they are established to provide an overarching structure for taught courses in the third cycle.

2.1.4. Joint degrees and programmes

Already in their Prague communiqué in 2001 ministers called for an increase in degree curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognized joint degree in order to promote the European dimension of higher education (Prague Communiqué, 2001). Programmes developed jointly by several universities from different countries and awarding joint degrees have the potential to stimulate developments in various Bologna action lines. For instance, joint degrees require joint curriculum development, joint quality assurance and joint decisions regarding mutual recognition of parts of programmes acquired at partner institutions. For joint programmes and joint degrees to be successful partner institutions can make use of the Bologna tools such as ECTS, Diploma supplement, qualifications frameworks and a learning outcomes orientation, thus also fostering the implementation of these tools⁹.

Several reports consider that the greatest problem is how to award joint degrees. One difficulty is that national legislation may not mention joint degrees at all. If this is the case, joint programmes and joint degrees have to fulfil all the same rules as standard programmes and qualifications, and the specific characteristics of joint programmes and degrees are not acknowledged. While institutions require autonomy to develop innovative joint programmes, the different procedures required for matters such as curriculum development and quality assurance need consideration and support at national level.

For this reason at their Berlin Conference in 2003 the ministers responsible for higher education stated that they agree to engage at the national level to remove legal obstacles to the establishment and recognition of such degrees and to actively support the development and adequate quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). Currently 35 countries report that their legislation allows both the establishment of joint programmes and the award of joint degrees. In 4 countries (AM, CY, HR and VA) legislation regarding joint degrees lacks clarity, as in AM and LT it allows joint programmes to operate but does not allow joint degrees to be awarded. In 8 countries, (BG, CH, FI, IE, KZ, LI, MD, and UA) legislation doesn't address joint programmes or joint degrees at all, and this often leads to difficulties both in establishing joint programmes and awarding joint degrees in practice¹⁰.

Country estimates of the percentage of higher education institutions awarding joint degrees and involved in joint programmes are shown in Figures 2.13 and 2.14. The situation varies greatly in different countries. In five countries (CH, ES, LU, MT and VA) the share of institutions involved in joint programmes and awarding joint degrees is between 75 and 100 %. These countries are closely followed by DK and UK-Sct where 50-75% of higher education institutions have joint programmes and also award the same percentage of joint degrees.

At the other end of the scale are AD, LI and MD where there are no joint programmes at all. A further 8 countries (AL, AZ, CY, HR, MD, RS, UA and UK-ENG/WLS/NIR) have only 0-5 % of their higher education institutions involved in joint programmes. In four countries (CY, FI, LI and LV) higher education institutions are involved in joint programmes but don't award joint degrees, although in LV w legislation allows joint degrees to be awarded since August 2011.

In many countries participation in joint programmes is more widespread than the award of joint degrees. This tendency is observed even in countries such as DE, FI, IE, IT and RO where the

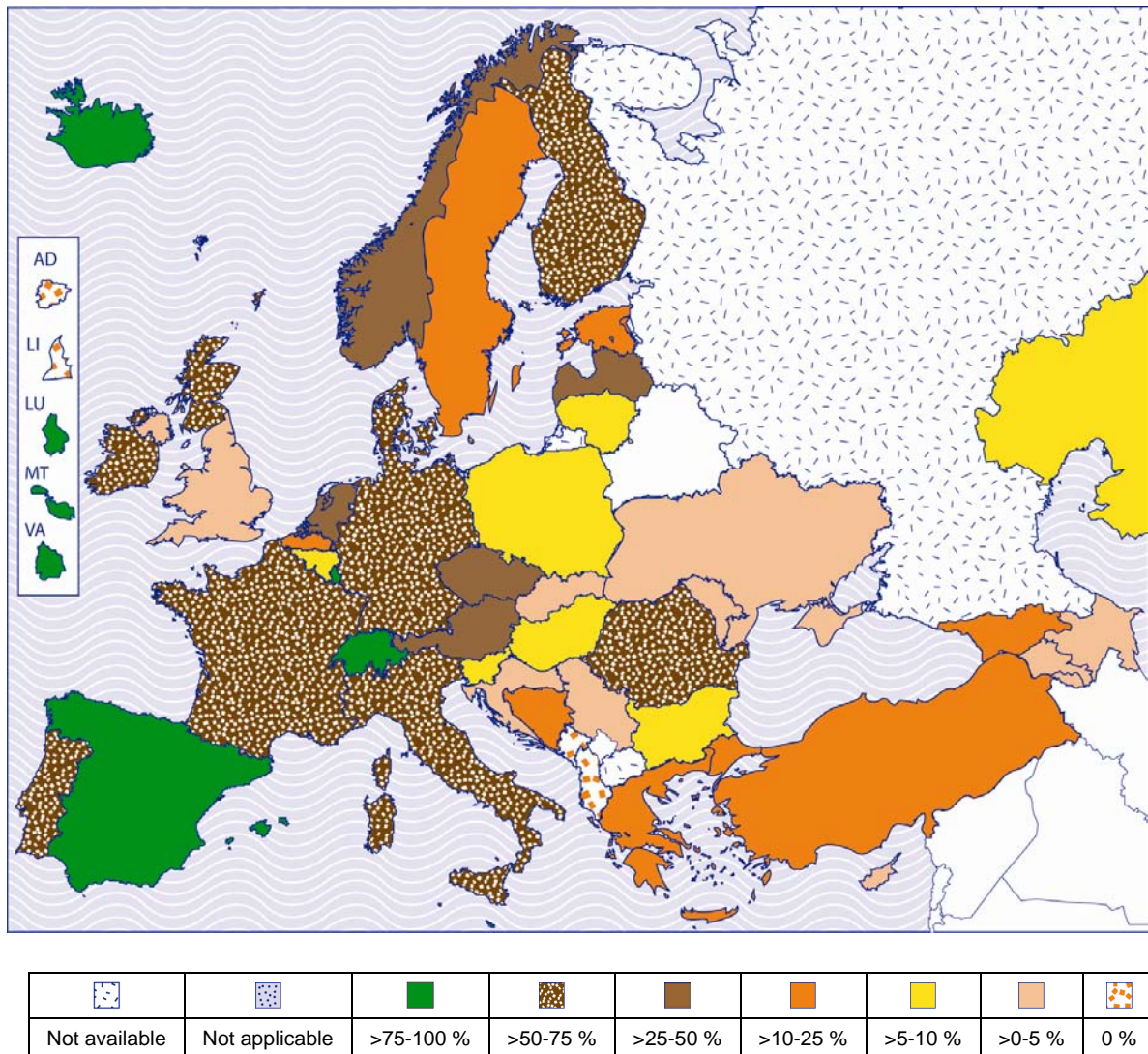
⁹ Reference to EUA report on master degrees and joint degrees, 2002.

¹⁰ Ref to JD report

percentage of higher education institutions involved in joint programmes is 50-75 %. Three countries - LV, NL and KZ - estimate the same number of graduates from joint programmes as those awarded joint degrees. At the same time in 6 countries (AD, EE, IE, LI, MD and ME) there were no graduates from joint programmes in 2009/2010. The highest estimated shares of students in joint programmes and those graduating with a joint degree are in UK-Sct and VA – over 10 % followed by AT with 5-7,5 % and BA, ES, LU and KZ with 2,5-5 %.

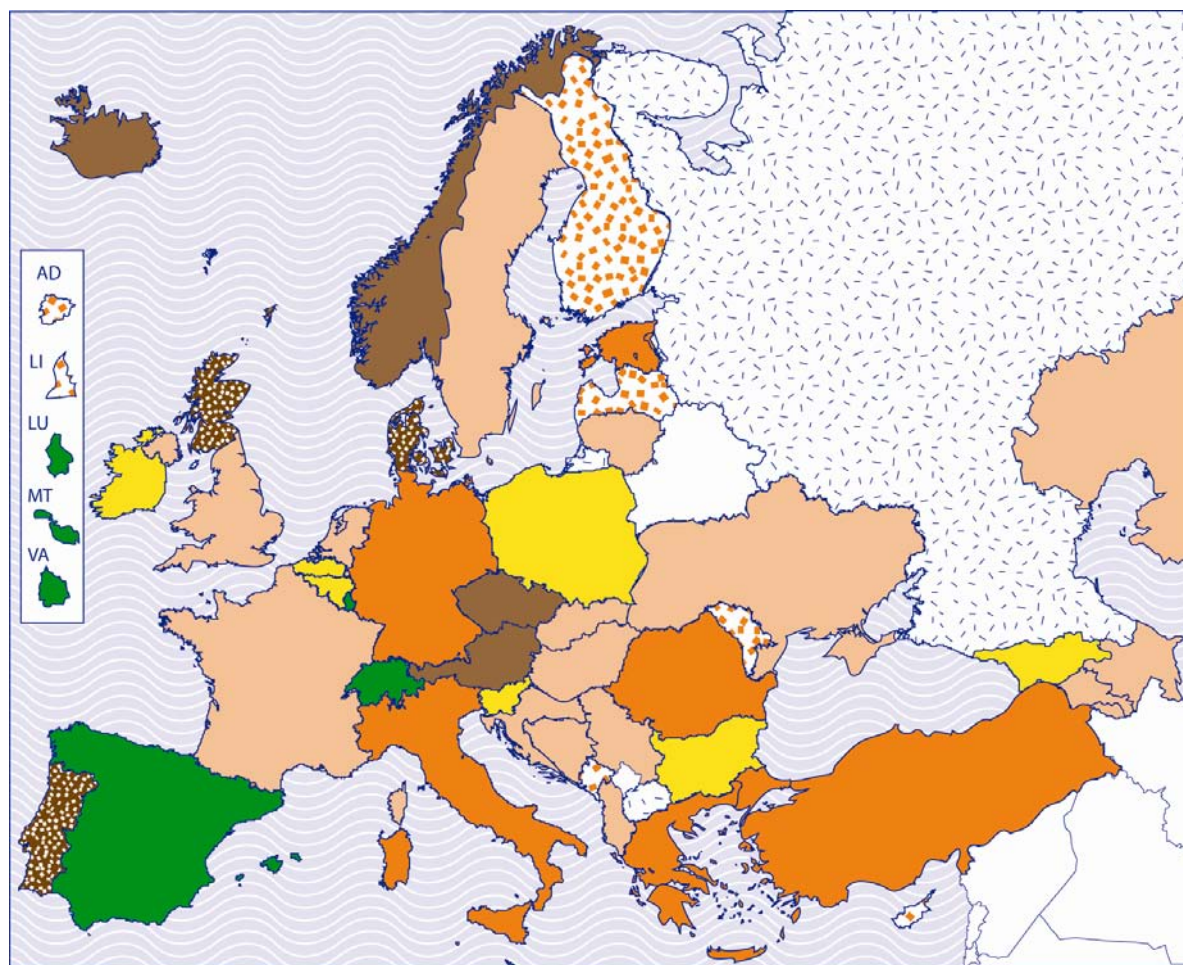
Countries estimate that the most popular fields of study for joint programmes/degrees are mathematics and sciences, engineering and technologies as well as economics & business. Next come studies of world regions or countries, law, humanities, health sciences, education, plus culture and arts. Languages, social sciences, agriculture and forestry, as well as interdisciplinary programmes are also mentioned in this respect.

Figure 2.13: Estimated percentage of institutions that participate in joint programmes, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Figure 2.14: Estimated percentage of institutions that award joint degrees, academic year 2010/2011



Not available	Not applicable	>75-100 %	>50-75 %	>25-50 %	>10-25 %	>5-10 %	>0-5 %	0 %

Source: BFUG questionnaire

The main conclusions are that more countries have reviewed their legislation in order to allow and encourage joint degrees and that more students are involved in joint programmes. However, students of joint programmes are not always awarded a joint degree.

Although reliable data to assess implementation of joint programmes and degrees is lacking, it appears that the picture across the EHEA is very uneven, with none or few institutions involved in some countries while nearly all institutions may offer at least one joint programme in others.

2.2. Bologna Tools

2.2.1. National qualifications frameworks

Qualifications frameworks came into the Bologna agenda between 2001 and 2003. At that time just a few qualifications frameworks existed in Europe – in Ireland, the UK-EWNI and UK-Sct and at an experimental phase in Denmark. Between 2001 and 2003 several Bologna policy seminars were organised on qualifications frameworks which concluded that establishing qualifications frameworks describing qualifications in terms of level, workload, learning outcomes, and profile should be useful both at national level and at the level of the EHEA. Qualifications frameworks had the potential to make higher education systems more transparent, providing common reference points for levels of qualifications, and also strengthening links between qualifications and learning outcomes.


In Berlin in 2003 ministers in their communiqué encouraged the member States “to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their HEI systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, learning outcomes, competences and profile”. Ministers also undertook to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the EHEA. Two years later in Bergen ministers adopted the overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA and committed themselves to elaborating national frameworks for qualifications compatible with the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA by 2010. However, due to the long time needed to carry out the change towards learning outcomes-based programmes and qualifications, as well as carrying out self-assessment procedures with the involvement of foreign experts, the 2010 deadline proved to be unrealistic. Ministers at Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009, stated: “We aim at having them [i.e. NQFs] implemented and prepared for self-certification against the overarching Qualifications Framework for the EHEA by 2012” (Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve Communiqué, 2009).

Figure 2.15: Scorecard Indicator n°3 on implementation of national qualifications frameworks, academic year 2010/2011

[Insert Figure]¹¹

2012	7	13	17	2	4
2009	6	6	21	6	9

Scorecard categories

-  Step 10: The Framework has self-certified its compatibility with the European Framework for Higher Education
-  Steps 7-9:
 - 9. Qualifications have been included in the NQF,
 - 8. Study programmes have been re-designed on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF,
 - 7. Implementation of the NQF has started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions, quality assurance agency(ies) and other bodies
-  Steps 5-6:
 - 6. The NQF has been adopted in legislation or in other high level policy fora
 - 5. Consultation / national discussion has taken place and the design of the NQF has been agreed by stakeholders
-  Step 4: The level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), and credit ranges have been agreed
-  Step 3:
 - The process of developing the NQF has been set up, with stakeholders identified and committee(s) established
 - Step 2. The purpose(s) of the NQF have been agreed and outlined
 - Step 1. Decision to start developing the NQF has been taken by the national body responsible for higher education and/or the minister

Indicator is defined as the current state in implementation of the national qualifications framework. The state of implementation was measured against the ten steps of implementation of NQF defined by the EHEA Qualifications frameworks working group (see below). To keep the same scoring criteria as in 2009 the 10 steps of NQF implementation are transformed into stocktaking scores as shown below.

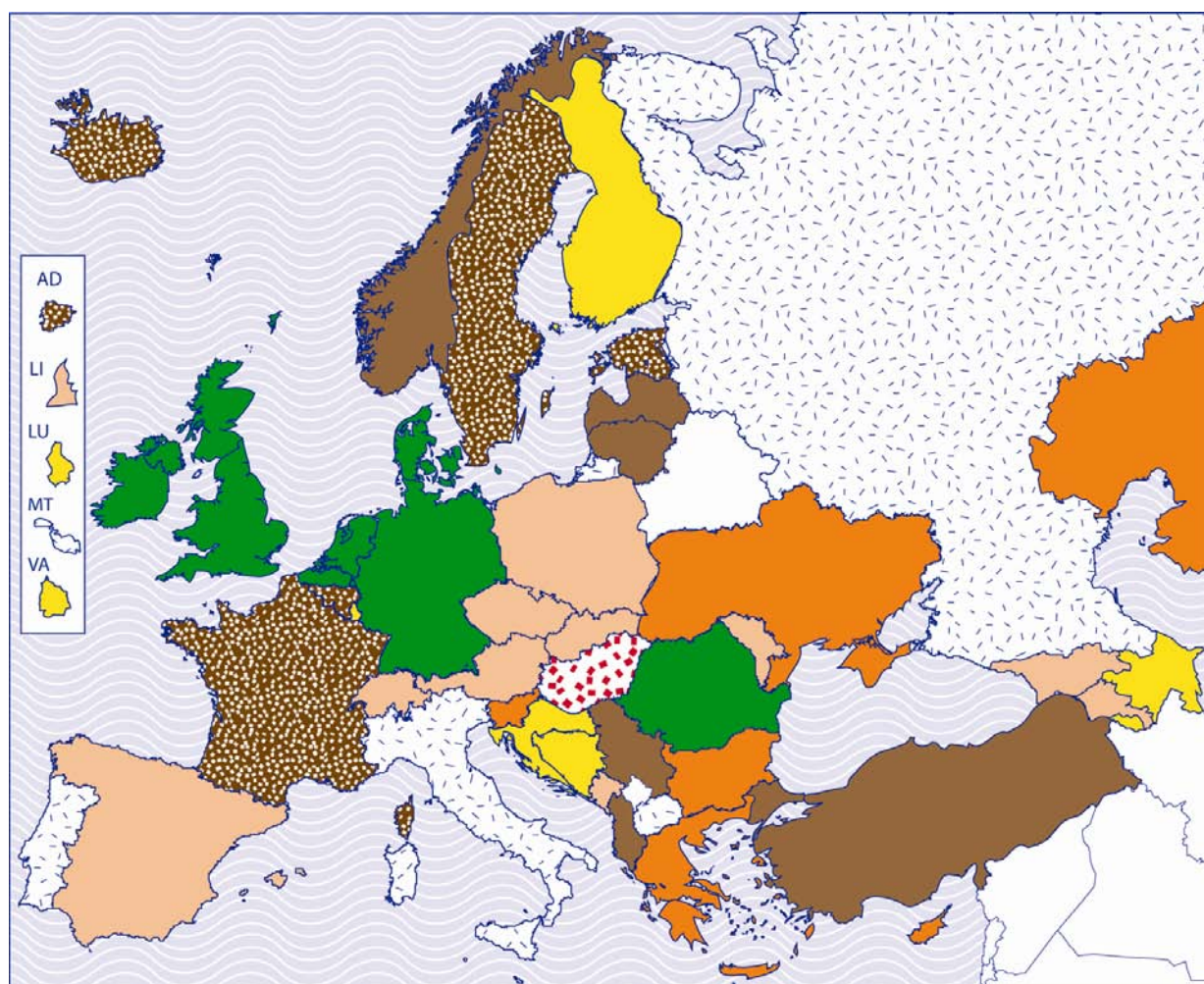
Source: BFUG questionnaire

BE-nl, DE, DK, IE, NL, UK-ewni and UK-sct (**possibly IT, MT, Pt, RO**) have fulfilled all the 10 steps in implementation of qualifications frameworks. Another group of countries - AD, BE-fr, EE, FR, IS, SE have a good chance to join the first group in 2012. Those countries mainly have to complete the self-certification procedure. More effort is needed but still there are good chances for AL, LT, LV, NO, RS and TR to complete the process in 2012. In addition to the preceeding group, they still have to complete the re-design of programmes on the basis of learning outcomes – and that will take more time and effort. The next group of countries – AM, AT, CH, CZ, ES, GE, LI, MD, ME, PL and SK have

¹¹ Will be inserted soon

adopted NQF in legislation or in other high level policy fora, but AZ, BA, FI, HR, LU, VA have so far completed the initial and fundamental discussions with all stakeholders. CY and SI have prepared and agreed the proposal on the level structure, level descriptors and credit ranges. BG, EL, KZ and UA are in the very first stages of implementation and have yet to draft and agree on the proposal of a NQF structure.

Figure 2.16: Progress in development of national Qualifications Frameworks according to the 10 steps, academic year 2010/2011



	No data
	Current development is between steps 1 and 4
	5. Consultation / national discussion has taken place and the design of the NQF has been agreed by stakeholders
	6. The NQF has been adopted in legislation or in other high level policy fora
	7. Implementation of the NQF has started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions, quality assurance agency(ies) and other bodies
	8. Study programmes have been re-designed on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF
	9. Qualifications have been included in the NQF
	10. The Framework has self-certified its compatibility with the European Framework for Higher Education

Source: BFUG questionnaire

The main focus at the moment is clearly on fulfilling the steps required for a National Qualification Framework to be established. For many countries there is still a considerable amount of effort and work required to meet agreed commitments. Redesigning study programmes and linking them with learning outcomes takes time and effort, as does including qualifications in the qualifications framework and carrying out the final step of self-certification. However, even when these tasks are completed, the work will not end. As the EHEA qualifications framework working group has pointed out in its report "...making qualifications frameworks work in practice is considerably more challenging than developing the structures". The working group also points out that "Making the QF-EHEA work in practice will be one of the main challenges of the EHEA in the years to come and this challenge will be common to its 47 members".

2.2.2. ECTS, Learning Outcomes and Student Centred Learning

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a student-centred credit system based on the student workload required to achieve specified learning outcomes. It was originally set up in 1989 in order to facilitate the recognition of periods of study abroad. More recently, it has been developing into an accumulation system to be implemented in all programmes at institutional, regional, national and European levels. Credit accumulation i.e. the allocation of credit points to each component of a study programme and determining the total number of credits needed for completion of the programme, is a practice that is steadily developing across the EHEA.

ECTS was mentioned in the 1999 Bologna declaration in the context of credit transfer, "as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility with a view to assign credits to foreign students". However, it also went beyond that "Credits could also be acquired in non-HEI contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by the receiving Universities concerned". In their Prague communiqué ministers sent a clear message that "a credit system such as the ECTS or one that is ECTS-compatible, providing both transferability and accumulation functions, is necessary" (Prague Communiqué, 2001). As of summer 2004 the revised "ECTS key features" state that ECTS credits are allocated on the basis of both workload and learning outcomes.






Proper implementation of ECTS is very important for reaching Bologna goals. Its use for accumulation makes programmes more transparent, and it facilitates the use of learning outcomes earned at another institution at home or abroad, but also those earned outside the system of formal education. Proper implementation of ECTS is one of the Bologna action lines that requires much effort. In the early stages the main challenge was the transformation of ECTS from a credit transfer system to a transfer and genuine accumulation system. Currently the most demanding issue is to link all programme components with learning outcomes. This is also reflected in the results of the Scorecard indicator on ECTS.

Figure 2.17: Scorecard Indicator n°8 on the stage of implementation of ECTS system, academic year 2010/2011

[Insert Figure]¹²

2012	20	15	9	3	0
2009	35	2	5	1	5

Scorecard categories

-  ECTS credits are allocated to all components of all HE programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation. ECTS credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes.
-  ECTS credits are allocated to all components of more than 75 % of HE programmes, enabling credit transfer and accumulation AND ECTS credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes¹⁰
OR
Credits are allocated to all components of all HE programmes using a fully ECTS compatible credit system enabling credit transfer and accumulation AND credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes
-  ECTS credits are allocated in 50-75 % of all HE programmes AND ECTS credits are demonstrably linked with learning outcomes
OR
ECTS credits are allocated to all components of more than 75 % of HE programmes enabling credit transfer and accumulation, but ECTS credits are not yet linked with learning outcomes
-  ECTS credits are allocated in at least 49 % of HE programmes
OR
a national credit system is used which is not fully compatible with ECTS
-  ECTS credits are allocated in less than 49 % of HE programmes
OR
ECTS is used in all programmes but only for credit transfer

Source: BFUG questionnaire

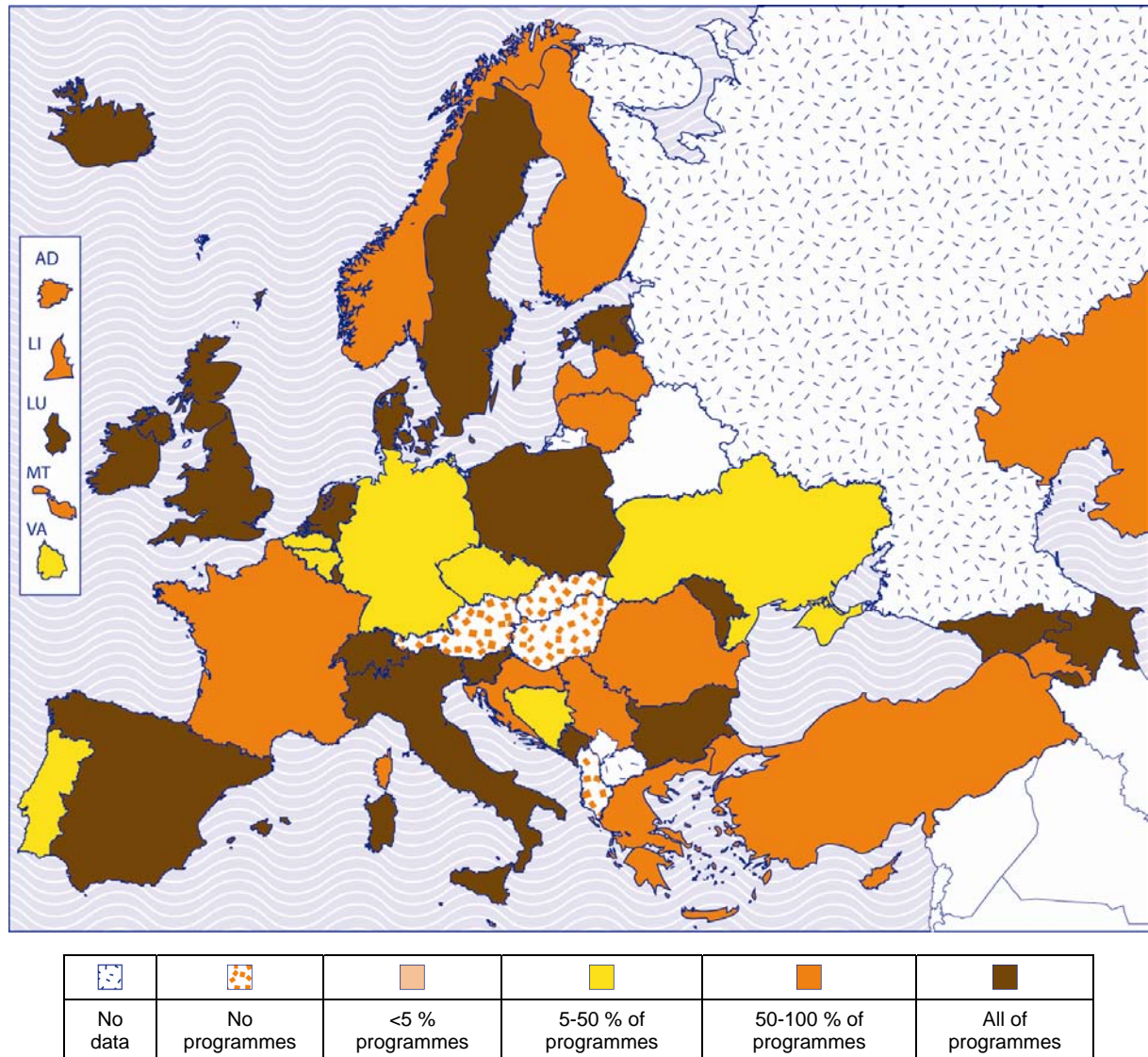
Comparing the results to those of the 2009 stocktaking, in 2012 there are no countries where ECTS credits are allocated in less than 50 % of programmes and there are only 2 countries – DE and AT where ECTS is used for both credit transfer and accumulation in less than 75 % programmes. This means that implementation of ECTS as a transfer and accumulation system in the sense of quantifying students' work appears to be almost completed. However, this is not the case with regard to the task of linking credits with learning outcomes. Here the task has not been completed in a disturbingly large number of countries.

¹² Will be inserted soon

A map of Europe and surrounding regions showing the distribution of five major language families. The legend indicates: AD (Germanic, dark brown), LI (Latin, yellow), LU (Slavic, orange), MT (Mediterranean, light brown), and VA (Vedic, light yellow). The map shows Germanic languages in Scandinavia and Northern Europe, Latin in Southern Europe and the British Isles, Slavic in Eastern Europe, Mediterranean in the Balkans and Southern Italy, and Vedic in the Indian subcontinent.

25

Figure 2.19: Extent to which ECTS credits are linked with learning outcomes in higher education programmes, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Comparing the Figures 2.18 and 2.19 above shows that there is much work still to be done in linking all parts of programmes with learning outcomes. This has been implemented to a far lesser extent than the use of ECTS for credit transfer and accumulation. In 30 countries all programmes use ECTS for credit transfer and accumulation, in 9 countries the same is true for more than 75 % of programmes but in 7 countries - AD, AT, DE, EL, FR, TR and VA ECTS credits are used for transfer and accumulation in 50 % - 74 % programmes (Figure 2.18).

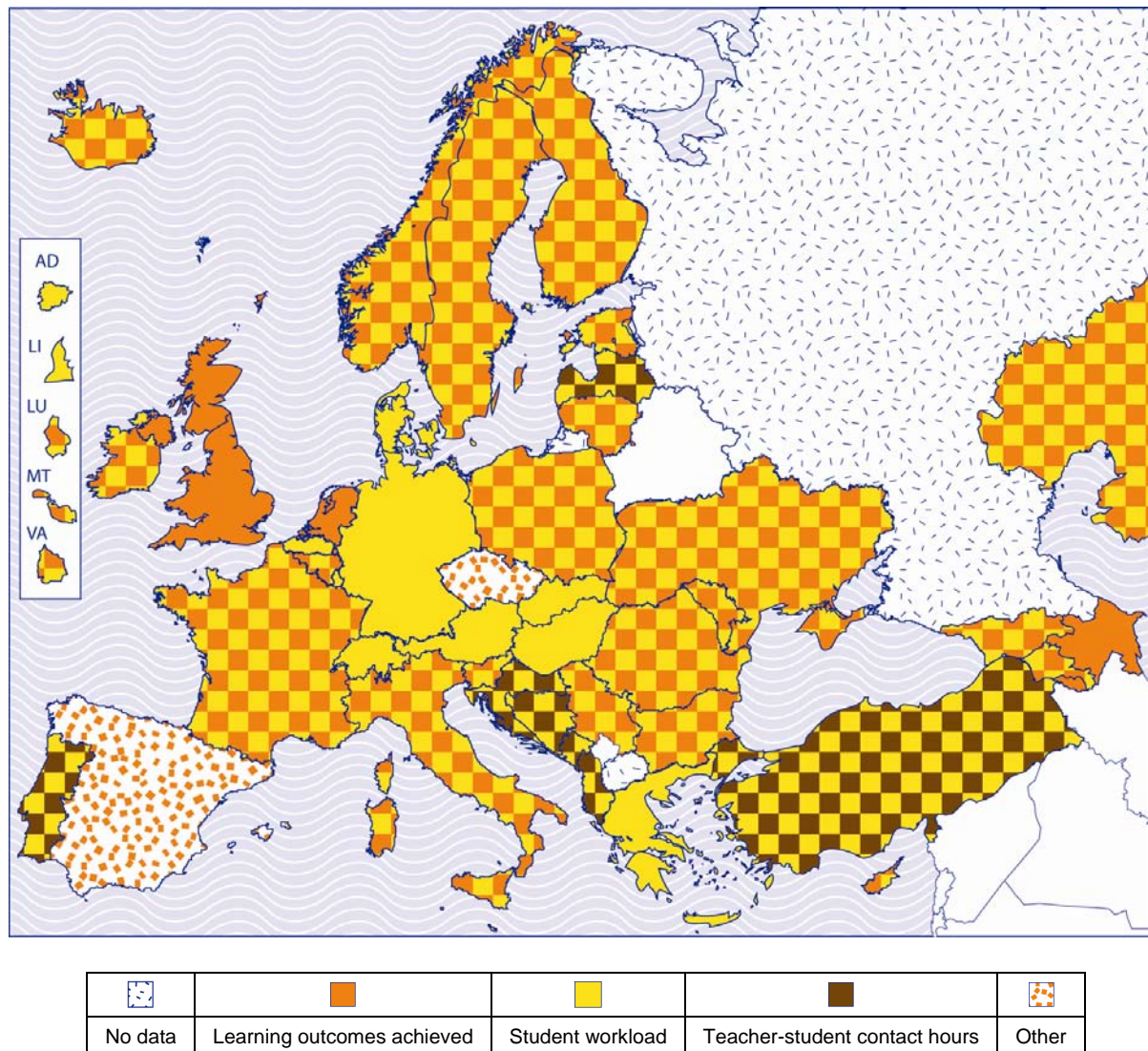
It is the linking of credits with learning outcomes that hinders the full implementation of ECTS: only in 19 countries (Figure 2.19) are all parts of programmes comprehensively and systematically linked to learning outcomes while there are 7 countries - BA, BE-fr, BE-nl, CZ, DE, PT, UA and VA where all parts of programmes are linked with learning outcomes in less than 50 % of programmes. In 3 countries – AL, AT and SK – parts of programmes are not linked to learning outcomes at all.

Credit allocation. Credit systems have evolved significantly in recent years. The main stages have been credit allocation on the basis of student-teacher contact hours, to allocation of credits on the basis of student workload, and now the trend is towards allocation of credits based on both student workload and learning outcomes.

The new approach means that credits are allocated on condition that the student has performed a certain quantified learning and can demonstrate the expected learning outcomes. The survey results presented in Figure 2.20 show that in the majority of countries (24) higher education institutions allocate credits to students on the basis of a combination of workload and learning outcomes. AZ, MT, and UK-ewni and UK-Sct are systems where credits are awarded only on the basis of learning outcomes. Nine countries (AD, AT, BE-nl, CH, DE, DK, EL, LI and SK) allocate credits based on student workload only. The fact that some countries where components of programmes are linked with learning outcomes in all or most programmes (CH, DK, AD, and LI) allocate credits on the basis of workload only suggests that achieving the planned learning outcomes is *sine qua non*, while the number of credits is calculated on the basis of workload.

In most countries there is a certain measure of hours of student work per credit: in most countries it is within an interval between 25 and 30 hours. 4 countries (CZ, HR, NO and RO) do not have a prescribed measure of hours per credit but higher education institutions are nevertheless encouraged to use ECTS. In BA, LV, ME and TR the number of contact hours, which varies from 10 (BA) to a maximum of 13 (LV), is set in addition to the standard measure of student work. It should also be recognised that some countries that only recently started using credits have created credit systems that are suitable for credit accumulation. However, making them useful for credit transfer is still a challenge.

Figure 2.20: Basis to award ECTS credits in the majority of institutions/programmes, academic year 2010/11



Source: BFUG questionnaire

The main conclusions on the allocation of credits are the following. It is positive that no country allocates credits on the basis of contact hours only. However, there are a number of countries that still base credit allocation on student workload only – mainly because there are few programmes where all components are linked with learning outcomes. Overall, the implementation of ECTS as a transfer and accumulation system has gained ground, but making sense of the system in the context of a more learning outcomes-oriented approach remains a significant challenge.

Understanding and usage of learning outcomes

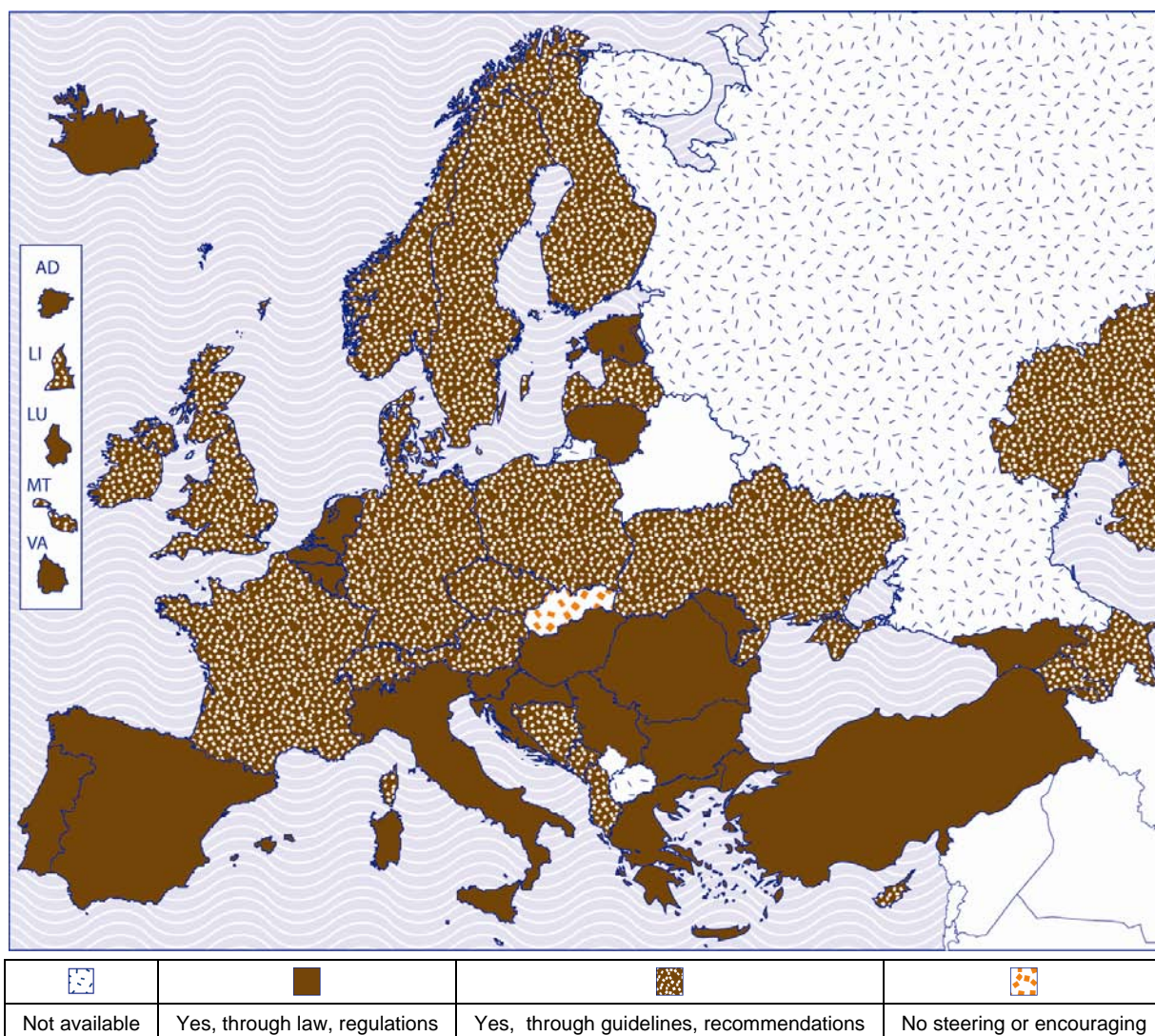
Definition of learning outcomes. Most countries follow two well-known and non-antagonistic patterns of definitions of learning outcomes. One comes from the EHEA overarching framework: “what the student is expected to know, understand and be able to do” (e.g. AD, AZ, BA, Be-Fr, CY, Fi, MT, TR, UK-end). The other is drawn from the EQF for LLL “knowledge, skills and competences” (e.g. DK, LV, ME, NO, SI). These definitions are then in some countries further sub-divided into more

categories. There are some countries, however, that have not yet agreed upon a national definition of learning outcomes (e.g. CH, DE, LI, and NL). There are also other definitions which appear compatible with the two most common patterns, such as “Learning outcomes explicitly express knowledge, skills and other abilities” (CZ), “knowledge, skills and attitudes” (EE, RS), “learning outcomes are knowledge and skills and corresponding autonomy and responsibility ...” (HR), “skills students are expected to have acquired” (SE), “knowledge, skills, or aptitudes “ (UK-Sct), “skills and competences” (VA).

However, in some countries specific national definitions are used that are not necessarily compatible with the other more widely adopted definitions. Examples are, “general measurable results of learning process that allow HEIs to assess whether students have developed the required competences” (AM), “ability to demonstrate knowledge and/or skills, oral and written representation of the information from the course” (BG), “Learning outcome is a qualification acquired through successful completion of academic program” (GE), “listed core competencies in accordance with [...] the requirements [...] of professional competence” (KZ).

National steering towards use of learning outcomes for curriculum development and student assessment. Less than half (21) of the countries have made the use of learning outcomes in curriculum development compulsory through laws or regulations, and a further 24 countries encourage the use of learning outcomes through advisory measures. In 1 country (SK) policies do not encourage learning outcomes (see Figure 2.21).

Figure 2.21: Steering and/or encouraging use of learning outcomes in national policy, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Steering or encouraging the use of learning outcomes through national policies is stipulated in legislation in only 14 countries (AD, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, GE, IS, LV, ME, NL, NO, RS, SI and partly in IE). More common (25 countries¹³) is to encourage learning outcomes through guidelines or recommendations. However in 7 countries (AL, AT, Be-nl, BG, CZ, LI and SK) it is not encouraged at all. CZ and HR report, however that they are preparing major projects on this issue.

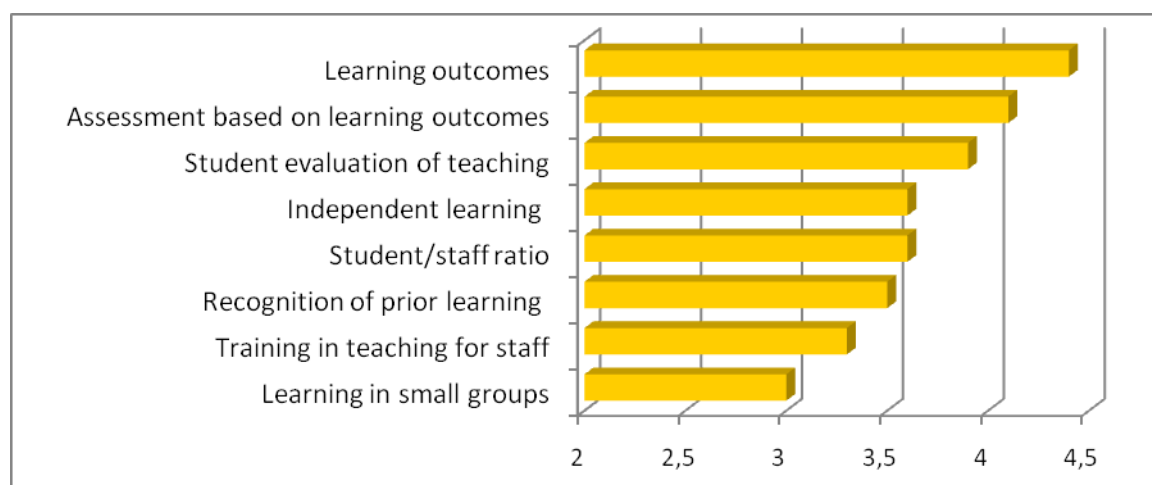
Implementation of ECTS, student - centred learning, qualifications frameworks, internal quality assurance within HEIs and other important action lines all depend on successful implementation of learning outcomes. At the same time these action lines take more time to implement properly than structural changes. The findings above suggest that those countries that choose not to make a learning outcomes approach compulsory through laws and regulations should step up their activities to encourage implementation of a learning outcomes approach.

¹³ AZ, BA, BE-fr, CH, CY, DE, FI, HR, IE, IT, KZ, LT, LU, MD, MT, PL, RO, SE, TR, UA, UK-eng, UK-sct, VA

Monitoring of the use of learning outcomes by quality assurance procedures is in place in most countries, the exceptions being AZ, CH, BE-fr, BE-nl, SK and TR. Most countries which monitor the use of learning outcomes first refer to external quality assurance and particularly procedures for programme accreditation/approval. It seems that the most widely used model is a direct assessment of implementation of learning outcomes by external evaluators. Three countries (BE, CZ and FI) mention the involvement of internal QA procedures, with external monitoring in the form of an audit procedure. CY mentions internal QA only. AM uses stakeholders' feedback.

Training programmes on student-centred learning/ learning outcomes are available in most countries. Seminars and conferences and/or staff consultations and training activities take place in 19 countries (AT, BG, CH, CY, DK, FI, EE, GE, KZ, LT, LU, LV, MD, MT, NO, PL, SI, TR, UK.) A number of countries (AM, AZ, LV, PL, RS, UA) issue methodological guidance materials, while others (BE-nl, EE, ES, FI, HR, LT, RO, SE) have allocated national or EU funding for major projects. The support measures are often organized by national Bologna expert groups, ministries, rectors' conferences¹⁴ or QA or other agencies. Generally, attendance to the training on implementation of student-centred learning is voluntary, although in 14 countries – (AL, AT, BA, BE-fr, CZ, DK, IE, IS, LV, MD, RO, TR, UK-ewni and UK-Sct) for some groups of staff attendance is mandatory. The staff for which the training is mandatory varies from country to country and it range from Deans, Directors of Graduate Schools, Bologna coordinators to quality officers at HEIs (TR), new lecturers, teaching fellows, or postdocs (UK-eng). In LV these topics are included in the compulsory training for all teaching positions below professorial level. Voluntary training in the use of learning outcomes is available for all staff in 16 countries and for some groups of staff in another 8 countries. However, in 7 countries (AD, AZ, BE-nl, EL, LU, PT and SK) there is no offer of training for implementation of learning outcomes/ student-centred learning.

Figure 2.22: Importance of elements of student-centred learning in the eyes of EHEA countries (of total score 5), academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Training on the issues of student-centred learning/ learning outcomes is organised in majority countries, however the answers suggest that training mainly addresses institution leaders, quality

¹⁴ CH, DE, FR, LV, and NO

officers, bologna coordinators and/or new or lower rank of teaching staff who may be obliged to attend such training. Yet, in one third of countries there is no training offer on LOs/ student-centred learning or such training is available only to some groups of staff which can be another reason of slow progress in action lines that are dependent on implementation of learning outcomes.

Countries were asked to score several elements of student-centred learning on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5, see Figure 2.22. The two most valued elements clearly are the learning outcomes and assessment based on learning outcomes. Independent learning is the next. The least valued aspect is learning in small groups. Additionally, countries have emphasized the importance of more aspects that are essential for establishing genuine student-centred learning. The development of the student's ability to think critically and engage independently with the curriculum has been stressed, as well as the objective that students should genuinely participate in all aspects of academic life. Participation of students in research and development has also been stressed. Countries also point out that support services: academic and career guidance, tutoring, psychological counselling have an important role in building up student-centred learning and that this process also requires the different actors to be identified and their roles to be (re)defined.

In conclusion, the vast majority of countries at least formally follow the definitions of learning outcomes used in the EHEA overarching qualifications framework or EQF for LLL while compatibility of some national definitions of learning outcomes with those two patterns could be questioned. The question still remains of how far those definitions are known, understood and actually applied in practice when it comes to individual HEI staff members who have to apply them for the courses they are delivering. In the majority of countries the introduction of a learning outcomes approach, especially regarding student assessment, is only encouraged through voluntary recommendations. While there are some countries where there is long experience of steering HEI by recommendations and guidelines, in others issuing a recommendation does not necessarily lead to immediate follow-up and that could be one reason why implementation of these issues is taking longer than might have been hoped for and expected. In most countries the use of learning outcomes for curriculum development is monitored directly by programme assessments in external quality assurance, while in fewer countries internal QA has the primary responsibility.

Countries consider that most important elements on the way to genuine student-centred learning are learning outcomes and outcomes-based assessment of student achievements. Genuine student-centred learning is a complex matter that is difficult to integrate into everyday higher education reality. It should comprise actions that ensure that students learn how to think critically, participate in all kinds of academic life, and are given more independence and responsibility.

2.2.3. Diploma Supplement






The Diploma Supplement was developed already in 1998 by a working group sponsored by Council of Europe, EU and UNESCO therefore it was taken up as a transparency tool already in the Bologna declaration in 1999.

Figure 2.23: Scorecard Indicator n°7 on the stage of implementation of the diploma supplement, academic year 2010/2011

[Insert Figure]¹⁵

2012	20	17	6	3	0
2009	26	9	11	02	

Scorecard categories

-  Every graduate receives a Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format and in a widely spoken European language
 - automatically
 - free of charge
-  Every graduate who requests it receives a Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format and in a widely spoken European language
 - free of charge
-  A DS in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format and in a widely spoken European language is issued to some graduates OR in some programmes free of charge
-  A DS in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format and in a widely spoken European language is issued to some graduates OR in some programmes for a fee
-  Systematic issuing of DS in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format and in a widely spoken European language has not yet started

Indicator¹⁶

Indicator measures the implementation of the Diploma Supplement against four criteria:

- 1) Diploma Supplement should be issued to every graduate
- 2) Diploma Supplement should be issued automatically,
- 3) Diploma Supplement should be issued in a widely spoken European language;
- 4) Diploma Supplement should be issued free of charge.

Quantitative data on the issuing the DS. The data submitted by countries show that only in 21 countries is the DS issued automatically. In a further 25 countries either all Diploma supplements or those in the non-national language are only issued upon request. In AD, AZ, EL, FR, TR, and VA Diploma Supplements are not issued to all graduates and in BA, RS and UA the Diploma Supplement is issued for a fee that varies from 10 EUR in UA to 50-100 EUR in RS. In nearly all countries the DS is issued in national language(s) and English – the dominant “widely spoken European language”.

¹⁵ Will be inserted soon

¹⁶ The criteria for the indicator on the implementation Diploma Supplement has not been changed since the Stocktaking exercise of the year 2007

National monitoring of the effectiveness of the DS. Only six countries BE-fr, DE, MD, ME, SE and SI report that they have launched studies to monitor how employers use DS and in Be-fr and DE the results of these studies are as yet unknown. SI and SE confirm that no more than 10 % of employers are aware of the Diploma Supplement and that they are not much interested in it. Meanwhile in MD employers wish to see a much more detailed DS although they appreciate the presence of learning outcomes listing generic and specific competences. As regards monitoring the use of DS in HEIs, less than half of the countries state that such monitoring takes place, and only FR, HR, RS and VA have provided any outcomes of such monitoring.

Lessons from the examples of Diploma Supplements. Only 12 countries (BA, CH, CZ, CY, DK, EE, IE, KZ, LV, MD, NO, VA) submitted a DS and two of those countries actually sent in a blank diploma supplement with a description of the national education system. The main shortcomings in the Diploma supplements submitted were the following. Some did not contain a description of the education system or only included a diagram without comments, or alternatively some description of the educational system but without a diagram. The format of all Diploma Supplements was the one approved by the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Commission. Less than half of the Diploma Supplements submitted provided the quality assurance status of the higher education institution which issued the qualification and/or administrated the studies. Only one third of Diploma Supplements mentioned what kind of access qualification was required as a prerequisite for access to the programme completed. In two thirds of the Diploma Supplements submitted, not only were Learning Outcomes not provided, but they were not even mentioned. However, in one third of the samples of Diploma Supplements there were attempts to provide the learning outcomes of the programme completed. Yet in most of these cases the formulations were in reality overall aims rather than real learning outcomes in the form of *“what the graduate knows, understands and is able to do”*.

The above shortcomings lead to the conclusion that Diploma Supplements are in many cases not prepared properly and hence do not provide the expected information to the users. Higher Education Institutions do not always follow the guidance for filling Diploma Supplement adopted by the Intergovernmental Committee of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 2007¹⁷ and therefore a much wider dissemination of the *Diploma Supplement explanatory notes* as well as training of the appropriate staff is needed. The results also add strength to the conclusion that slow implementation of a learning outcomes approach is a hindrance for a number Bologna tasks and action lines.

2.3. Recognition of Qualifications

Recognition has been at the heart of the Bologna Process since its inception in the late 90s. Recognition can be considered both as an operational objective by itself and as an instrument to pursue other operational objectives, which would enable the full implementation of the EHEA. In the last two decades, various instruments have been developed, adopted and implemented at the European, national, regional and institutional level aiming at facilitating fair recognition of foreign qualifications and/or study periods abroad. As showed in the analysis of the 2007 National Action Plans for Recognition (NAPs), despite the signature and/or ratification of the LRC by all EHEA countries except EL, there are still legal problems to implement the principles of the LRC and its subsidiary texts in those countries that have not amended their legislation adopting the above

¹⁷ See *Diploma Supplement explanatory notes* at e.g. http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ds/ds_en.pdf

principles. As illustrated in the analysis of the 2007 National Action Plans for Recognition (NAPs)¹⁸, despite the signature and/or ratification of the LRC by most of the EHEA countries, there are still legal problems in implementing the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts in those countries that have not amended their legislation adopting the above principles. Ministers responsible for higher education in their Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve Communiqué, 2009) asked the BFUG, “to follow-up on the recommendations of analysis of the national action plans on recognition” which was done by the EHEA Working Group of recognition, see final report¹⁹.

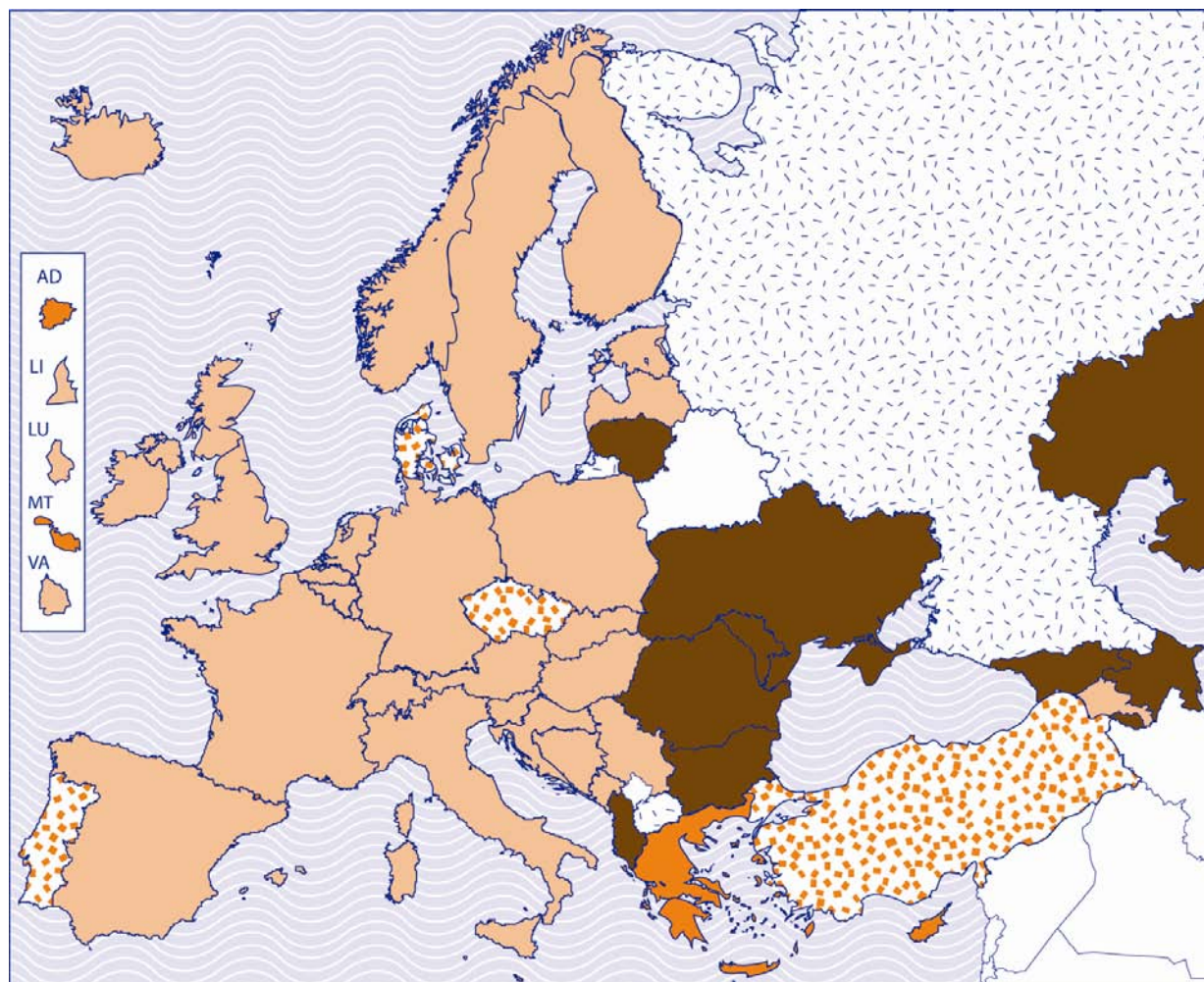
The BFUG survey shows that higher education institutions take the final decisions on recognition of foreign qualifications for the purpose of further studies in the vast majority (30) of countries. Within this group recognition decisions are taken at the central level of the higher education institution in 15 countries, while in most other countries they are left to individual departments. This increases the risk that the staff taking recognition decisions may have less knowledge and experience in assessing foreign qualifications or credits

In two countries (CZ and DK) higher education institutions also have the main responsibility for the decision upon recognition. However, in DK the ENIC/NARIC centre may assess and certify compliance of qualifications for meeting general admission requirements. In CZ the ministry rather than the higher education institution takes decision on recognition in cases of the qualification coming from countries with which CZ has bilateral agreements on recognition. In 9 countries (AL, AZ, BG, GE, KZ, LT, MD, RO, UA) decision taking for academic recognition of foreign qualifications is done by a central government authority, e.g. ministry (Figure 2.24). In at least 4 of these countries decisions on recognition are still made by national authorities without involving the ENIC and NARIC Centres and the higher education institutions. Such a practice may adversely impact on the institutional autonomy of higher education institutions and restrict their capacity to select and admit students according to their admission criteria. Decisions on academic recognition are made by the national ENIC/NARIC centre in 4 countries – AD, CY, EL, and MT. In addition, in TR recognition decisions are also taken by the HEI Council (YOK) without participation of HEIs.

¹⁸ The full version of the analysis of the 2007 NAPs for recognition is accessible here:
http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/qualification/Analysis_of_2007_RecognitionNAPs.pdf.

¹⁹ Final Report of the EHEA Working Group of Recognition,
http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/Bucharest_conf/Final_report_WG_Recognition.pdf

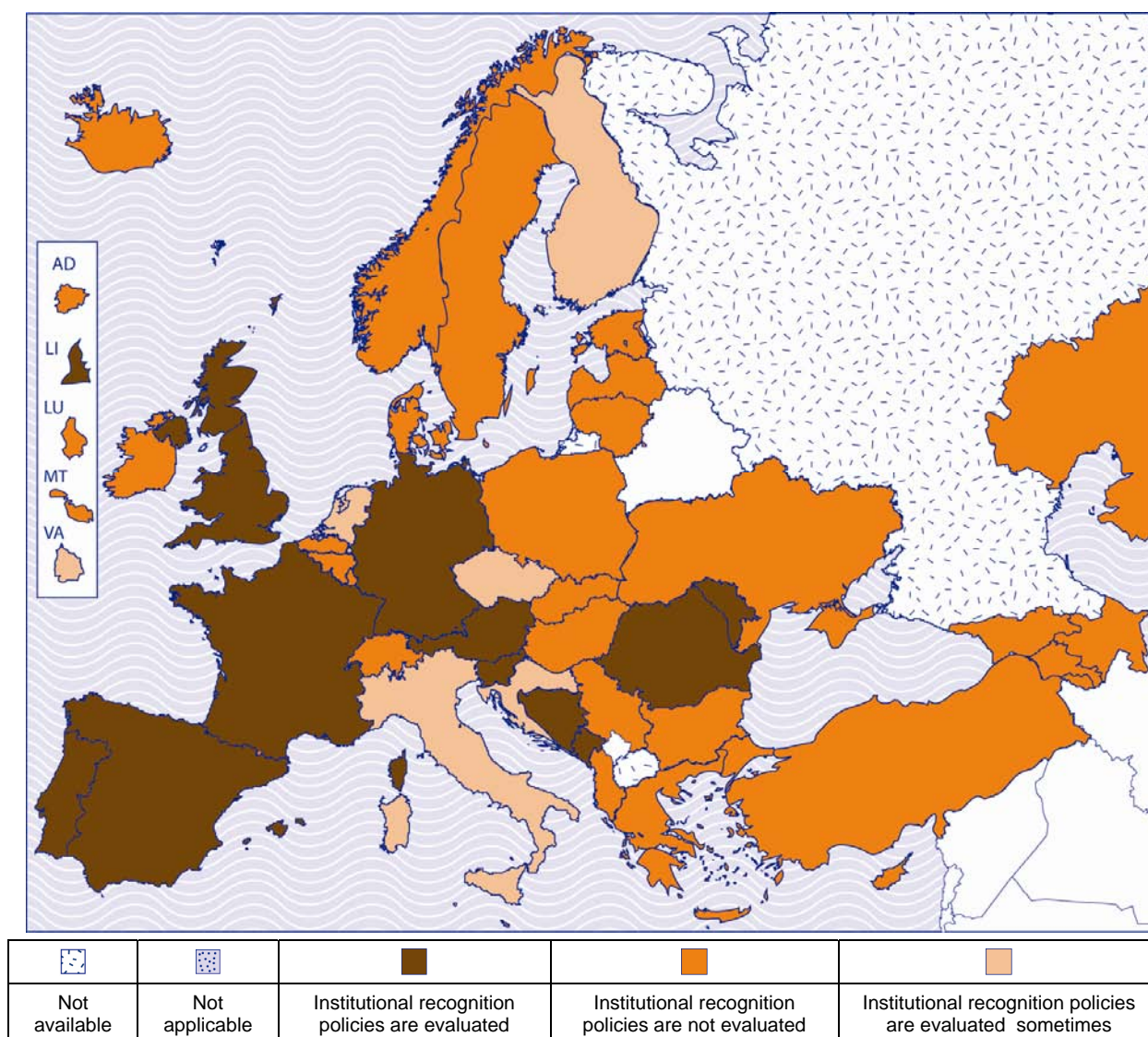
Figure 2.24: Institution which makes final decisions on recognising foreign qualifications for academic purposes, academic year 2010/11



Not available	Not applicable	Central government authority	National ENIC/NARIC centre	Higher education institution	Other

Source: BFUG questionnaire

Figure 2.25: Evaluation of higher education institutions' recognition policy in external quality assurance processes, academic year 2010/11



Source: BFUG questionnaire

The analysis of the 2007 National Action Plans for Recognition also indicated that some countries report problems in implementing the Lisbon Recognition Convention since the recognition decisions are taken by higher education institutions that are autonomous. Therefore the state cannot ensure that the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention are followed. While such statements are legally obsolete, it should be noted that 14 years after the adoption of the Lisbon Recognition Convention these countries have not managed to ensure that their institutional recognition procedures comply with the Convention. One good solution to this issue is making the recognition of qualifications in higher education institutions part of quality assurance processes. Quality assurance would then assess compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Involvement of quality assurance as a solution to this problem is logical because the quality of the recognition procedures used within a higher education institution can be covered by the internal QA system in the same way as any other academic or administrative procedure. Secondly, higher education institutions have accepted external and internal quality assurance and therefore introducing the Lisbon Recognition Convention principles

through quality assurance, and especially through internal quality assurance, should be easier than through directive measures. Figure 2.25 shows that recognition policies are regularly evaluated by external quality assurance in only 12 countries while in the majority of countries (28) recognition at higher education institutions is not evaluated at all.

The EHEA Working Group on recognition suggests that countries should be encouraged to examine and, where necessary, amend national legislation so that it complies with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary legal texts by 2015. Ministers should set the 2015 ministerial conference as a deadline by which all countries should complete this task. To ensure implementation of the above principles in institutional recognition procedures of foreign qualifications and credits/periods of study gained abroad, higher education institutions and Quality Assurance Agencies should include compliance of the institutional recognition procedures with the legal framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in issues covered by both internal and external quality assurance.

ⁱ The criteria for the indicator on the Diploma Supplement has not been changed since the Stiocktakimng exercise of the year 2007.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Introduction

The Bologna context

The Bologna Declaration encourages European co-operation in higher education quality assurance, with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies. Thus from the beginning of the process, there has always been a strong focus on quality. All subsequent Ministerial Communiqués have also paid attention to an evolving agenda in European quality assurance, with notable milestones being the acknowledgement in Berlin 2003 that the primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with higher education institutions, the adoption in the Bergen meeting of May 2005 of the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" and the establishment in 2008 of the European Quality Assurance Register. The 2009 Leuven Communiqué also stresses that Quality Assurance will remain a priority in a landscape where new tools, mechanisms and initiatives are increasingly being designed to provide information about higher education institutions.

Chapter outline

This chapter deals with the progress made to develop Quality Assurance systems across the European Higher Education Area and covers both external and internal Quality Assurance. The main focus of the chapter is on the extent to which quality assurance systems are following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). It looks at the main distinctions in European quality assurance systems, as well as the development of trends towards greater internationalisation in quality assurance. The focus then shifts to other developments in external quality assurance, including the involvement of different key stakeholders. The last section is on developments in internal quality assurance systems.

3.1. External Quality Assurance

3.1.1. Character and Orientation of National Quality Assurance Systems

Quality assurance in higher education can be understood as policies, procedures and practices that are designed to achieve, maintain or enhance quality as it is understood in a specific context.

Since the Bologna Process was launched in 1999 there has been a rapid transformation of external quality assurance in Europe. Improving quality of higher education and establishing quality assurance systems has been a high priority for many if not all countries. The development of the European Higher Education Area can certainly be seen as a catalyst to this process with quality assurance clearly linked to establishing stakeholder confidence. The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for quality assurance were adopted in 2005, and this gave a boost to European cooperation in the domain. The Register of quality assessment agencies (EQAR) was also established 2008, and 27 agencies in 12 countries are now listed on the Register.

Only a handful of countries had established clear external quality assurance systems prior to the Bologna process. Since the Bologna process was launched, however, 22 countries have established national agencies for quality assurance, with half of these being set up since 2005 (Eurydice 2010). In a few countries, such as Denmark, France and Italy, new agencies have replaced or built on existing agencies.

11 countries in the EHEA do not have established quality assurance agencies. These include those with a small higher education sector such as Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Malta. However, in these countries, the small size of the sector does not mean that quality assurance is neglected, but rather that a different and more suitable approach may have been developed. In the case of Andorra, although responsibility rests with the government, the actual practice of external evaluation is carried out through using other national quality assurance agencies – most commonly the Spanish national agency (ANECA). Luxembourg has also developed a progressive approach of improvement-oriented evaluation that is both inclusive of stakeholders and extremely international in its orientation.

Although practically all Bologna countries have established some form of external quality assurance system, there are significant differences in the philosophy and approach behind systems. Despite the adoption of Common Standards and Guidelines for the EHEA, systems are indeed still quite diverse in their orientation.

One important distinction that can be drawn is whether the focus of quality assurance is on institutions or programmes. A second is whether or not the QA agency or national body is invested with the power to grant permission for institutions or programmes to operate. Although certain national system features make this reality more complex (for example, whether or not governments retain the power to issue degrees at central level), these orientations give a good general sense of the approach to quality assurance.

It is noteworthy that the vast majority of QA systems now focus primarily on institutions (27) rather than programmes (5). This picture suggests that while the early stages of developing QA systems have tended to focus on programmes, systems often tend to evolve to an institutional focus.

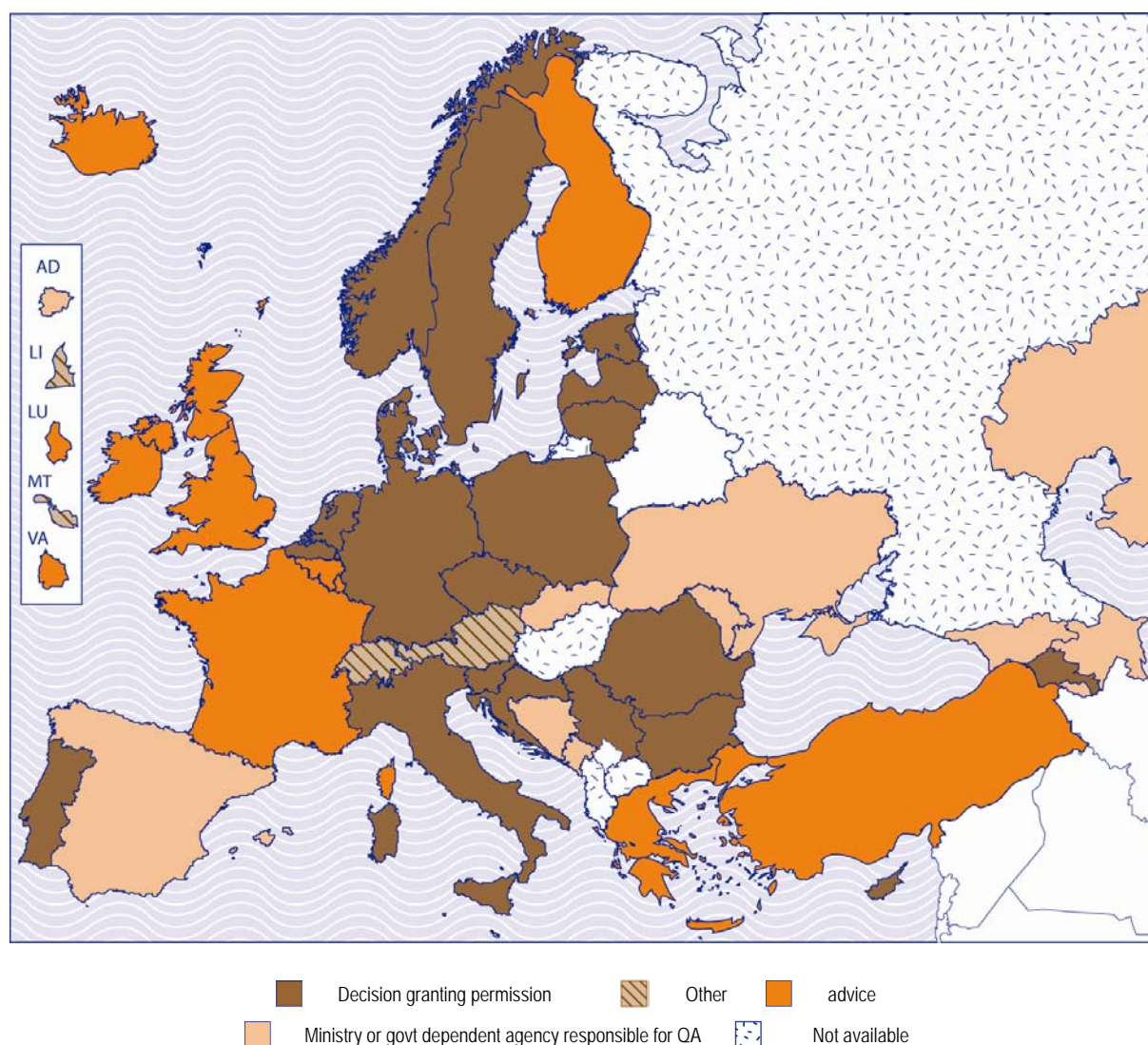
In systems where responsible QA bodies/agencies have the power to permit or refuse programmes and/or institutions to operate, quality assurance can, in broad terms, be perceived as supervisory in character, and generally aims to ensure that minimum quality thresholds are met. Agencies may of course play other roles – including giving advice on the enhancement of quality. This is indeed specifically mentioned in a number of countries, but all these additional roles are likely to be subordinate to the decision of permitting programmes and/or institutions to operate.

In other systems, QA agencies report on institutions' management of quality, and although having 'only' an advisory role, aim to support quality enhancement. In such a construction, the primary emphasis is thus on empowering higher education institutions with responsibility for quality improvement. These are systems that will be more likely to use 'light touch' external quality assurance processes, aiming to ensure that necessary measures to improve quality have been established within institutions, and interfering less in the decision-making processes at institutional level.

The majority of systems across the EHEA are, using this categorisation, more supervisory in character. Indeed 20 systems have established agencies with decision-making powers, while 11 have agencies that are advisory and more enhancement-oriented in character. However, it is also interesting to note that not all the evaluations of "supervisory" agencies have an impact on the funding of institutions or programmes. Indeed, in 5 systems (PL, CY, DE, LI and BG) there is no impact of

evaluation on funding. Conversely, some of the enhancement-oriented agency evaluations may have an impact on funding. This is the case in Luxembourg, France and the UK.

Figure 3.1: Main outcome of external evaluation by QA agency, 2010/11



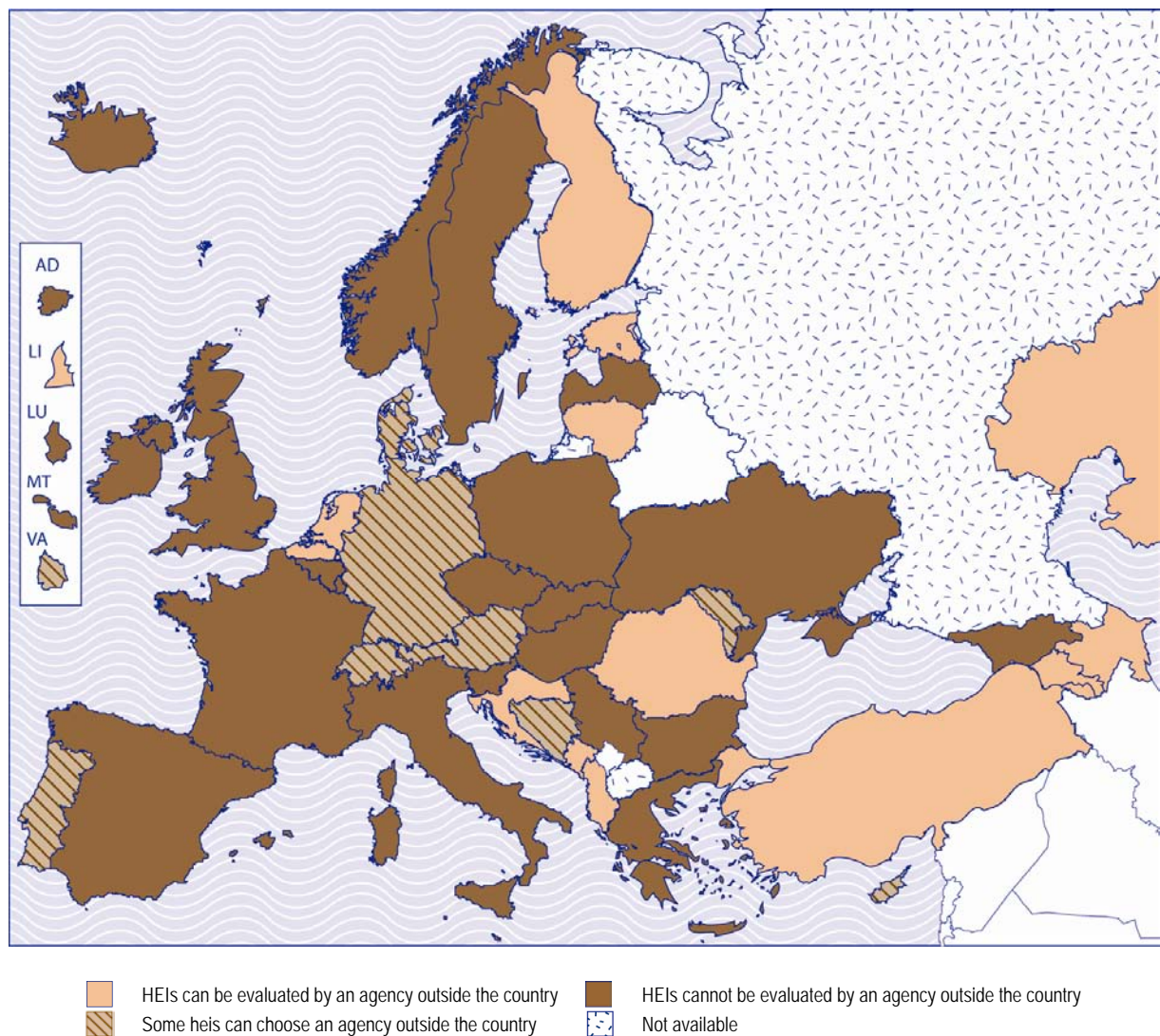
Source: BFUG questionnaire

3.1.2. Capacity for Higher Education Institutions to be evaluated by non national Agencies

The European debate on quality assurance has stressed the importance of trust between systems. One significant measure of how far trust is developing, is whether governments enable higher education institutions to be evaluated by a quality assurance agency from another country when aware, for example that the agency works in full compliance with the European standards and Guidelines. This indeed is a significant purpose of the ESG, and also the *raison d'être* for the European Quality Assurance Register. However, as national responsibility could be seen to be

challenged by such practices, it is by no means evident that evaluation from non national agencies will become commonplace in the EHEA. The issue may also perhaps be perceived differently by bigger and smaller higher education systems.

Figure 3.2: Capacity for higher education institutions to be evaluated by an agency outside the country



Source: BFUG questionnaire

In addition to Andorra Liechtenstein and Luxembourg that routinely work beyond national boundaries in the quality assurance system, a further 13 national systems claim that all their higher education institutions are free to be evaluated by other national agencies instead of their own. This is the case of DK NL FI KZ AM LI TR ME EE LT BE(NL) HR AZ RO. A further 7 countries suggest that under certain conditions, some agencies are able to pursue this route. For Austria and Cyprus, public HEIs may use non national agencies, but private institutions cannot. In Germany the possibility exists only for the accreditation of joint programmes. Moldova pointed out that institutions are able to go through evaluation processes with other agencies but only if they are first accredited by the national system.

As this is rather a duplication of efforts than evidence of trust and cooperation, these countries are shown in the map along with those that are unable to be evaluated abroad.

3.1.3. Evaluating national systems against ESG

The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) were developed by the so-called E4 Group (ENQA, (ESU, EUA and EURASHE), and were adopted in 2005 by the Ministers in Bergen (Norway). The standards and guidelines are designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located. The ESG do not include detailed "procedures" since institutional and agency procedures are an important part of their autonomy. Rather the ESG "recognise the primacy of national systems of higher education, the importance of institutional and agency autonomy within those national systems, and the particular requirements of different academic subjects."

They also reflect the statement of Ministers in the Berlin Communiqué (2003) that "consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework". In the standards and guidelines, therefore, an appropriate balance has been sought between the creation and development of internal quality cultures, and the role which external quality assurance procedures may play (ENQA 2005, p.11). Indeed the following principles outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) stress that Quality Assurance should focus on:

- the interests of students as well as employers and the society more generally in good quality higher education;
- the central importance of institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities;
- the need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives.

Three indicators on Quality Assurance are included in the EHEA Scorecard. Because a great deal of progress has been achieved in the development of quality assurance systems in the past decade, these indicators have been newly devised to reflect Ministerial agreement on the main issues for further development in quality assurance in the years to come. They focus on the stage of development of external quality assurance systems, the level of student participation in external quality assurance and the level of international participation in external quality assurance.

Figure 3.3: Scorecard indicator 4: Stage of development of external quality assurance system

Indicator 4: Stage of development of external quality assurance

Colour	
Green	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The QA agency/ies has/have been successfully evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The QA system applies to all institutions and/or programmes and covers the following main issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching • student support services • internal quality assurance/management system
Light green	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The QA agency/ies has/have been successfully evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The QA system applies to all institutions and/or programmes and covers a subset of the main issues.
Yellow	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The QA system has not been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The QA system applies to all institutions and/or programmes and covers teaching, research, student support services and internal quality assurance/management. OR A quality assurance system is in operation at the national level. The QA system has been successfully evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The QA system applies to some institutions and/or programmes and covers subset of the main issues.
Orange	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The QA system has not been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The QA system applies to all institutions and/or programmes and covers a subset of the main issues.
Red	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The QA system has not been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The QA system applies to some institutions and/or programmes and covers a subset of the main issues.

2012	12	8	10	12	1
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The indicator that focuses on the stage of development of external quality assurance systems combines elements assessing how comprehensive the system is, the range of key issues covered by the quality assurance system (teaching, student support and internal quality assurance), as well as whether or not the agencies or other responsible bodies in the system have been successfully evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines. This process of evaluation is a requirement both for full membership of ENQA and for agencies that are members of EQAR. The indicator is very demanding, and this itself is a reflection of how much progress has been made to the quality assurance landscape during the first decade of the Bologna Process.

Countries are spread quite evenly among the top four categories. Only one country is in the red zone, indicating that an adequate quality assurance system has yet to be implemented. 12 countries find themselves in the Orange zone. The countries in this category have established national quality assurance agencies or other bodies with responsibility for quality assurance, but these have not yet been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines. Moreover, the system does not cover all of the key Quality Assurance issues.

10 countries are in the Yellow zone. These are all countries that have a comprehensive quality assurance system in place, covering all priority aspects of Quality Assurance. However, their agencies have not yet been successfully evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines.

8 countries are currently in the light green, and 12 in the green zone. In both cases, a comprehensive quality assurance system is in place, and it has been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines. The difference between these situations concerns the coverage of the Quality assurance systems, as one of the four main elements of Quality Assurance is missing in the countries in the light green zone. However, for most of the countries the missing issue is "Research". While research may not be covered by the Quality Assurance agency, quality is often ensured through other national processes.

Figure 3.4: Scorecard Indicator 5: Level of student participation in quality assurance

Indicator 5: Level of student participation in quality assurance

Colour	
Green	In all quality assurance reviews, students participate at five levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In governance structures of national quality assurance agencies • As full members or observers in external review teams • In the preparation of self evaluation reports • In the decision making process for external reviews • In follow-up procedures
Light green	Students participate at four of the five levels mentioned above
Yellow	Students participate at three of the five levels mentioned above
Orange	Students participate at two of the five levels mentioned above
Red	Students cannot participate or participate at only one level mentioned Above

2012	5	12	6	9	10
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One of the striking characteristics of the development of quality assurance systems in Europe during the last decade has been the recognition of the importance of stakeholder participation, and in particular the importance of students as the key stakeholder group in higher education. The Bologna documentation recognises that students should be fully engaged in the improvement and enhancement of higher education and of their own learning experiences. The form of this engagement

should be wide-ranging, involving students in all aspects of quality assurance systems. This indicator therefore focuses on student participation in governance structures, in review teams, in the preparation of self-evaluation reports, in decision-making processes and in follow-up procedures. These elements are given equal weight, as all are considered essential ways in which student voices and views should be heard and acted upon.

The overall results show that there is still considerable room for progress. Only five countries currently demonstrate that students systematically participate in all these aspects of Quality Assurance systems, although a sizeable number (12) indicate that students are involved in all but one of these areas. Among these countries, students are most commonly not involved in follow-up procedures.

A group of 6 countries are in the yellow zone, indicating that students are involved systematically in three out of the five areas. Here, in addition to the follow-up procedures, it is most common to find students not being involved in decision-making processes that result from evaluation.

9 countries are currently in the orange zone, with students being involved in two of the five identified areas. A further 10 countries are in the red zone, indicating that students are absent from all or all but one of the identified areas.

Figure 3.5: Scorecard indicator 6: Level of international participation in external quality assurance

Analysis to be added after agreement is reached on the indicator

3.1.4. Involvement of employers in QA

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) highlight not only the importance of students and international peers in quality assurance, but also the role of other stakeholders – and in particular employers. Indeed the ESG specify that quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include "regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations."

The findings for this report indicate that employer involvement has become a feature of quality assurance in many systems. Indeed 28 countries state that there is a formal requirement for involvement of employers – whether in governance bodies or in external review teams. Among the 14 countries that state that there is no such formal requirement, it should not be assumed that there is no employer involvement. For example, the United Kingdom points out that the involvement of employers depends upon the orientation provided by higher education institution being evaluated. Thus in this case the principle of institutional autonomy is respected above formal requirements for employer involvement.

3.2. Internal Quality Assurance

This report, not having any direct input from higher education institutions themselves, can only give a limited picture regarding the state of development of internal quality assurance systems.

3.2.1. Formal Requirements for higher education institutions to establish internal Quality Assurance systems

Countries were asked to specify whether or not there are formal requirements on higher education institutions to establish internal quality assurance systems. It is interesting to see that this is the case in all but four national systems. The exceptions are Estonia, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. For the United Kingdom, however, the answer is a reflection of the legal environment within which higher education institutions operate. Indeed while there is no formal legal requirement for institutions to establish internal QA systems, there are clear expectations laid out by the Quality Assurance Agency. For all other countries, there are formal requirements, most commonly embedded in higher education legislation.

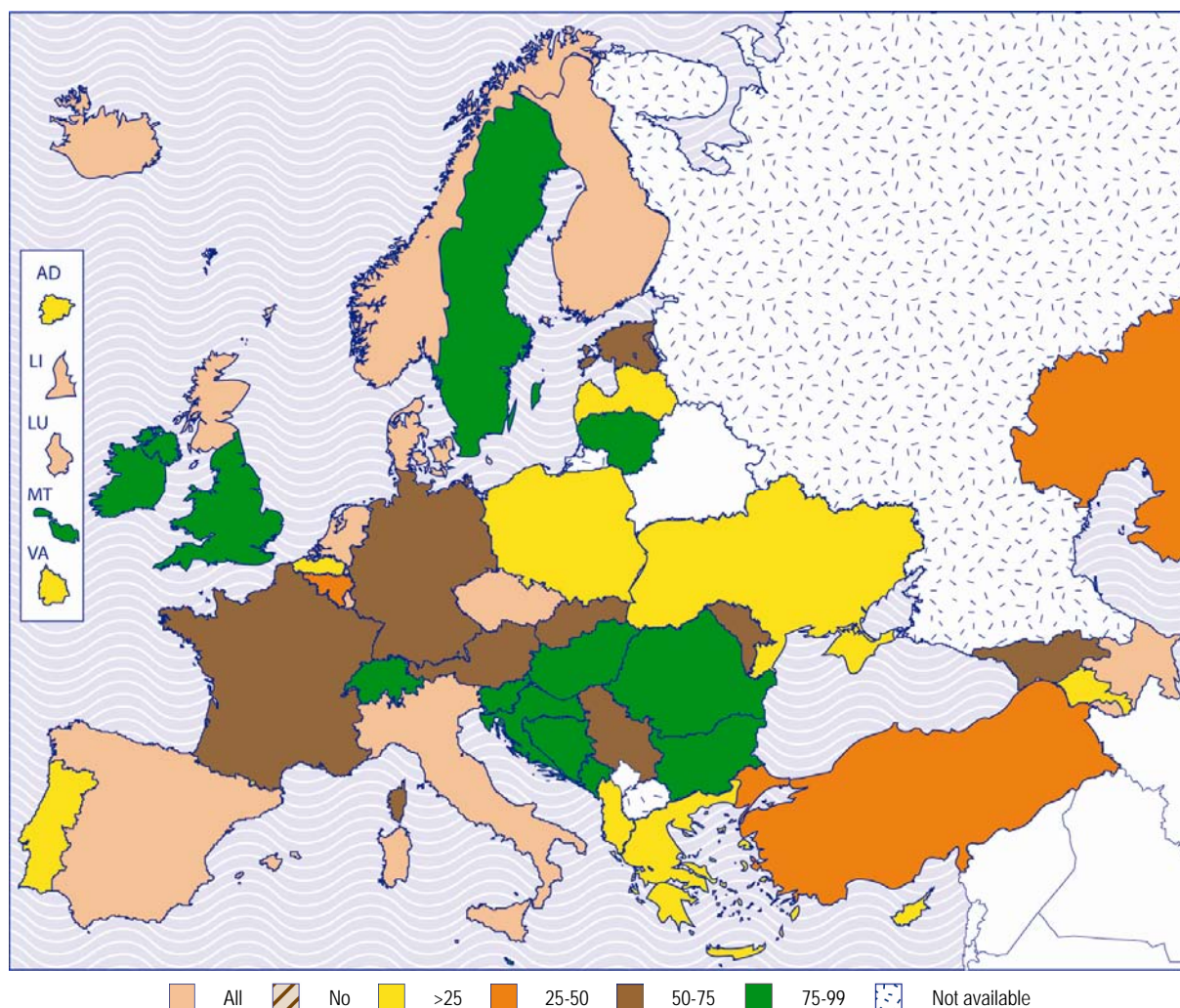
3.2.2. Responsibility for the focus of internal Quality Assurance systems

The primary focus of internal quality assurance systems is, according to the information provided by countries, most commonly determined by higher education institutions themselves. However, a number of countries put the emphasis on other actors. Several countries, including Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the UK point to the role of the Quality Assurance Agency in setting the priorities for external evaluation. These priorities then clearly have a major impact on how internal quality processes are organised.

Azerbaijan and Montenegro are the only countries to state that the Ministry is primarily responsible for determining the focus of internal quality assurance, although several other countries also point to the role of the Ministry in combination with other actors. This is the case for Georgia, Liechtenstein and Spain.

3.2.3. Institutional Strategies for continuous quality improvement

Figure 3.6: Publication of strategy for continuous quality enhancement in past 5 years



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Many countries report very positive findings regarding the number of institutions that have published a strategy for continuous quality improvement in the past 5 years. Indeed 24 national systems consider this number to be in excess of 75% of their higher education institutions, with 12 systems claiming that all higher education institutions have published such a strategy.

There are, however, some systems at the other end of the spectrum. 9 national systems estimate that between 0 – 25% of institutions have published such a strategy. 3 systems estimate 25 – 50%, and 8 place the estimation between 50 and 75%.

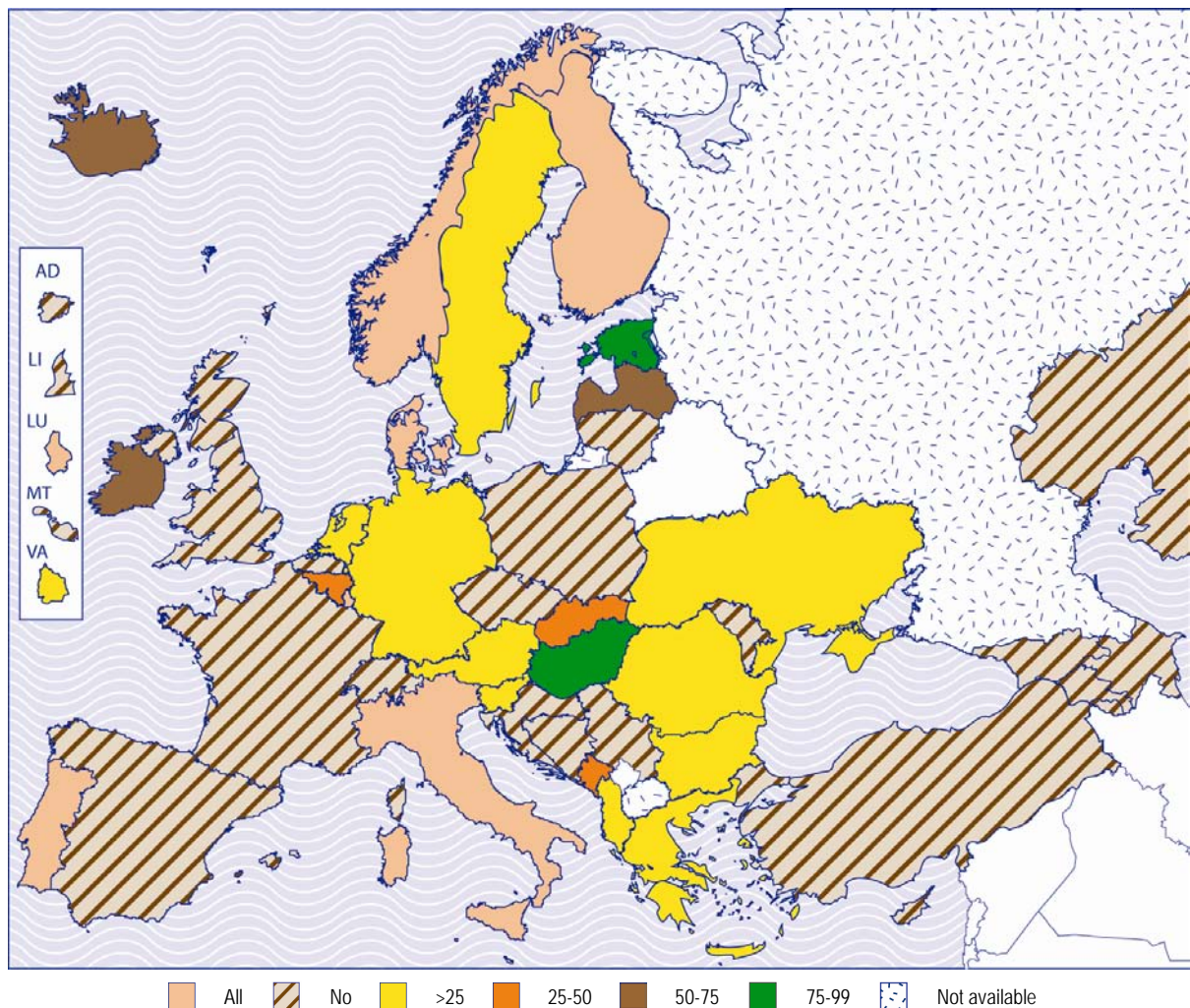
Overall, if these data reflect national reality relatively closely, they suggest that higher education institutions have been making great efforts to develop strategies to improve quality in recent years.

3.2.4. Publication of critical and negative evaluation reports

The picture regarding the number of institutions that publish critical and negative outcomes of quality assurance is significantly different. Here by far the greatest number of countries (22) state that none of their institutions publish such reports, and a further 10 put the lowest percentage (1% – 25%). At the other extreme are a group of 6 countries that state that all of their institutions publish these reports. However, among this group is Italy that also reports that no external evaluations have yet taken place by the Quality Assurance Agency. So this finding remains hypothetical. Only 7 countries are in the categories ranging between 25 and 99%.

The reason for the diversity of these findings is not clear, as countries have generally provided little supplementary explanation. However, it is likely that countries where all institutions publish critical reports are either very open, transparent societies, or there is a requirement for institutions to publish evaluation reports – whether they are positive or critical.

Figure 3.7: Publication of critical and negative outcomes



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Conclusions

This report provides strong evidence that the wave of quality assurance activity that gathered momentum after the launch of the Bologna Process in 1999 continues today. Despite the common Standards and Guidelines for the EHEA, systems nevertheless remain quite diverse in their orientation. The vast majority of QA systems now focus primarily on institutions rather than programmes. This suggests that while in the early stages of developing external QA systems the focus tends to be on programme evaluation, in time this often evolves to an institutional focus. A parallel shift has also taken place within the Bologna process, as the initial focus on governmental responsibility for QA evolved to the position expressed in the Berlin Ministerial Communiqué 2003 that the primary responsibility for Quality Assurance rests with higher education institutions themselves.

The scorecard indicators that have been used for this report reflect the main issues of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and look forward towards 2020. While the outcomes confirm the impressive changes that have taken place in the landscape of higher education quality assurance since the Bologna process began, there is still considerable room for improvement. In particular stakeholder involvement in all relevant aspects of quality assurance is an accepted principle, but it is still far from being a commonplace reality. The report also shows that, despite the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Register, many countries remain reluctant to devolve responsibility for external quality assurance beyond national boundaries.

4. SOCIAL DIMENSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

The Bologna context

In the Bologna process, the social dimension entered in the communiqués later than most other issues, in 2001. However, in the following years, it gained significant attention. In 2001, the Prague Communiqué concentrated on the inclusion of students and the need to make mobility opportunities available for all. In 2003 in Berlin, ministers focused more broadly on social cohesion of the student population and social and gender inequalities. In particular, they mentioned the need to remove obstacles related to students' social and economic background based on comparable data. These general and specific commitments to make higher education accessible to all were renewed in Bergen in 2005, emphasising the obligation of governments to help students from "socially disadvantaged groups" to widen access.

Despite this repeated reference to the social dimension aspect of building the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), there was no precise and commonly accepted definition of the social dimension in higher education until 2007. In that year in London, the ministers agreed on a comprehensive definition and the goal to achieve. Accordingly, "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations". Ministers also emphasised that "students [should be] able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background" (London Communiqué 2007, p. 5). The 2007 report of the BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Data on Mobility further clarified that the social dimension is understood as the process towards achieving this overarching goal (BFUG 2007, p.11). In other words, the social dimension is defined as a large sphere of activities where governments can enact policies.

In 2007, the ministers also agreed to report on the progress made on this trajectory and in 2009 decided to set measurable targets "for widening overall participation and increasing participation of under-represented groups" with a goal to achieve them by 2020 (Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve Communiqué, 2009). Eurostudent and Eurostat (2009) also highlighted the need to have more comparative research on the social dimension of higher education based on recent data to be used by policy makers.

Based on this call for more precise and comparable data, Eurydice examined the social dimension in the European Higher Education Area (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, 2011b) and concluded that significant changes in higher education systems have taken place, but challenges remain. In particular, very few countries have set specific targets related to the social dimension and a monitoring of the participation of underrepresented groups has not yet been developed to any significant degree. Eurydice reports also indicate that while special measures to assist specific groups based on socio-economic status, gender, disability, ethnicity, etc. exist in many countries, these are rarely a central element of higher education policy.

BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension

Further support to the cooperation on the social dimension in higher education has been provided through the activities of the Working Group on the Social Dimension (2010-2012), which has been entrusted the responsibility to oversee the progress made by countries, define comparable indicators on the social dimension in higher education and collect examples of good practice in this area. The working group has also been exploring the possibility of creating a European Observatory on Social Dimension of Higher Education. This chapter has benefitted greatly from close cooperation with the Working Group, whose members have provided advice both on the issues to be addressed as well as detailed comments on provisional drafts.

Chapter outline

Building on the previous reports and the outcomes of the Working Group on the Social Dimension, this chapter brings together available statistical information on student background and educational attainment with administrative data on the social dimension and funding of higher education in Bologna signatory countries. The chapter starts with an overview on higher education participation and attainment based on available background characteristics of students. On the one hand, these indicators set the context for further analyses of social dimension policies in higher education. On the other hand, they help to assess the achievement of goals set by the ministers. This mostly statistical section is followed by an analysis of different national approaches to widening participation in higher education. In particular, the focus lies on whether under-represented groups are expressly defined or whether there are other policy approaches to address the under-representation. Following this, the chapter looks at specific aspects of the social dimension in higher education as highlighted in the Bologna communiqués, namely alternative access routes targeting non-traditional learners and guidance and counselling services available to students during their studies. The chapter concludes with a look at the financial side of higher education by contrasting major costs charged to students (e.g. tuition fees) and data on student income via direct and indirect public student support, family support and self-financing through paid jobs. The aim is to examine whether funding systems are being oriented to support and stimulate the social dimension policy objective of widening participation.

4.1. Statistical information on the impact of students' background on their participation in and attainment of higher education

The need to expand higher education in a time where labour markets and the knowledge-based economy increasingly require higher education degrees has been reaffirmed by all signatory states repeatedly in the communiqués and other international declarations. This section provides an overall picture of trends in participation in higher education as well as data on the participation and attainment of certain groups of the student population. These indicators will set the context for further analyses of social dimension in higher education and provide information relevant to assessing the achievement of goals set by the ministers.

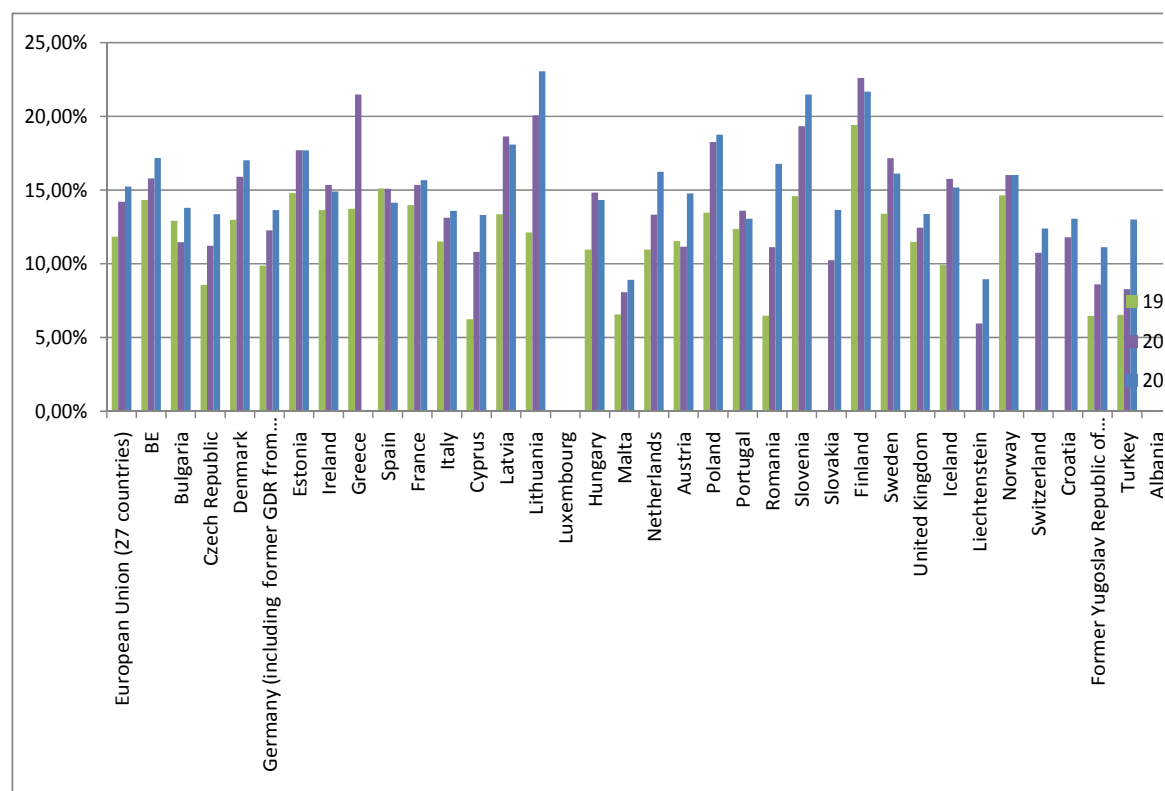
4.1.1. Trends in participation in higher education: overall picture

Data in the introductory chapter to this report (see Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1) has shown that between 2003/2004 and 2008/2009, only a few countries registered a slight decline in the total number of students enrolled in tertiary education, while in half of the Bologna countries the number of students increased by more than 10 %. In Albania, Romania, Cyprus and Turkey, the increase was even higher than 40 %.

The increase in student numbers also shows up in the participation rates of the countries (Figure 4.1). In general, participation has increased by a third across all countries, reflecting the continuing move towards the “massification” of higher education. Simply averaging across all EHEA countries (for which data is available) the participation rate increased from 1999 to 2009 from 11% to over 14 %.

Growth in participation rates, however, is uneven across countries. In those countries with the highest absolute growth in student numbers the participation rates have also increased in the 18-34 age group by more than 50 % (CZ, CY, LT, RO, SK, IS, FYROM, TR, EL). A number of other countries experienced a more uneven development (AT, MT, NO, EE, FI, IS), hitting a peak in the mid-2000s and slightly decreasing student numbers since then. Only Spain exhibits a continuous decrease in participation rates throughout the decade.

Figure 4.1: Trends in participation rates in tertiary education in the 18-34 age group, 1999-2009¹



Source: Eurostat

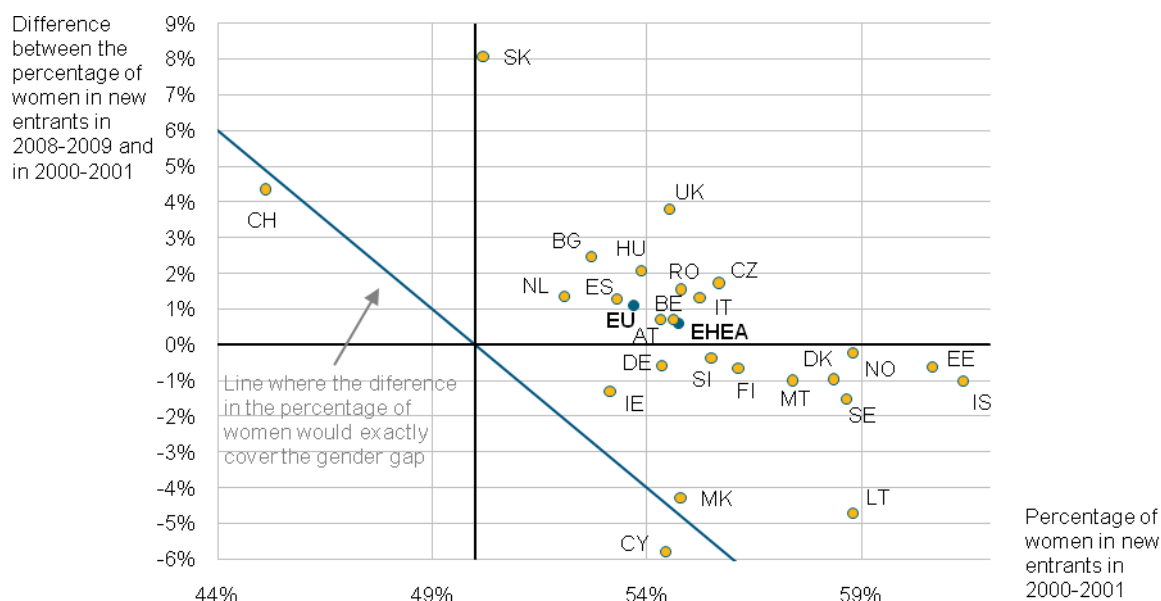
4.1.2. Gender balance in higher education

Ministers agreed that those participating in higher education should reflect the composition of the overall population as closely as possible. One important indicator in this regard looks at the sex of students. Here, the historical trend is a reversal of the tendency for men to outnumber women in higher education.

Figure 4.2 shows that in the beginning of the first decade of the Bologna Process more women than men entered in higher education. This is reflected by the fact that, with the exception of Switzerland, all countries in the EHEA for which data is available were positioned to the right of the 50% vertical line. This development has continued throughout the decade in half of the countries. For those countries above the 0% horizontal line, the percentage of women in higher education has increased between 2000-2001 and 2008-09.

¹ This indicator will be updated by Eurostat according to comments received (i.e. the figure will refer to the EHEA and not EU-27).

Figure 4.2: Percentage of women in new entrants in tertiary education, 1999-2009²



Notes: The value for 2000-2001 corresponds to the average level of the academic years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001, and the one for 2008-2009 the average of academic years 2007/2008 and 2008/2009.

The value for the EHEA is the median of all the countries for which data is available.

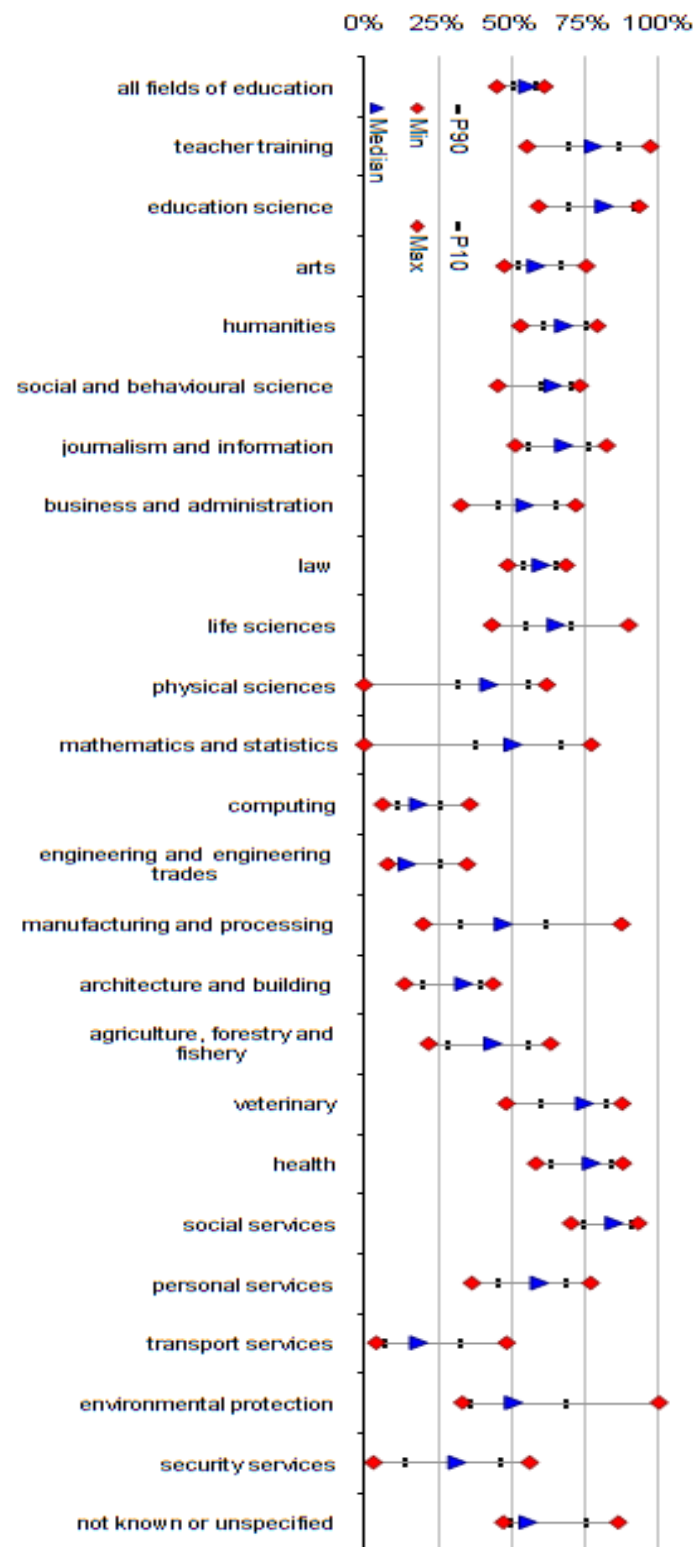
Source: Eurostat

Overall, the figure indicates that the gender parity imbalance has increased slightly during the first Bologna decade. However, divergent developments stand out. For example, out of the 37 countries for which data is available, in 12 countries, a higher percentage of women entered higher education in the beginning of the decade, but by 2009 the relationship had moved more towards gender balance. One country, Cyprus, has seen the picture completely turned upside down, and now has more men entering higher education than women. In Switzerland, fewer women than men entered higher education in the beginning of the decade (44.4 % in 2002), but by 2009 parity was almost achieved (49.6 % female entrants). In contrast, in the Slovak Republic, the student population was balanced in the beginning of the decade (49.9 % female entrants), but by the end of the decade the country had the 4th highest percentage of women entering higher education (58.4 %).

The overrepresentation of women in higher education, however, needs to be further analysed. When looking at gender balances by study field, another picture emerges (Figure 4.3). Women dominate in the education field, in veterinary sciences and in health and welfare. Men, on the other hand, are predominant in computing, in engineering and engineering trades and in transport services. And while in mathematics and science, as well as in manufacturing and processing and environmental protection, the median is around 50%, the spread across countries is very wide.

² Will be updated by Eurostat.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of women in new entrants in tertiary education by field (distribution with min/max across countries; median and 10/90 percentile), 2008/2009³



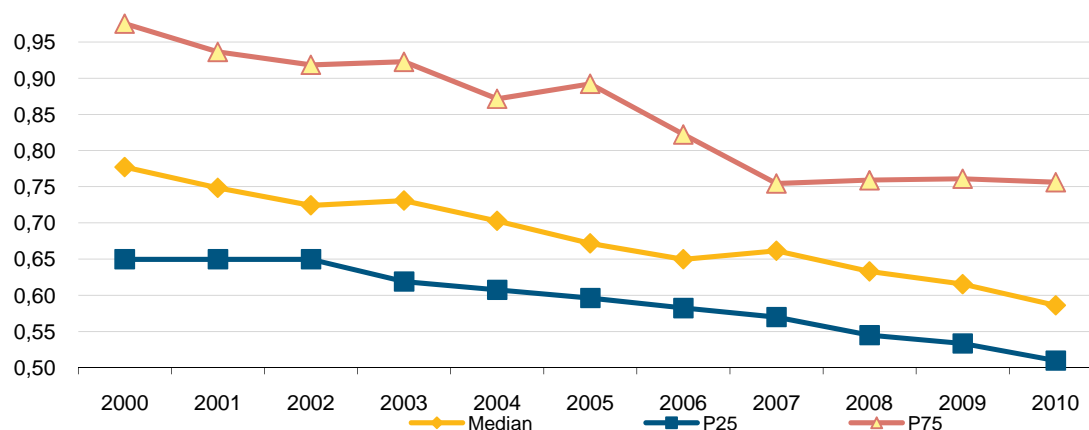
Source: Eurostat

³ Will be updated by Eurostat

This indicator highlights that when looking at the importance of gender in higher education participation, taking a broad look across study fields does not yield sufficient information. While overall participation by women is higher, this picture needs to be adjusted by looking at particular study fields. Besides, a recent Eurydice study (Eurydice, 2009) also underlines the question of vertical segregation in higher education, showing that women are still slightly under-represented among doctoral graduates.

Building on the indicators on participation by sex, attainment by sex (Figure 4.4) supports the already reported findings: over the last decade, the chances for men to achieve tertiary education attainment have been decreasing compared to their female counterparts. The figure shows that already in 2000, the odds ratios for men were lower than 1, which means men had lower relative chances to attain higher education than women. Over the decade, chances of men have been progressively decreasing, reaching a median odds ratio of less than 0.6 by 2010. This is not to say that fewer men enrol in higher education, but that the overall balance is increasingly tilted towards women.

Figure 4.4: Attainment by sex: odds ratios of men over women to attain higher education, 2000-2010⁴



Source: Eurostat

The figure also shows that the spread between the countries where the odds ratio of men over women was the lowest (P25) and those where the odds for men and women were most similar (P75) have decreased. Yet, the development was – from a balance point of view – negative, as the countries in which the situation was the most balanced showed a much stronger decreasing odds ratio than the countries that already had a low odds ratio in 2000.

4.1.3. Migrants in higher education

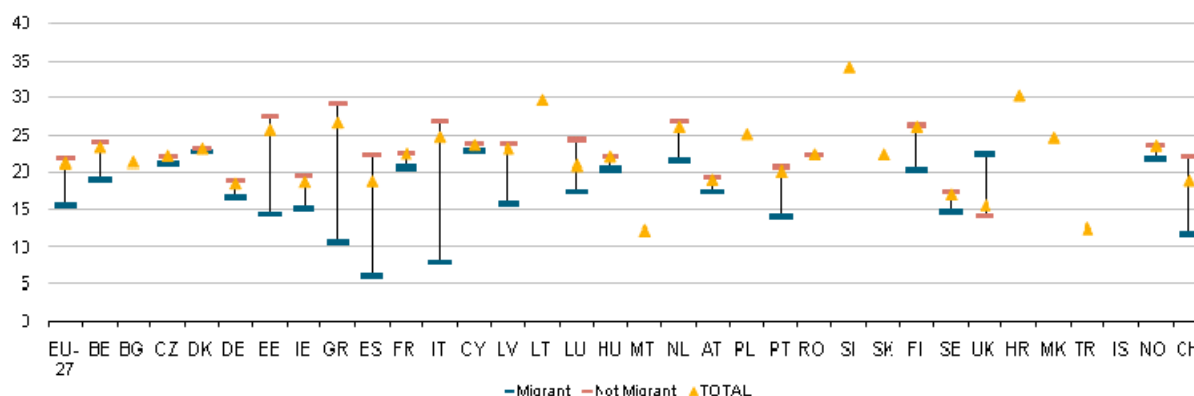
The integration of Europe and globalisation in general have led to increasing cross-border migration. In many countries, a significant share of the resident population does not have the citizenship of the country or was born abroad. This brings a further dimension of higher education to attention: migrant participation. In a European Higher Education Area that provides accessible higher education for all (Bergen Communiqué, 2005), migrants should constitute a share among the student population that is equal to their share in the population.

⁴ The figure will be updated by Eurostat

Figure 4.5 depicts the participation rates of migrants compared to non-migrants. Migrants here are defined as individuals who were not born in the country of their studies. However, it is not possible to know whether an individual has been living in a country for a long time or whether s/he has come to a country only recently (e.g. for the purpose of study). As a result, participation rates for migrants include the international student population but, at the same time, do not include second-generation migrants born in the country of their studies. This highlights the difficulties of accurately evaluating migrant participation in higher education.

Data differentiating between migrants and non-migrants in higher education covering 22 countries show that in 18 countries, participation rates for migrants are lower than for non-migrants. In 12 of them this gap is larger than five percentage points, with Estonia (13%), Greece (18.5%), Spain (16.3%), Italy (19%) and Switzerland (10.5%) having the largest gaps. A second group of 4 countries (the Czech Republic, Denmark, Cyprus and Hungary) has the same (or very similar) participation rates for the two groups. In these countries, migrants are as likely to participate in higher education as non-migrants, thus reaching the goal ministers set themselves. The United Kingdom stands out among the countries as migrants show a much higher rate of participation than non-migrants (22.4 % v 14.1%). This exceptional situation can be partially explained by the attractiveness of the UK higher education system for international students as the figure on student inbound mobility illustrates (see Figure 7.1 in the Mobility Chapter).

Figure 4.5: Participation rates in tertiary education among the migrant, non-migrant and total population, 2009⁵

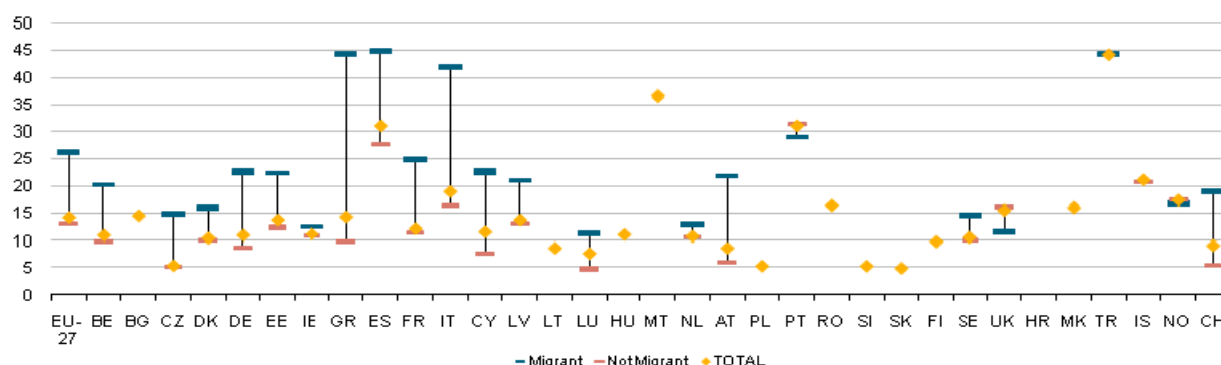


Source: Eurostat LFS

The reasons for relatively low participation rates of migrants in higher education, however, are not (only) linked to access problems and admission to higher education. The reasons can be found clearly at earlier education levels. For example, in countries having large gaps in higher education participation rates between migrants and non-migrants, data on early school leaving (Figure 4.6) also show that students with a migrant background are much more likely to leave school early than the non-migrant population. The picture is particularly striking for Greece (35.5 percentage points difference), Spain (17 percentage points difference) and Italy (25.6 percentage points difference). This indicates that measures to foster the participation of people with a migrant background must start much earlier than at the level of higher education.

⁵ The figure will be updated by Eurostat

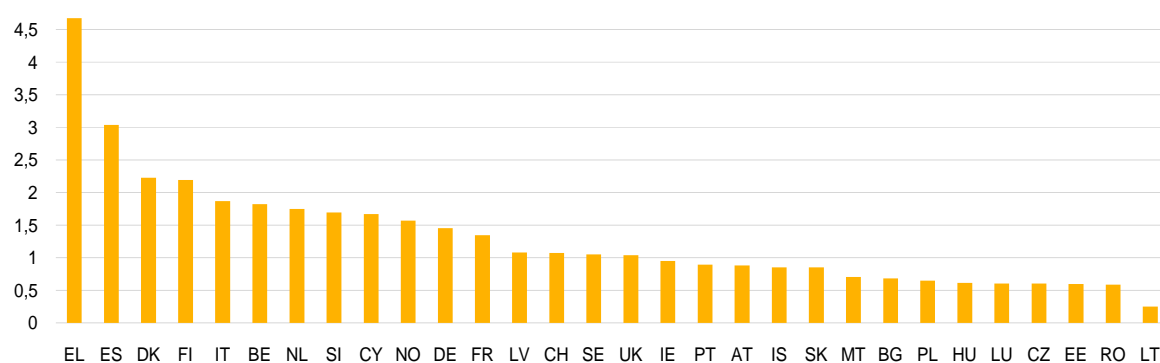
Figure 4.6: Early school leavers as percentage of the migrant, non-migrant and total population, 2009⁶



Source: Eurostat LFS

Figure 4.7 presents relative chances of non-migrants to attain higher education compared with the migrant population. It shows that in four countries - Greece, Spain, Denmark and Finland - non-migrants have significantly higher chance to achieve a degree than migrants (the odds ratio is higher than 2). On the other hand, in 14 countries, the odds ratio for non-migrants is less than 1, meaning that in these countries, migrants have higher relative chances to attain higher education than non-migrants. In Lithuania, the number is even as low as 0.25, i.e. the odds for migrants to have higher education attainment are four times as high as for non-migrants. In another four countries, the odds ratio is under 1.1 and thus very close to equilibrium.

Figure 4.7: Attainment by migrant status: odds ratios of non-migrants over migrants to attain higher education, 2009/2010⁷



Source: Eurostat

⁶ The figure will be updated by Eurostat

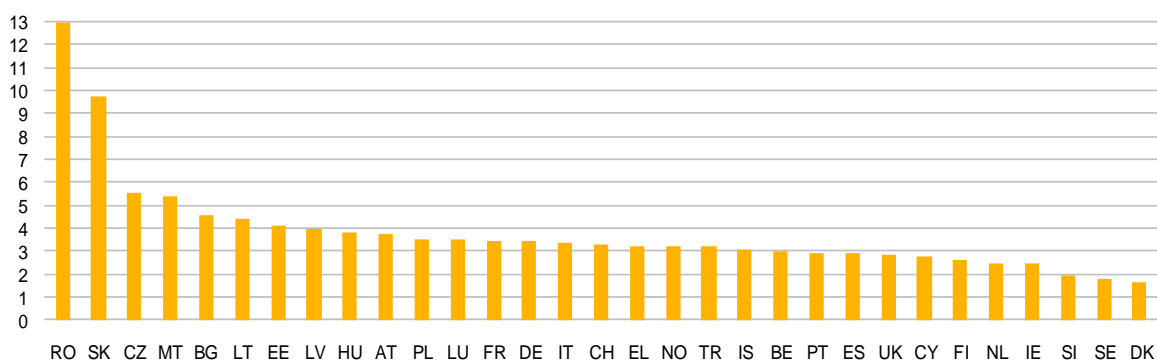
⁷ The figure will be updated by Eurostat (Bologna median is already available and will be included in the figure).

4.1.4. Influence of parental education on higher education attainment

One strong indicator for the fairness of a higher education system is to what extent educational attainment is passed down through generations. If the EHEA countries want to achieve their commitment made in the London communiqué that students should be able to complete their study regardless of their social and economic background, looking at the effect of parental educational attainment is crucial. It has been shown that the educational level of parents strongly influences educational attainment (e.g. Koucky, 2010), though data also show that this relationship has been diminishing (Eurostat/Eurostudent, 2009, p.67).

Figure 4.8 presents the odds ratios for attaining a higher education qualification, comparing students with highly educated parents (ISCED 5/6) to students with medium educated parents (ISCED 3/4). It shows that in almost all countries the chances of people to attain tertiary education are strongly determined by their parents' educational background. In Denmark, Sweden or Slovenia the impact of parents' educational background is evident, but relatively weak. In most other EHEA countries, however, the relative chances for students with highly educated parents to attain higher education are between two and five times higher than for students whose parents have a medium educational level. In Slovakia and Romania, the relative chances are even higher, with the chances for children of highly educated persons being 10 and 13 times higher, respectively.

Figure 4.8: Attainment by educational background: odds ratios of students with highly educated parents (ISCED 5/6) over students with medium educated parents (ISCED 3/4) to attain higher education, 2009/2010⁸



Source: Eurostat

These findings are confirmed by Eurostudent data on educational background of students enrolled in higher education (Eurostudent, 2011). In particular, Eurostudent research identifies the higher education systems of Slovakia and Romania among socially exclusive systems, i.e. systems characterised by a significant under-representation of students with low educational background.

As Figures 4.7 and 4.8 use the same statistical approach, it is possible to compare the influence of migrant status on students' chances to achieve a higher education degree with the influence of parents' educational attainment. The comparison between the two indicators shows that while being a

⁸ The figure will be updated by Eurostat

migrant in a significant number of countries does not limit the odds to obtain a higher education degree, in no country, parents' educational background is irrelevant for higher education attainment. In other words, migration background does not influence students' chances to attain higher education as much as their parents' educational background.

*

Overall, the analysis of data on higher education participation and attainment indicates that the goal of providing equal chances for all in the EHEA has not yet been achieved. The following section will take a more detailed look at policy approaches countries use to expand access to and participation in higher education.

4.2. Policy approaches to widening access to and participation in higher education

Building on statistical data on background characteristics of students, this section provides an overview of national approaches to widening participation in higher education so that the diversity of the population is reflected. It presents an overview of policy measures countries adopt to reach this goal as well as monitoring mechanisms put in place. The objective is to gain an understanding of the different mechanism through which the goal of widening participation is addressed.

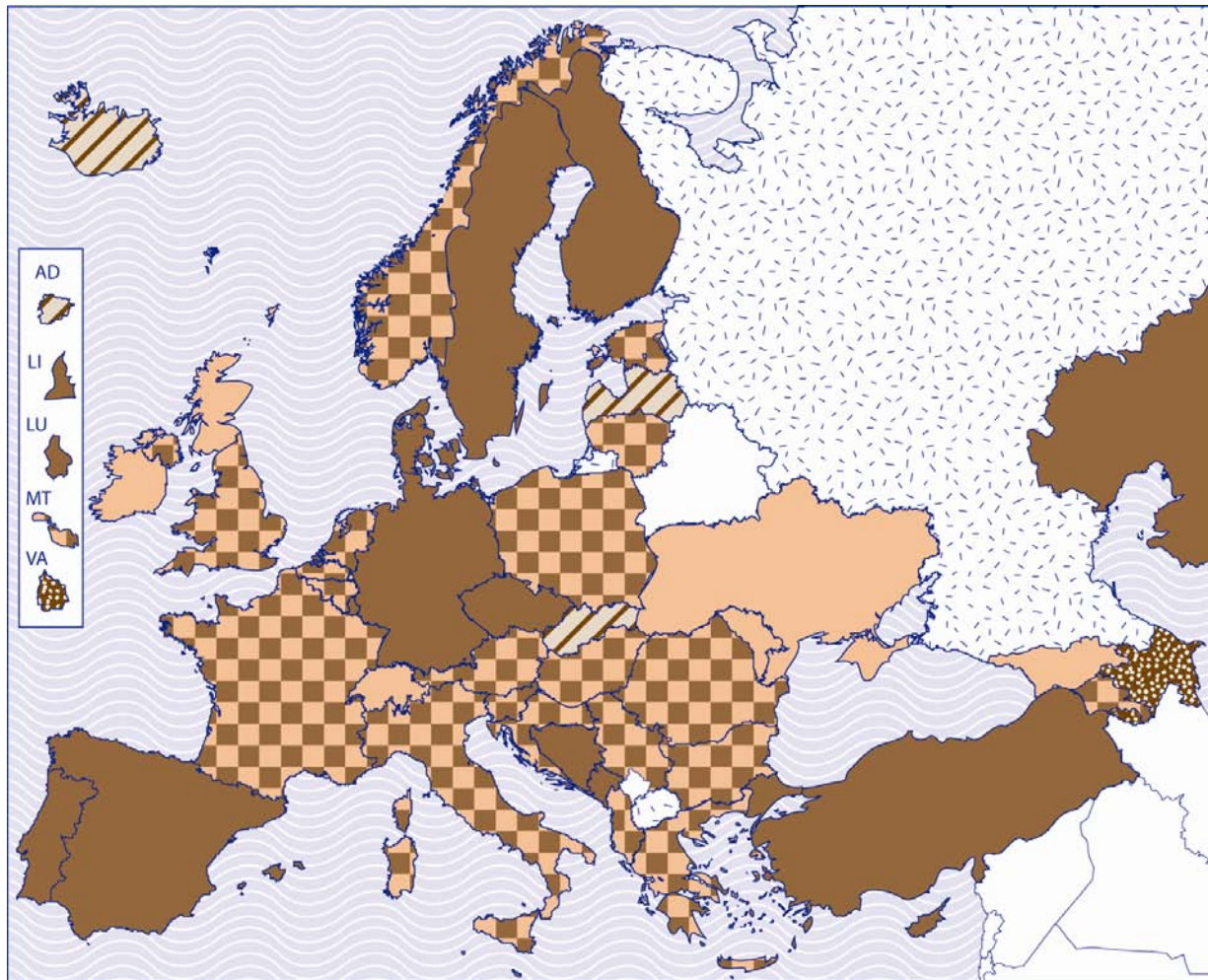
4.2.1. Overview of the main approaches

According to the 2011 BFUG reporting, almost all EHEA countries work towards the goal of widening participation in higher education as laid down in the Bologna documents. Only four countries (Andorra, Iceland, Latvia and Slovakia) do not reflect this goal in their higher education policy.

Approaches to widening access to higher education can take different forms. While most EHEA countries combine policy actions targeting all categories of students (i.e. general policy approach) with measures focusing on different under-represented groups, some countries concentrate only on one of these approaches. Two higher education systems – Azerbaijan and the Holy See – claim to work towards the goal of widening participation in higher education, but they do so through a policy approach that can neither be described as general nor as targeted⁹. Figure 4.9 provides an overview of the situation across the EHEA.

⁹ **Question to Azerbaijan and the Holy See (VA):** could you please provide more details on your policy approach(es)?

Figure 4.9: National policy approaches to widening participation in higher education, academic year 2010/2011



	Under-represented groups are identified and targeted measures are taken to counteract under-representation
	There is a general policy approach to increase and widen participation in HE
	Countries applying a different approach
	Countries not reflecting the goal of widening participation in their HE policy
	Data not available

Source: BFUG questionnaire

General policy approach

Higher education systems addressing the under-representation through a general policy approach commonly strive for creating an environment that provides equal opportunities for all to participate in higher education. It is expected that this will have a positive impact not only on the overall participation in higher education, but also on the number of students from disadvantaged groups. While the majority of EHEA countries combine general policy actions with targeted measures, 11 countries concentrate on the first approach. From the geographical perspective, general policy approach is quite common in the Nordic countries, as in three of them - Denmark, Finland and Sweden - it is the main mechanism to address the under-representation.

Several countries (or regions within countries) indicating general policy approach to widening participation refer to financial arrangements they have put in place (Belgium – French Community, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Croatia, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Romania and Slovenia). These countries are commonly pointing out that the system of fees and financial support available for students are intended to allow all those interested in higher education to embark on studies at this level regardless of their socio-economic status or situation. More details on these aspects are provided in Section 4.4, which deals with higher education funding systems, relating the most important elements of national fee systems with student support.

Alongside financial measures, countries reporting general policy approach often make a reference to structural changes in their higher education systems. The aim of these measures is to adapt existing higher education provision so that the system would attract larger societal groups, including groups that have been under-represented in the past. Such structural adaptation can be related to the introduction of new higher education programmes (Cyprus), including short-cycle programmes (Luxembourg) or professionally-oriented programmes (France and Montenegro). It can also be linked to the development of public vocational higher education institutions (Poland) or institutions focusing on flexible higher education provision (Italy). Besides, some countries report that their higher education systems have become more open towards the recognition of learning outcomes acquired outside formal learning contexts (France, Germany, Italy and Sweden), which can also be seen as an adjustment susceptible to enhance the participation in higher education.

Finally, efforts to achieve equity in higher education are sometimes complemented by actions in other parts of the education systems. These actions mainly take place at upper secondary level and can, for instance, include guidance and counselling services targeting upper secondary graduates (the Czech Republic, France and the Netherlands). Their aim is to ensure that pupils make informed choices about their further career and consider higher education as one of possible options. Preparatory programmes for higher education candidates (which are referred to by the Czech Republic) also fall under this category of measures.

Policy approaches targeting specific under-represented groups

Along with general policy approach, many BFUG countries have taken measures targeting specific under-represented groups. Six higher education systems (Switzerland, Georgia, Ireland, Moldova, Ukraine and the United Kingdom – Scotland) concentrate on targeted measures, rather than general policy actions or the combination of both approaches.

Targeted actions can cover different categories of students. The BFUG reporting shows that **students with disabilities** are the most common group targeted by specific measures (around 20 EHEA countries¹⁰ are referring to this category of students). The aim is to adapt their study environment so that they could integrate the higher education system on the same footing as other students. The second most common category of students targeted by specific measures is the category of those, whose **socio-economical situation** is susceptible to be a barrier to higher education studies (18 EHEA countries¹¹ are referring to this category of students). Although the low socio-economical status is defined differently across countries, the measures most commonly focus on those from low-income families, families with low educational background or orphans. These students are often eligible for

¹⁰ CY, NL, ME, PL, UK-Scot, UK, AT, EE, RS, UKR, IE, LT, IT, BG, BE-fr, BE_nl, SI, MD, AL, HU, EL, CH

¹¹ CY, PL, UK-Scot, UK, UKR, IE, HR, LT, IT, BG, BE-fr, BE-nl, MD, GE, AL, HU, EL, CH

various forms of financial support, in particular grant and subsidies, aiming to compensate their economic handicap. In some systems (e.g. Scotland), students with low socio-economical status are also targeted by special guidance and counselling services as well as preparatory programmes aiming to improve their chances to enter higher education and succeed in it.

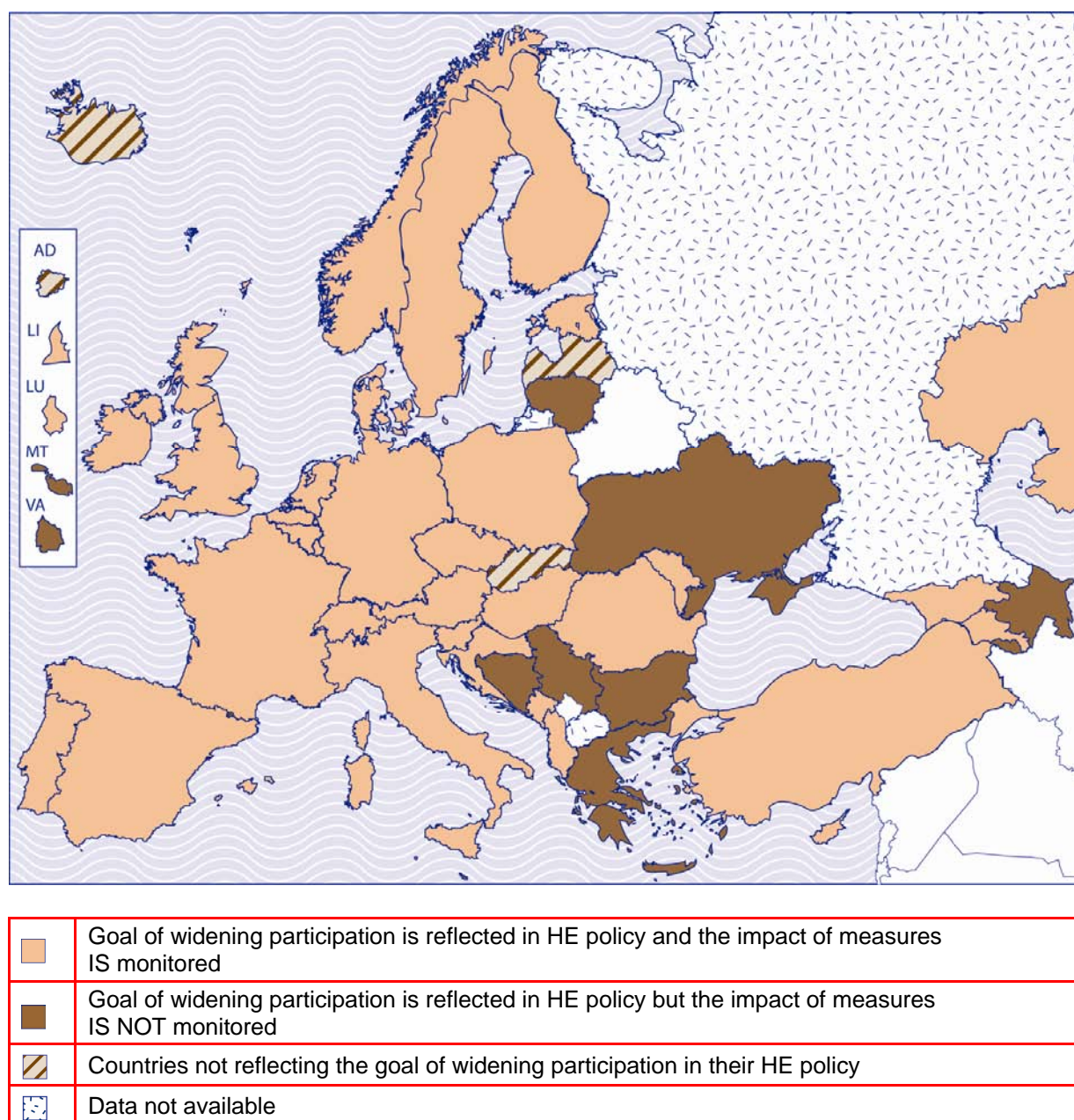
Several higher education systems formally identify other under-represented groups and target them by a range of policy actions (e.g. financial support schemes, special admission regimes and guidance and counselling services). These groups are defined on the basis of various criteria, including **ethnicity and/or migrant status** (Albania, Belgium – the Flemish Community, Georgia, Croatia, Moldova, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom), **gender** (Albania, Austria, Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) **geography**: rural versus urban areas and/or deprived versus wealthy areas (Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Georgia, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom – Scotland) or **age**: mature versus typical HE students (Ireland, Norway, Slovenia and the United Kingdom – Scotland). Within these general categories, countries often express their specific national concerns. For instance, with regard to ethnicity/migrant status, Georgia pays particular attention to Azeri and Armenian students, whereas Croatia focuses on Roma students. It can also be noted that some countries define under-represented groups on the basis of criteria, which are closely related to their recent history. This applies to certain Balkans and East European countries (e.g. Armenia, Georgia and Moldova), where students or students whose parents participated in military conflicts are recognised as groups under-represented in higher education and targeted by special measures.

Despite the fact that many countries indicate policy measures targeting specific under-represented groups, only a few countries (Armenia, Austria, Ireland and Norway) refer to quantitative targets to be reached. The most concrete objectives have been set in Ireland, where according to the National Action Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008-2013, all socio-economic groups should have entry rates of at least 54 % by 2020, and mature students should comprise at least 20 % of total full-time entrants by 2013.

4.2.2. Monitoring

Most EHEA countries indicate that they have put in place systematic activities allowing them to monitor the composition of the student body according to different characteristics (e.g. gender, disability, age, social background, migrant status etc.), and therefore evaluate the effect of measures aiming to widen participation in higher education. These monitoring activities are often part of the regular national statistical monitoring and the outcomes are commonly published in statistical or research reports. A few countries state that they address the issue of widening participation through various policy initiatives, but they do not report any systematic monitoring activities that would allow them to evaluate the effect of these measures on the composition of the student body. Figure 4.10 summarises the situation across the EHEA.

Figure 4.10: Existence of monitoring activities allowing the evaluation of the effect of measures to increase participation in higher education, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Although the majority of countries have already put in place monitoring activities allowing them to capture the composition of the student body, the monitoring systems do not always cover all groups defined as under-represented and/or they do not allow capturing all relevant student characteristics. This is sometimes related to various legal constraints, in particular the fact that in some contexts it is legally forbidden to monitor certain aspects of the composition of the student body. For example in Estonia and Finland, it is impossible to collect data on ethnic and socio-economic background of students.

It should also be noted that the BFUG reporting does not always show a systematic relationship between monitoring activities and the actual impact of these activities on policy developments across

the EHEA. In fact, only a few countries clearly indicate that data obtained through monitoring is systematically used as a reference for strategic planning of future policy initiatives. It therefore seems that the link between data gathering and policy development is yet to be straightened in the majority of EHEA countries.

4.3. Opening access routes to higher education and providing adequate student services

The objective to increase the number and diversity of the student population goes hand in hand with the need to create an institutional environment that values the recruitment of non-traditional learners and pays particular attention to student retention in the higher education system. This has been recognised by the ministers responsible for higher education who highlighted, within the London Communiqué (2007), that the social dimension in higher education should include efforts to create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education as well as the provision of adequate student services. Similar references have been included in the Bergen and the Louvain/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqués (2005 and 2009 respectively).

This section looks at specific aspects of the social dimension in higher education as highlighted within the Bologna Communiqués. It will first provide an overview of alternative access routes to higher education that can be used by prospective students who do not comply with traditional access requirements. The section then looks at services that are commonly available to students, in particular academic and career guidance and services of psychological counselling. Other measures referred to by the ministers, namely flexible learning pathways within higher education, will be examined in Chapter 6 on lifelong learning. Chapter 5 on outcomes and employability will look at policies targeting the completion of higher education studies and it will examine how different higher education systems address the problem of student under-performance and dropout.

4.3.1. Non-traditional access routes to higher education

Non-traditional (or alternative) access routes to higher education are commonly understood as access routes targeting higher education candidates who do not comply with traditional entry requirements. This is either because they followed a short upper secondary vocational path (i.e. a programme, which does not allow access to higher education) or because they abandoned initial education prior to the completion of upper secondary level. In the current policy context, promoting the idea that no talent should be left behind, the theme of non-traditional pathways into higher education gains particular attention. The objective is to extend admissions criteria so that all those who have a capacity to follow higher education studies would be provided with the opportunity to do so, regardless of their prior formal learning achievements.

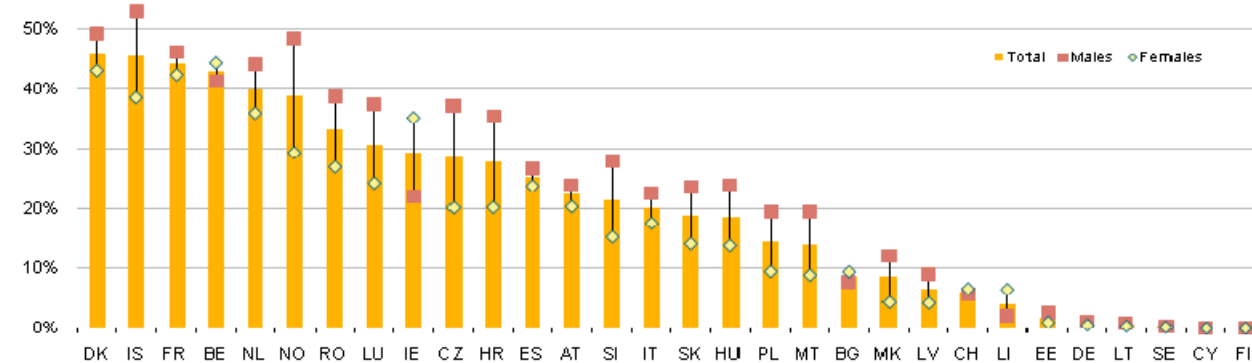
Overview of the current situation

The analysis of alternative access routes to higher education must be carried out in close relation to the current structures of the upper secondary education systems. In fact, one of the most important characteristics of many upper secondary systems is the absence of a clear boundary between

academic and vocational paths. This means that vocational upper secondary programmes often lead to a standard qualification allowing access to higher education studies. Overall, this can be seen as a positive trend that contributes to parity of esteem and equality of different educational choices and pathways.

Eurostat data indicates (Figure 4.12) that in Finland, Cyprus, Sweden, Lithuania, Germany and Estonia, virtually all upper secondary graduates hold a qualification opening access to higher education. The situation is different in countries such as Denmark, Iceland, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, where more than 40% of pupils complete upper secondary education with a qualification, which does not give them direct access to higher education. Yet, alternative pathways may play an important role not only in this second group of countries, but also in countries where all (or almost all) upper secondary programmes open access to higher education, as they may be used by higher education candidates who left initial education without completing upper secondary education (see Figure 4.6 for country-specific information regarding early school leaving).

Figure 4.11: Percentage of upper secondary graduates finishing a programme with no direct access to higher education, 2008/2009



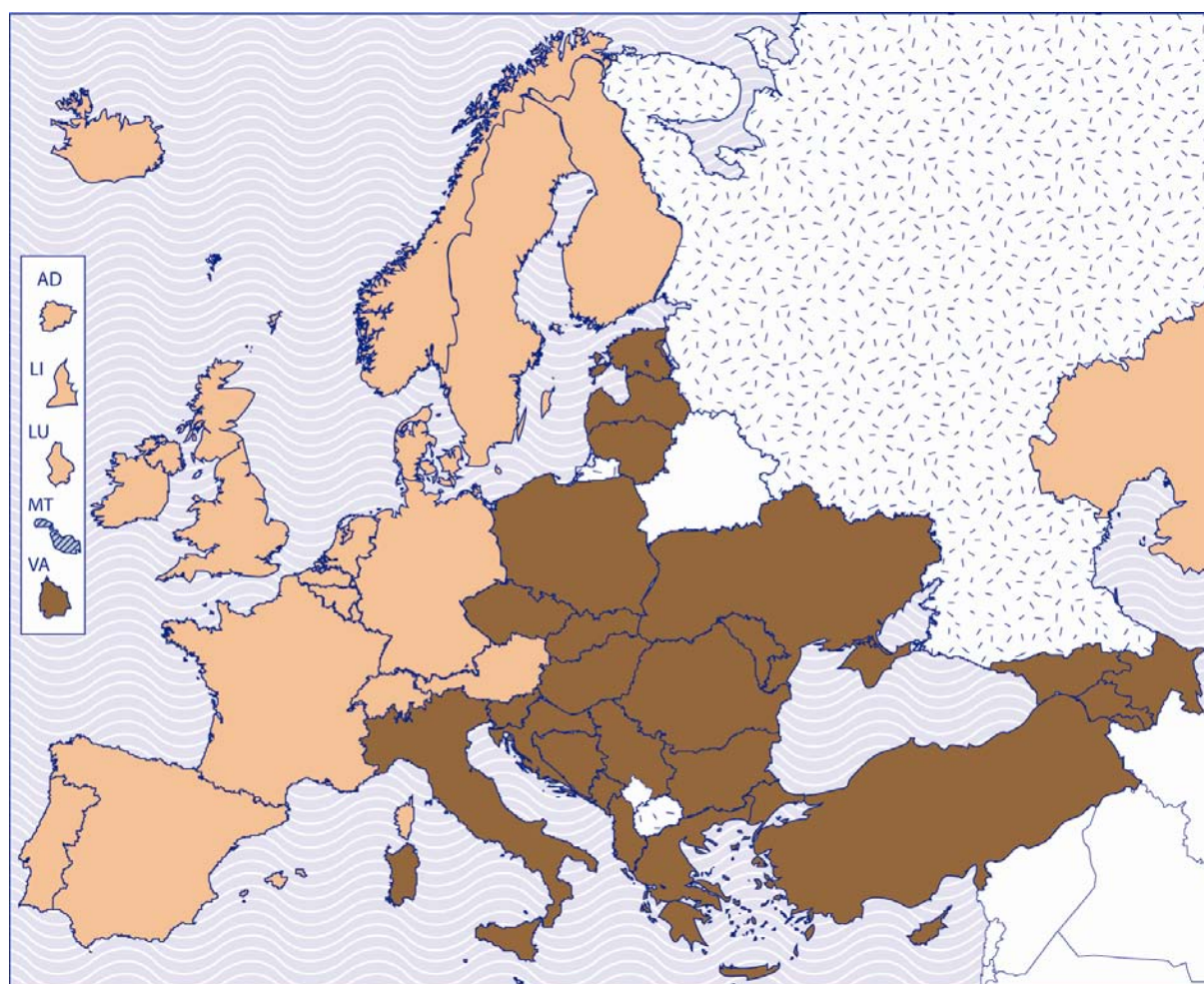
Source: Eurostat

Figure 4.12 provides an overview of the current situation in the European Higher Education Area with regard to alternative access routes to higher education. It classified the EHEA countries into two groups. The first one includes countries where the traditional upper secondary school leaving certificate (general or vocational) is not the only way to enter into higher education, and where at least one alternative path into higher education exists. The second group comprises countries where the standard upper secondary school leaving qualification remains the only way to embark on higher education studies¹².

¹² The second group includes a few countries (e.g. CZ, SI and TR), where under exceptional circumstances, particularly talented higher education candidates who do not hold the upper secondary school leaving certificate can be granted access to higher education. However, as this concerns only exceptional cases and often only certain fields of study (e.g. arts programmes in CZ and SI), these countries cannot be regarded as having a systematic provision of alternative entry routes into higher education. Alongside, the second group also includes countries where candidates without necessary qualifications can be admitted into higher education, but cannot be awarded a higher education degree if they do not complete their upper secondary studies (e.g. CZ and UA).

The figure shows that out of 46 higher education systems for which data is available¹³, 21 higher education systems have already established at least one alternative route to higher education¹⁴, whereas in 25 systems the access to higher education is conditioned by the possession of the upper secondary school leaving certificate. Overall, the figure shows that the higher education systems in the countries of Western Europe are characterised by higher flexibility in terms of their entry qualification requirements than other EHEA countries.

Figure 4.12: Alternative routes to higher education for non-traditional candidates, 2010/11



4 categories:

	Alternative routes exist
	No alternative route
	Data difficult to interpret
	Data not available

Source: BFUG questionnaire

¹³ **Question to Malta:** data provided is difficult to interpret: could you please clarify your national situation with regard to this indicator?

¹⁴ **Question to Kazakhstan:** we are not sure whether we have correctly interpreted the situation in your country. Could you please confirm that the standard upper secondary certificate is not the only way to enter higher education? Please provide more details on alternative access to HE in your country.

Alternative entry to higher education can take different forms and can be based on a range of methods and approaches. Most commonly, alternative entry involves the recognition of the knowledge and skills that prospective non-traditional students acquired outside formal learning contexts (i.e. through various non-formal learning activities, professional experience, volunteering etc.). Besides, candidates who lack the knowledge and skills necessary for higher education study can be provided with the possibility to follow specific preparatory programmes allowing access to higher education. The two sub-sections that follow provide more detailed information on different approaches that can be observed within the EHEA.

Recognition of the knowledge and skills acquired outside formal learning contexts

In countries, where alongside standard formal qualifications the admission to higher education can also be granted on the basis of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, legislation most often refers explicitly to such possibility. Yet, legal frameworks regulate this option in different ways and to a different extent. In some countries, legislation refers to alternative access to higher education in a relatively open way, i.e. it does not refer to any specific categories of non-traditional learners or to any approaches to be used in alternative admission procedures (e.g. Finland and Sweden). Regulatory frameworks can also be more prescriptive and provide further details relating to various aspects, including the categories of learners who are eligible or methods and approaches that should be used when evaluating the knowledge and skills of non-traditional applicants (e.g. Germany and Spain). The United Kingdom represents a specific case, as there is no legislation referring to alternative entry into higher education, but higher education institutions commonly accept non-traditional candidates who do not comply with standard entry requirements. This is related to the fact that universities are autonomous institutions responsible for the quality of their qualifications and the recruitment of their student population. They can therefore set their own admission criteria and conditions. Nevertheless, at the national level, a support has been provided to boost the implementation of alternative entry routes into higher education: the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has published a code of practice, which specified a range of evidence that may be considered in judging the potential of a prospective non-traditional student. According to the document, the evidence might include all prior learning of candidates, including that achieved in the workplace.

Preparatory programmes for non-traditional higher education candidates

Alongside the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, some countries have put in place special preparatory programmes targeting non-traditional higher education candidates who need additional support in gaining the skills required for higher education study before they enter higher education. These programmes are primarily directed at learners who followed a short upper secondary programme not opening access to higher education or who left upper secondary education before completing it. They most often lead to a qualification that is recognised as an alternative to the upper secondary school leaving certificate. Provision of preparatory courses for non-traditional higher education candidates is relatively common in Ireland and all areas of the United Kingdom.

It should also be noted that in virtually all countries, there are possibilities for mature students who do not hold a necessary higher education entry qualification to follow programmes leading to the standard upper secondary school leaving certificate. These “second chance” programmes are often delivered under various flexible arrangements such as evening, part-time or distance courses. Despite the fact that this type of provision is not considered under Figure 4.13, it plays an important role in providing

non-traditional learners with an opportunity to achieve a standard qualification allowing access to higher education studies.

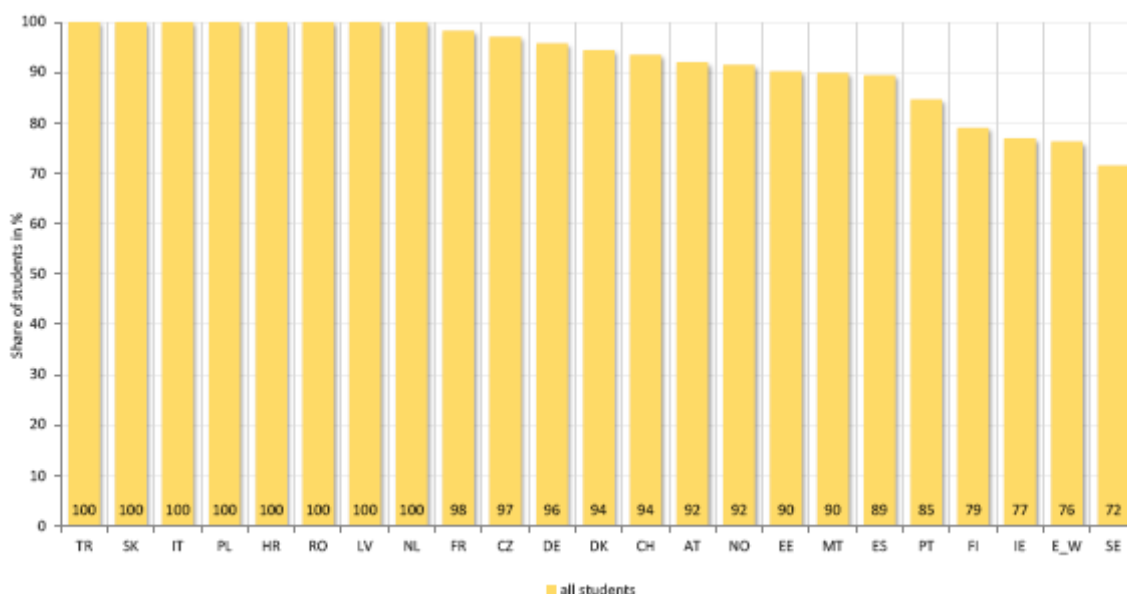
Statistics and monitoring

In addition to different approaches to alternative access to higher education, it is also important to examine the extent to which these alternative options are used in practice. However, countries reporting the existence of at least one alternative entry route to higher education are often unable to provide information on the proportion of students entering into the system on the basis of alternative admission procedures. It indicates that in the majority of countries this area is not subject to a regular system-wide monitoring.

Where quantitative data is available (i.e. where countries provided it within the 2011 BFUG reporting) alternative pathways into higher education do generally count only for up to 5 % of all entries. Only England reports significantly higher proportion of those who enter higher education through a non-traditional entry route (around 28 % of all entries).

The information provided by central authorities can be compared with recent Eurostudent research (Eurostudent, 2011), which allows to quantify the role of traditional and non-traditional entry routes¹⁵ in different higher education systems (Figure 4.13). The data covers 22 countries and is based on students' responses to a question on the access route they have taken to enter higher education.

Figure 4.13: Students entering higher education through a regular route (upper secondary qualification) in %, 2009/10



Source: Eurostudent

The figure shows that in Turkey, Slovakia, Italy, Poland, Croatia, Romania, Latvia and the Netherlands all students entering higher education are in the possession of the traditional upper secondary school leaving certificate. This confirms the information provided in Figure 4.12, which indicates that most of

¹⁵ Within Eurostudent research, the following entry routes fall under the category of non-traditional/alternative entry routes: 1. Vocational training/work experience/Accreditation of prior learning (APR); 2. Special aptitude/entrance examinations; 3. Post-secondary non-tertiary education (for more details, see Eurostudent, 2011).

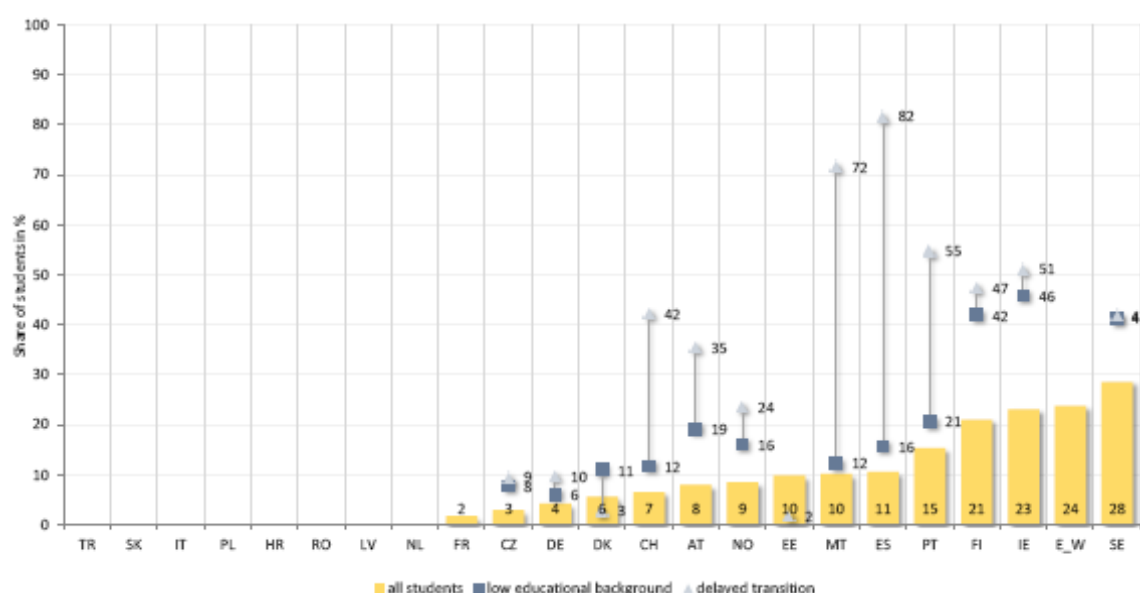
these countries do not provide any systematic possibilities to enter higher education without the standard upper secondary school leaving qualification. Only the Netherlands reports that non-traditional higher education candidates aged over 21 can be admitted to higher education on the basis of the recognition of prior learning. However, according to Eurostudent data, this possibility is rarely used in practice.

At the other end of the spectrum lie Finland, Ireland, the United Kingdom (England and Wales) and Sweden, where between 70% and 80% of higher education students enter the system through traditional access routes, whereas the rest of the student population takes an alternative entry pathway. The contextual information provided in the text above confirms that all these countries have already established at least one alternative access route to higher education, namely the access based on the recognition of the knowledge and skills acquired outside formal learning contexts (Finland, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Sweden) or preparatory courses for non-traditional higher education candidates (Ireland and the United Kingdom).

The majority of the 11 countries situated in the middle of the spectrum, namely France, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Norway, Malta, Spain and Portugal, report that they have a systematic policy approach to alternative entry routes for non-traditional learners (Figure 4.12). In these countries, alternative access routes represent between 2% and 15% of all admissions, which indicates that this option is being used in practice to different degrees.

Eurostudent research also provides information on characteristics of those entering higher education through non-traditional access routes (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14: Students entering higher education through alternative routes by education background and transition route in %, 2009/10



Source: Eurostudent

Data reveals that students belonging to the category of delayed transition students¹⁶ and students characterised by a low education/social background¹⁷ are those who often take non-traditional access

¹⁶ Delayed transition: "characteristic used to define a type of student, who entered the higher education sector for the first time at a later stage in his/her life. This new focus group has been developed in order to capture a group

routes. In Finland, Ireland and Sweden more than one in three students characterised by a low education/social background or delayed transition have taken an alternative access route to enter higher education. This confirms that the theme of alternative access to higher education ought to be seen as a key component of debates relating to the social dimension in higher education.

Prospective developments

With regard to future developments in the field of alternative entry into higher education, some countries see the establishment of their national qualification frameworks based on learning outcomes as a mean to enhance the development of alternative access routes to higher education. It is expected that the shift to clearly identified learning outcomes will support alternative entry pathways in two different ways: First, clearly identified knowledge, skills and competences needed for study at higher education level could allow the implementation of measures to recognise non-formal and informal learning as a part of standard admission procedures. Second, national qualification frameworks are also expected to clarify content of different national qualifications, which could allow certain “non-traditional” certificates and qualifications to be better understood and potentially accepted by higher education institutions as an alternative to a standard upper secondary school leaving certificate. The impact of the implementation of national qualification frameworks on alternative entry routes to higher education is therefore a theme to be followed within further analyses.

4.3.2. Student services

Student services provided within the higher education sector are commonly regarded as an integral part of the social dimension, as elements contributing to the quality of the student experience and to widening access to higher education. They can support prospective students before entry to higher education, contribute to students’ performance and success during their studies, and accompany higher education graduates in their transition to the labour market. They are also crucial to achieve the goal to make higher education more inclusive, as the ministers acknowledged in their 2007 Communiqué.

Overview of the provision

While higher education institutions can offer multiple student services, the 2011 BFUG reporting exercise paid particular attention to the three types of services, namely academic guidance services, career guidance services and services of psychological counselling. It intended to provide an overview of the extent to which these services are ensured by higher education institutions.

Available data indicates that both academic and career guidance are commonly available to students in the majority of countries. Only Andorra, Croatia, Montenegro and Ukraine indicate that these services are not included in the standard provision of higher education institutions, and in Bulgaria and Georgia, only career guidance is included. The provision of psychological counselling services seems

of students on which a lot of policy focus is being laid. All students, whose delay between receiving HE entrance qualification at school and entering HE for the first time amounts to more than 2 years are considered delayed transition students. All students, whose delay was less than 2 years, but whose entry qualification was obtained outside the normal school system are also considered delayed transition students, ...”(Eurostudent 2011, p. 220)

¹⁷ Low education/social background: “Low education/social background: socio-economic background of a student due to his/her parents’ social standing. The parents’ social standing is approximated by their highest educational qualification according to ISCED-97-code. The highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is taken into account. The ISCED levels 0, 1 and 2 are considered as low qualification background...” (Eurostudent 2011, p. 219)

to be slightly less common: only around two thirds of countries report that higher education institutions commonly provide these services to students. Yet, this could be related to the fact that psychological counselling is often ensured by external providers, rather than by higher education institutions themselves (for more details, see the information on the organisational aspects provided further in the text).

Apart from the above-mentioned services, around half of the countries provide information on other services that are commonly available to higher education students. They mainly include healthcare and accommodation services, as well as services related to sport, social and cultural activities of students.

Several countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Croatia, Iceland, Ireland and Slovenia) provide specific student services for those with special needs, in particular students with disabilities. The aim of these services is to ensure that these students are provided with academic and career guidance adapted to their needs, and that they can follow their studies on the same footing as other students.

A few countries (e.g. Montenegro and the United Kingdom – Scotland) refer to the provision of academic and career guidance services targeting prospective higher education students, in particular upper secondary pupils. These services mainly take the form of various outreach activities/programmes aiming to enhance the motivation of learners to enter higher education and allow prospective students to make appropriate choices for their study career.

Organisational patterns

From the organisational perspective, student services provided by higher education institutions appear as a complex field. While a certain number of services are often ensured at the central level of higher education institutions, others may be provided by individual faculties or departments. For example in Slovenia, central enrolment offices ensure academic and career guidance as well as services related to accommodation, student mobility and the recognition of ECTS obtained in other higher education institutions. Alongside, individual faculties provide additional and more targeted academic and career guidance support to students. Similarly in the Czech Republic, student services are provided by special advisory units as well as by distinct departments, dean's offices, study offices etc.

Individual higher education institutions do not necessarily ensure the provision of all services available to their students. This applies in particular to health services or services of psychological counselling, which are often provided by external institutions. In Serbia, for instance, academic and career guidance are most often provided inside higher education institutions (in career guidance centres), whereas services of psychological counselling are for the most part ensured by external providers, in particular medical centres and polyclinics.

Some countries have established independent legal entities responsible for the provision of various student services. This is the case in Norway, where student services fall under the responsibility of the Student Welfare Organisation and its 24 local branches. This organisation ensures services in the areas such as student accommodation, catering and health, as well as services related to sport, social and cultural activities of students. A similar situation can be observed in Germany, where the public institution "Studentenwerk" with branches all over the country, offers comparable services. Denmark has established a self-governing institution Student Counselling, which ensures the provision of psychological counselling.

Student services and legislative frameworks

Legislative frameworks address the provision of student services in different ways. While in some countries it is legally binding for higher education institutions to offer certain types of student services, in other instances such obligations do not exist. For example in the Czech Republic, according to the Higher Education Act, public higher education institutions are obliged to provide applicants, students and other persons with information and advisory services relating to higher education studies as well as to labour market opportunities for graduates. In Denmark, universities are legally obliged to offer special guidance for students who are at risk of dropping out. In Norway, according to the Act on Student Welfare Organisations, all Norwegian higher education institutions are obliged to collaborate with the Student Welfare Organisation. The United Kingdom represents a different model: higher education institutions are not obliged to offer the provision of student services, given their institutional autonomy. However, the lack of explicit directives does not necessarily mean the absence of student services. Scotland for example reports that all Scottish higher education institutions offer academic and career guidance services as well as psychological counselling services, and many also provide comprehensive health services to students.

Funding of student services

Budgets of higher education institutions largely appear as the main source of funding of various student services. Yet, several countries also refer to other financial sources.

In countries such as the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland and Slovenia, the European Social Fund seems to play an important role in the development of services available to higher education students. This is done either through projects focusing specifically on the provision of student services, or through initiatives having a wider scope, where student services represent only one area of action. The second case can be illustrated by the Slovenian project “Primus”, which aims to support the quality development of higher education and increase the competitiveness of graduates. The project consists of six major action lines, one of them supporting 19 higher education institutions with the provision of student services.

Complementary funding can also come from various national-level funds. This is the case in Denmark, where student services are partly financed from the Globalisation Fund, created as part of the Government's Globalisation Strategy, which includes initiatives in the area of research, education, innovation and entrepreneurship. Besides, some universities have also received a special grant (in total DKK 10 million in 2009-2010) to test different career guidance initiatives.

In countries, where independent entities providing student services exist, these organisations are financed in various ways. For example in Norway, the Student Welfare Organisations are partly financed by compulsory students' contributions and partly by the government, whereas in Denmark, the Student Counselling service is financed by the state.

4.4. Fees and Support

Since 2001, as a part of debates related to the social dimension in higher education, the ministers have regularly reaffirmed the need to build higher education systems where students can complete studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. It is in this context that the question of how higher education funding systems are structured and whether there is the balance between student fees and support available to students gains particular importance.

Issues of student fees and support are difficult to understand and compare accurately and clearly at European level. This is because national realities are complex and there are many dimensions to be considered. For example, the statement, "students pay fees in country x" may seem clear, but it lacks sufficient information to understand the system. Does the term "students" refer to all or some students? If some, what are the criteria that determine which students pay fees? How much do students pay, (the range of fees)? Are the fees paid upon enrolment or after graduation? Even if answers are provided to all of these questions, the information is still insufficient to understand and assess reality. The rest of the picture needs to be filled in with information on the student support system. Are students or their families able to access public financial support in the form of grants, loans or tax relief? If so, under what conditions and criteria?

This section therefore aims to show only some main patterns and approaches in national higher education systems, relating the most important elements of national fee systems with student support. It can, however, only be an overview of such a complex topic, and more detailed information is needed from national sources.

4.4.1. Student Costs

The information on student expenses provides the first part of the picture of how higher education funding systems are structured and whether they support the social dimension in higher education.

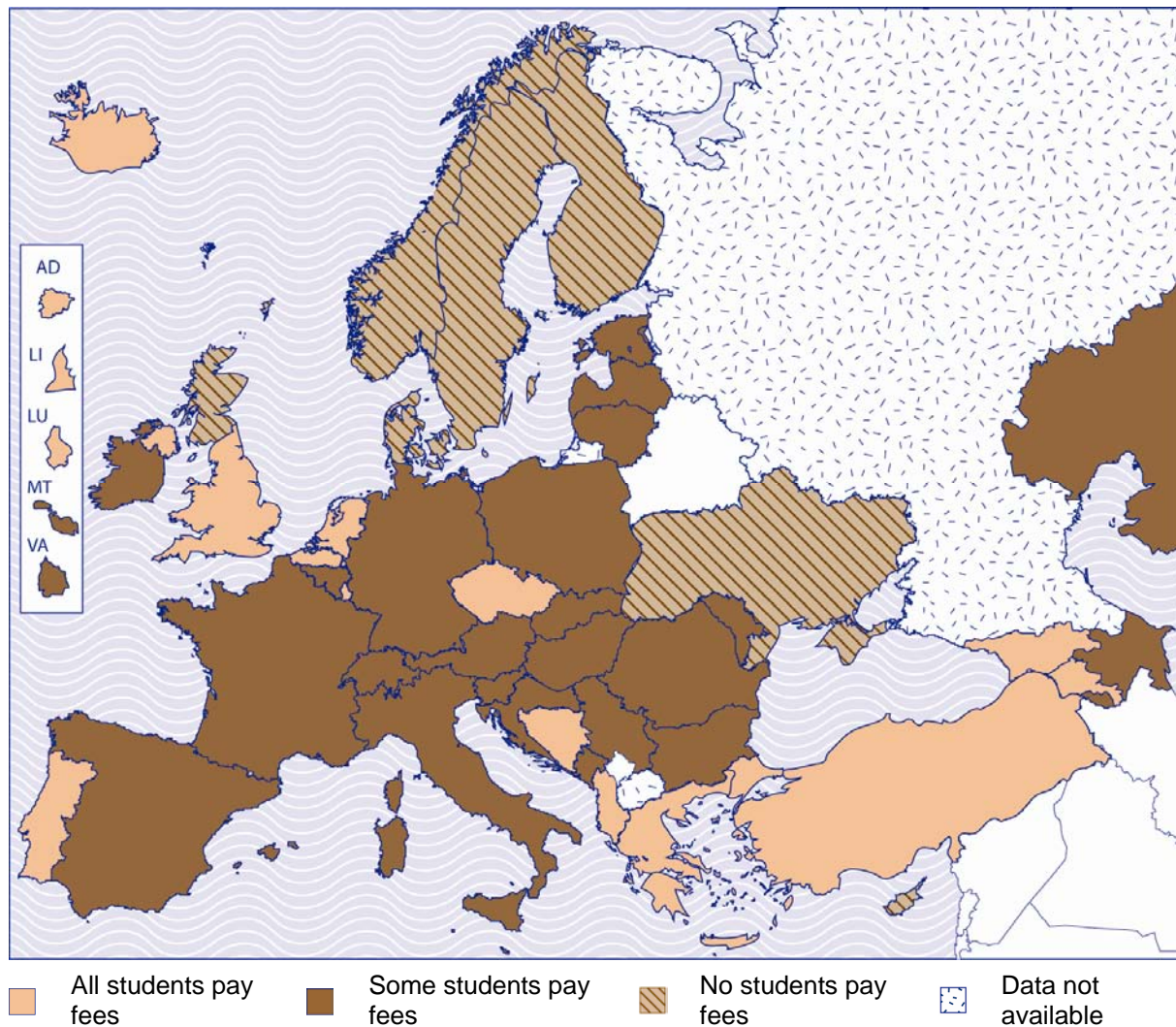
Figure 4.15 gives an overview of the prevalence of fees in the first cycle. While the information does not take account of the amounts of fees charged, it does differentiate between countries where all students are charged fees and those where only some students are charged fees. In this map, the main reference is to home students and/or students who are considered under the same fee regime as home students (for example in European Union countries, students from other EU states).

Overall it is evident that across the European Higher Education Area fees are very commonly charged. Indeed only in 7 countries is the first cycle organised without recourse to fees. There is a clear cultural and geographical aspect to such no fee models, as these can be found to be predominantly a characteristic of Nordic systems.

For approximately half of the countries of the EHEA, fees are charged to some students. This implies that there is recourse to criteria for distinguishing fee-payers and non fee-payers in these countries.

Meanwhile in 17 national systems all students are required to pay fees.

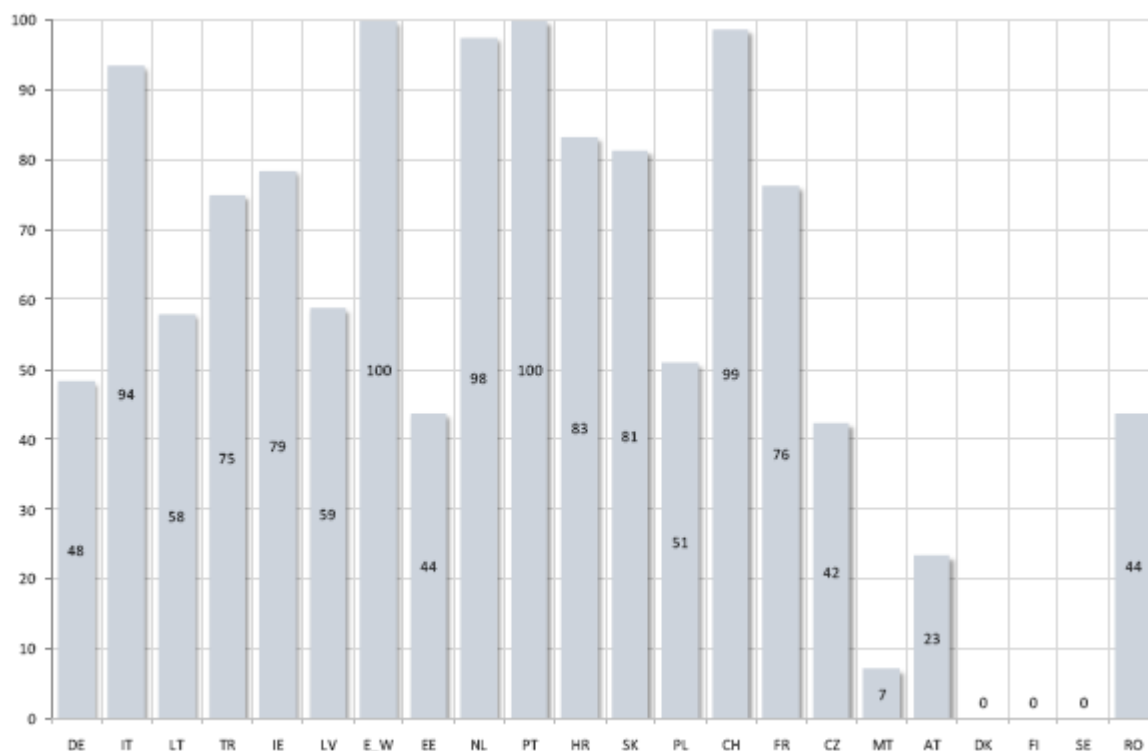
Figure 4.15: Prevalence of fees in the first cycle, 2010/11



Source: BFUG questionnaire

Eurostudent information echoes these findings. Indeed, Figure 4.16 illustrates the great diversity between systems, and provides a more precise picture of the percentages of students paying fees in participating Eurostudent countries. All or practically all students can be found to pay fees in Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland and the UK (England and Wales) while none pay fees in the Nordic countries. A further 6 countries have above 70% of fee-payers, while a further 7 have more than 40% of fee-payers. Apart from the fee-free Nordic countries, only Malta (7%) and Austria (23%) have low overall percentages of fee-payers.

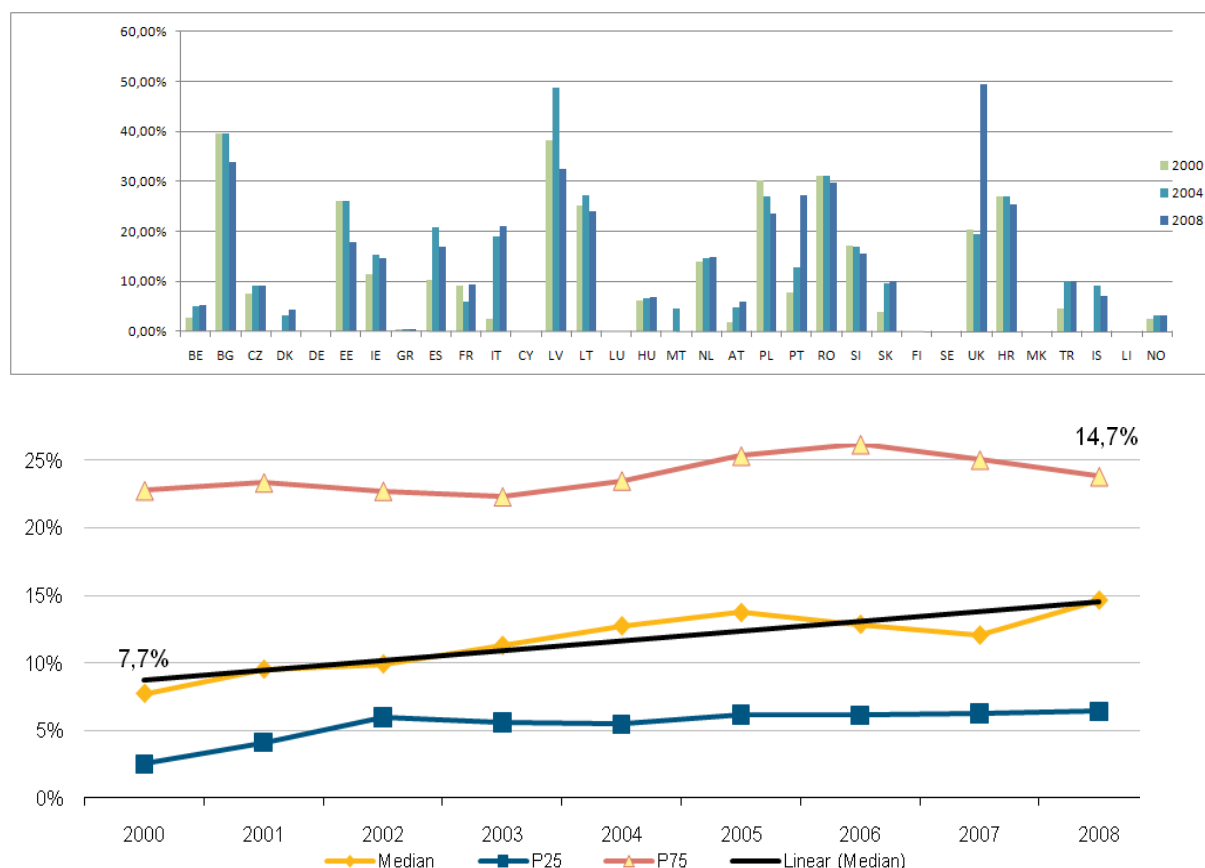
Figure 4.16: Share of Bachelor students who pay fees



Source: Eurostudent

Differences in approaches to fees are also reflected in Eurostat information on the share of household funding in total expenditure of higher education institutions (Figure 4.17). Across the countries for which data is available, there has been a steady overall increase in this percentage between 2000 and 2008 with the median value reaching nearly 15%. However, the country differences are striking. There is a significant group of countries (13) where the share of household expenditure remains less than 10% in 2008. A further 6 countries lie between 10 – 20% with the same number lying between 20 – 30%. The countries with the most significant share of household expenditure are the United Kingdom (49%), Bulgaria (33%) and Latvia (32%).

Figure 4.17: Share of household funding in total expenditure of higher education institutions



Source: Eurostat

WHO PAYS FEES?

While it is clear that there are major system differences in terms of the prevalence of fees, it is also true that there are considerable differences in the criteria used to determine which students pay fees, and how much they pay.

Financial considerations (economic condition of students) are used as criteria for charging fees in Belgium (French-speaking and Flemish communities), France, Italy and Cyprus. Meanwhile in Spain financial considerations are taken into account with regard to the amount of fees charged – but not the decision on whether or not fees are charged.

A number of countries (Estonia, Spain, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey) use academic performance criteria as a means of distinguishing who pays fees and/or the level of fees paid.

However, the majority of countries use a combination of criteria. Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia combine criteria based on academic performance with those based on the type of study programme. Belgium, both French-speaking and Flemish communities, combines financial criteria related to the economic conditions of students with criteria linked to the field of study. Meanwhile, France combines financial criteria with academic performance. Cyprus and Spain combine financial

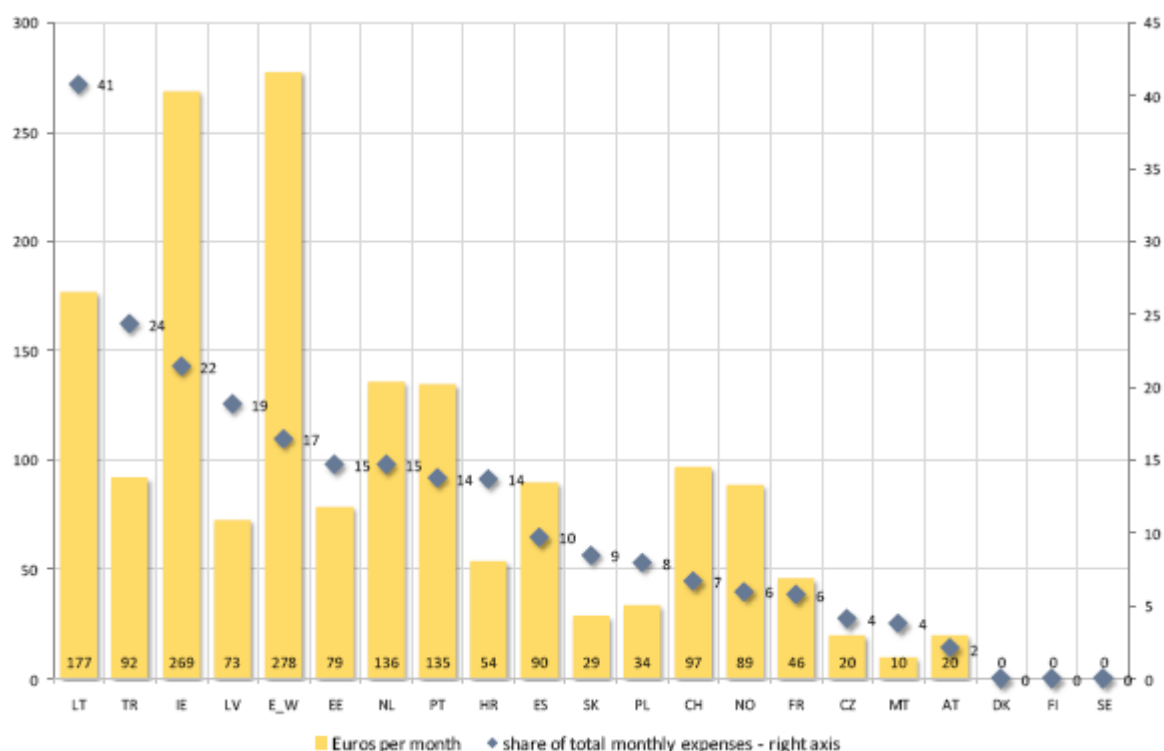
criteria both with academic performance and the type of study programme. In the case of Spain, however, the decision of whether or not a student pays fees is determined only by financial criteria related to the family. Other criteria are then used in relation to the amount of fees paid.

In the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia higher education institutions are free to set their own fees for programmes taught in a foreign language. However in all other cases, fees are limited to admission charges and to charges to students who extend the expected length of studies beyond more than an academic year. In Latvia, although fees are charged to a majority of students, fees per credit for programmes taught in a foreign language are generally higher than those for programmes taught in the national language.

The impact of fees upon individual students depends on a number of factors. The level of fees is a significant issue, although fee levels affect students differently according to their particular economic situation. Moreover public authorities are also able to alleviate the impact of fees through the design of the support systems.

Figure 4.18 shows that in the majority of Eurostudent countries that are charging fees for Bachelor students, the average fee is below €100 per month. High absolute amounts of fees are charged in England/Wales, Ireland, and Lithuania, where the monthly values range from over €170 to almost €280. In Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, Bachelor students study free of charge.

Figure 4.18: Monthly fees as a share of total monthly expenditure for bachelor students not living with parents



Source: Eurostudent

The relative meaning of fees expressed as share of students' total monthly expenditure varies greatly between the countries. Bachelor students have to dedicate less than 10% of total expenditure on fees in half of the countries.

In one group of countries – Ireland, Turkey, and Lithuania – the share of fees roughly ranges between 1/5 and 2/5 of the students' total monthly expenses. Along with accommodation costs, this, therefore, determines a large chunk of the students' budget.

Besides the 3 Scandinavian countries which waive fees completely, in 3 other countries – the Czech Republic, Malta, and Austria – the relative impact of fees is rather low (below 5% of monthly expenditure).

These country clusters do not, however, remain intact, when one further element of the design of fee schemes is taken into consideration. That is the question of how many students actually have to pay fees. In Italy, Turkey, Ireland, England/Wales, the Netherlands, Portugal, Croatia, the Slovak Republic, Switzerland, and France, at least 75% or more of the Bachelor students are subject to paying fees. In Italy, England/Wales, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Switzerland, it is practically 100%.

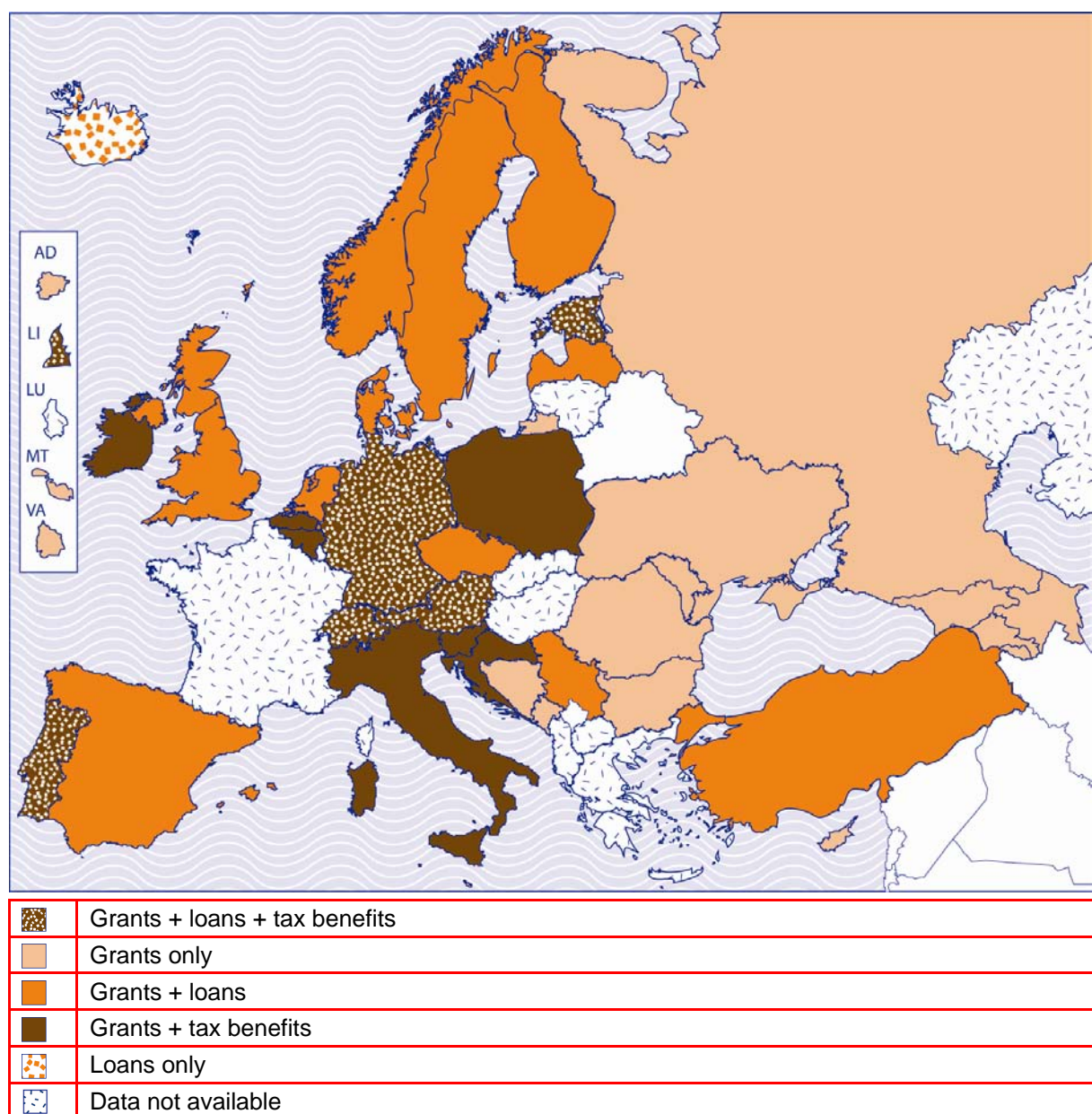
4.4.2. Student Income and Public Support

Fees should not be considered in isolation of information about student support and student income. Indeed it is only when information on fees and support is combined that an accurate picture of the national system can be ascertained from a student perspective.

Figure 4.19 shows the main forms of student support used across the EHEA. Here it is interesting to see that the main patterns of support indicate some significant geographical and cultural differences. 13 systems have grants as the main source of student support, and it is interesting that the great majority of these systems are located in Central and Eastern Europe. Loans are an important feature of support, but only in the case of Iceland are they the primary, exclusive form. More commonly they are found to operate in conjunction with grants, as is the case in 15 systems.

Support is not only channelled to students in the form of grants and loans, however. Tax benefits for parents also play a significant role in many countries. Indeed in 7 countries tax benefits for parents are combined with grants for students as the main form of support, while in a further 6 countries loans are also part of the combination.

Figure 4.19: Main forms of student support, 2010/2011¹⁸



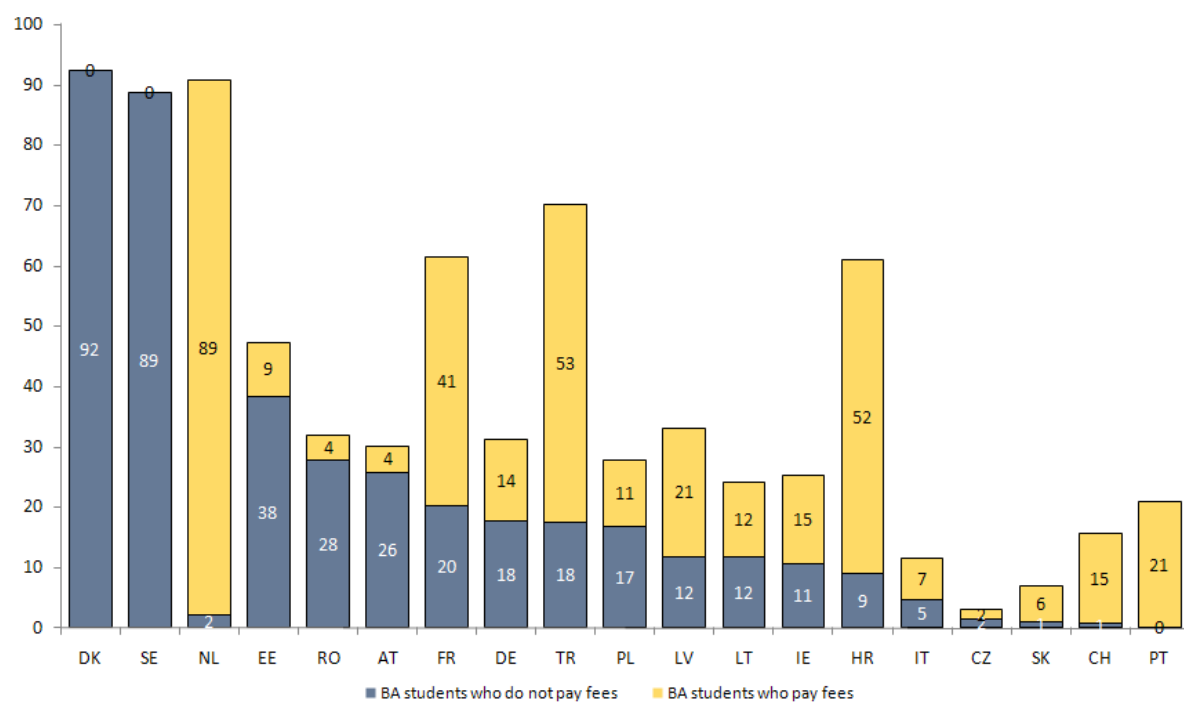
Source: BFUG questionnaire

Eurostudent information (Figures 4.20 and 4.21) enables a picture to emerge of how those in receipt of student support may or may not be affected by fees. Some noteworthy issues can be seen. Firstly it is striking that in a number of countries the likelihood of paying fees is not greatly affected by receiving public funding. This is the case in the Netherlands, France, Croatia, Germany, Latvia, Poland and Portugal, as well as in the Nordic countries that are not concerned by fees. However, in Estonia, Romania and Austria the fact of receiving public support greatly reduces the likelihood of paying fees. These findings should also be seen in relation to information from the BFUG questionnaire that shows

¹⁸ The figure will be updated soon

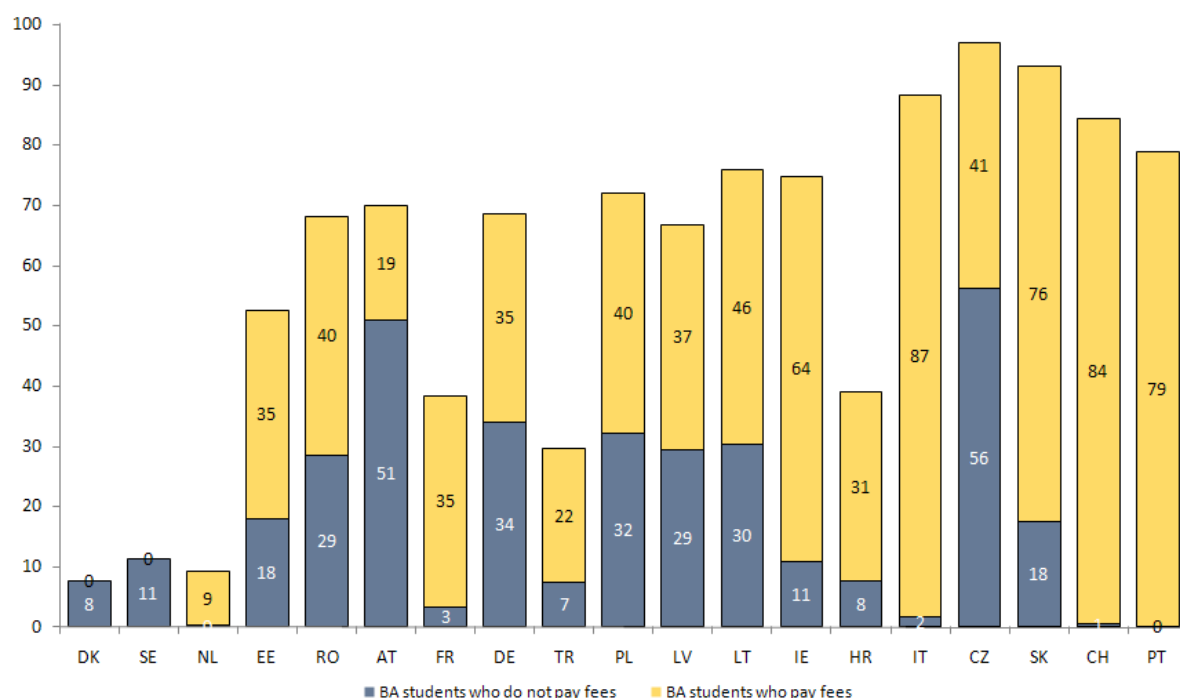
that in many countries the most significant criteria for distinguishing which students pay fees are the mode of study, type of study programme or field of study chosen rather than to social characteristics of the student population.

Figure 4.20: Percentage of fee-payers among recipients of public support



Source: Eurostudent

Figure 4.21: Percentage of fee-payers among non recipients of public support



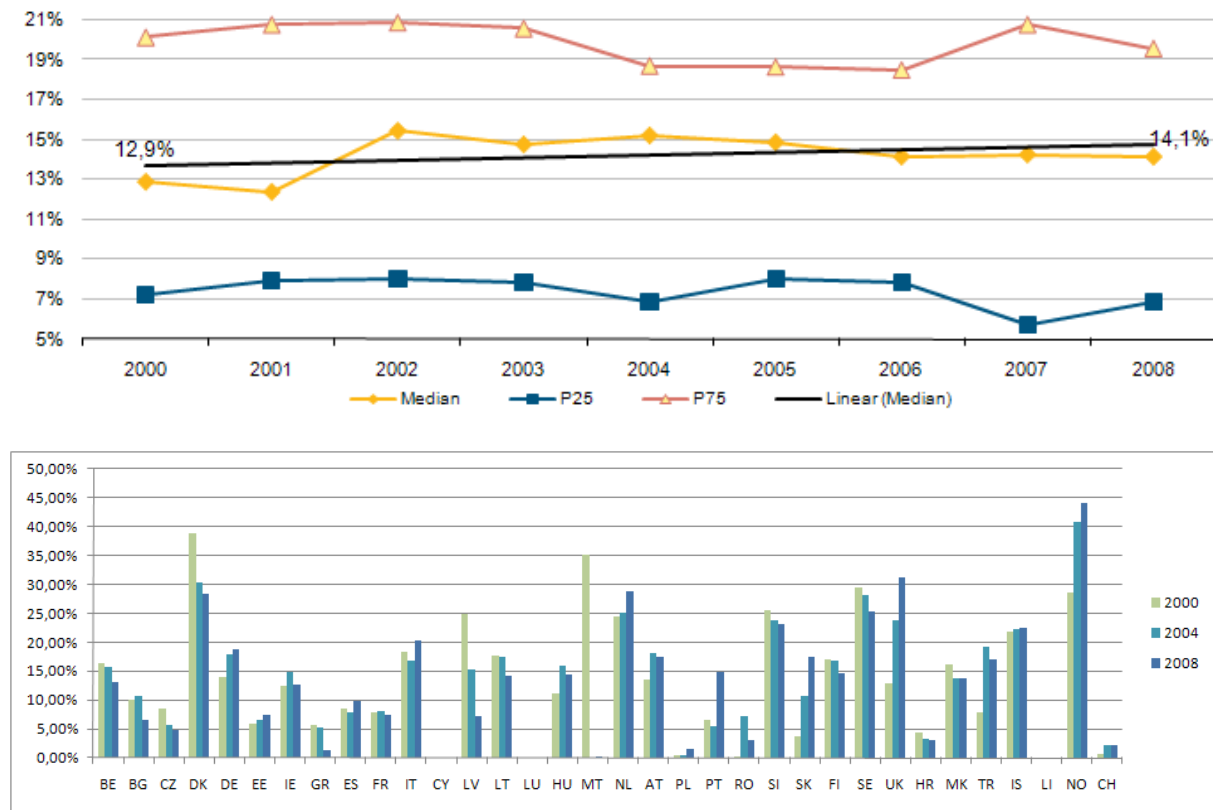
Source: Eurostudent

The quality and strength of the student support system is directly related to the amount of money made available through the public budget. Figure 4.22 presents the evolution of the student support budget between 2000 and 2008 showing the amount of money countries provide as public financial aid to students as a percentage of the overall higher education budget.

While the median level of investment in student support has increased slightly - from 12.9 % to 14.1 % – there are very divergent underlying patterns and realities within European countries. Overall, three relatively balanced groups of countries can be identified. There are those where a significant increase in the share of money allocated to the student financial system has taken place. This is the reality for Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Norway and Turkey.

The second group of countries is where the share of investment in financial aid has changed little between 2000 and 2008. This is the case for Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Finland and Iceland. There are also countries where a downward trend can be observed, such as Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden.

Figure 4.22: Support to students as a percentage of public expenditure on education



Source: Eurostat

Irrespective of these three national trends, however, very significant differences can be perceived in the percentage of the higher education budget devoted to student support. The percentage ranges from as high as 44% for Norway to as low as 1.5% for Poland. The countries that invest most – above 15% - as a percentage of the higher education budget on the student support system are Norway, the United Kingdom, Denmark and the Netherlands. The countries that invest least – less than 5 % - as a percentage of the higher education budget are Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Switzerland. While these figures also need to be considered in relation to the size of the overall higher education budget, it is clear that they signify major differences in student support across Europe.

Another aspect to be noted is the countries where changes have been significant. The United Kingdom stands out as the country with the most significant increase, moving from 12.9% in 2000 to more than 30 % by 2008. Norway, already starting at a high percentage of investment in 2000 (29%) also moved upwards by 15% to reach 44%. Denmark appears as a mirror image of Norway, starting at 39% in 2000 and ending at 28% in 2007. However, the most dramatic fall in financing is in Latvia – from 24.9% in 2000 to 5.1% in 2007. As Latvia was later to suffer the most severe higher education budget cuts as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis (see Chapter 2) this fall in student aid funding earlier in the decade is therefore highly significant. The Czech Republic, although cutting "only" 4.4% during the first 8 years of the decade did so from a low starting point of 8.6% in 2000. Thus in reality this fall is also highly significant, and likely to have made a major impact.

The information presented in this section therefore needs to be considered in relation to these levels of funding, and in relation to the question of how effectively efforts are made to target funding.

WHO RECEIVES FINANCIAL SUPPORT?

The philosophical question that underlies the choices made by countries is the nature of a fair system of student financial support. Clearly there are a number of aspects to be considered. Firstly, should available resources be spread as widely as possible, but with the general consequence of reducing the impact of such support? Or should a minority group or groups – however the criteria for membership are constituted - receive a more significant share of the resources? If it is decided that resources should be targeted to increase their impact, which students should qualify for support? In terms of the social dimension is it fairer and more effective to target support on the basis of financial need? Or to what extent should those who perform well in their studies be rewarded by financial support? Does such funding reinforce social inequity by rewarding students who are already socially advantaged at the expense of those who may have equal potential, but are unable to develop it through social and financial disadvantage? Whether as the result of implicit or explicit debate, national systems of student support all take position in relation to these questions.

Criteria for Awarding Grants

Denmark, Finland and Sweden have a system of universal grants for full-time students provided that certain basic requirements of study performance are met. Therefore in these countries no criteria are required. For all other countries the main question is whether grants are provided on the basis of financial need or academic performance, or a combination of these two main criteria.

The largest share of countries combine the two criteria, providing some grants on the basis of financial need and others on the basis of academic performance. Estonia combines criteria based on the course or field of study with merit.

A small group of countries, consisting of Belgium (French community), Ireland, Netherlands, Finland, the United Kingdom, Liechtenstein and Norway, provide grants on the basis of financial need only, although it may be a requirement that students progress in order to continue receiving grants.

Criteria for awarding loans

It is noticeable that whereas universal grants are available only in Denmark and Sweden, loans are available to all students in 12 national systems (Belgium (German Community), Denmark, Germany, France, Lithuania, Hungary, Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway), although in Hungary students over 40 are not eligible. In the case of France, very few students actually take out a student loan.

One significant difference between grants and loans is reflected in the finding that need-based criteria are relevant in nearly all national systems for grant allocation, but only considered in 2 national loan systems (Belgium (French-speaking Community) and Poland). Thus when finance is offered in the form of loans, and is to be paid back by students, it is generally more widely available to the student population.

Meanwhile in Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, the UK and Iceland eligibility for loans depends on criteria related to the particular type of study programme. In Spain, loans are limited to new second cycle master programmes, while in the UK the student loan system is designed for students in the first cycle.

In some countries (e.g. Estonia and Slovakia), only full time students are able to benefit from student loans.

Tax benefits and other support

Tax benefits and other financial allocations to parents of students can also play a significant role in a number of European countries. Such information does not, however, concern those students who are themselves parents.

Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia provide both tax benefits for parents, and other financial allocations to parents. In a further 7 countries Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Liechtenstein parents of students in higher education also receive tax benefits, but are not able to claim additional financial allocations. Thus in all these countries support to families rather than to individual students is a significant aspect of the system.

This contrasts with the picture in the remaining systems where there are neither tax benefits nor other financial entitlements for parents. In the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) this reality is clearly central to the cultural understanding of higher education as a provision for independent adult students.

However, the Nordic countries are by no means the only countries where there is no tax or financial benefits for parents. This is also the reality in two of the larger members of the EU (Spain and all parts of the UK) in a number of central and eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania) as well as in Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

Student Perceptions of Sufficiency of Funding

While countries may have their own system to provide different degrees of financial support to different students, students are in the best position to judge the sufficiency of the funding support that they receive. In this respect Eurostudent is able to highlight differences in perception.

Figure 4.23 shows the assessment of students who are not living with parents with a dependency upon a certain income source. Dependency means that the respective income source amounts to more than 50% of the students' total income. The focus of the analysis is on the 3 main components for funding of students: parental support, students' earnings from gainful employment and public support.

The average satisfaction figures for the different components already tell a story: Whilst on average 48% of students depending on parental support assess their financial situation as (very) satisfying, 47% of students dependent on paid employment and 37% of students with a dependency on state support do so. The same picture is drawn if the focus is set on the share of (very) dissatisfied students.

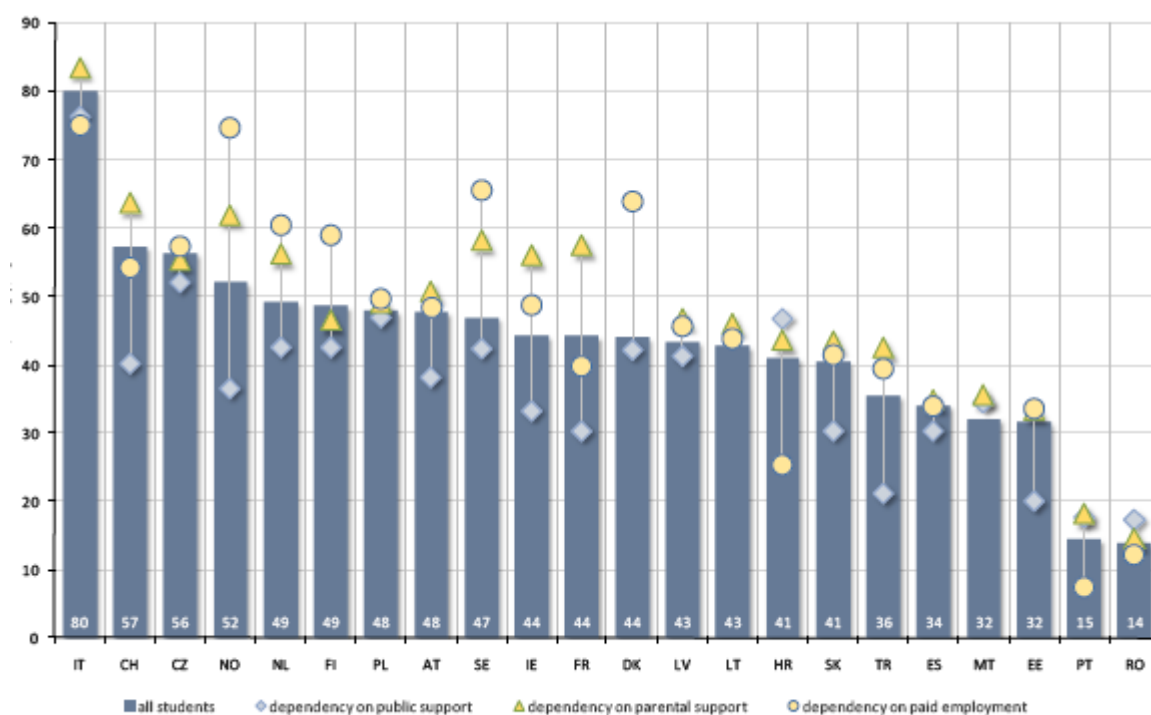
Concentrating on the highest shares of satisfaction by source, 3 country cluster become apparent: There are 9 countries where a majority of students who are depending on parental support are (very) satisfied with their financial situation: Italy, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, Ireland, and France.

Dependency on paid employment is considered by a majority of students as (very) satisfying in countries with older students, but not exclusively so; this refers to Italy, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Norway, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark.

When public support is the dominant source of income for students, only in Italy and the Czech Republic more than 50% of the depending students (strongly) agree that this income source provides sufficient means.

Figure 4.23: Students' assessment of sufficiency of funding to cover monthly costs by finance-related characteristics – students not living with parents

Students with a dependency on a specific income source with (strong) agreement in %



Source: Eurostudent

Conclusion

Starting from the analysis of statistical data on the participation of different societal groups in higher education, this chapter has examined the social dimension of higher education looking at policy approaches through which the EHEA countries address the under-representation.

Available data on higher education participation and attainment show that the goal of providing equal chances for all has not yet been achieved. This does not mean that no progress has been made, but it is rather that there are still areas where supplementary effort is needed. In particular, parental educational still strongly influences chances to achieve a higher education degree and, in many countries, the migratory also limits the odds to study at this educational level. Yet, a positive point is that almost all EHEA countries claim to work towards increasing and widening participation in higher education. Most of them address this issue through the combination of a general policy approach with measures targeting specific under-represented groups. Policy actions through which the under-representation is addressed take a variety of forms. They often include financial support measures, special admission regimes, outreach programmes as well as the provision of guidance and counselling services. However, the effect of these policy actions is not always monitored and even if the monitoring takes place, its impact on the policy development is not always visible.

Within their discussions on the social dimension of higher education, the ministers have agreed to pay particular attention to selected areas of action. Alternative access routes to higher education have been identified as one of these areas. According to the results of the BFUG reporting, alternative access to higher education, which most often takes form of the recognition of prior learning, currently exists in less than half of the Bologna countries. In the rest of the countries, access to higher education is conditioned by the possession of an upper secondary school-leaving certificate. From the geographical perspective, the countries of Western Europe are characterised by higher flexibility in terms of their entry qualification requirements than other EHEA countries. However, in order to accurately evaluate the situation of each country, it is necessary to take into account a range of factors, including the rate of early school leaving as well as the question of qualification outcomes of upper secondary education.

Another theme integrated in the discussions on the social dimension of higher education – the theme of student services - appears as a complex field characterised by heterogeneity of arrangements, both at national and cross-national levels. It is therefore difficult to provide a comprehensive picture of this area in a comparative international perspective. The information collected in the framework of the BFUG reporting indicates that in most EHEA countries, higher education institutions ensure provision of a relatively wide range of student services. Yet, the reporting does not allow to fully evaluate the extent to which these services are accessible to all students and the degree of their relevance with regard to different student needs.

Finally, the analysis looked at the main patterns of higher education funding systems, relating the most important elements of national fee systems with student support. The objective was to examine whether funding systems are being oriented to support and stimulate the social dimension policy objective of widening participation. The results indicate that the diversity of fees and support systems is the most striking characteristics of higher education systems across the EHEA. The realities vary from situations where no students pay fees to situations where all students pay fees, and from

situations where all students receive support to those where few receive support. Moreover, the levels of fees and support are also extremely diverse across different countries. Although the analysis does not provide a complete picture on this complex topic, it is evident that the way higher education funding systems are structured is likely to be having a significant impact on the social dimension of higher education.

Overall, the chapter shows that in many EHEA countries, there are already measures in place to address the under-representation of particular societal groups in higher education. The question however remains as to whether national higher education policy gives sufficient priority to these issues, and to what degree policy is responsive to the results achieved by particular measures.

5. EFFECTIVE OUTCOMES AND EMPLOYABILITY

Introduction

This chapter discusses data and policies on effective outcomes in higher education. The concept of effective outcomes can be measured through analysis of two main factors: first, higher education attainment and completion rates and second, the labour market prospects of graduates (Eurostat & Eurostudent, 2009). This latter is usually grasped by the concept of "employability".

The Bologna context

Within the Bologna Process, employability is understood as "the ability to gain initial employment, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market" (The official Bologna Process website, 2011). In this context, the role of higher education is "to equip students with skills and attributes (knowledge, attitudes and behaviours) that individuals need in the workplace and that employers require, and to ensure that people have the opportunities to maintain or renew those skills and attributes throughout their working lives" (The official Bologna Process website, 2011).

The London Communiqué in 2007 identified employability as one of the priorities until the next ministerial conference in 2009. The Communiqué asked the BFUG to consider how to improve employability in relation to the different cycles and in the context of lifelong learning (London Communiqué, 2007). The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué in 2009 further strengthened this priority emphasising the need for a "close cooperation between governments, higher education institutions, social partners and students" in "maintaining and renewing a skilled workforce" (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009). This Communiqué emphasised that higher education institutions should be more responsive to employers' needs, and also highlighted the importance of work placements and on-the-job training. The objective of enhancing employability was also underlined by the Budapest-Vienna Declaration (2010).

Chapter outline

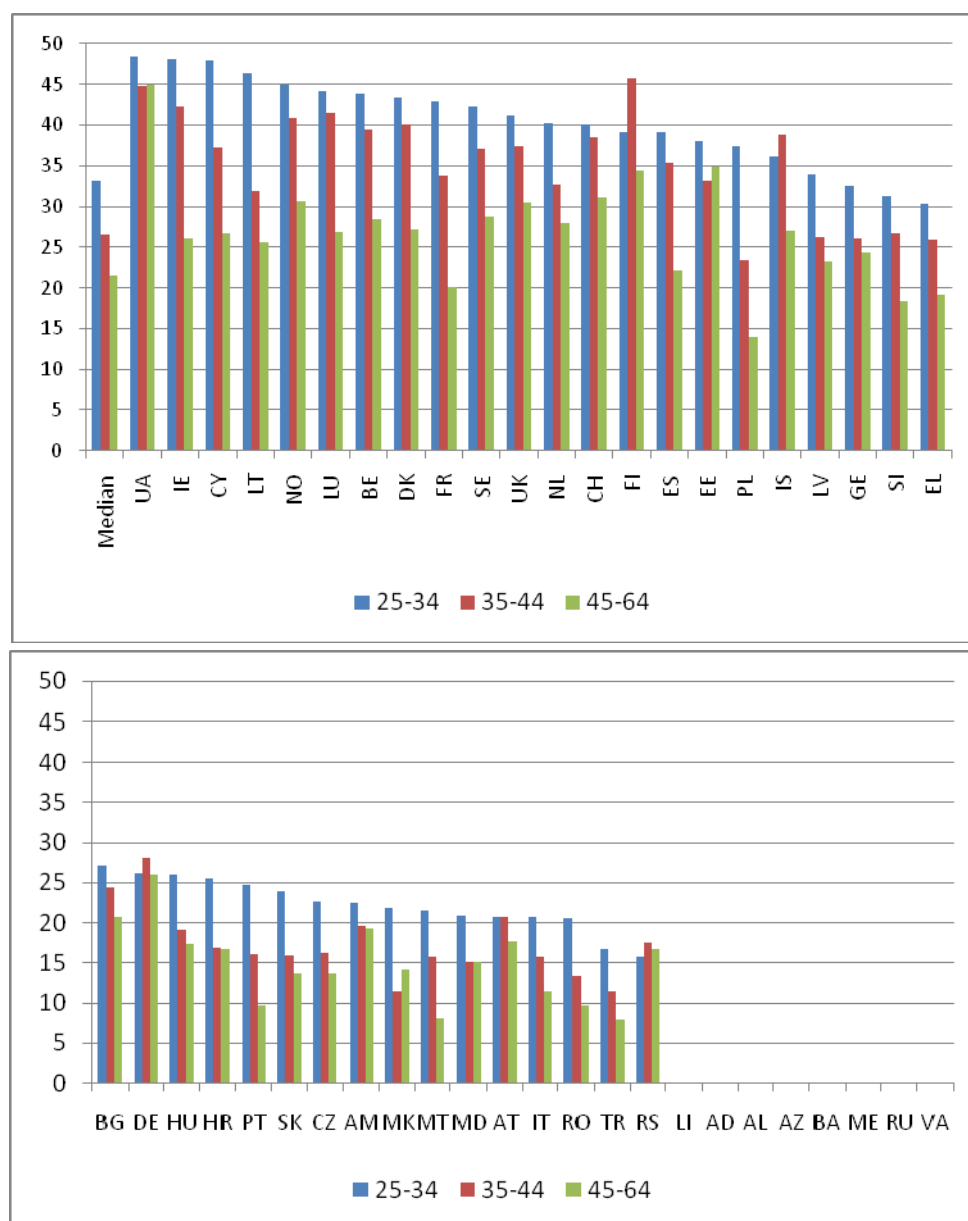
The structure of this chapter is the following. First, it looks at the main output of the higher education system: the number of tertiary education graduates. In doing so, the chapter compares tertiary education attainment levels across the EHEA region. In addition, it presents information on higher education completion as well as on national policies for improving the current situation. The chapter then turns to data relevant for assessing the labour market prospects of graduates. Keeping in mind the conceptual limitations of measuring employability, the chapter first looks at unemployment rates of higher education graduates in comparison to those with lower levels of education. Furthermore, the chapter examines the annual gross income of workers by education attainment in order to evaluate the private returns of obtaining a higher education qualification. Finally, in order to complete the picture of graduates' employment prospects, the chapter discusses qualification mismatches.

5.1. Higher education output: higher education attainment levels

An important indicator of higher education output is the share of the population having obtained a higher education qualification. Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of persons with higher education across the EHEA. In general, attainment levels are higher in younger age groups. The Bologna median value for the 25-34 age group is 33.2 %, while it is 26.5 % for the 35-44 year olds and 21.5 % for the 45-64 age group. This indicates that an increasing percentage of the population is getting a higher education degree. There are exceptions to this rule, however. In Germany, Finland, Iceland and Serbia, there are more people with a higher education qualification among the 35-44 year olds than within the younger, 25-34 age group.

Among the 25-34 year olds, higher education attainment is the highest in the Ukraine (48.4 %), Ireland (48.2 %) and Cyprus (47.9 %); and the lowest in Turkey (16.8 %) and Serbia (15.7 %). Within the 35-44 age group, the percentage of persons with tertiary education is the highest in Finland (45.6 %), the Ukraine and Ireland; and the lowest in the FYROM (11.5 %) and Turkey (11.4 %). Finally, within the oldest, 45-64 age group, it is the Ukraine, Estonia and Finland with the highest higher education attainment levels, and Malta and Turkey with the lowest ones.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of persons with higher education (ISCED 5 and 6), by age group, 2010



Notes: Data for the Ukraine refer to 2009.
Data for Malta and Croatia lack reliability due to small sample size.

Source: Source: Eurostat, EU-Labour Force Survey

Regarding the gender balance, Chapter 4 showed that more women than men finish higher education. Moreover, the chances of men to achieve tertiary education attainment have been decreasing compared to their female counterparts (see Figure 4.4).

5.2. Completion rates and policies for improvement

Another indicator of higher education output is higher education completion, that is, whether students who enter higher education actually finish it. In the past decade, concerns over the level of completion

rates have increased in a number of Bologna countries. They are linked to a series of other developments like an increased focus on accountability as well as the need for greater efficiency in resource allocation and spending. It is also closely linked to the issue of equitable access to higher education, as non-completion affects a high number of disadvantaged students.

Non-completion in higher education can be influenced by a number of factors related to the higher education institution and the individual student. They can range from inability to cope with the demands of the programme, the wrong choice of courses, the poor quality of student experience to dissatisfaction with aspects of institutional provision (Yorke & Longden, 2004, 2008). Often various factors act in combination.

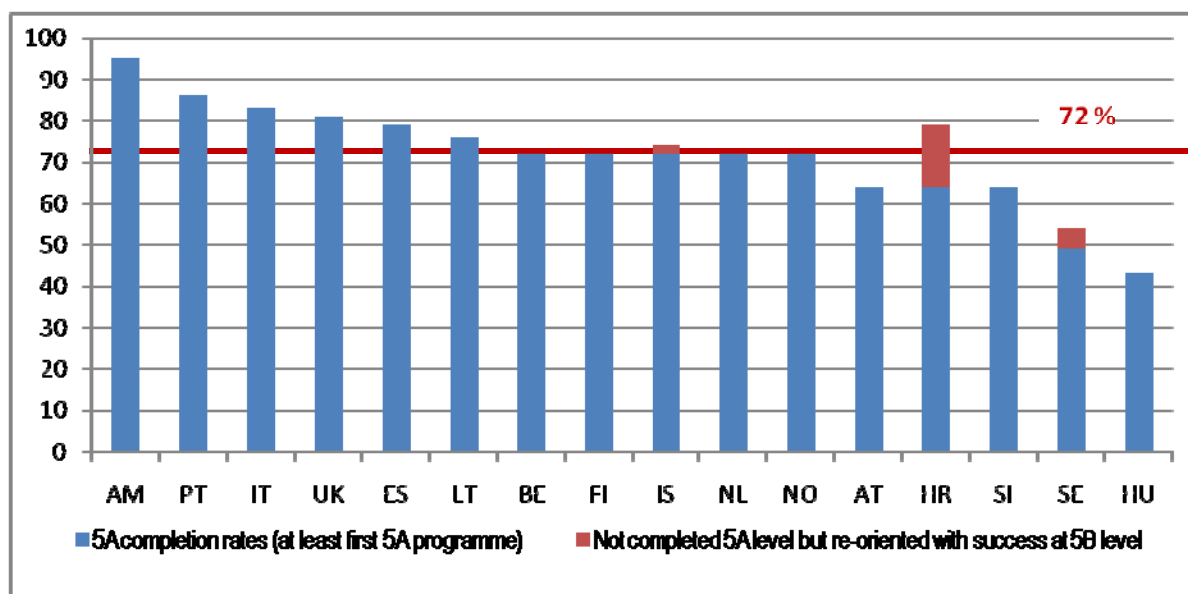
This section discusses the current situation regarding non-completion in countries of the EHEA region, and examines national policy approaches aiming to improve the effective outcomes of higher education systems. Because data on actual completion rates are available only for a small number of countries (sixteen), the difference between entry rates and graduation rates is also used as auxiliary information. Policy approaches are presented at the end of this section.

5.2.1. Completion rates

Completion rates show the percentage of higher education entrants who have successfully completed at least a first programme at ISCED 5A level. This indicator measures how effective the higher education system is in turning entrants into successful graduates. Completion rates are calculated based on two main methods. First, in some countries, higher education entrants of a given year are followed until all have dropped out or graduated (Eurostat & Eurostudent 2009, p. 122). Second, in other countries, the number of graduates in a given year is divided by the number of new entrants in the appropriate number of years before (Ibid., p. 123).

Completion data is available in sixteen countries of the EHEA region. For these countries, the median completion rate is 72 %. As Figure 5.2 shows, the completion rate is the highest in Armenia (95 %). More than 60 % of higher education entrants are graduating in almost all countries, with two exceptions. These two countries with the lowest completion rate are Hungary (43 %) and Sweden (49 %); in Sweden, however, another 5 % of entrants are successfully reoriented towards an ISCED 5B level programme. Reorientation is quite considerable also in Croatia: in this country, above the 64 % completion rate, 15 % of higher education entrants are successfully reoriented to ISCED 5B level.

Figure 5.2: Completion rates (%), 2009



Notes: Cross-section cohort: PT, UK, LT, BE, NO, AT, HU; True cohort: IT, ES, FI, IS, NL, HR, SE; Method unknown: AM, SI

Belgium: Data on entrants only concern data for students who have entered higher education for the first time in the Flemish Community (either in a professional bachelor or a academic bachelor) and who are still registered on 1 February 2006. The graduate data refers to bachelor degrees only. In the earlier data collections on survival rate / drop out another methodology was used. This change is mainly based on the implementation of the BA/MA structure. Due to this the bachelor degrees are considered as first degree and the master degrees are considered as second or further degrees. Any comparison between this year's data and that of previous years should be avoided. No data for social advancement education, royal military school, open university, etc ... were included.

Italy: Due to relevant changes that occurred in the structure of the tertiary system in the last years this indicator is not suitable for Italy.

Hungary: 2003/2004 for university students and 2005/2006 for college students. Number of foreign students is estimated. It contains the number of foreign students from total of graduated.

Netherlands: Refers to First time ISCED 5A graduation- 1st and 2nd degree (unduplicated).

Slovenia: Academic year 2001/2002.

Finland: Data are based on the true cohort method. The number of entrants and graduates are based on individual-based register data of Statistics Finland which covers almost 100 % of the entrants and graduates in Finland. Only negligible amount of persons (those who do not have a personal identity number) are excluded from the coverage of the true cohort data. The graduate number represents the number of graduated persons of those who started their studies in 1995 by the end of the year 2005. This represents the graduation of those who started their studies in 1995 during 10 years of studies. Polytechnic programmes for adults are excluded from entrant and graduate data for completion rates.

Iceland: Graduates 1999-2008.

Norway: Academic year 1997/98.

Croatia: The total includes only national students.

Source: Eurostat

5.2.2. Entry and graduation rates

Net entry rates and net graduation rates are available for more countries. Comparing these ratios can also be used as auxiliary information to assess educational outcomes. The net entry and graduation rates were computed as the sum of the entry rates and graduation rates, respectively, by single year of age, through every single age. The entry and graduation rates for a particular year of age, or an age range, are the ratio between the number of new entrants and graduates (first degree in the education level), respectively, of that age by the population size of the same age. The indicators were computed as the sum of net entry rates for single ages from 14 to 29 years and for the age groups 30-34 years, 35-39 years and 40 years and over. For new entrants and graduates where data are only available by age group (e.g. 30-34, 35-39), the entry and graduation rates are multiplied by the number of years covered by the age group before being added to the other single-age entry rates. As regards the age group "40 and over", the denominator is the 35-39 age group, and the result is also multiplied by 5 before adding up.

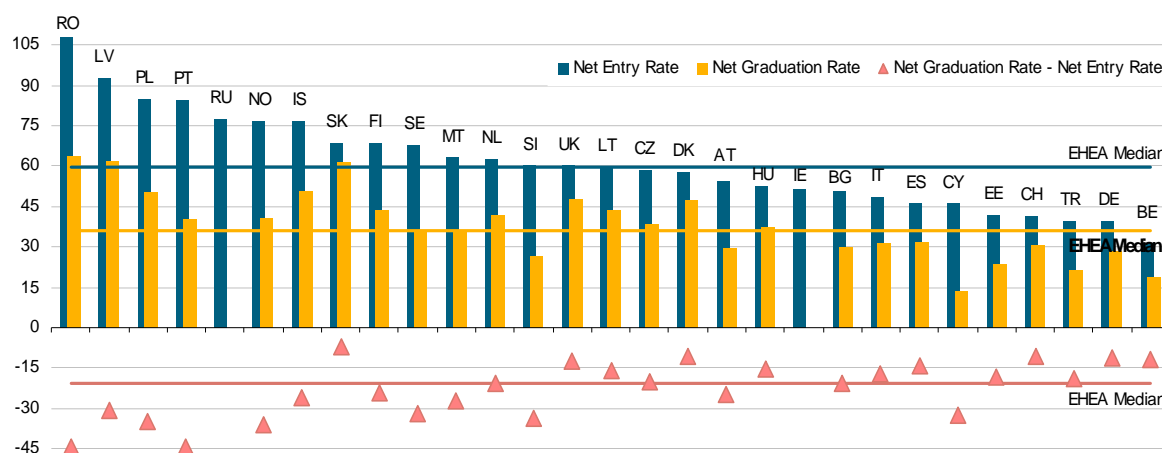
Figure 5.3 and 5.4 show net entry rates and net graduation rates as well as the difference between these two indicators at ISCED level 5A and 5B for the 2008/2009 academic year. In this academic year, the net entry rate was more than 60 % in half of the EHEA countries at ISCED level 5A, while the median net graduation rate was 36.2 %. The difference between the two indicators was more than 20.8 percentage points in half of the countries. The respective median levels at ISCED level 5B were 18.5 % (net entry rate), 8.5 % (net graduation rate) and 8 percentage points (difference).

The highest net entry rates in the EHEA region at ISCED level 5A for the 2008 / 2009 academic year were observed in Romania, Latvia, Poland and Portugal, all countries having more than 80% of net entry rate.

The same countries were also amongst those with the highest differences between the net entry rate and the net graduation rate. Romania and Portugal had both a difference around 45 percentage points between the entry rate and the graduation rate. However, these large differences do not necessarily signal a large drop-out rate in these countries. In fact, as can be seen in Figure 5.2, the completion rate in Portugal is the second highest amongst the countries for which data is available. There is a time lag between entrance in higher education and graduation. In these two countries the net entry rate was increasing consistently (from 44 % in 2002 to 108 % in 2009 for Romania and from 53 % in 2006 to 84 % in 2009 for Portugal), and it takes some years for this increase in the entry rates to be reflected in the graduation rates.¹

¹ The large increase of the entry rates in Romania also explains its net entry rate of more than 100%. The net entry rate is a good approximation to the probability of entering in higher education when the entry levels are relatively stable over time. However, when they increase significantly – as they have in Romania – the large number of late entrants, who did not enter in the previous years, increase the net entry rate.

Figure 5.3: Net entry rate and net graduation rate, ISCED level 5A (%), academic year 2008 / 2009

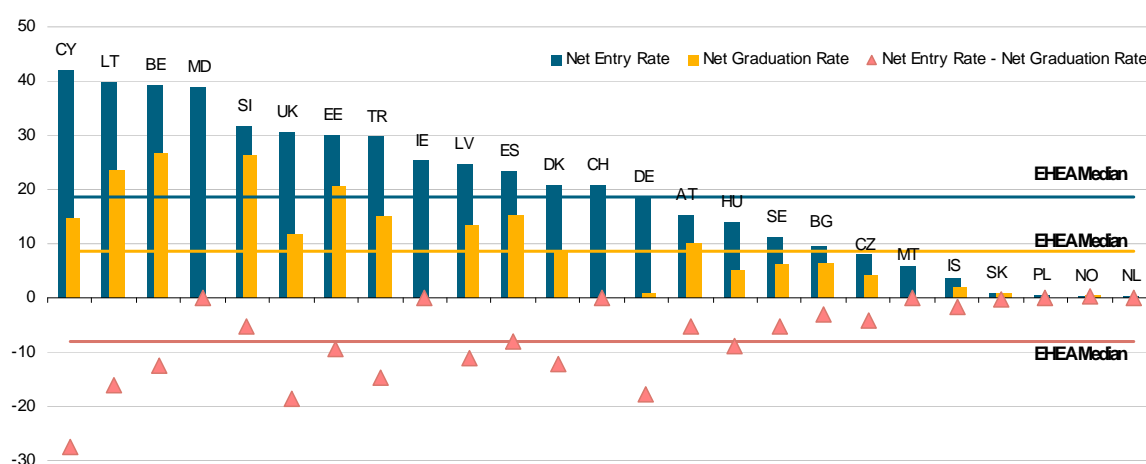


Source: Eurostat, UOE

The country with the lowest gap between the net entry rate and the net graduation rate at ISCED level 5A was Slovakia, which with an entry rate slightly over the median had one of the highest graduation rates.

At ISCED level 5B, the countries with the largest gap between net entry rates and net graduation rates were Germany, Cyprus and the United Kingdom.

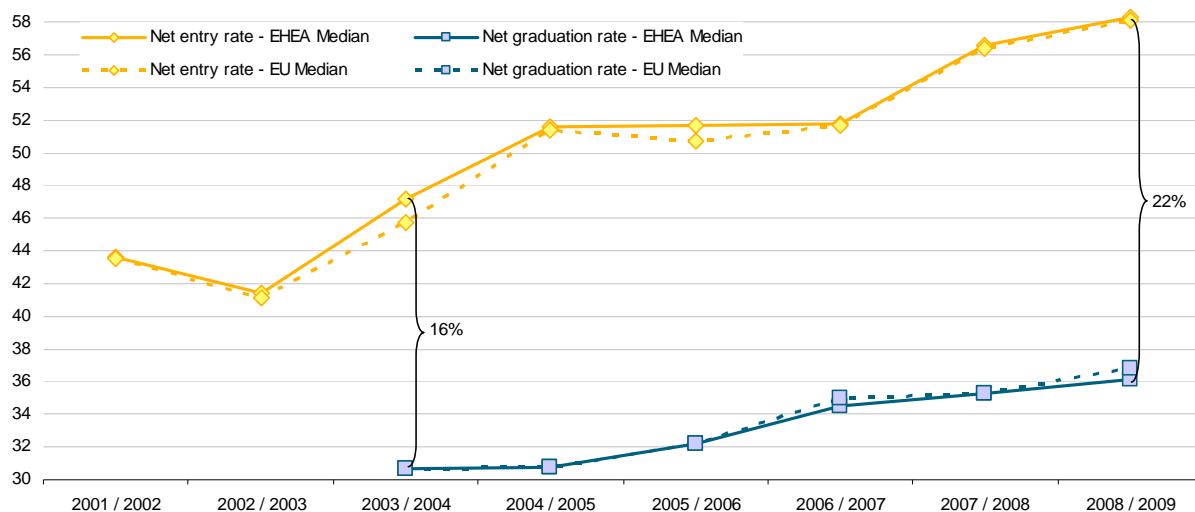
Figure 5.4: Net entry rate and net graduation rate, ISCED level 5B (%), academic year 2008 / 2009



Source: Eurostat, UOE

Figure 5.5 depicts the median net entry rate and the median net graduation rate at ISCED level 5A by academic year, from 2001 / 2002 to 2008 / 2009. The median net entry rate at ISCED level 5A increased significantly in the EHEA for most of the first decade of the 21st century, from around 44 % to around 58 %. The median net graduation rate at ISCED level 5A also increased between the academic years 2003 / 2004 and 2008 / 2009, although at a slightly lower pace, from around 30 % to around 36 %. As a result, the gap between the median entry rate and the median graduation rate at ISCED level 5A has increased from 16 percentage points to 22 percentage points.

Figure 5.5: Net entry rate and net graduation rate, ISCED level 5A (%), by academic year



Notes: Net entry rate median excludes AL, AD, AM, AZ, BA, HR, MK, GE, VA, KZ, LI, LU, ME, MD, RS and UA.
Net graduation rate median excludes AL, AD, AM, AZ, BA, FR, GE, VA, IE, KZ, LU, ME, MD, RS and UA.

Source: Eurostat, UOE

5.2.3. Policies for improving completion rates

Although the majority of the Bologna countries claim to have put in place policies to increase the level of completion of studies, there is a great variety in the scope and content of enacted measures.

Most commonly, countries report that a number of broad policy measures, although not directly targeting the increase of completion rates, are expected to contribute to the improvement of these rates. Measures that aim to promote flexible learning paths, improve student support, recognise periods of study in another higher education institution, including abroad, increase the quality of teaching and others can positively affect completion rates. The implementation of the Bologna reforms with the two-cycle study structure and introduction of ECTS has also improved the situation, as there are now fewer students leaving their institution without having obtained a higher education qualification.

A minority of countries (Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom (Scotland)) have adopted comprehensive national strategies that address a range of factors for non-completion. Such strategies combine initiatives at both national and institutional level and include incentives for institutions and students. Furthermore, these measures are supplemented by well developed monitoring mechanisms.

Initiatives focus on the financing of institutions and the organisation of studies. They can include a funding formula that take into account whether students have completed a Bachelor or Master programme within the prescribed study period. Moreover institutions can be required to follow-up on students that are at risk of drop out, to strengthen study guidance, student advising and flexible learning paths. In addition, data on completion rates is included in the annual reports of institutions to the Ministry and is used to calculate the public grant for the following year.

The student support system can also have arrangements that support and encourage the timely and successful completion of studies.

Some countries report that they implement several of the above types of policy measure. Others (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Portugal, Turkey) focus on a single measure such as facilitating the transfer between programmes, repeating a course, or being able to return to higher education.

Incentives for higher education institutions

In order to encourage higher education institutions to work towards increasing completion rates, governments use a variety of steering mechanisms. Incentives for higher education institutions to improve student completion rates are usually financial in nature. Moreover, data on completion rates can also be taken into account in external evaluations, internal quality assurance and the general monitoring of the sector.

In a minority of countries (Austria, Belgium (French Community), the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Finland, Italy, Iceland, the United Kingdom (Scotland)), public budget allocations depend in part on student completion rates. Numbers of completed credit points, student participation rates in examinations and statistics of awarded degrees are included in the funding formulas and/or dedicated funds.

Financial incentives to improve completion rates can target both institutions and individual students. HEIs can receive funding per student and per credit that students achieve. Therefore, there is an interest from the HEIs' side to support students in advancing through their studies. Student grant and loan systems can also be linked to how many credits the student achieves every year.

Quality assurance measures

In a minority of countries, completion rates are also considered as one of the criteria in external quality assurance procedures (Albania, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Luxembourg, Italy, Poland, the United Kingdom (Scotland)) and in the accreditation of programmes (Moldova, the United Kingdom (Scotland)).

Academic and personal support to students

Factors such as the wrong choice of course or subject, poor preparation and lack of readiness and commitment are commonly stated reasons for non-completion of studies. However, in a number of countries, academic guidance services, career guidance services, mentoring and psychological counselling are commonly provided (see Chapter on Social Dimension).

Recognising the fact that experience during the first year of higher education has a great impact on student completion rates, several countries have put in place special measures that concentrate on

pre-admission and first year counselling and support. In some cases, these measures are specifically targeting socially disadvantaged groups or students in specific academic fields.

In France, the Plan for "Success in Bachelor's programmes" aims to raise the graduation rate from Bachelor programmes to 50 per cent by 2012. Active guidance aims to address the difficulties that some students might have in accessing relevant information.

In the United Kingdom (England), institutions are encouraged to provide clear, comparable information about their courses and thus help students to make better informed choices, which should help reduce the number who 'drop out' because they have chosen the wrong course or did not realise what higher education would entail.

In Ireland, the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 recommends the inclusion of induction and preparation programmes in the first-year curriculum, as well as more broad-based courses with more interdisciplinary learning opportunities. In addition, specific measures are implemented to improve progression levels in ICT/technology disciplines.

Monitoring of completion rates

Designing and implementing effective policies on completion rates needs to be supported by well-developed monitoring and reporting at both national and institutional levels.

All countries, except Georgia, Ireland and Turkey, report that completion rates are monitored at national and/or institutional levels. Data is used for the preparation of annual statistical reports, efficiency analyses, admission planning and dialogues with the stakeholders.

Completion rates are often considered important for the reputation of the individual HEI and the publication of data at institutional level can offer an incentive to improve completion rates. This is a practice reported by France, England and Switzerland.

In a minority of countries completion rates are used as one of the indicators in the framework of accountability requirements. In Denmark, each higher education institution has set a goal for completion rates in a contract with the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation or the Ministry of Education which is supervised based on the data for student completion rates.

A recent retention project in the United Kingdom (Scotland) shows that all institutions have developed sophisticated information management systems which enable them to monitor, collect and analyse data on student retention. They have also developed very good reporting mechanisms and are able to integrate reporting on retention into their senior management and academic quality processes.

Countries also report that information on completion is used to inform policy and funding priorities. However, concrete examples of reports and analyses and the way they have impacted policy formulation are rare.

In Ireland, a study of Progression in Irish Higher Education was undertaken by the HEA in 2010 and presents empirical evidence relating to the issue of progression through higher education. The report is intended as a reference document that will serve to inform policy and the development of interventions to improve rates of completion and graduation².

² See: <http://www.heai.ie/en/node/1386>

In the United Kingdom (Scotland), a new policy on targeted funding has been developed as a result of the analysis of previous results. All institutions will continue to receive funding aimed at improving retention but those institutions which recruit large numbers of students from the most deprived neighbourhoods will receive additional funding and will be asked to complete Outcome agreements, showing how they intend to use the funding and the retention outcomes they would anticipate that the funding will then achieve.

To sum up, it appears that in the EHEA a common understanding of the coverage and elements of completion policies has yet to emerge. Across countries policy approaches range from systematic and coherent efforts to address the issue to isolated, small scale projects, or the absence of any type of targeted measures. An important reason for the differences in approaches could be the level of public and government concerns over the issue and the related actual situation (see sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2).

5.3. Graduates on the labour market: unemployment rates

This section analyses graduates' labour market situation in the Bologna countries. One aspect of employability is tertiary education graduates' ability to gain initial employment. In this respect, looking at the unemployment rates of tertiary education graduates is a good starting point, since these ratios can give indications about the labour market prospects of educated young people.

However, employment and unemployment do not only depend on the quality of education young people receive. Changes in the general state of the economy and the labour market are the most important determinants of job opportunities. In addition, not all graduates who received the same education have similar labour market opportunities, for example due to discriminatory practices on grounds of gender, race, disability, etc. This latter problem is often overlooked by employability discussions (Morley, 2001). These issues highlight the difficulties of trying to measure the contribution of higher education institutions in raising graduates' employment prospects (see also Little, 2001). Nevertheless, unemployment rates provide valuable information on the relative value of tertiary education degrees in different economic environments.

Besides these conceptual problems, data availability also poses limitations to analysing the employability of graduates. For example, despite the fact that the employability of bachelor graduates is of concern in some countries, it is not possible to analyse the employability of first- and second-cycle graduates separately due to data unavailability.

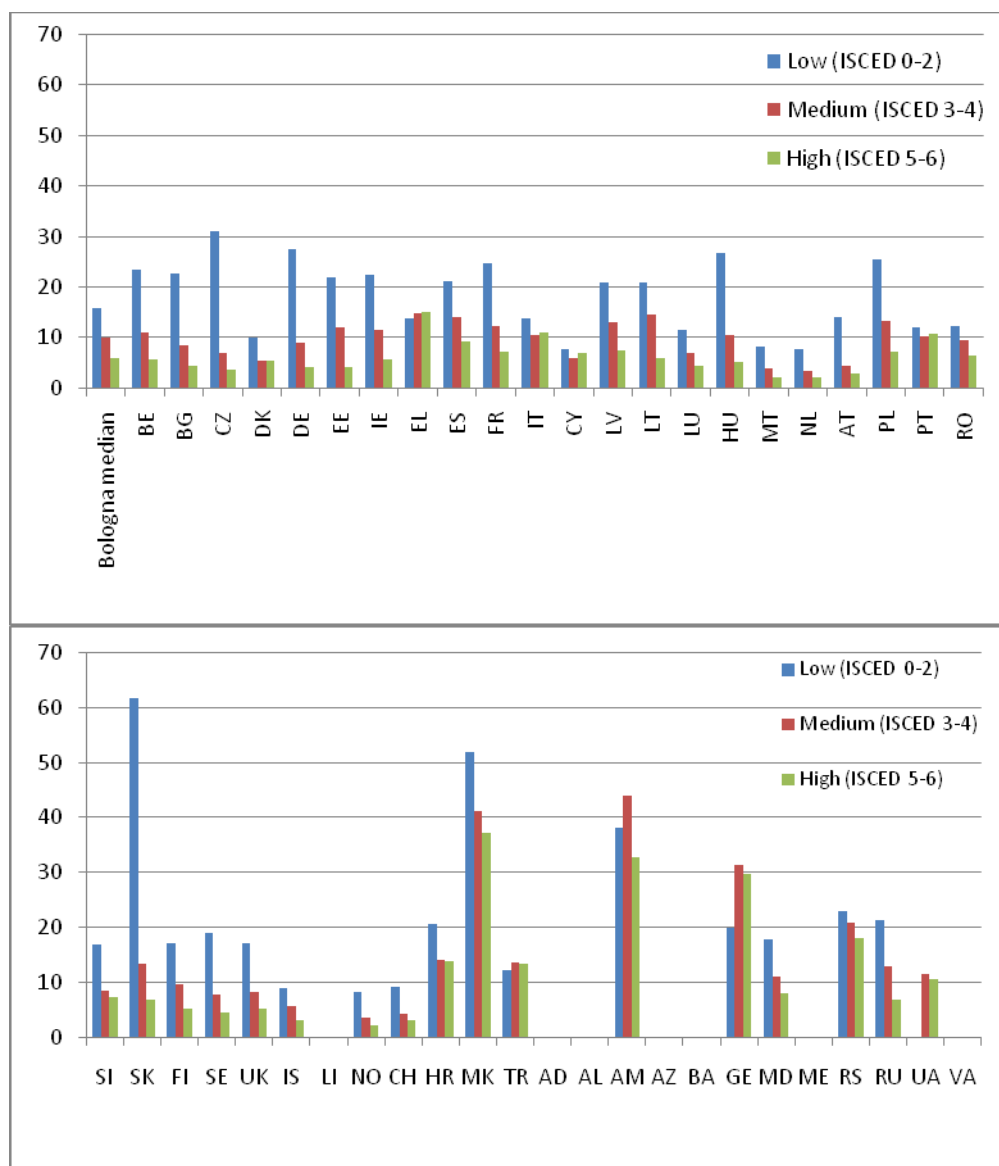
Figure 5.6 shows the unemployment ratio of people aged 20-34 by educational attainment level. Due to the small size of yearly samples, only the average of the years 2006-2010 can be presented. This does not make it possible to analyse the employment prospects of graduates in light of recent economic changes.

On average, the higher the level of education, the lower the unemployment ratio of young people is. In half of the Bologna countries, the unemployment rate of young people with low educational attainment (ISCED 0-2) is higher than 16 %. This median ratio is 10 % for the medium educated (ISCED 3-4) and only 6 % for young people with a tertiary qualification (ISCED 5-6).

The biggest gap between the unemployment rates of young people with low and high educational attainment is in the Czech Republic (31 % vs. 4 %) and Slovakia (62 % vs. 7 %), followed by Germany

(28 % vs. 4 %). Countries where there is practically no difference between unemployment rates for the low and high skilled are Cyprus, Portugal, Greece and Turkey. Interestingly, in the latter two countries, the unemployment ratio of highly educated young people is even higher than that of the low educated. This is also the case in Georgia, to a much greater extent (the unemployment rate is 20% for the low educated, 31% for the medium educated and 30% for the highly educated).

Figure 5.6: Unemployment ratio of people aged 20-34 by educational attainment level (%), average 2006-2010



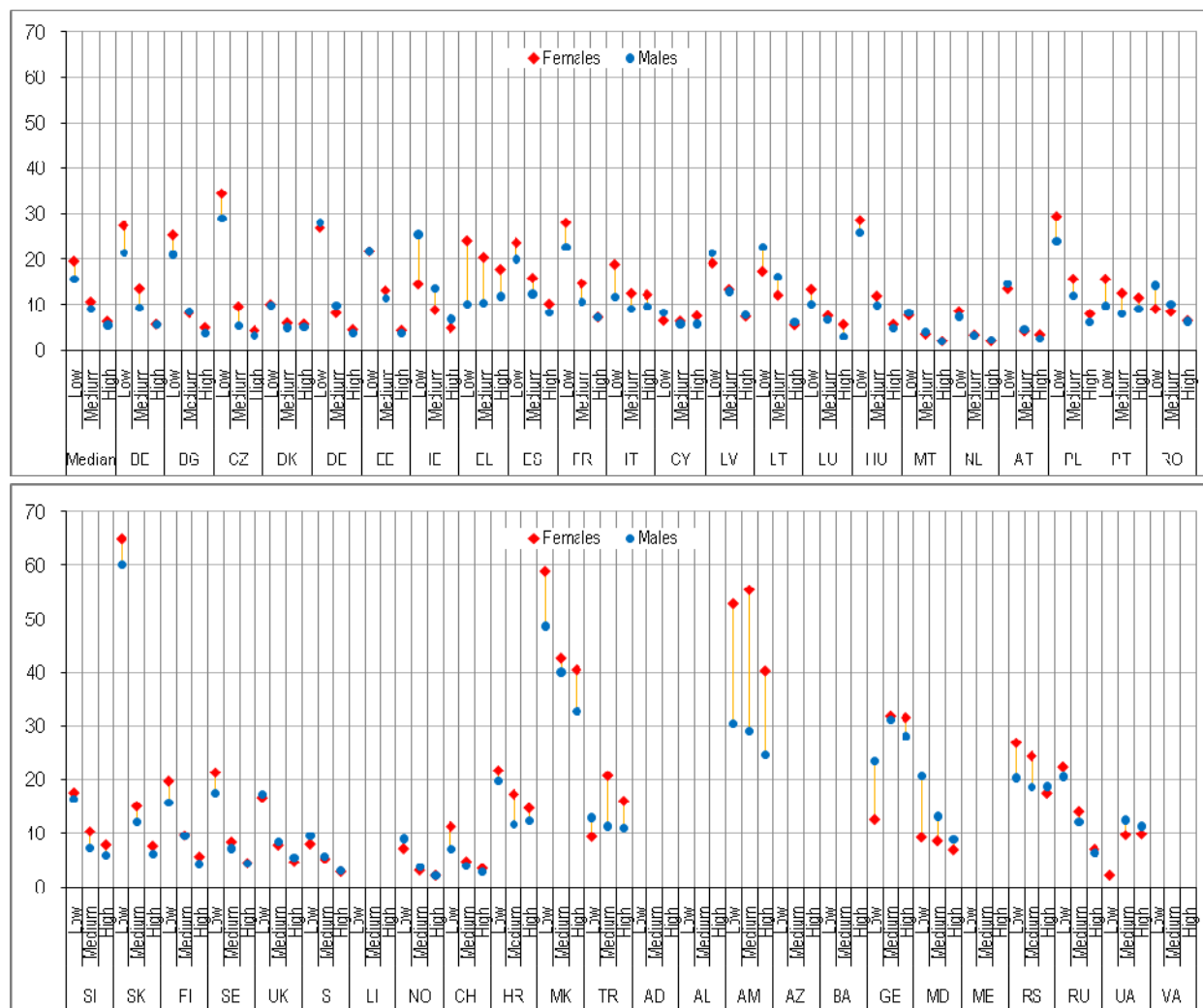
Notes: Data refers to 2010 in Georgia and Ukraine. For this reason, the Bologna median does not include these two countries.

Data lack reliability due to small sample size in BG, DK, EE, CY, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, AT, SI, IS, NO and HR.

Source: Eurostat

Nevertheless, as Figure 5.7 shows, the picture can be different for women and men. In the case of Greece and Turkey, for example, where there are no big differences among the unemployment rates of people with different educational backgrounds, differences exist in the case of women. In both countries, the unemployment ratio for women is higher than that of men. However, in Greece, obtaining a higher qualification reduces the probability of unemployment for women (the female unemployment rate of low educated women is 24 % vs. the 18 % of the highly educated). In Turkey, it is medium educated women who are in the worst situation in terms of unemployment prospects, while the unemployment rate is the lowest for women with low educational background.

Figure 5.7: Unemployment ratio of people aged 20-34 by educational attainment level and by sex (%), average 2006-2010



Notes: Data refers to 2010 in Georgia and Ukraine. For this reason, the Bologna median does not include these two countries.
Data lack reliability due to small sample size in BG, DK, EE, CY, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, AT, SI, IS, NO and HR.
Breakdowns by gender lack reliability for the same reason in IE, CZ, SK, CH and MK.

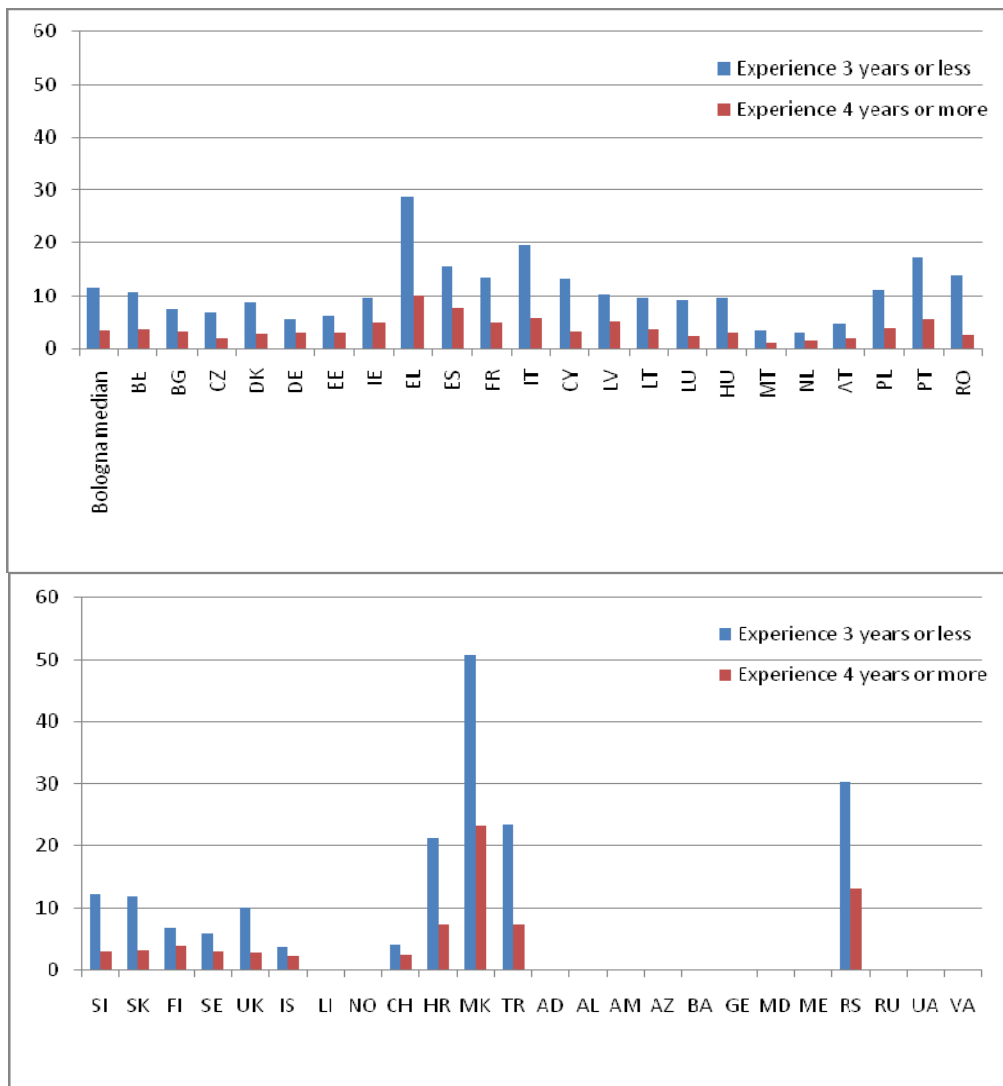
Source: Eurostat

In general, the higher the level of education, the smaller the gender differences are. While the median unemployment rate is the same for highly educated women and men in the EHEA region, it is 1.17 more for women than for men among the medium educated (11 % vs. 9 %) and 1.25 more for women among the low educated (20 % vs. 16 %). So on average, obtaining a higher qualification improves women's employment prospects even more than that of men. The countries where this is not true, thus where there are relatively big differences between men and women among the low educated with male unemployment rates being higher than female unemployment rates are Ireland, Moldova and Georgia. However, the gender gap is reduced in the highest education category also in these countries. In Georgia however, as was discussed above, while the differences between men and women are smaller among the highly educated, the unemployment rate is higher for them than for the low educated. The biggest differences between the unemployment rates of women and men, regardless of educational attainment, are in Armenia.

Besides making the comparison among young people with different educational attainment levels, one can also take a closer look at differences among the highly educated. Figure 5.8 depicts the unemployment ratio of tertiary education graduates aged 20-34 by the number of years since graduation (again the average of the years 2006-2010). The graph differentiates between young people who graduated less than three years before data collection ($\leq 3Y$) and those whose graduation was four or more years before data collection ($\geq 4Y$). This indicator captures the labour market entry prospects of recent graduates in comparison to the employment situation of more experienced young people.

Overall, the unemployment rate of recent graduates is considerably higher than that of more experienced young people. In half of the Bologna countries, the unemployment rate of recent graduates is higher than 11.7 %, which is more than three times more than the median rate for young people four or more years after graduation (3.4 %). Countries with the largest gap between recent graduates and those with more experience are Cyprus (13.2 % and 3.1 %), Romania (13.8 % and 2.6 %) and Slovenia (12.4 % and 3 %); while countries with the smallest gap are Finland (6.8 % and 3.8 %), Iceland (3.8 % and 2.2 %) and Switzerland (4.1 % and 2.4 %).

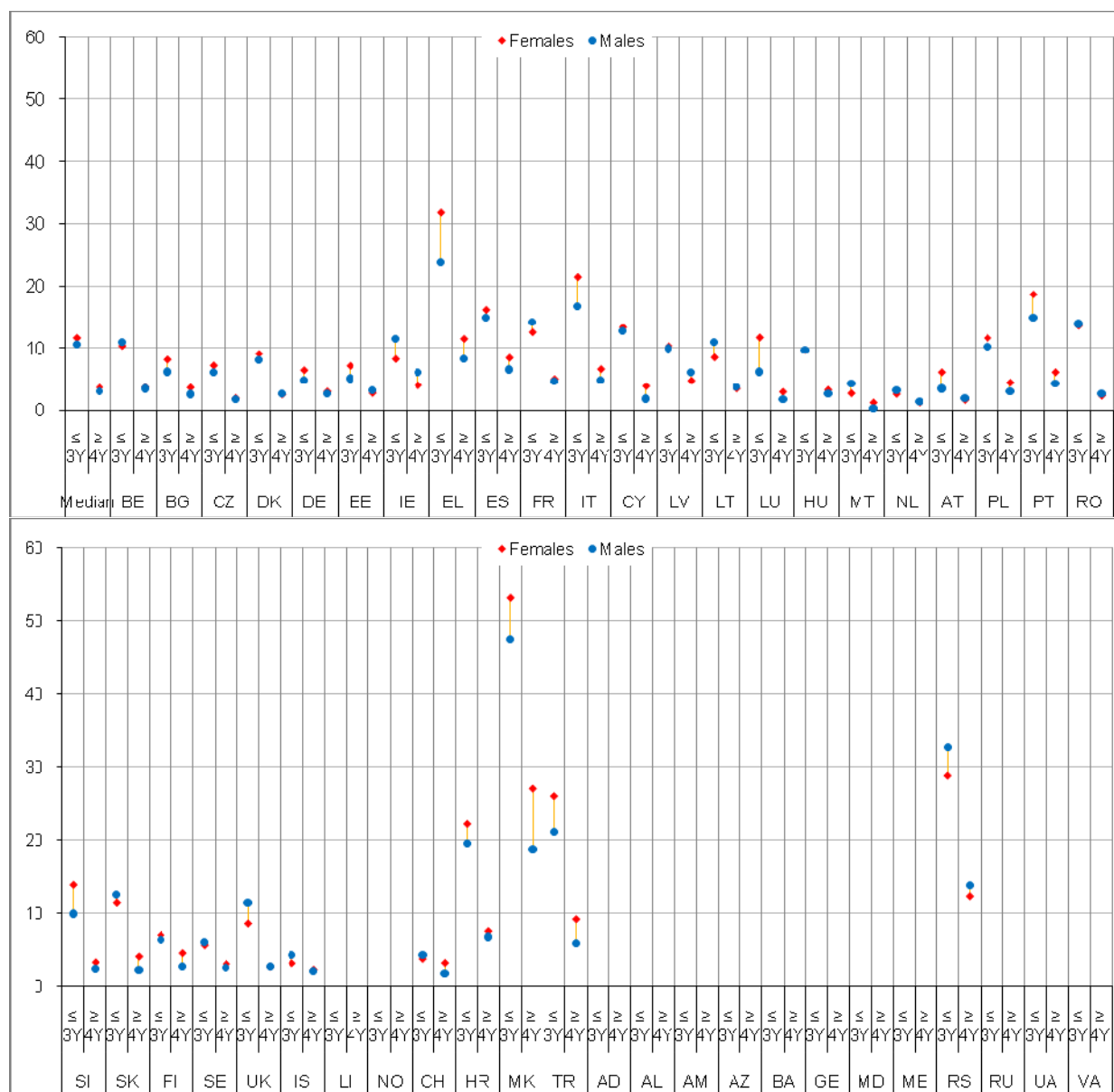
Figure 5.8: Unemployment ratio of tertiary education graduates aged 20-34, by the number of years since graduation (%), average 2006-2010



Source: Eurostat

This discrepancy between recent graduates and more experienced young people is relatively similar in the case of women and men (see Figure 5.9 depicting unemployment rates for women and men separately). In approximately two thirds of the countries where data is available, the gap is slightly bigger in the case of men than in the case of women.

Figure 5.9: Unemployment ratio of tertiary education graduates aged 20-34, by the number of years since graduation and by sex (%), average 2006-2010



Source: Eurostat

In sum, while obtaining a tertiary qualification improves the employability of young people in most countries, graduates without considerable work experience face difficulties in the labour market.

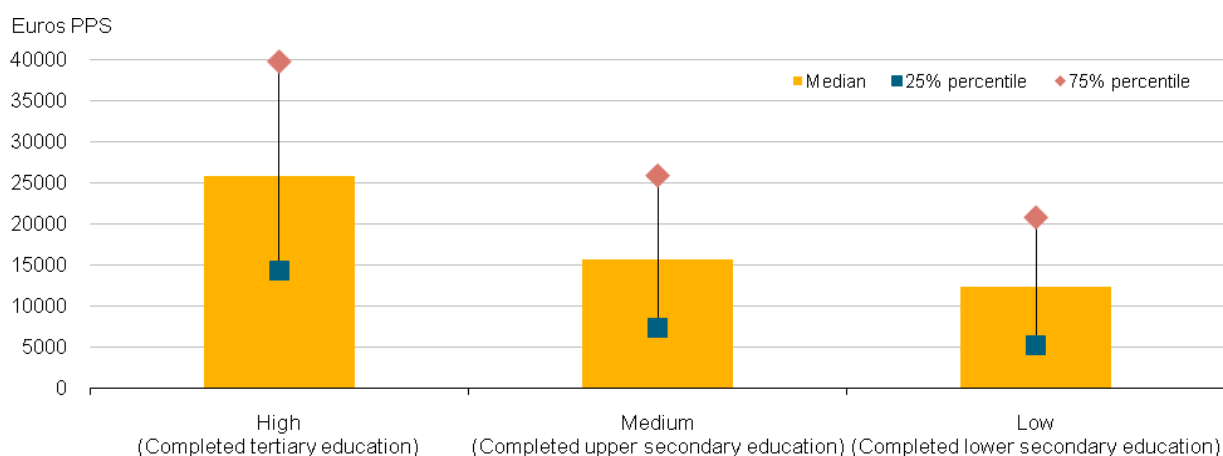
5.4. Private returns on education: income and educational attainment

The expected income of people with tertiary qualifications forms part of discussions on graduates' labour market prospects. The assumption is that higher educational attainment – and thus higher levels of investment in education – should be compensated by better paid jobs after graduation. Bringing in the concept of employability, higher education institutions are seen as responsible for equipping students with skills that are rewarded by employers, also in economic terms. Nevertheless, it has to be noted again that such statements have to be nuanced by highlighting income differences between graduates receiving the same education but belonging to different groups based on gender, race, disability etc. (Morley, 2001).

The assumption about the relationship between educational attainment and income generally holds true in the EHEA region, though the extent of returns on education varies across countries. Figure 5.10 shows the median, the 25 % percentile and the 75 % percentile of workers in the EHEA by educational attainment, confirming the added value of receiving a higher education qualification. Completing tertiary education has a significant impact on gross income. In 2010, the median income of those with tertiary education was the double of those who only completed lower education and 60 % higher than that of those that only completed upper secondary. For those with tertiary education only 25 % had an annual gross income of less than 15 000 Euros PPS (25 % percentile), while half earned at least 26 000 (median) and 25 % earned more than 40 000 (75 % percentile).

However, tertiary education is not a guarantee for higher income. 25 % of those who completed only lower secondary levels of education earned more than 20 000 Euros PPS, while 25 % of those who completed tertiary education earned less than 15 000. Such differences in wages can be potentially linked to the fact that not all tertiary graduates are occupying jobs that require a tertiary qualification (see Section 5.5).

Figure 5.10: Median, 25 % percentile and 75 % percentile of annual gross income (cash and non-cash) of workers (family workers excluded) in the EHEA in PPS EUR by educational attainment, 2010

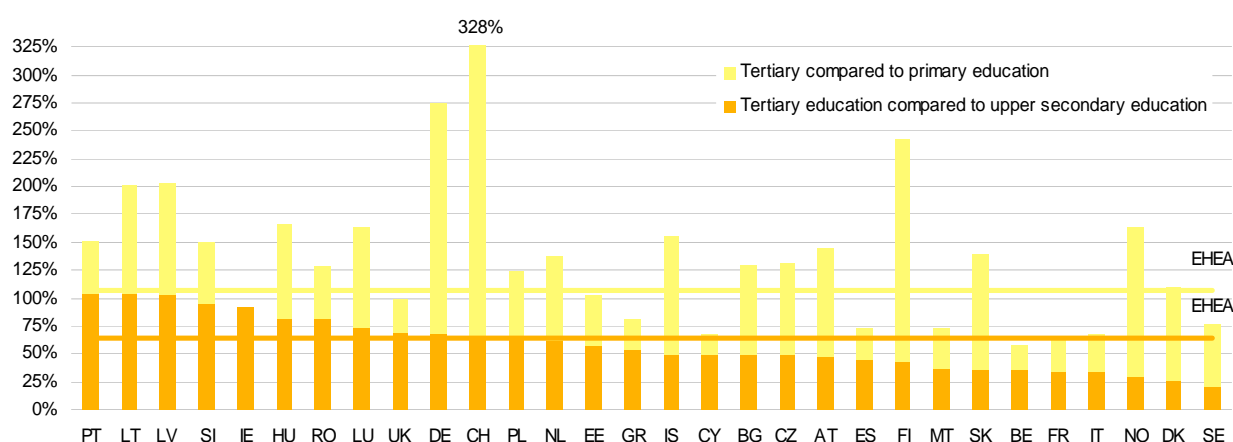


Notes: Excludes Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey and Ukraine.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (Statistics on Income and Living conditions)

Figure 5.11 depicts percentage differences between the median annual gross income of workers with tertiary and with lower levels of education by country (the country order is defined by the income difference between tertiary and upper secondary education). In 2010, in every country the median gross income of those who completed tertiary education was higher than of those who completed only upper secondary or lower secondary education.

Figure 5.11: Percentage difference between median annual gross income (cash and non-cash) of workers (family workers excluded) with tertiary education and with a lower level of education, 2010



Notes: Data refers to 2009 for Cyprus and Ireland.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC (Statistics on Income and Living conditions)

The effect of completing tertiary education instead of upper secondary on the median income ranged from around 20 % in Sweden and Denmark to 100 % in Portugal, Lithuania and Latvia. Differences between the median earnings of people with tertiary and primary education are even more diverse. The countries with the smallest differences (around 60 %) are Belgium and France, while in Switzerland the median income of workers with tertiary qualifications is more than 300 % of those who completed only the primary level of education.

5.5. Higher education qualifications and labour market demand: qualification mismatches

Tertiary education graduates do not only have to find a (well-paying) job after graduation, but ideally they have to find one that matches their knowledge and skills acquired through education. If there is an imperfect matching between educational attainment and the educational requirements of an occupation, we are dealing with the phenomenon of skills (or qualification) mismatch. The most commonly referred mismatch is vertical mismatch, in which case there is a discrepancy between the acquired and required **level** of education or skills (Cedefop 2010, p. 13).

Vertical mismatch at the individual level can take the form of overeducation or undereducation. Overeducation can be the most easily grasped as overqualification: an individual is overqualified if he or she has a higher qualification than what the job requires (Ibid.). Conversely, underqualification refers to having a lower qualification than what is required by a given job (Ibid.). Certainly, there might be a discrepancy between an individual's qualification level and his or her skills and abilities to perform certain jobs. This means that overeducation can also be only formal (Ibid.). Nevertheless, examining overqualification rates (i.e. the proportion of people working in occupations for which their qualification is too high) is a useful tool when one attempts to evaluate tertiary education based on employability criteria.

The phenomenon that tertiary education graduates take up jobs requiring lower qualifications can occur for three main reasons. First, it might indicate that tertiary education institutions were not able to match employment needs by providing graduates with the necessary skills (see Allen & de Weert, 2007). In this case, employability-enhancing policies can contribute to decreasing overqualification rates. Second, there might not be enough jobs demanding higher qualifications for the amount of tertiary graduates. This phenomenon can be referred to as skills surplus³ and might be reduced via labour market forecasting and examining the relationship between the education system and labour market needs. Finally, graduates might not find or get the matching jobs due to labour market imperfections or discrimination. Different overqualification rates for women and men or for the foreign born and natives⁴ can indicate such problems, especially in comparison with participation rates. In this case, adequate policy responses concentrate mainly on the labour market.

This section looks at overqualification rates defined as the percentage of young people with tertiary education occupying a post not regarded as necessitating a tertiary qualification (ISCO occupation level 4 to 9). Based on data from 2010, Figure 5.12 shows the percentage of people aged 25-34 who are employed in occupations that usually require tertiary qualifications (ISCO 1, 2 and 3) and those who are not.

Data is not available for the whole EHEA region. In the EU27, roughly one fourth (24.5 %) of young people with tertiary education can be regarded as overqualified for the job they occupy, thus are employed in occupations not requiring tertiary qualifications. This percentage remained quite stable between 2000 and 2010, despite the growing participation rates and the "massification" of higher education (see Chapters 1 and 4). The median overqualification rate among the countries where data is available is 17.8 %.

There are no big differences between female and male overqualification rates (see Figure 5.13). On average, women are slightly more likely to take up jobs under the level of their qualifications, but countries differ a lot in this regard. For example, in Moldova and Russia, young men are almost twice as likely to be overqualified than women, while in Finland and Hungary, young women are around 1.4 more in this situation.

Among the countries for which data is available, there are six with an overqualification rate around or above 30 %: Bulgaria (30 %), Greece (30.1 %), Spain (38 %), Ireland (37 %), Italy (30.4 %) and Cyprus (37.6 %). The seven countries with overqualification rates under 15 % are the Czech Republic

³ Skills surplus occurs "when the supply of people with a particular skill exceeds the demand for it" (Cedefop 2010, p. 13).

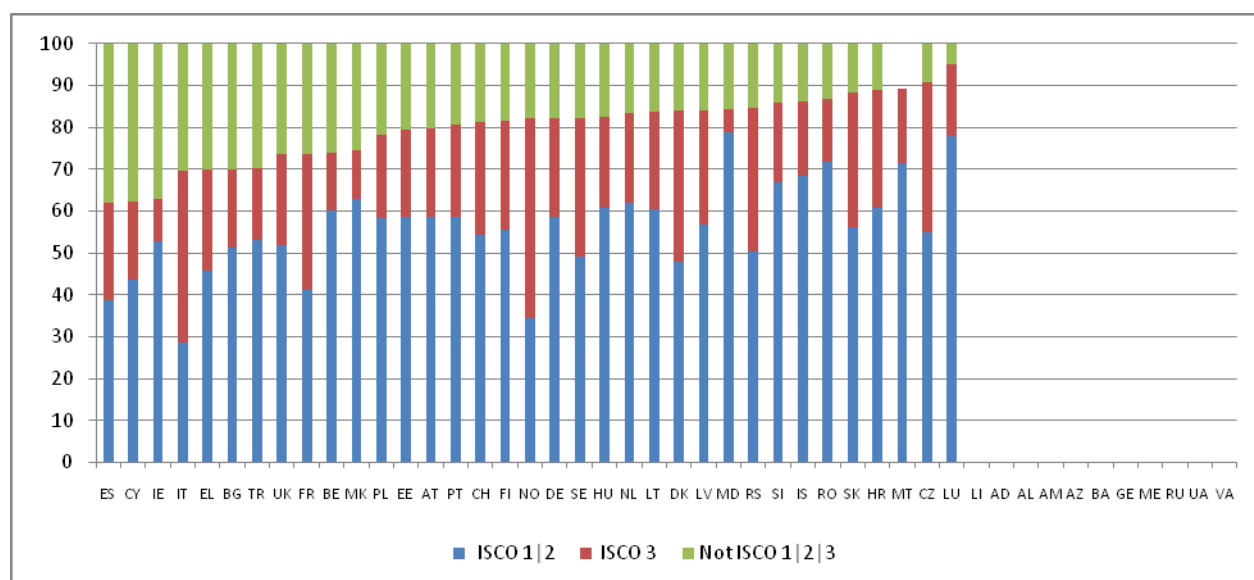
⁴ Based on data from 2009, Eurostat (2011, p. 76) concludes that "in the age group 20-64, the overqualification rate of foreign born persons in the EU is much higher than the overqualification rate of the total population (33% to 21%)".

(9.2 %), Luxembourg (5.1 %), Romania (13.2 %), Slovenia (14.1 %), Slovakia (11.6 %), Iceland (13.9 %) and Croatia (11 %).

On average, among young people with tertiary qualifications occupying ISCO 1, 2 or 3 posts, one third is employed in ISCO 3 jobs and two thirds have jobs in the highest, ISCO 1 and 2 categories. This means that overall, around half (50.8 %) of young people with tertiary qualifications are employed in ISCO 1 and 2 posts in the EU27. In the EHEA countries for which data is available, the median rate for those employed in ISCO 1 and 2 posts is 56.1 %.

Countries with the lowest share of people with ISCO 3 posts are Belgium, Ireland, Romania, the FYROM and Moldova. There are two countries where more young people have ISCO 3 jobs than ISCO 1 and 2: Italy and Norway.

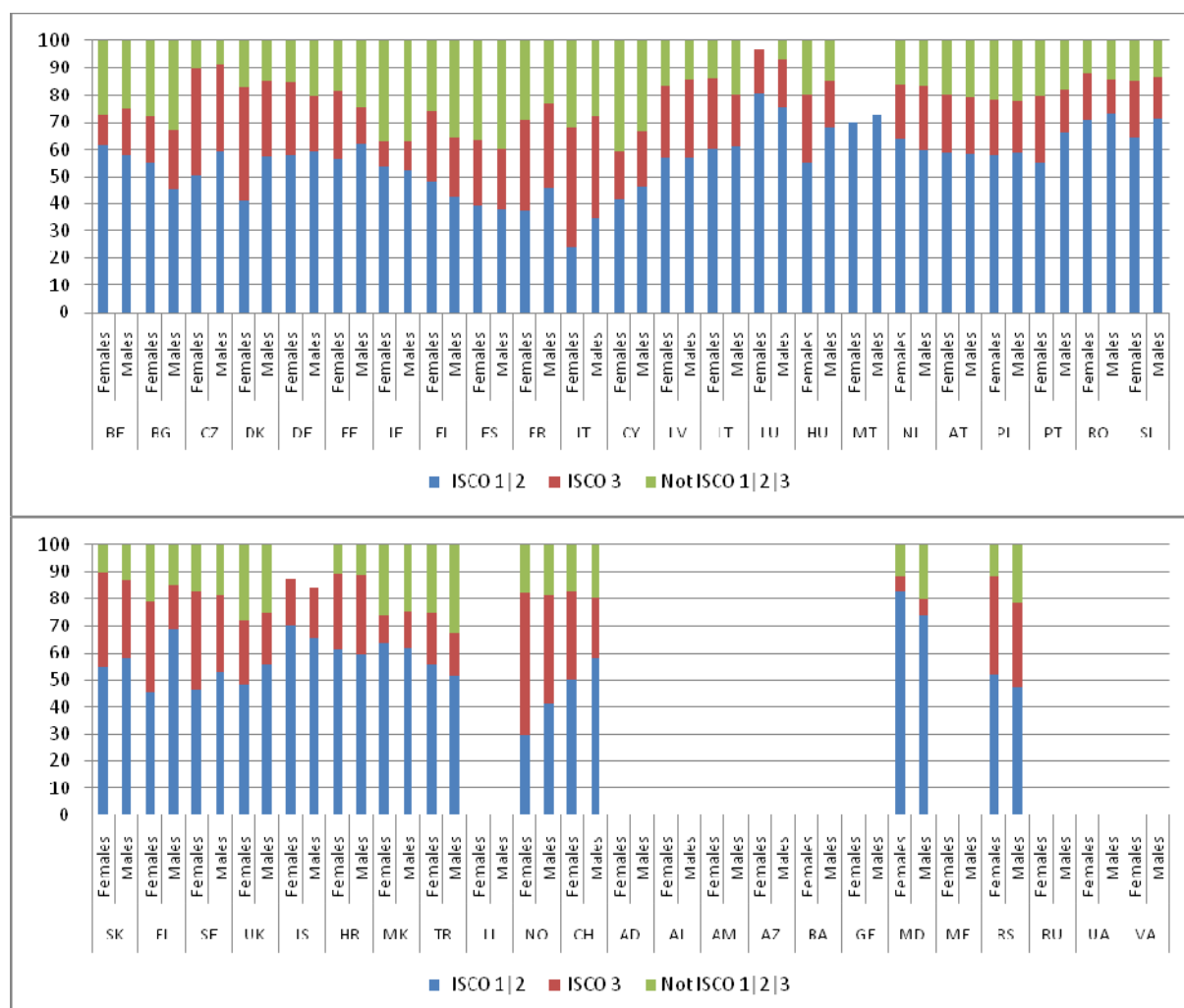
Figure 5.12: Percentage of people with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) aged 25-34 and employed in ISCO 1 or 2 (legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals), in ISCO 3 (technicians and associate professionals) and not in ISCO 1 2 or 3 (2010)



Notes: Data for LU, MT, SI, HR and MK lack reliability due to small sample size. Certain results are not published for LU, MT and IS due to very low sample size.

Source: Eurostat

Figure 5.13: Percentage of people with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) aged 25-34 and employed in ISCO 1 or 2 (legislators, senior officials, managers and professionals), in ISCO 3 (technicians and associate professionals) and not in ISCO 1 2 or 3, by sex (2010)



Notes: Data for LU, MT, SI, HR and MK lack reliability due to small sample size. Certain results are not published for LU, MT and IS due to very low sample size.

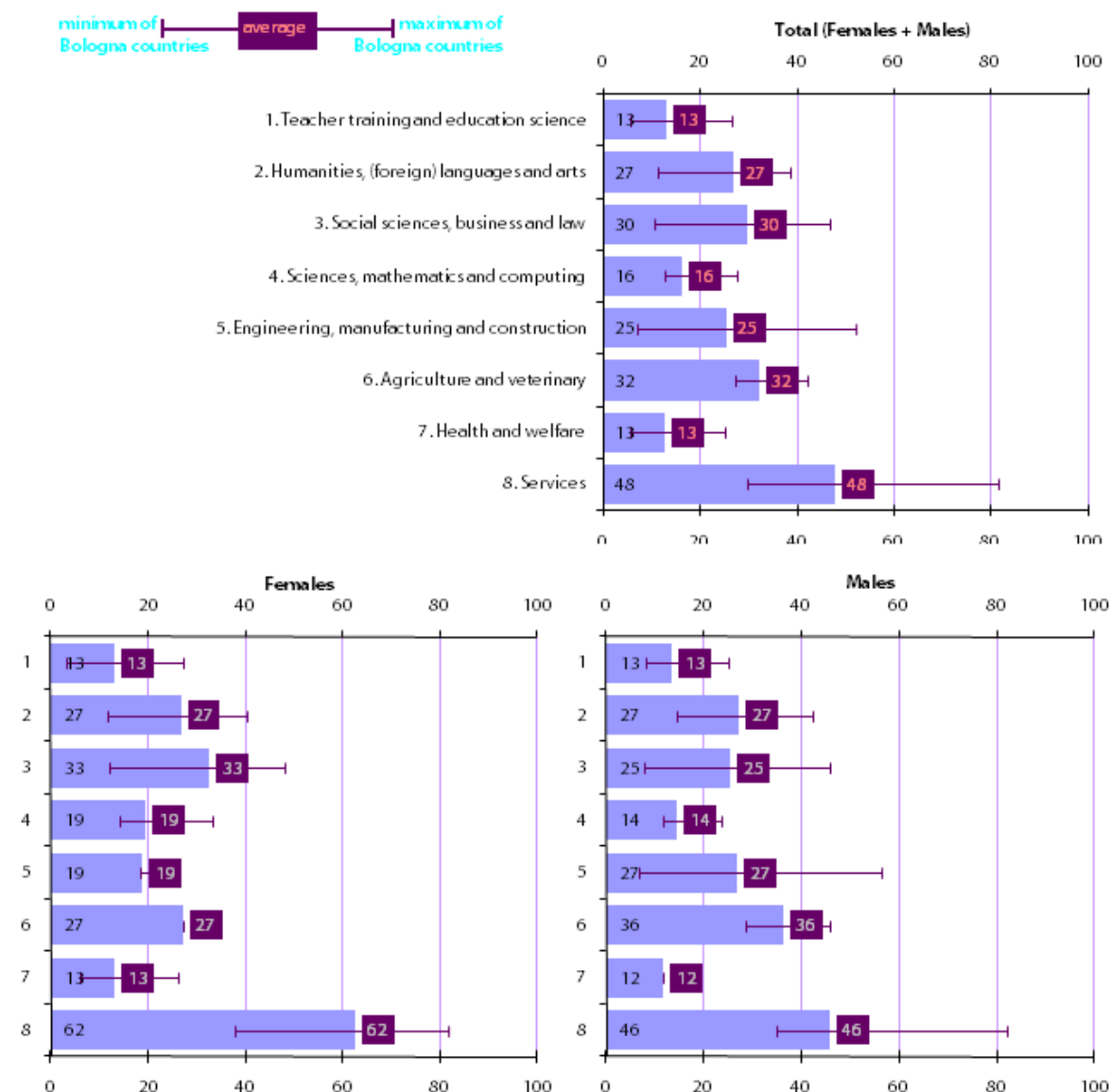
Source: Eurostat

Figure 5.14 depicts vertical mismatch by the field of study of tertiary education graduates. Due to insufficient yearly data, the figure shows the average of the years 2006-2010. Data shows that young people with a qualification in "services"⁵ are the most likely to take up jobs under their qualification level. On average, almost half (47.7 %) of young people are overqualified in this field. Data Among the countries where data is available, Greece and Cyprus are the countries with the highest overqualification rate in services, with over three quarters of young people occupying posts below their qualification level (76.2 % in Greece and 81.5 % in Cyprus). The overqualification rate in services is the lowest in the Czech Republic, but it is also 29.8 %.

⁵ "Services" include a wide range of occupations from restaurant and tourism to defence and military services (for more details, see the ISCED classification for fields of education, e.g. Andersson & Olsson, 1999).

Study fields with the lowest overqualification rates are teacher training and education science (13.1 %) and health and welfare (12.8 %). Again, countries differ: overqualification rates in teacher training and education science range from 5.7 % (Turkey) to 26.6 % (Spain); in health and welfare from 5.5 % (Czech Republic) to 25.1 % (Spain). However, it has to be stressed again that data is not available for all countries in all study fields.

Figure 5.14: Percentage of people aged 25-34 with tertiary education (ISCED 5-6) who are vertically mismatched (not in ISCO 1, 2 or 3) by field of study and sex, average 2006-2010



Notes Data for field 6 (total and by gender) and field 5 (females) lack reliability due to small sample size in many countries.

Source Eurostat

General trends are similar in the case of women and men, though women are more likely to be overqualified in the services field, as well as in social sciences, business and law and in the field of sciences, mathematics and computing. There is a higher vertical mismatch for men in the fields of engineering, manufacturing and construction as well as after agricultural and veterinary studies. In engineering, manufacturing and construction, the range of overqualification rates is much broader in the case of men than in the case of women. While overqualification rates for men in this sector are relatively low in the Czech Republic (6.8 %), more than half of men are overqualified in Spain (56.4 %).

5.6. Conclusion

Raising attainment and completion rates and improving graduate employability continue to be a challenge in the EHEA. However, significant gaps in data availability, a lack of common understanding on the effective policies in these areas as well as conceptual ambiguity hinder the comparison of the current situation.

Within the EHEA, an increasing proportion of the population is obtaining a higher education qualification. Regarding higher education completion, completion rates are available for only 16 countries, for which the median rate is 72 %. The data, however, points towards large differences between systems. The diversity of the current situation is confirmed by statistical information on net entry and graduation rates. Moreover, although the majority of the Bologna countries report to have put in place policies to increase completion levels, there is a great variety in the scope and content of enacted measures. Only a small minority of countries have adopted comprehensive national strategies that address a range of factors for non-completion. Such strategies combine initiatives at both national and institutional level and include incentives for institutions and students. Furthermore, these measures have been supplemented by well-developed monitoring mechanisms. Other countries report that broad policy initiatives, although not directly targeting the increase of completion rates, are expected to contribute to the improvement of these rates. In other cases there are either only isolated, small-scale projects or no targeted measures to tackle this problem.

Although the notion of "employability" is widely used in policy debate, there are significant problems in defining the concept for the purposes of collecting data that can show whether the situation is improving or worsening. Instead, data usually reflect the labour market situation for higher education graduates in relation to people with educational attainment at a lower level. Statistical information on unemployment rates shows that while obtaining a tertiary qualification improves the employment prospects of young people in most countries, graduates without prior work experience can face difficulties entering the labour market. In half of the Bologna countries, the unemployment rate of recent graduates is higher than 11.7 %, which is more than three times the median rate for young people four or more years after graduation. Furthermore, almost 25 percent of graduates can be regarded as overqualified for the job in which they are employed, with "services" graduates being the most likely to be in this situation. This percentage has remained stable between 2000 and 2010. At the same time, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of employability policies at national and institutional levels, as changes in the general state of the economy and the structure of the labour markets are important determinants of the availability and quality of job opportunities.

6. LIFELONG LEARNING

Introduction

The Bologna context

Lifelong learning has been an important element of the Bologna process agenda and the need to enhance its development has been emphasised in all the communiqués ⁽¹⁾ that followed the Bologna Declaration (1999). Already in 2001, the Prague Communiqué stated that

Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life (Prague Communiqué 2001, p. 2).

In the succeeding communiqués, higher education ministers returned to the theme of lifelong learning and highlighted various areas that contribute to building the culture of lifelong learning in the EHEA. They underlined the necessity to enhance the development of flexible learning pathways, to create opportunities for the recognition of prior learning, to establish national qualifications frameworks and to build closer cooperation between higher education institutions and various external partners, including employers.

In 2008, on request of French authorities, the European University Association (EUA) elaborated the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning (EUA, 2008), written in a form of ten commitments from universities and ten commitments from governments in addressing the implementation of lifelong learning. The document was prepared on the basis of extensive consultation with EUA member universities, Rectors' Conferences and a wide range of European higher education stakeholder organisations. The commitments cover various aspects of lifelong learning, in particular the need to ensure the provision of flexible, relevant and innovative programmes targeting diversified student population and the need to establish systems for the recognition of all forms of prior learning. The Charter also refers to the necessity to reinforce structured dialog between higher education institutions and a range of stakeholders at different levels.

Chapter outline

Based on policy priorities identified within the above-mentioned documents, this chapter aims to examine selected aspects of lifelong learning in the higher education sector. To achieve this objective, the chapter first looks at how different countries understand and interpret the concept of lifelong learning in higher education. It then examines the extent to which lifelong learning has become a recognised mission of higher education institutions as well as financial arrangements in place to promote lifelong learning provision. A substantial part of the chapter is dedicated to the theme of flexible modes of delivery of higher education programmes, with a specific focus on part-time higher education studies. This part is followed by the analysis of the extent to which higher education institutions across the EHEA offer possibilities for the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning. Taking into account the information provided in all sections of the chapter, the final part looks

⁽¹⁾ Prague 2001, Berlin 2003, Bergen 2005, London 2007, Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve 2009.

at how successful different higher education systems are in attracting non-traditional learners to participate in formal higher education programmes.

The reader should be aware that other chapters of the report also provide information closely related to the theme of lifelong learning in higher education. Therefore, the content of this chapter should be complemented with the information provided in other parts of the report, in particular Chapter 4 on the social dimension in higher education and Chapter 5 on higher education outcomes and employability.

6.1. National understanding of the concept of lifelong learning

Despite the fact that lifelong learning has been one of the central themes of the Bologna process agenda, policy documents related to the process do not provide any exhaustive definition of the concept of lifelong learning in higher education. The absence of a commonly accepted European or international definition calls for the investigation of how different EHEA countries understand and interpret the concept of lifelong learning within their respective higher education systems.

The results of the 2011 BFUG reporting exercise show that while in the majority of EHEA countries steering documents related to higher education refer to lifelong learning, they do not necessarily provide a definition of this term. Where such definition exists, it often has a very broad character, referring to learning 'from cradle to grave' or to all learning activities undertaken by individuals throughout their lives, be they formal, non-formal or informal. A good example of this is the United Kingdom - Scotland strategy adopted in 2007, "*Skills for Scotland – a Lifelong Skills Strategy*"

It is only when countries start to report on the main forms of lifelong learning provision in which higher education institutions are involved that certain cross-national differences emerge. These differences mainly relate to the range of provision individual countries associate with lifelong learning in higher education. While some types of provision are referred to by virtually all countries, others are less frequently or rarely mentioned.

The provision most strongly associated with lifelong learning in higher education includes non-formal courses for individuals offered by higher education institutions alongside their formal degree programmes. Virtually all EHEA countries are referring to this type of provision, although they may use various expressions to describe it, including 'short-term further education courses' (Finland), 'courses outside the academic degree scheme/study programmes' (Serbia and the Holy See) or 'courses for personal development' (the United Kingdom - EWNl).

Alongside non-degree courses for individuals, a significant proportion of EHEA countries refer to degree programmes provided under various arrangements different from traditional full-time schemes. Here, countries make a reference to flexible higher education studies, part-time programmes, open learning, distance learning, e-learning, external studies, evening or week-end courses, etc. Yet, there are some countries, which do not make a reference to this type of provision, even if their systems provide a possibility for students to register with a formal status other than the status of a full-time student. This concerns countries such as Armenia, Latvia, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Holy See (see Figure 6.2), and it could indicate that these countries do not include formal higher education programmes provided under flexible arrangements in their national concept of lifelong learning in higher education.

With regard to the two types of provision described above, i.e. non-formal courses for individuals and degree programmes provided under flexible arrangements, it is important to note that the boundary between them can sometimes be blurred. This is in particular the case in countries, where individuals

can follow distinct modules or courses of degree programmes, without necessarily being regular students of these programmes. Such a possibility already exists in many EHEA countries.

Another type of provision frequently seen as lifelong learning in higher education is the area of continuing and professionally-oriented upgrading of already achieved higher education qualifications. With regard to this type of provision, several countries make a direct reference to continuing professional development of those working in regulated professions (e.g. teachers, medical doctors, etc.).

While all the above-mentioned types of higher education provision are referred to by at least half of EHEA countries, and can therefore be regarded as the most common components of lifelong learning in higher education, certain activities are mentioned by a less significant number of countries. For example, despite the policy importance accorded to the theme of the recognition of prior learning, only a few countries, or regions within countries (the French Community of Belgium, Switzerland, Estonia, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands and Portugal), expressly refer to this type of activities. The information provided in Section 6.5, which examines the level of development of the recognition of prior learning across the EHEA, can partly explain why the number of countries referring to this type of provision is still quite low.

Other types of activities which are referred only by a limited number of countries include tailor-made provision for industry/companies and other external partners (Germany, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom – Scotland), provision of public lectures, seminars, conferences, round tables and workshops (Austria, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Slovenia and the United Kingdom), targeted guidance and counselling services (France, Ukraine and the United Kingdom - Scotland), access provision to attract non-traditional learners (Portugal and the United Kingdom) and the possibility for the general public to use various higher education resources, including higher education libraries (Estonia and Ukraine). Although this does not mean that these activities exist only in the countries listed above, it could indicate that they are not always thought of as the elements of lifelong learning in higher education.

Overall, lifelong learning in higher education appears as a fragmented concept, as a mosaic of different types of learning provision, where the number of elements included in the mosaic varies from one country to another. While in some countries, a wide range of higher education activities are viewed in the light of their contribution to lifelong learning, in other instances, the list of lifelong learning provision in which higher education institutions are commonly involved is still relatively short.

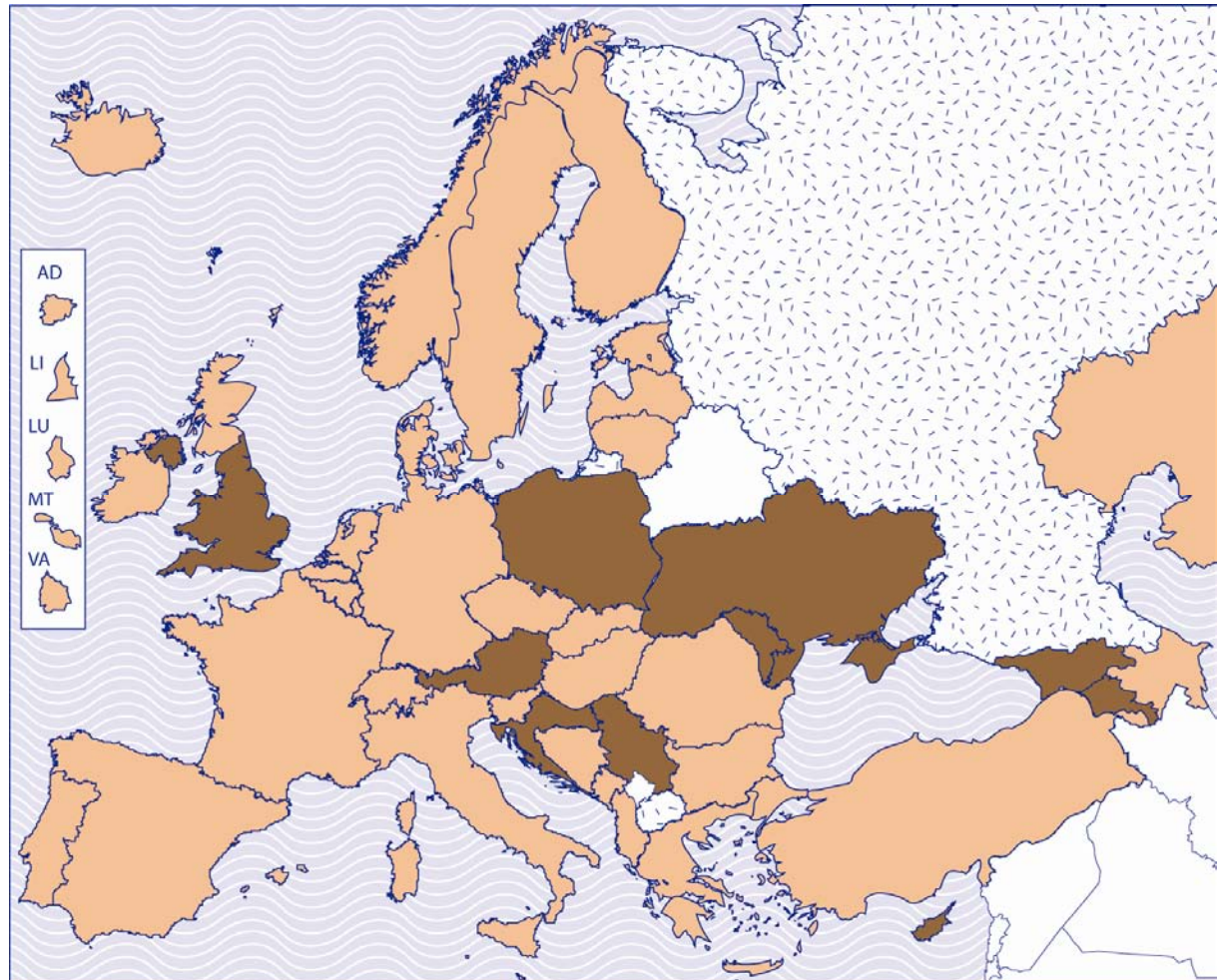
6.2. Lifelong learning as a recognised mission of higher education institutions





The central position of lifelong learning in policy debates is reflected by the fact that in more three-quarters of EHEA countries, lifelong learning is a recognised mission of all higher education institutions (see Figure 6.1). In the rest of the Bologna countries, namely Armenia, Austria, Cyprus, Georgia, Croatia, Moldova, Poland, Serbia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), it is a recognised mission of at least some higher education institutions. Countries classified in the second category² commonly point out that higher education institutions have a certain

² These countries show slightly different profiles with regard to their understanding of lifelong learning in higher education. In some of them (AM, GE, MD and RS), the concept of lifelong learning includes only activities situated outside academic degree schemes, whereas in other instances (AT, CY, HR, PL, UA and the UK), lifelong learning embraces not only non-formal provision, but also formal higher education programmes.

degree of autonomy in this regard and can decide whether and to what extent they will include lifelong learning in their mission statement.

Figure 6.1: Lifelong learning as a recognised mission of higher education institutions, academic year 2010/2011



			
Not available	Recognised mission of all HE institutions	Recognised mission of some HE institutions	Not a recognised mission

Source: BFUG questionnaire

Regardless of whether lifelong learning is a recognised mission of all higher education institutions or only of some of them, several countries point out considerable cross-institutional variations in the extent to which lifelong learning has been implemented. This means that while in the case of some institutions lifelong learning appears as the main mission (e.g. institutions focusing on the provision of flexible higher education programmes such as open universities), in other instances, activity flows relating to lifelong learning might be less significant. In this context, Norway provides an interesting example, indicating that while in 2010 the average share of students studying under flexible arrangements was 6,3 %, some higher education institutions had up to 40 % of students on the flexible offer.

Higher education institutions can also specialise in certain types of lifelong learning activities, whereas other elements of lifelong learning might not be included in their offer. For example in Austria, the Fachhochschule sector (i.e. professionally-oriented higher education sector) is characterised by a considerable share of flexible programmes (nearly 50 % of study programmes take a form of evening classes), but the provision of alternative access routes based on the recognition of prior learning is still very limited in this sector. Another example is provided by Lithuania, where some higher education institutions have been involved in pilot projects related to the recognition of prior learning, whereas a few other institutions have a well-established provision of courses targeting the continuing professional development of teachers and trainers.

The majority of EHEA countries do not identify any legal restrictions that could prevent higher education institutions to offer lifelong learning provision or services. Only a few countries refer to legal constraints related to different segments of lifelong learning in higher education. Such constraints include the lack of regulations on the recognition of prior learning (Latvia), the impossibility to propose degree programmes under flexible arrangements (Serbia), restrictions related to the registration of participants in separate modules of degree programmes (the Netherlands) or the impossibility for institutions of professional higher education to offer the second cycle studies (Denmark).

6.3. Financing lifelong learning

From the policy perspective, the information on financial arrangements related to lifelong learning is commonly regarded as an area of particular interest. However, virtually all comparative analyses covering this field highlight that this theme is particularly difficult to cover (for example EACEA/Eurydice, 2010). This is, to a certain extent, a result of a lack of conceptual clarity regarding lifelong learning, which means that depending on the context, the concept can refer to a larger or narrower range of higher education provision. The second difficulty relates to the fact that lifelong learning in higher education commonly involves diverse funding sources and it is often difficult to identify the relative contribution of each individual source.

The 2011 BFUG reporting exercise shows that when describing how lifelong learning is financed, countries often refer to different types of higher education provision, specifying financial arrangements related to each type. Most commonly, a distinction is being made between programmes leading to higher education degrees, including programmes provided under various flexible arrangements, and non-degree higher education provision. While the first type of provision is often partially or completely covered from the public budget, in the case of the second type, the contribution from the public budget is generally less significant. Nevertheless, certain types of non-degree programmes (e.g. continuing professional development of those working in regulated professions, courses for the unemployed, programmes targeting retired citizens etc.) are commonly financed/co-financed from public resources.

In around two-thirds of EHEA countries, higher education institutions do not dispose of a public budget earmarked specifically for lifelong learning. This means that resources for lifelong learning come from general budgets of higher education institutions, these means being often combined with other financial resources. In 15 higher education systems (out of 47 for which data is available), there are budgets earmarked specifically for lifelong learning, but these financial resources are sometimes targeted towards particular types of lifelong learning provision. This is the case in the Czech Republic, where the lifelong learning budget is intending to finance universities of the third age, or in Georgia and Slovenia, where it is commonly used to cover in-service training of teachers and trainers.

Apart from general or special budgets of higher education institutions, other public resources contribute to financing lifelong learning in higher education. These include resources from EU

structural funds, resources from ministries other than those responsible for higher education and means allocated in the framework of various projects/programmes, be they national, regional or local. Public financial support can also take an indirect form, in particular through tax incentives targeting individuals taking part in lifelong learning activities.

Only a very few countries are able to quantify the degree to which lifelong learning provision in higher education is financed from public sources. Where the information on the degree of public funding is available, it varies significantly from one country to another, which may be partly related to different understandings of the concept of lifelong learning in higher education. While Romania and Bosnia and Herzegovina state, respectively, that public funding of lifelong learning in higher education is nil or only very modest, the Netherlands estimates that around 16 % of lifelong learning provision is funded from the public budget, and France and Hungary evaluate this amount to around 30 %. Austria and Norway report higher level of public funding. The first country evaluates its proportion to 85 %, while the second one indicates that most funding for lifelong learning comes from the public budget. Malta and Iceland are the only countries reporting that lifelong learning in higher education is fully publically funded.

Private investment in lifelong learning in higher education directly depends on the extent of public funding. Where private investment is requested, it is most often made by participants themselves. Yet, it can also be made by their employers, in particular, if the employer has requested the employee to undertake the programme in question, or, if there are any specific local or sectoral arrangements between employers and employees with regard to continuing education and training. Besides, lifelong learning can also be financed or co-financed from collective funds, to which employers make contributions. This is the case in France, where legislation obliges companies to contribute to the cost of continuing education and training through mandatory contributions, which depend on the type of company and the number of employees. Financial resources collected can be used to finance various education and training schemes and can also provide support for individuals taking part in higher education provision.

The list of different sources that are used to finance lifelong learning in higher education can be completed by means earned by higher education institutions themselves. Despite the fact that Latvia is the only country referring to this source, it is likely that there are other countries, where it is legally possible for higher education institutions to finance or co-finance lifelong learning with the resources they have earned either through the provision of various services or through private donations.

The results of the reporting exercise confirm that cross-country analyses based on a series of general questions on how lifelong learning in higher education is financed, can only lead to very limited outcomes. Such analyses can provide a mapping of different financial sources, but they do not allow a cross-country comparison of the extent to which these sources contribute to financing lifelong learning in the higher education sector. To achieve this objective, it would be necessary to develop a robust methodology, including a common operational definition of the concept of lifelong learning in higher education.

6.4. Promoting flexible delivery of higher education programmes

In a larger sense, flexibility in higher education refers to different ways of enabling individuals to follow educational paths adapted to their needs. This section focuses on one aspect of flexibility in higher education, namely flexible modes of delivery of higher education programmes. As shown is Section

6.2, a significant proportion of EHEA countries see this type of provision as one of the key elements of lifelong learning in higher education.

The present section is divided into four sub-sections. The first one concentrates on different policy approaches to flexible provision of higher education studies. It is followed by a sub-section focusing on the extent to which higher education systems provide formal student statuses other than full-time and the impact of these alternative statuses on study conditions of students. The third part looks at the extent to which higher education institutions ensure the provision of part-time studies, while the last part examines the degree of student participation in this type of study.

6.4.1. Policy approaches targeting flexible delivery of higher education programmes

One of the objectives of the 2011 BFUG reporting was to examine whether and to what extent policies in different EHEA countries promote flexible delivery of higher education programmes. According to the information provided by central authorities, in virtually all EHEA systems (43 out of 47 for which data is available), there are policies promoting flexible higher education provision. Yet, countries see their policy support in very different perspectives and are referring to diverse types of policy actions.

Several countries, or regions within countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Croatia, Portugal, Romania and Serbia), associate their policy support with legal frameworks, which create preconditions for the implementation of flexible higher education studies. This commonly means that legislation expressly enables higher education institutions to provide programmes under flexible study arrangements and/or it enables students to spread their courses over a longer period than the duration of traditional full-time studies.

Some countries (Andorra, Austria, Cyprus, Finland, the Netherlands and Portugal) see their policy support in close relation to higher education institutions focusing on flexible studies, or institutions, where flexible studies represent a significant proportion of the overall provision. Norway also partly belongs to this group. Although the country does not refer to any institution that would focus on the provision of flexible studies, it has established an agency under the Ministry of Education and Research (Norway Opening Universities) dedicated to the promotion of flexible courses and study programmes at Norwegian higher education institutions.

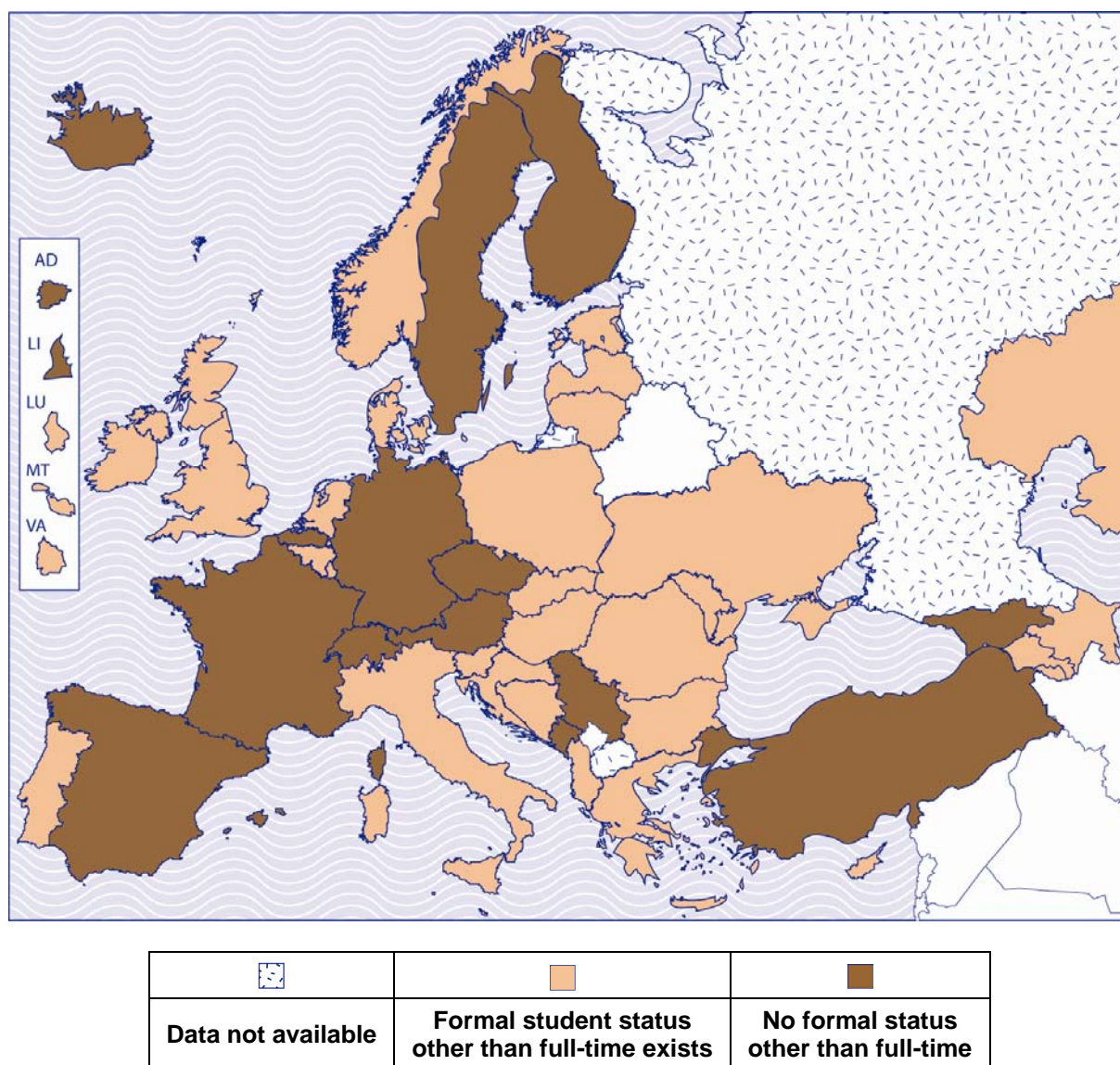
Among other policy initiatives promoting flexibility, countries refer to the implementation of the recognition of prior learning (Denmark, the Flemish Community of Belgium and Luxembourg), modularisation of higher education programmes (the French Community of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg) and the implementation of ECTS (Albania and Switzerland). Besides, some central authorities point out financial arrangements related to flexible higher education programmes, in particular the fact that full-time students and those following flexible studies are treated equally in terms of student fees and/or student financial support (for more details see Section 6.4.2, Figure 6.3).

Finally, a few countries make a reference to their strategic policy documents, which include an explicit reference to the policy objective to enhance flexible higher education provision and possibilities for students to engage in flexible studies. Such documents exist in Estonia (Higher Education Strategy 2006-2015), Ireland (The National Strategy for Higher Education), Slovenia (National Masterplan for Higher Education 2011-2020) and Scotland (Letter of Guidance of the Scottish Government to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC)).

6.4.2. Studying in higher education with a formal status other than the status of a full-time student

Alongside the status of a full-time student, the majority of countries formally recognise at least one additional student status. Figure 6.2 provides a picture of the situation across the EHEA. It shows that out of 47 higher education systems for which data is available, in around two-thirds there is an official student status other than the status of a full-time student.

Figure 6.2: Existence of a formal student status other than the status of a full-time student, academic year 2010/2011



Source: BFUG questionnaire

In most countries, the alternative student status is the status of a part-time student. Yet, countries that formally recognise a part-time student status, do not necessarily define it in the same way.

Most commonly, the definition of a part-time student status is based on the workload of students, often measured in ECTS credit points. Where this concept is being used, part-time students are generally defined as those who achieve less than 60 ECTS credits per academic year and/or less than 30 ECTS

credits per semester (e.g. Ireland and Malta). There are also variations, such as in Cyprus, where part-time students are expected to achieve less than 25 credit points per semester, or in Luxembourg, where they are expected to register only for 15-20 ECTS credits per semester.

The workload of part-time students can also be expressed in study hours/weeks, rather than in ECTS credit points. This is the case in the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), where a part-time student is a student who does not fall under the category of a full-time student, and where studying full-time means studying at least 21 hours per week for at least 24 weeks per year.

In Scotland and Latvia, the definition of a part-time student combines the two above-mentioned approaches, which means that it refers to credit points as well as to hours dedicated to higher education studies. In Scotland, part-time students are defined as those studying for less than 120 SCQF credits (60 ECTS), less than 24 weeks a year, and less than an average of 21 hours a week. In Latvia, they are defined as students, who are expected to achieve less than 40 LV credits (60 ECTS) per year and their study workloads is expected to be less than 40 hours a week.

Although Estonia also founds its definition on the student workload, it defines part-time students in terms of the percentage of the workload of full-timers. It is expected that part-time students cumulatively complete less than 75 % of the annual study load of full-time students.

In a few countries (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary and Moldova), the definition of part-time students does not refer to the workload of students, but to their limited direct participation in study sessions. This means that part-time students should in principle achieve the same number of credits as full-time students, but they are expected to dedicate more time to self-study activities.

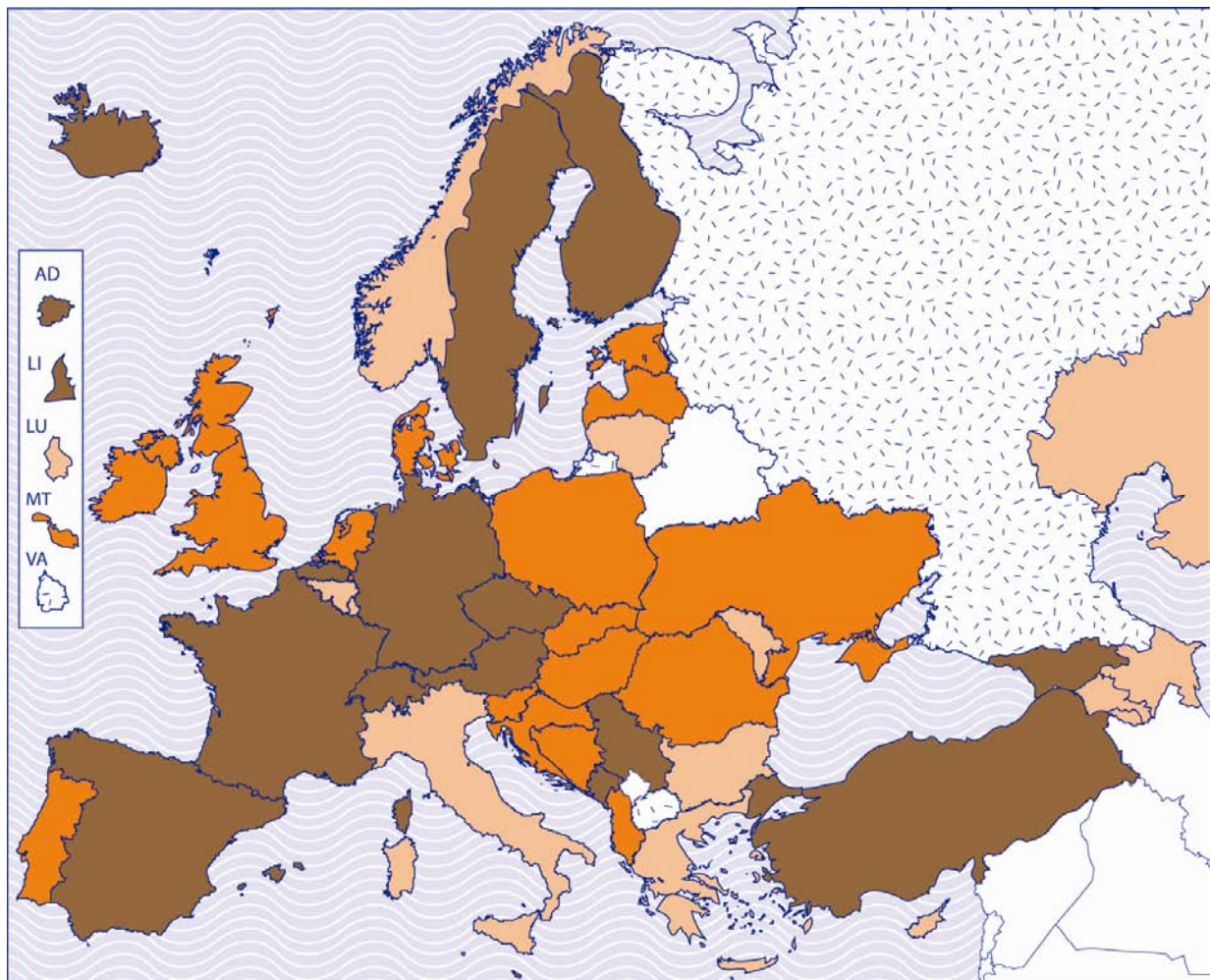
Several countries participating in the BFUG reporting exercise state that the status of a part-time student exists within their respective higher education systems, but they do not supply its definition. Two of these countries (Italy and Poland) indicate that steering documents related to higher education expressly refer to the possibility to offer part-time studies, but it is up to individual higher education institutions to define requirements related to the part-time student status. It is likely that this also applies to other countries, where the formal part-time status exists, but no definition is provided.

Even if the status of a part-time student is the most common student status other than full-time, there are also countries referring to other student statuses, including the status of an external student (Estonia, Slovakia and Ukraine) or distance learning student (Bulgaria, Hungary and Ukraine). Besides, in some countries, there are more than two formal student statuses. For example in the Netherlands, alongside full-time and part-time student status, there is also a dual student status, covering those who combine studies with a work experience in a related field.

Denmark and the French Community of Belgium represent rather specific cases, as their distinction between different student statuses refers to the existence of different higher education sub-systems, rather than the dichotomy “full-time student status” – “alternative student status”. The first country refers to students studying within the system of professional higher education for adults, whereas the French Community of Belgium refers to students following studies within the sub-system of Education for Social Advancement (i.e. a sub-system targeting mature students).

Formal status other than full-time often has an influence on the conditions under which students follow their studies, in particular on financial aspects related to studies. This includes tuition fees, grants, loans or other financial subsidies students might be eligible for. Figure 6.3 provides an overview of the situation in the EHEA.

Figure 6.3: Impact of formal student status on financial arrangements related to higher education studies, academic year 2010/2011



	Students holding a status other than full-time			
Data not available or information difficult to interpret³	are likely to make higher private financial contributions than full-time students	are not required to make higher private financial contributions than full-time students	No formal status other than full-time	

Source: BFUG questionnaire

In several countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Estonia, Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom), part-time studies are likely to be related to higher private financial investment than full-time studies. This expectation can be expressed in various ways, directly or indirectly. For example, in Slovenia and the United Kingdom, tuition fees related to part-time studies are unregulated and can be set by higher education institutions themselves, whereas tuition fees related to full-time studies are centrally regulated. Similarly in Estonia, part-time students are not expressly required to pay higher fees, but as

³ **Question to the Holy See (VA):** the information provided in the BFUG questionnaire is difficult to interpret. Could you please explain your situation with regard to this indicator?

there are only a very few state-funded places for this category of students, they often have to cover their tuition expenses. In Ireland, part-time students are not eligible to participate in the Free Fees Initiative, which provides that tuition fees are paid for full-time students.

Student support is another area where differences between full-time and part-time students can be observed. For example in Ireland, Latvia and the Netherlands, part-time students are not eligible for student grants and scholarships, and in Malta, only certain categories of part-time students are eligible for this type of support. Hungary reports that contrary to full-time student, part-times students cannot apply for need-based student support. In Croatia, those studying part-time do not have the right to many student benefits, including subsidized board and lodging, and health insurance, while in Estonia, part-time students cannot take out student loans. Although the United Kingdom offers financial support to both full-time and part-time students, each category of students is covered by a different financial support scheme.

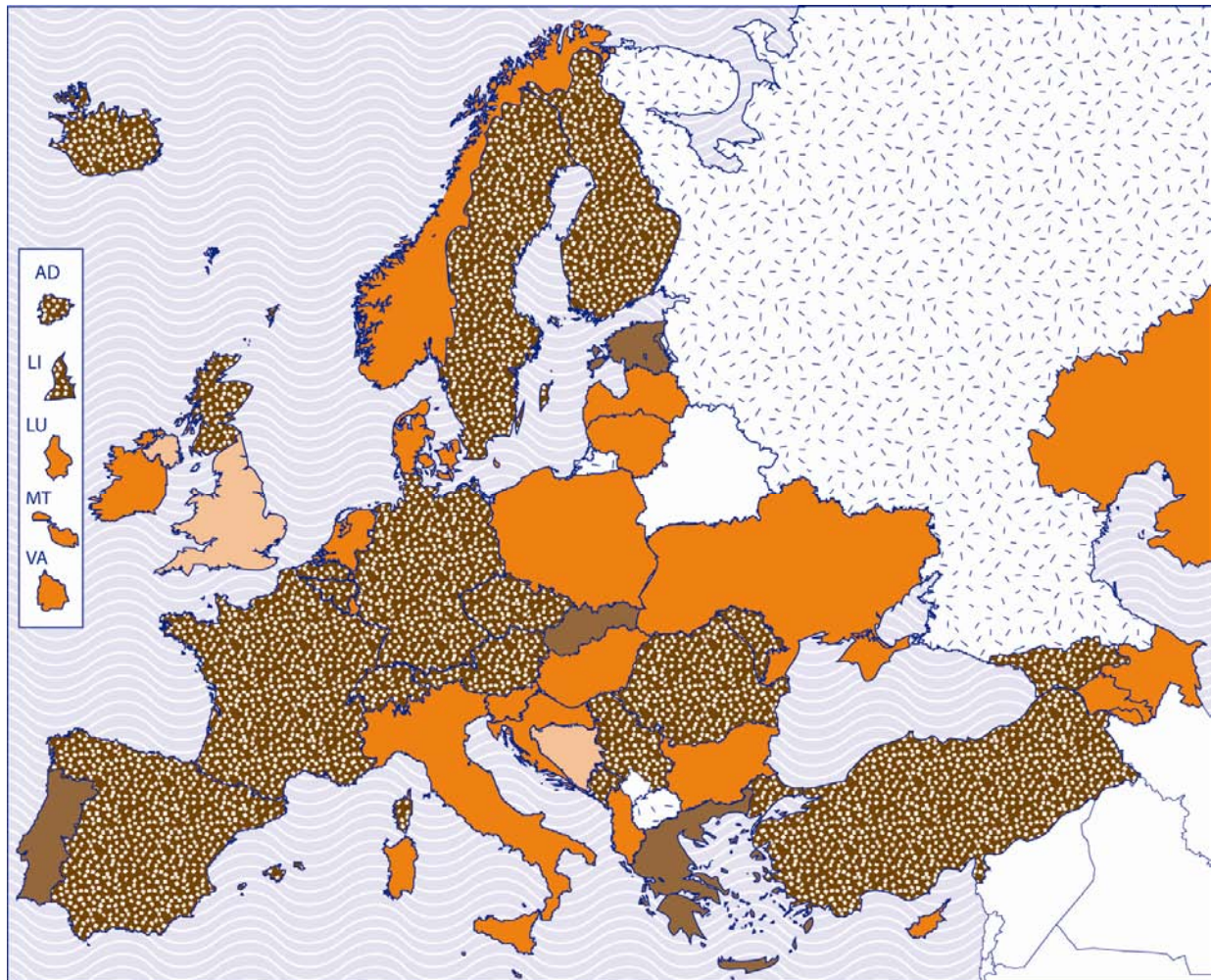
Some countries or regions within countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova and Norway) indicate that there is no difference between full-time and part-time studies in terms of fees and financial support. This means either that both categories of students are required to pay the same fees and are eligible for the same amount of financial support, or that fees and support of part-time students are calculated in relation to their workload (i.e. students taking less credits pay lower fees and are eligible for reduced amount of financial support).



Among countries where part-time students are likely to make higher private financial contribution than full-time students, only two countries – Ireland and Slovenia – indicate that they are considering a reform of the system in favour of part-time students. In Ireland, the National Strategy for Higher Education recommends that disincentives to part-time studies are removed, while in Slovenia, the National Masterplan for Higher Education 2011-2020 includes a policy intention to abandon fees for part-time studies and allow both full-time and part-time students to benefit from the same financial support.

6.4.3. Provision of part-time studies by higher education institutions

In many EHEA countries, higher education institutions have autonomy to decide whether they will offer studies other than full-time (see Figure 6.4). Most of these countries specify that higher education institutions commonly offer flexible studies, whereas two countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)) report that only a limited number of institutions offer other than full-time studies. Estonia, Greece, Portugal and Slovakia are the only countries indicating that all higher education institutions are required to offer part-time studies.

Figure 6.4: Provision of part-time studies by higher education institutions, academic year 2010/2011



				
Not available	All higher education institutions are required to offer part-time studies	Higher education institutions have autonomy to decide, but most of them offer part-time studies	Higher education institutions have autonomy to decide and only a limited number offers part-time studies	Other

Source: BFUG questionnaire

The category “other” refers to a variety of national situations, which cannot be described using the pre-defined categorisation. For example in Moldova, the extent to which part-time studies are offered is defined annually by the Ministry of Education, depending on the labour market requirements. Consequently, the degree of part-time provision changes from one year to another. In the French Community of Belgium, the part-time provision depends on the higher education sub-sector. All programmes organised within the sub-sector of Education for Social Advancement (i.e. a sub-sector targeting mature students) are part-time programmes, whereas with regard to traditional higher education, part-time programmes are offered by the majority of institutions. In Scotland, higher education institutions are not expressly required to offer part-time studies, but all of them do so.

The above-mentioned category also includes the higher education systems, with no formal status of part-time students (for more details see also Figure 6.2). Yet, the absence of the formal part-time status does not necessarily mean that higher education institutions do not ensure flexible provision. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, there is no formal part-time status, but all higher education institutions are required to offer flexible study pathways. Montenegro reports that higher education institutions commonly offer possibilities for students to apply for a limited number of credits and follow de facto part-time studies. A similar situation is indicated by Finland, in which case, it is also confirmed by Figure 6.9 in Section 6.4.4. In the Czech Republic, higher education legislation does not refer to full-time and/or part-time studies, but it refers to “on-site”, “distance” and “combined studies”. This means that legislation makes a direct reference to flexible studies, but uses a slightly different conceptualisation. Higher education institutions commonly offer distance or combined study programmes.

6.4.4. Statistical data on student participation in part-time studies

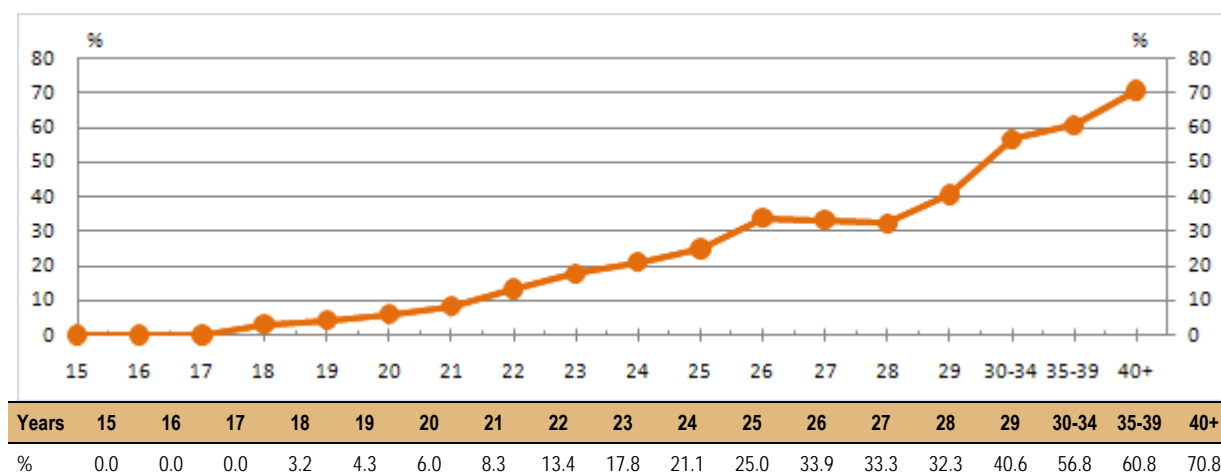
The information on the extent to which higher education institutions ensure the provision of flexible study options (Section 6.4.3) can be complemented with data on the participation of students in part-time provision. The participation levels are examined through two different data sets, which represent two different approaches to part-time studies. First, they are assessed through administrative data (UOE data collection); second, they are evaluated through students’ self-reported assessments of their formal status and study intensity (Eurostudent research).

According to the operational definition used within the UOE data collection, an individual is regarded as a part-time student if he/she is taking an educational programme that requires less than 75 % of a full-time study load. Despite some limitations of this operational definition⁴, the UOE data collection allows to evaluate various aspects of the participation in part-time studies.

Figure 6.5 clearly indicates that age is a significant factor in students’ decision to pursue their studies on the part-time basis, and that older students are much more likely to study part-time than younger ones. In median terms, less than 10 % of students at the typical age of entrance into higher education choose studying part-time, whereas the share of part-timers in the late 20’s is situated between 30 and 40 %. After students have reached their 30’s, it is even more probable that they will study part-time (more than 50 % study part-time) and among those who are older than 40, only one third will choose a full-time study mode.

⁴ Countries may to some extent differ in the way they measure the study load of students. Ideally, the study load should be measured in terms of the academic value or progress, but it can also be measured in terms of the time/resource commitment or time in classroom. The national data available to countries tends to dictate which of these methods countries use to categorise students as full-time or part-time (UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat, 2010).

Figure 6.5: Median of the percentage of students studying part-time, by age, academic year 2008/2009⁵



Source: Eurostat, UOE

Figure 6.6 provides information on the situation in individual countries for which data is available, showing the participation in part-time studies of those aged 21 (representing the category of “traditional” higher education students⁶) and those aged between 30 and 34 (representing the category of “mature students”). For all countries, the figure confirms that the older the students are, the more likely they are to study part-time. The figure also shows that in countries such as Belgium, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Sweden, even “traditional” higher education students often choose part-time studies (at least 20 % chose this mode of study).

In the majority of countries, participation in part-time studies is at least three times higher for those aged between 30 and 34 than for those aged 21. Only in Belgium, Estonia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden, the participation levels of the two age categories are slightly more balanced, but the participation of older students in part-time studies is always at least two times higher than the participation of those aged 21. In six countries – Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia - more than 80 % of higher education students aged 30-34 are part-timers.

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a group of seven countries (the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Turkey) where, regardless of the age of students, the participation in part-time studies is nil or negligible. Figure 6.2 in Section 6.4.2 indicates that some of these countries offer a formal student status other than full-time (e.g. Greece⁷, Italy and Luxembourg), whereas in other instances no formal status other than full-time exists (e.g. the Czech Republic⁸, France and Turkey).

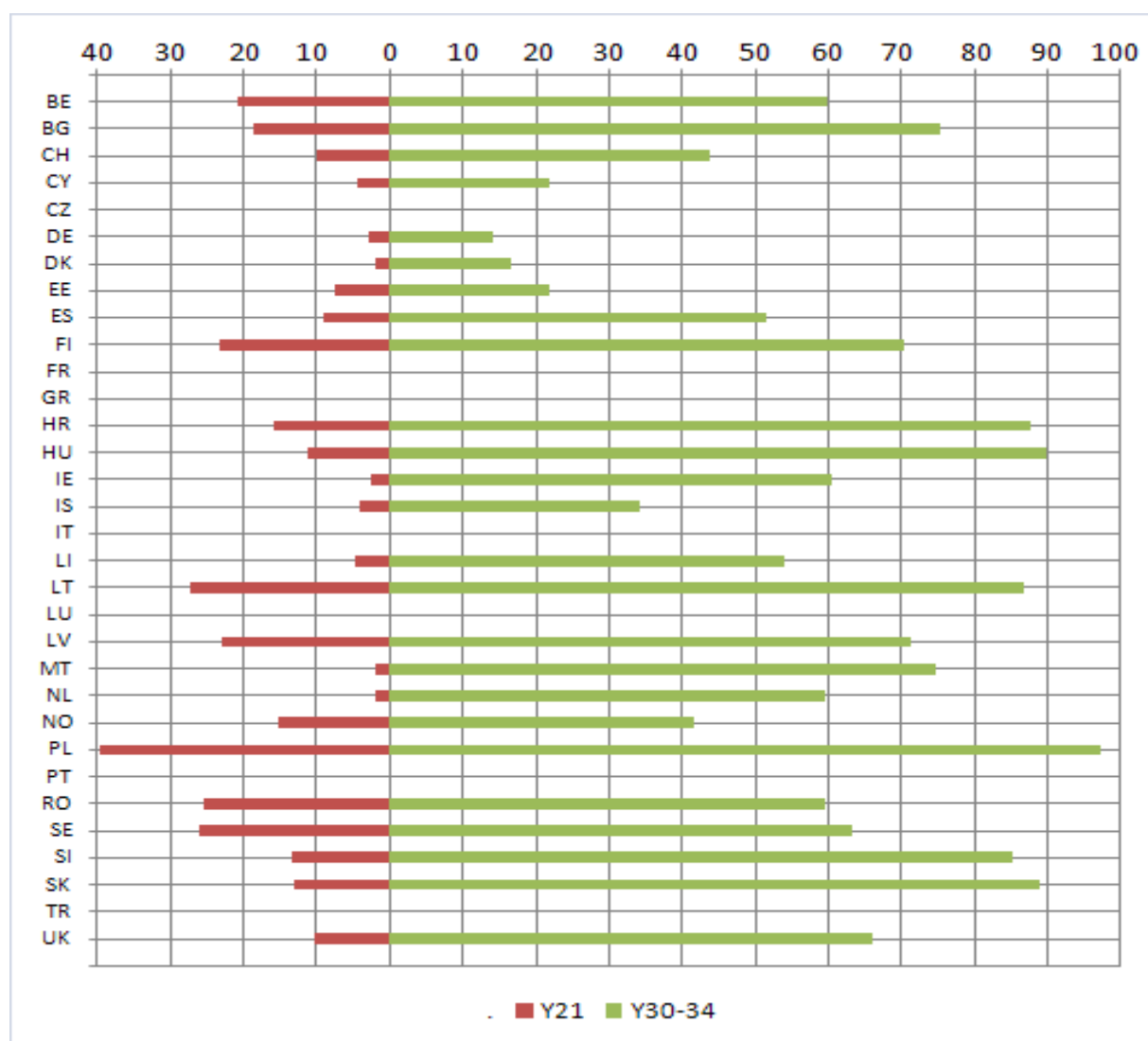
⁵ Will be updated by Eurostat

⁶ Note: In Denmark and Sweden, the most common starting age for 1st cycle students is above the age of 21 (EACEA/Eurydice, 2010). Therefore, “traditional” higher education students in these countries are slightly older than in other countries.

⁷ **Question to Greece:** Figure 4 indicates that all HEI in Greece are required to offer part-time studies. This seems to be in contradiction with data in Figure 6. Could you please clarify the situation in your country?

⁸ For more details on the situation in the Czech Republic, see also Section 6.4.3., the last paragraph.

Figure 6.6: Percentage of students studying part-time, by country and by age, academic year 2008/2009⁹



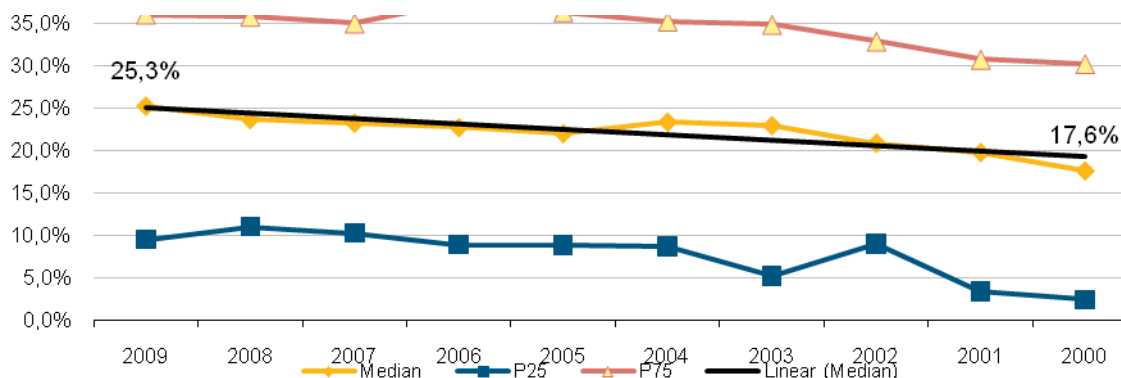
(%)	BE	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	GR	HR	HU	IE	IS
Y21	20.7	18.5	10.1	4.6	0.0	2.8	1.9	7.7	9.0	23.4	0.0	0.0	15.8	11.3	2.6	4.2
Y30-34	59.8	75.4	43.8	21.9	0.0	14.2	16.6	21.8	51.4	70.4	0.0	0.0	87.6	89.8	60.6	34.1
	IT	LI	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	TR	UK
Y21	0.0	4.7	27.3	0.0	23.1	1.8	2.1	15.2	39.8	0.0	25.5	26.0	13.4	13.1	0.0	10.3
Y30-34	0.0	54.1	86.8	0.0	71.4	74.7	59.4	41.6	97.2	0.0	59.6	63.1	85.2	89.1	0.0	65.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE

The trend data covering all age categories show that between 2000 and 2009, in median terms, part-time study has increased from 17.6 % to 25.3 % (Figure 6.7). This increase has been the result of a higher take up of part-time study in the majority of countries considered (18 out of 34 for which data is available). Only in eight countries, the participation in part-time studies has decreased. In some of them, the participation was below the average already in the beginning of the decade (Austria, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Estonia and Malta), whereas others had part-time levels above the average (Hungary and the United Kingdom).

⁹ Will be updated by Eurostat

Figure 6.7: Median of the percentage of students studying part-time, by year, 2000-2009¹⁰



Source: Eurostat, UOE

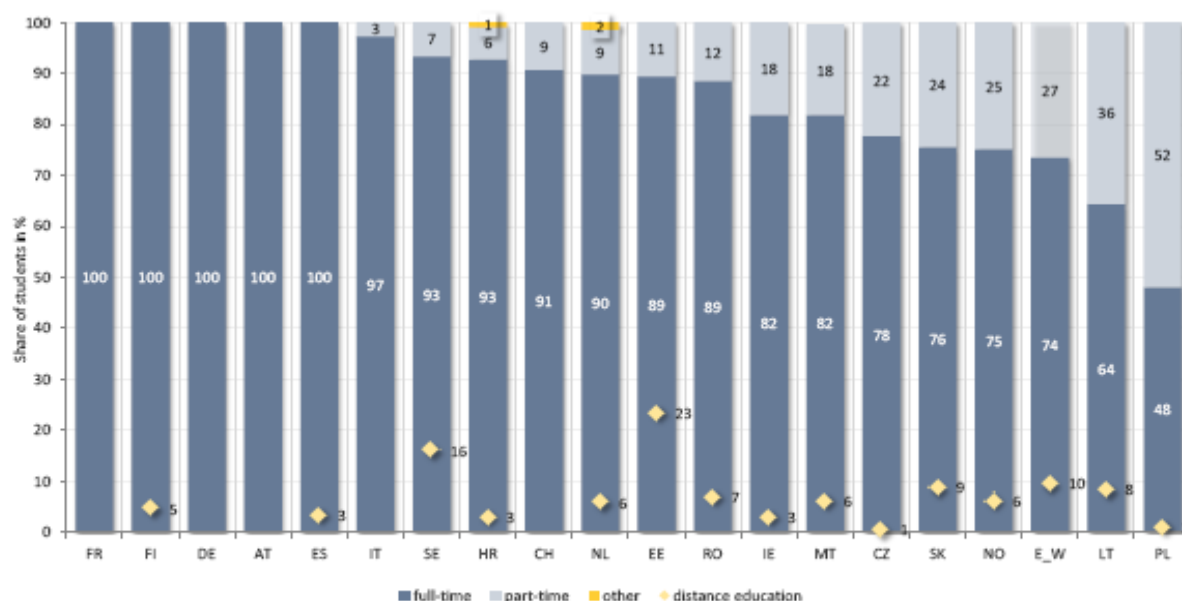
Compared to the UOE data collection, Eurostudent research looks at the participation of students in part-time studies in a different perspective. Instead of using an operational definition of part-time studies/students, it takes into account the self-declaration of students regarding their formal student status¹¹. Data covering 20 EHEA countries indicate that on average, regardless of age, 18,5 % of students have a formal part-time status.

Looking at the situation in individual countries, some significant cross-country differences in the proportion of students with a formal part-time status can be observed (Figure 6.8). In Poland, every second student has a formal part-time status, and in Norway, the United Kingdom (England and Wales) and Lithuania, at least one in four students is formally a part-timer. On the other end lie five countries - France, Finland, Germany, Austria and Spain, where the proportion of those formally registered as part-timers is nil. Contextual data provided in Section 6.4.2 (see Figure 6.2) confirm that in these countries, there is no formal student status other than the status of a full-time student. It is also interesting to note that in Croatia and the Netherlands, a small proportion of students (between 1 % and 2 %) are registered with a formal status other than full-time or part-time. In the Netherlands, these students are likely to be those who follow dual higher education studies (for more details see Section 6.4.2).

¹⁰ Will be updated by Eurostat

¹¹ In the framework of Eurostudent research, formal status of enrolment is any student modus which is officially registered and recognized as such by the state's order and/or higher education institution in the respective country. It may contain the categories full-time, part-time and other. A full-time/part-time student is a student who formally holds the respective status irrespective of the weekly number of hours spent on study-related activities (taught studies + personal study time). Any deviations from the two categories should be placed in the response category 'other', but only if the rule of mutual exclusiveness of response categories is observed (Eurostudent, 2011).

Figure 6.8: Students by formal status of enrolment in %, academic year 2009/2010



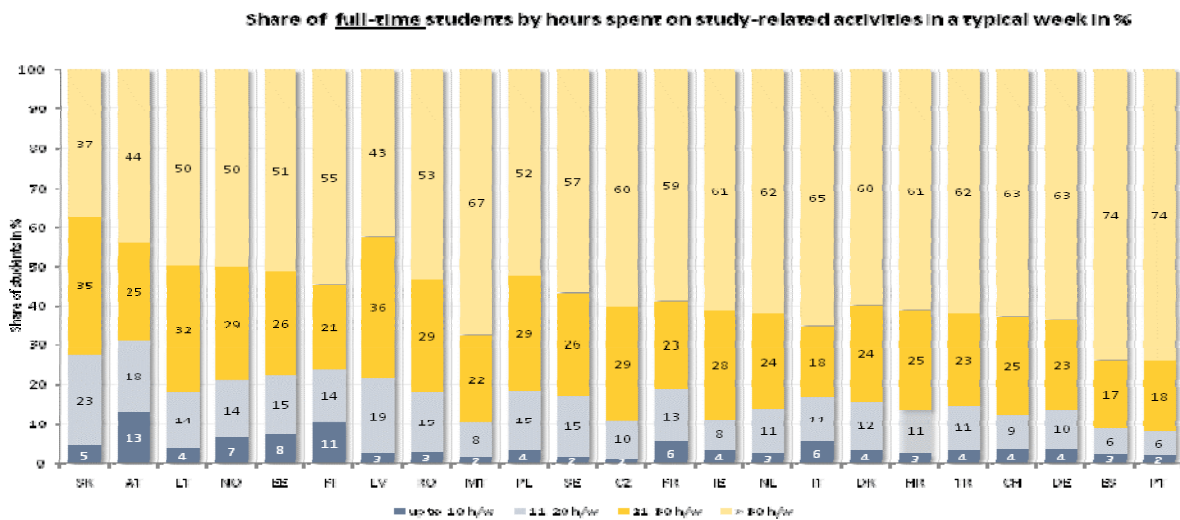
Source: EUROSTUDENT IV, B.10. No data: SI, TR, PT, DK, LV. No data for distance education: DE, LV, IT, CH, FR.
EUROSTUDENT Question(s): 1.2 What is your current formal status as a student?, 1.3 Are you a student of distance education?

Source: Eurostudent

Eurostudent research also allows the evaluation of the relationship between the formal student status and the number of hours students spend during a typical week on study-related activities, i.e. taught courses and personal study.

Figure 6.9 looks at a typical study week of students who consider themselves as having a full-time status in their respective national system. It shows that in each country under consideration, a majority of full-time students (69 % or more) declare that they dedicate more than 20 hours a week to their study-related activities. More than half of these students even devote over 30 hours a week to their studies. Yet, in some countries, a significant proportion of full-time students indicate that they only dedicate up to 20 hours a week to studies. This applies in particular to Austria, Slovakia and Finland, where at least one out of four full-time students is characterised by relatively low study intensity. Taking into account the situation in all countries, on average, 17 % of students holding an official status of a full-time student declare that they do not spend more than 20 hours a week on study-related activities. Therefore, in terms of their study intensity, these students can be regarded as de facto part-time students.

Figure 6.9: Full-time students by hours spent on study-related activities in a typical week in %, academic year 2009/2010



Source: Eurostudent

Besides the study intensity of full-time students, Eurostudent research also looks at the study intensity of those studying part-time. It shows that while the overall study intensity of students having a formal part-time status is lower than that of full-time students, a certain proportion of part-timers are characterised by high study intensity (i.e. these students can be regarded as de facto full-time students). The proportion of these students is particularly high in Poland, Croatia and Switzerland (for more details see Eurostudent, 2011).

Overall, different indicators presented in this section show that the participation of students in part-time studies can be approached from different angles of perspective. While each individual approach has some limitations and disadvantages, brought together, they allow better understanding of the phenomena of part-time studies. These indicators also illustrate that cross-country comparisons of flexible modes of study in higher education should be carried out with caution, taking into account the complexity of this subject matter.

6.5. Recognising prior non-formal and informal learning

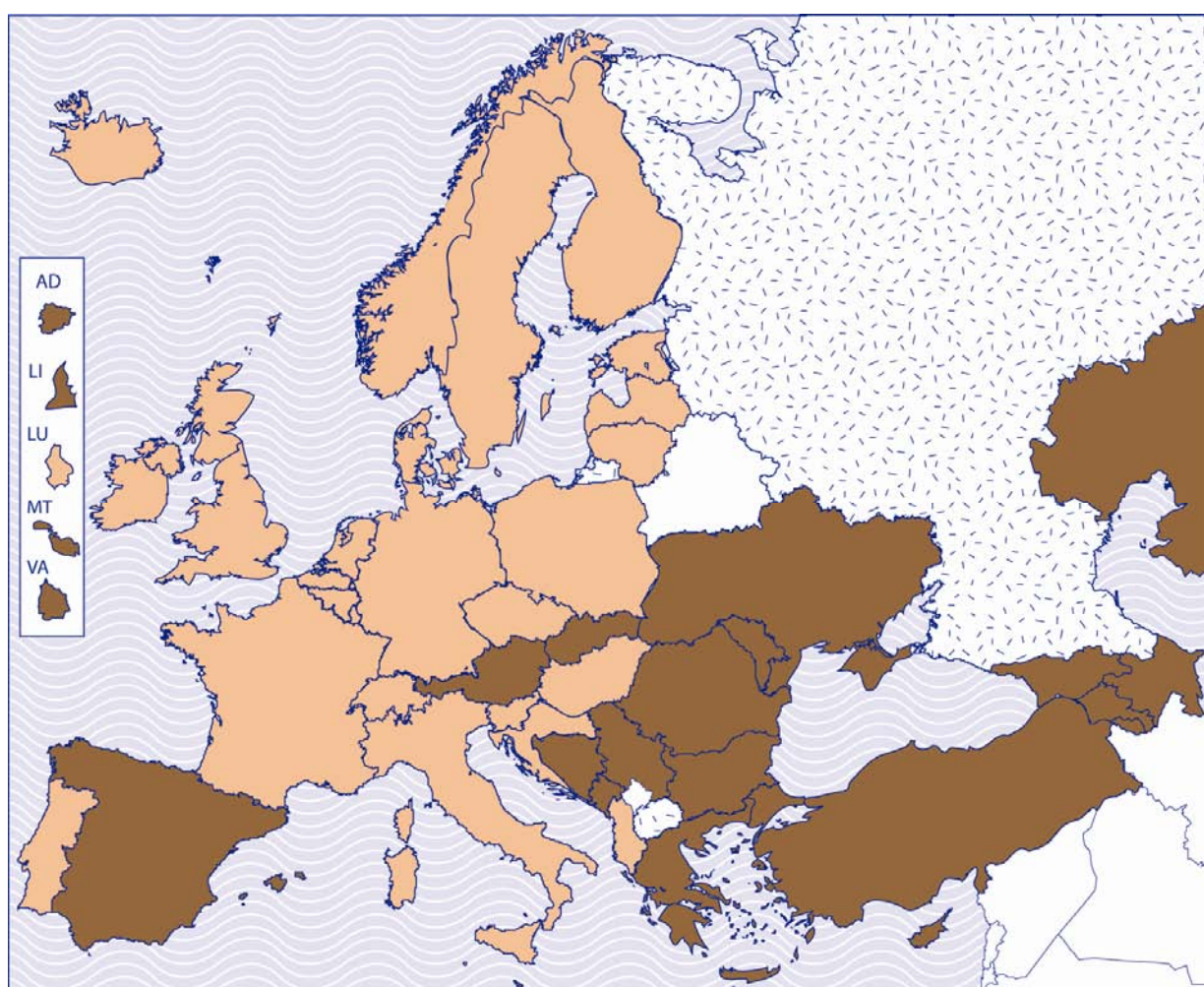
The establishment of systems for the recognition of all forms of prior learning has become one of the central themes not only in the higher education sector, but also in all other sectors of education and training. Along with the recognition of prior formal learning, which commonly takes place in all countries, particular emphasis is being put on the need to enhance the recognition of the knowledge and skills gained through non-formal and informal learning. This type of the recognition is the main focus of the present section.




From the learner's perspective, the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning is most commonly undertaken with one of the following objectives: to gain admission to a higher education programme or to progress in higher education studies. The chapter on the social dimension of higher education (Chapter 4, Figure 4.12) has examined the extent to which the recognition of prior learning can be used for admission to higher education. It has shown that out of 46 higher education systems for which data is available, 21 systems provide a possibility of an alternative access to higher

education, and such access is most often based on the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning.

The recognition of prior learning for progression in higher education studies implies that learners can be exempt from certain higher education courses if they demonstrate that they already possess the knowledge and skills related to these parts of study. Figure 6.10 provides a mapping of this area. It indicates that out of 47 higher education systems for which data is available, in 25 systems prior non-formal and informal learning can be taken into account towards the completion of higher education studies. This suggests that the recognition of prior learning for progression in higher education studies is possible in a slightly higher number of countries than the recognition for admission to higher education.

Figure 6.10: Recognition of prior learning for progression in higher education studies, academic year 2010/2011



	Prior learning	
		
Not available	can be used	cannot be used
	towards fulfilment of a HE study programme	

Source: BFUG questionnaire

The two above-mentioned dimensions of the recognition of prior learning are brought together under the scorecard indicator covering this theme (see Figure 6.11). The indicator was introduced in 2007

and re-examined in 2009. The 2011 version takes into account the extent to which the two types of the recognition are possible within different EHEA systems and the extent to which they are used in practice.

Out of 46 higher education systems for which data is available¹², the indicator identifies a group of thirteen higher education systems (dark green), where the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning can be used for access to higher education as well as for progression in higher education studies. In these countries, the recognition of prior learning is a standard practice in the majority of higher education institutions. Nine higher education systems (light green) have also reached a relatively high level of development in this field. Yet, in these HE systems, the recognition of prior learning is either not yet a common practice in the majority of institutions or, if it is a common practice, it cannot be used both for access to higher education and for progression in higher education studies. In eight countries (yellow), the recognition of prior learning is possible either only for access to higher education or only for progression in higher education studies. In any case, it is still not very widespread. There is also a very small group of countries (orange) that have not yet developed any systematic approach to the recognition of prior learning, but report some progression in this field (e.g. preparation of steering documents). Finally, fourteen EHEA countries (red) have not yet commenced any systematic activities related to the recognition of prior learning in the higher education sector.

Overall, the 2011 BFUG data collection confirms the results of the 2007 and 2009 reporting exercises, which indicated that in the majority of EHEA countries, the recognition of prior learning was at an early stage of development or had not yet started (Rauhvargers, Deane & Pauwels, 2009). Compared to the previous editions, the 2011 scorecard indicator on the recognition of prior learning looks even more pessimistic. This is mainly because the focus of the 2011 reporting was on the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, whereas in the case of previous editions the recognition of prior formal learning was also taken into account. The present indicator shows that a large proportion of EHEA countries are situated at the two extremities of the spectrum: either they already have a well established system of the recognition of prior learning or they have not yet started their activities in this field. A relatively small number of countries are situated at intermediary stages. This could mean that despite the policy attention accorded to the theme of the recognition of prior learning, only very little developments are taking place across the EHEA.

Figure 6.11: Scorecard Indicator n°9 on the recognition of prior learning, academic year 2010/2011






[Insert Figure]¹³

2012	13	9	8	2	14
2009	19	4	9	10	6

¹² **Question to Malta:** the information provided in the BFUG questionnaire is a bit unclear and difficult to interpret. Could you please provide more information on the recognition of prior learning in your country (in particular with relation to access to HE)?

¹³ Will be inserted soon

Scorecard categories

-  There are nationally established procedures, guidelines or policy for assessment and recognition of prior learning as a basis for 1) access to higher education programmes, and 2) allocation of credits towards a qualification and/or exemption from some programme requirements, AND these procedures are demonstrably applied in practice.
-  There are nationally established procedures, guidelines or policy for assessment and recognition of prior learning as a basis for 1) access to higher education programmes, and 2) allocation of credits towards a qualification and/or exemption from some programme requirements, BUT these procedures are not demonstrably applied in practice.
OR
There are nationally established procedures, guidelines or policy EITHER for 1) OR for 2) (see above), AND these procedures are demonstrably applied in practice.
-  There are nationally established procedures, guidelines or policy EITHER for 1) OR for 2) (see above), BUT these procedures are not demonstrably applied in practice.
OR
There are no specific procedures/national guidelines or policy for assessment of prior learning, but procedures for recognition of prior learning are in operation at some higher education institutions or study programmes.
-  Implementation of recognition of prior learning is in a pilot phase at some higher education institutions
OR
Work at drawing up procedures/national guidelines or policy for recognition of prior learning has started.
-  No procedures for recognition of prior learning are in place EITHER at the national OR at the institutional/programme level.

Source: BFUG questionnaire

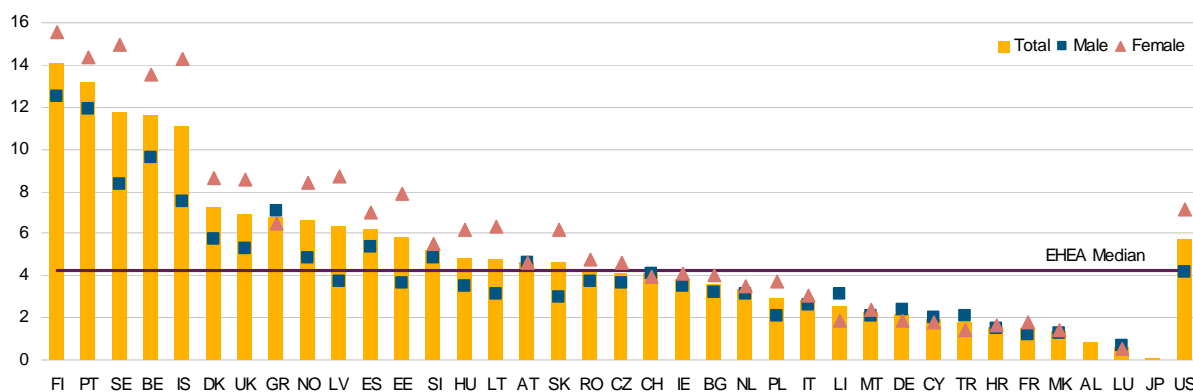
6.6. Participation of mature students and delayed transition students in formal higher education provision

While the preceding sections have been primarily devoted to different policy approaches to lifelong learning across the EHEA, the present section intends to assess how successful the higher education systems are in attracting “lifelong learners”. Although there is no perfect measure that would fully cover this area, available data on the participation of mature students (Eurostat) and delayed transition students (Eurostudent) can be used as a proxy to evaluate the degree to which different higher education systems have already established a culture of lifelong learning.

Eurostat data on students aged 30 and over enrolled in higher education show that during the academic year 2008/2009, the median level of the percentage of these students in formal higher education programmes was 4 % (see Figure 6.12). However, across 35 countries for which data is available, situations vary significantly. While in Albania, Luxembourg, Macedonia and France, mature students represent only around 1 % of those enrolled in the system, in Finland, Portugal, Sweden, Belgium and Iceland, they represent between 14 % and 11 %. However, it must be noted that the latter group includes several countries - namely Finland, Sweden and Iceland – where “typical” higher education student are generally slightly older than in the majority of other EHEA countries. For example in Sweden, the most common starting age for 1st cycle tertiary education is the age of 22 and in Finland, it is situated between 20 and 24 years (EACEA/Eurydice, 2010).

Data on the gender distribution indicate that the share of older students is higher among women than among men in almost every country. Only in 7 countries (out of 34 countries for which data is available) the share is higher for male students. The difference in the share of older students between female and male students is the highest in Iceland and Sweden, where the share for female students is almost 7 percentage points higher than for male students.

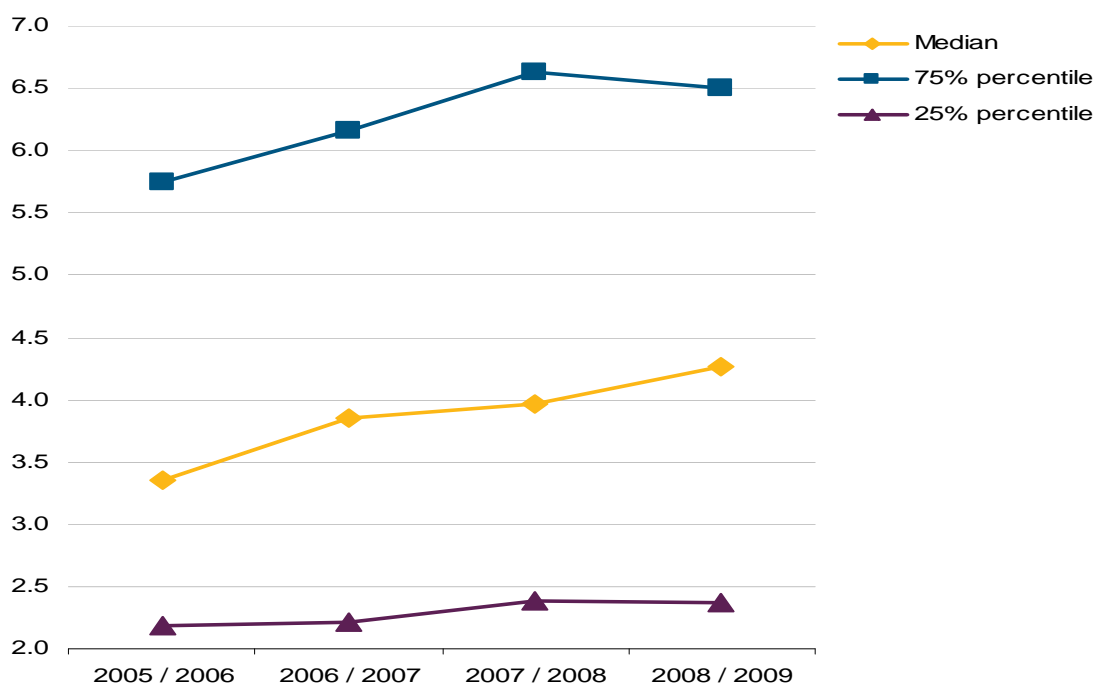
Figure 6.12: Percentage of students enrolled in tertiary education with 30 or more years old, by gender, 2008/2009



Source: Eurostat.

The trend data show that during the second half of the first Bologna decade, the EHEA country median level of share of mature students has increased consistently and passed from 3.35 % in 2005/2006 to 4.26 % in 2008/2009 (see Figure 6.13). It has increased both for the top 25% countries with the highest levels (75 % percentile) and for the 25 % countries with lowest levels (25% percentile).

Figure 6.13: Percentage of students enrolled in tertiary education with 30 or more years old, EHEA country median, 25% percentile and 75% percentile, 2005/2006-2008/2009 (by academic year)

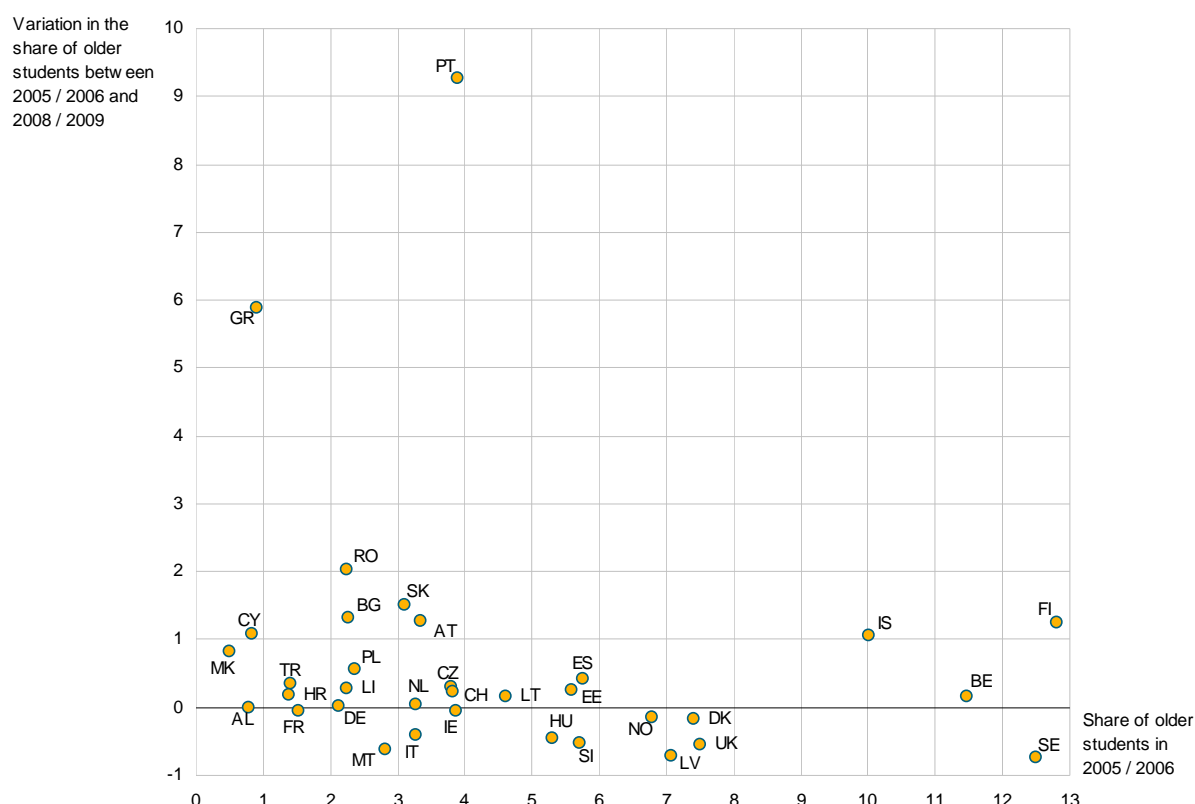


Source: Eurostat.

However, as Figure 6.14 indicates, the share of older students did not increase in every country. The group of 11 countries in which it has decreased includes a few countries which in 2005/2006 presented already relatively low participation levels (e.g. Malta and Italy).

Among countries which recorded an increase in the share of older students between 2005/2006 and 2008/2009, Portugal and Greece represent the most interesting cases. In the first country, the level has increased from around 4 % to the second highest score among the EHEA countries (increase of around 9 percentage points), while in Greece, which had in 2005/2006 one of the lowest levels, it has increased of almost 6 percentage points.

Figure 6.14: Percentage of students enrolled in tertiary education with 30 or more years old in the academic year 2005/2006 and corresponding variation from 2005/2006 and 2008/2009

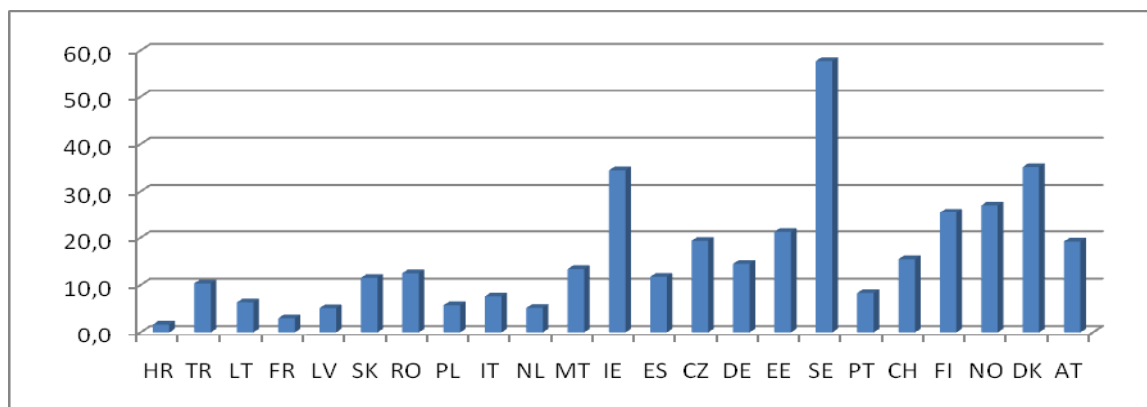


Source: Eurostat

The extent to which higher education systems provide lifelong learning opportunities can also be examined through the level of participation of delayed transitions students, i.e. students who have delayed their transition between upper secondary and higher education by at least 2 years¹⁴. Available Eurostudent data covering 23 countries indicate (see Figure 6.15) that the highest share of these students can be found in the Nordic countries and Ireland, where they represent at least 25 % of the overall student population. Among these countries, Sweden counts a particularly high proportion of delayed transition students (almost 60 % of the student population). On the other end of the spectrum lie Croatia and France, where delayed transition student represent, respectively, only 1,7 % and 3 % of the total student population.

¹⁴ Complete definition of delayed transition students is provided in the Social Dimension Chapter

Figure 6.15: Share of delayed transition students in the student population, 2009/2010



Source: Eurostudent

Overall, these data show that in some EHEA countries, it is relatively common for students to enter higher education after a certain period spent outside the education systems, whereas in other countries, there is a small probability that those who did not embark on studies immediately (or almost immediately) after the completion of upper secondary education would enter the system later in life. This could indicate that countries in the second group have not yet fully adapted their higher education systems to the needs and expectations of “lifelong learners”.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at six interlinked aspects of lifelong learning in higher education. First, it examined how the concept of lifelong learning is understood and interpreted across the EHEA, to what extent lifelong learning has become a recognised mission of higher education institutions and what sources contribute to its financing. The chapter then paid attention to two distinct elements of lifelong learning in higher education, namely flexible delivery of higher education programmes and the recognition of prior learning. The final section looked at how successful different higher education systems are in attracting mature students and delayed transition students to participate in formal higher education programmes.

The analysis has shown that cross-country differences in the understanding of lifelong learning in higher education are difficult to capture. This is partly related to the fact that only in a few countries steering documents covering higher education include a definition of lifelong learning. Where such definition exists, it often has a very broad character, which does not allow a full understanding of how lifelong learning in higher education is viewed and what activities fall under its concept. However, cross-national differences emerge when comparing the main forms of lifelong learning in which higher education institutions are commonly involved. While in some countries, lifelong learning in higher education embraces a wide range of activities, in others, the list is still relatively limited. This could indicate that apart from promoting lifelong learning as a concept of its own right, more policy attention could be provided to the promotion of activities, which are still rarely seen as a part of lifelong learning provision.

Despite conceptual differences in understanding lifelong learning, in most EHEA countries, lifelong learning has already become a recognised mission of all higher education institutions. Yet, activity flows in this field often vary from one institution to another. Besides, higher education institutions sometimes specialise in certain lifelong learning activities, whereas other elements of lifelong learning are not included in their offer. This can have various reasons, including specific legal constraints such

as the lack of regulations on the recognition of prior learning or the impossibility for higher education institutions to provide formal higher education programmes under flexible arrangements.

From a financial perspective, lifelong learning in higher education commonly involves diverse sources. Higher education institutions rarely dispose of specifically earmarked budgets to cover their lifelong learning provision. Most commonly, institutions finance lifelong learning activities from their general budgets, which are often combined with other financial means. Comparable data on the extent to which lifelong learning is financed from public sources is difficult to obtain. To achieve a cross-country comparability in this field it would be necessary to develop a robust methodology that would include an operational definition of lifelong learning in higher education.

With regard to distinct elements of lifelong learning in higher education, the analysis has shown that most EHEA countries recognise the need to enhance flexible delivery of higher education programmes and they address this issue through various policy actions. Around two-thirds of countries have established an official student status other than the status of a full-time student. However, studying with a formal status other than full-time often requires higher private financial investment than studying under traditional arrangements. Therefore, the existence of alternative student statuses needs to be seen in close relation to financial arrangements that apply to each category of students. It can also be noted that the absence of an alternative student status does not necessarily mean the impossibility for students to follow their studies in a flexible way.

Data on the participation of students in part-time studies indicate that mature students are those who are the most susceptible to study part-time. Flexible delivery of higher education programmes and lifelong learning therefore appear as two interlinked thematic areas. The analysis also shows that cross-country comparisons related to alternative modes of study should be carried out with caution, taking into account conceptual complexity of this field.

Another element of lifelong learning in higher education - the recognition of prior learning - has been followed by a separate scorecard indicator since 2007. The main focus of the 2011 indicator was the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning. Similarly to previous editions, the analysis looked at two different aspects of the recognition of prior learning: access to higher education and progression in higher education studies. In addition, the indicator examined the extent to which the recognition of prior learning has become a common practice within the higher education sector. The results show that a large proportion of EHEA countries are situated at the two extremities of the spectrum: either they already have a well established system of the recognition of prior learning or they have not yet started their activities in this field. A relatively small number of countries are situated at intermediary stages, which could indicate that despite the policy attention accorded to the theme, only very little developments are taking place across the EHEA.

Finally, while policy approaches to lifelong learning in higher education differ from one country to another, the degree of participation of non-traditional learners (in particular mature students and delayed transition students) in formal higher education programmes can be used as a proxy to evaluate how successful different higher education systems are in the implementation of a culture of lifelong learning. Available data show that despite the fact that the overall participation rate of matures students remains low, most higher education systems have registered an increase in their participation since the last few years. Hence, it seems that lifelong learning in the EHEA is moving towards positive direction although further improvements are still needed.

7. MOBILITY

Introduction

The Bologna context

Mobility has always been at the heart of the Bologna process. It has been conceived both as a transversal action to complement the original action lines of the process, and as a key instrument to develop the European Higher Education Area. As explained in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), mobility embraces several different dimensions - political, social, economic, as well as academic and cultural¹. The promotion of student and staff mobility has been reiterated in all Ministerial communiqués, and in their 2009 meeting in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve, the Ministers gave a new boost to mobility in the form of a target to be reached by the EHEA countries: *"In 2020, at least 20 % of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad"* (Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009).

The EHEA mobility target was set before available statistical data was able to express clearly the quantity of mobile students in Europe and in the world. Indeed the process of gathering the statistics required to measure progress towards the 20 % mobility target has been a topic of major discussion since 2009. The target includes the two major forms of mobility: degree mobility, whereby a student takes a full degree programme in another country, and credit mobility whereby a part of a student's study programme is undertaken in another country. The required revisions to statistical definitions to capture degree mobility accurately have now been agreed, and the first statistical collection was made by Eurostat in 2010. These data should now start to be available yearly. However, the definitions for the required credit mobility statistics have not yet been finalised, and the sources of data will also need to be developed. Eurostat has initiated this process and during 2011 a task-force including experts from national statistical institutes discussed the required methodological developments. Assuming that progress is smooth, the required statistics on credit mobility should start to be available from 2013.

The second half of the first Bologna decade saw shifts in the way the value of mobility was described in the Bologna process. Not only was mobility being valued for the academic and cultural benefits that it brings, but also for its benefits to the European labour market. The two most recent communiqués dedicated one paragraph explicitly to employability in the context of an increasingly inter-connected European and global labour market. Thus mobility was perceived as a means of widening knowledge and skills of students and staff and better preparing them for employment in the twenty-first century.

The Bologna Ministerial Communiqués have also given attention to the obstacles preventing mobility, naming those which emerge most frequently. Indeed, these have to be eliminated or greatly reduced in order to support and promote mobility on a larger scale.

Mobility is also closely linked to the attractiveness of higher education institutions and is a main tool of internationalisation. Internationalisation of higher education institutions in Europe has been stressed in the Bologna process, and the decade has seen many higher education institutions taking forward their implementation strategies in this area. It is also worth mentioning that one of the innovative features of internationalisation during the last decade has been the creation of an international environment at

¹ See: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/Berlin_Communique1.pdf

home institutions for those who for one reason or another cannot pursue a study period abroad. The institution can provide courses taught in English or other foreign languages for domestic students and facilitate more interaction with students from abroad in an increasingly multi-cultural environment.

BFUG Working Group on Mobility

The BFUG established a working group on mobility at its meeting in Stockholm on 28/29 September in 2009. Its main task was to draft a Mobility Strategy for the EHEA which is to be adopted at the Ministerial Conference in Bucharest in April 2012. The Strategy focuses on the importance of mobility and internationalisation in higher education, and outlines key action required by the Bologna countries to pave the way for more high quality mobility exchanges and fewer obstacles across the continent.

BFUG Working Group on International Openness

The BFUG also continued to support a working group on International Openness to take forward the recommendations of the 2009 report "The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in a global context: Report on overall developments at the European, national and institutional levels". The working group has set up the Information and Promotion Network (IPN) which aims at enhancing an international promotion of the EHEA as well as the promotion of national higher education systems in a European context. One of the IPN's outcomes is a report based on a survey which focused on international marketing, i.e. activities that are aimed at attracting international students and thus at increasing incoming mobility to the EHEA. In this respect, different channels of providing information about the EHEA as well as the ways of building ties across borders and organisations have been proposed.²

This chapter has benefited from close co-operation with both working groups mentioned above. In particular, one of the main sources of information for this chapter – the BFUG mobility questionnaire – was developed by the Mobility Working Group.

Chapter outline

This chapter aims to give an overview of the progress EHEA countries have made so far. The chapter first looks at the main different types of mobility. Statistical data on incoming and outward mobility show the main trends in mobility flows of students from the EHEA and the rest of the world studying in one of the EHEA countries, as well as students who are nationals of one country and graduate in a different country within the Bologna area. A substantial part of this chapter is dedicated to obstacles and measures adopted to foster student mobility. The last section encompasses staff mobility and, attempts to identify the main obstacles and measures in place.

7.1. Types of mobility

Although the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué sets a concrete target for mobility, it does not provide definitions and refers only to "a study or training period abroad" (Ibid). "Types" of mobility are mentioned only in general terms, as Ministers call upon each country to increase mobility and "to diversify its types and scope".

These types of mobility have been taken forward and defined in the context of discussions on statistical indicators at European level. The definitions used in this report have been formulated by Eurostat in the context of its work on the measurement of mobility targets within the Bologna process.

The most important distinction for student mobility from a statistical point of view, as well as for policy making, is between degree and credit mobility. Degree mobility is a long-term form of mobility which aims at the acquisition of a whole degree or certificate in the country of destination. Credit mobility is a short-term form of mobility - usually a maximum of one year - aiming at the acquisition of credits in a foreign institution in the framework of on-going studies at the home institution. Thus the student typically begins a programme in the home institution, moves to another institution for an agreed part of the programme, and then returns to the home institution in order to finish the programme.

While information on degree mobility should be tracked in administrative statistics, credit mobility data is more difficult to collect. The only credit mobility data systematically collected is through programmes such as Erasmus. However, even if all programme information data are put together, it is clear that a number of students will not appear in statistics. In particular "free-mover" students who are not mobile within an organised programme will not be tracked.

Another important distinction of mobility types is linked to mobility flows commonly addressed as incoming and outward mobility. Incoming mobility refers to the country of destination – the country where the student moves in order to study - and is usually measured by the ratio between the mobile students studying in the country and the total number of students studying in the country. The incoming mobility rate may be considered as an indicator of the attractiveness of the country as a destination for international students.

Outward mobility refers to the country of origin – the country from where the student moves. While for many students this will be identical to the country of the student's nationality, it is more accurate to consider the country of permanent/prior residence or prior education. It can be measured by the ratio between the number of students from the country of origin and the total student population of the country of origin. The outward mobility rate may be considered as an indicator of a pro-active policy for students to acquire international experience (particularly for credit mobility). However, it may also be an indicator of possible insufficiencies in the country of origin (particularly for degree mobility).

While degree and credit mobility are the main forms of mobility under consideration in this report, other forms should not be forgotten. Mobility encompasses a wide range of short-term provision such as internships/work placements, research stays, summer schools, language courses and voluntary work. Statistical data on these types of mobility are, however, not collected at European level.

7.2. Student mobility flows

Mobility in Europe should not, and cannot, be separated from trends at global level. Even when the focus is on European countries, mobility flows from other continents to Europe as well as flows of European students worldwide form a significant part of the picture. Overall, three main student mobility flows can be distinguished:

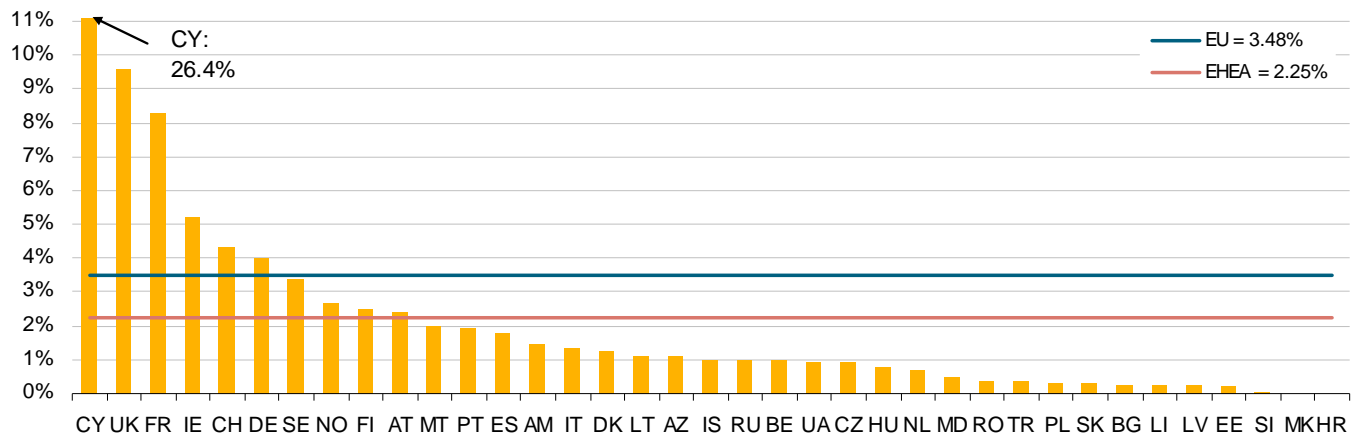
- degree mobility flows from outside the EHEA to the EHEA
- degree mobility flows from inside the EHEA to outside the EHEA
- degree and credit mobility flows within the EHEA

² See: <http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/presentations/IPN%20Survey%20Report%2025%20March%202011.pdf>

7.2.1. Degree mobility flows from outside the EHEA to the EHEA

Figure 7.1 depicts the incoming degree mobility rate to EHEA countries, showing mobile students from the whole world, but excluding the EHEA countries, studying in the country as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled.

Figure 7.1: The incoming mobility rate – mobile students from abroad from outside the EHEA studying in the country as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled, by country of destination, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Footnotes: Data refer to foreign students (student with the citizenship of a foreign country) instead of mobile students (student who moved to the country in order to study) for the following countries: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV and MK.

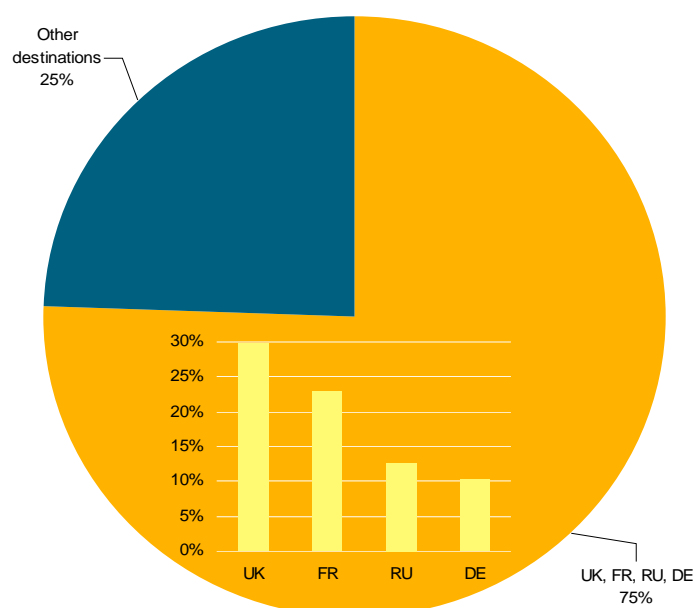
EHEA aggregate excludes the following countries of destination: Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia and Holy See.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

Only four countries, namely Cyprus, the United Kingdom, France and Ireland reach more than 5 %. These countries thus seem to be the most attractive countries for students coming outside the EHEA. At the other end of the spectrum, seventeen countries reach less than 1 %. The aggregated value for the whole EHEA is 2.25 %.

Although from this figure a number of countries appear to have a low rate of incoming mobility from outside the EHEA, the size of the country and the overall volume of students also needs to be considered. Indeed a very different picture emerges when looking at the distribution of incoming mobile students by country of destination (see Figure 7.2). Four countries - the United Kingdom, France, Russia and Germany - attract 75 % of all students from outside the EHEA.

Figure 7.2: Distribution of incoming mobile students from abroad from outside the EHEA by country of destination – academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

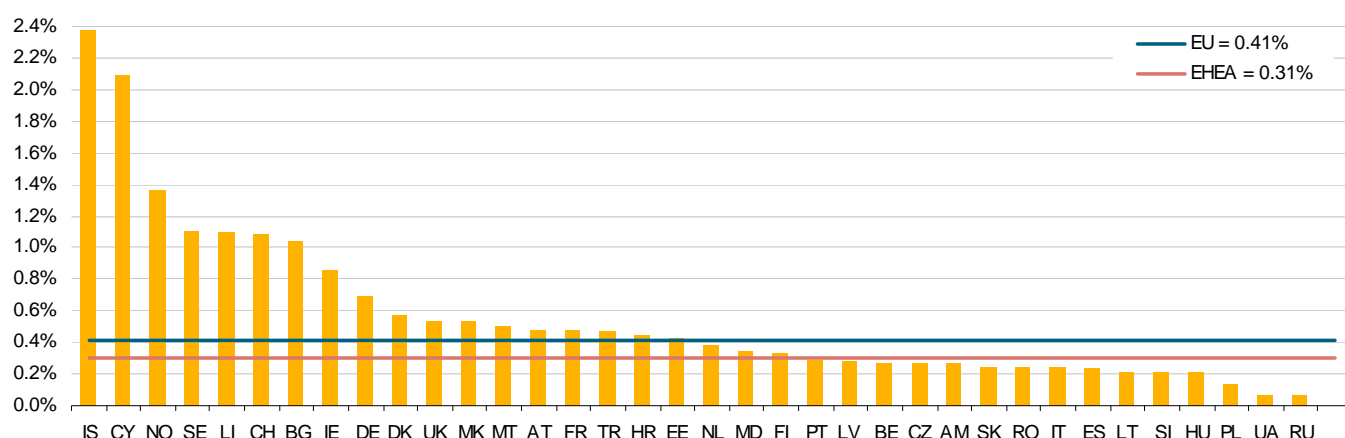
Footnotes: Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following countries: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV and MK.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

7.2.2. Degree mobility flows from inside the EHEA to outside the EHEA

The outward degree mobility rate shows mobile students that graduated abroad as a percentage of the total number of students graduating in the country of origin.

Figure 7.3: Outward mobility rate – students from a country of the EHEA studying abroad outside the EHEA as a percentage of the total number of students of the same country of origin, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

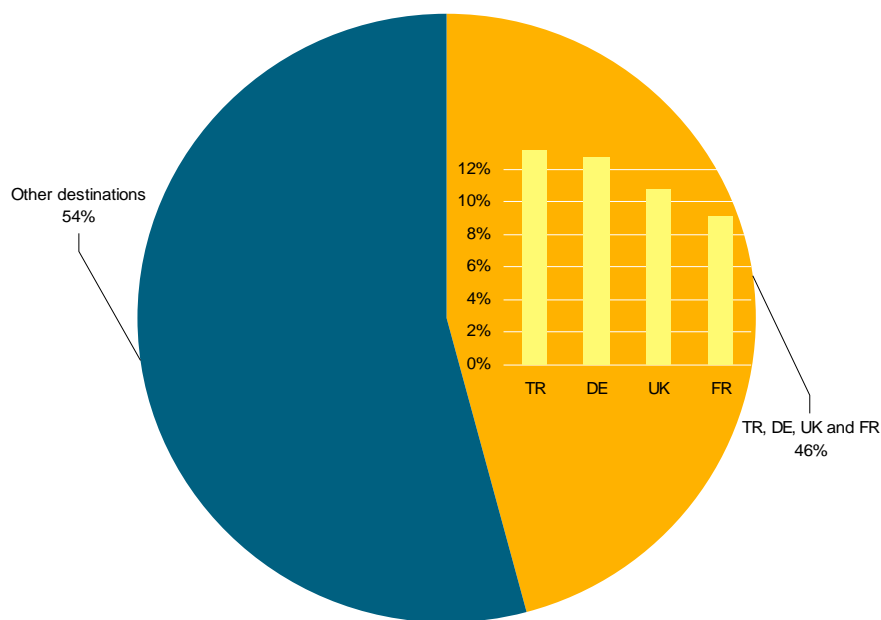
Footnotes: Destinations outside of the EHEA considered are Australia, New Zealand, United States and Japan.

Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following country of destination: Japan.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

The rate is highest in the small states of Iceland and Cyprus reaching slightly more than 2 % (see Figure 7.3). These countries are followed by Norway, Sweden, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Bulgaria where the range is from 1 % to 2 %. The aggregated value for the EHEA reaches only 0.31%.

Figure 7.4: Distribution of outward mobile students from the EHEA to abroad outside the EHEA by country of origin, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Footnotes: Destinations outside of the EHEA considered are Australia, New Zealand, United States and Japan.

Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following country of destination: Japan.

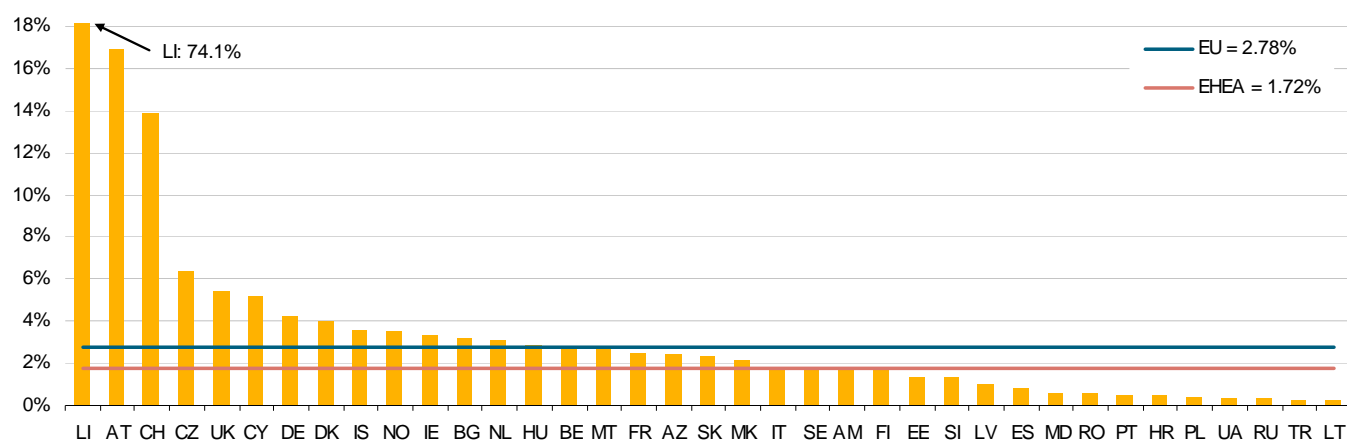
ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

When the information is analysed in relation to the country of origin, four countries can be seen to provide a very significant proportion of the students studying abroad outside the EHEA. These are Turkey, Germany, the United Kingdom and France (see Figure 7.4). Students from these four countries present almost half of all outward mobile students from the EHEA studying outside the area.

7.2.3. Degree and credit mobility flows within the EHEA

It is important to keep in mind that mobility is currently a relatively minor phenomenon and does not reach significant values compared to the total numbers of students enrolled in higher education. Based on Eurostat data, the aggregated value of students studying in the EHEA coming from any country from abroad (i.e. incoming mobility from outside the EHEA plus incoming mobility from inside the EHEA) reaches slightly less than 4 % (Figure 7.1 and 7.5).

Figure 7.5: Incoming degree mobility rate – mobile students from abroad from inside the EHEA studying in the country as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



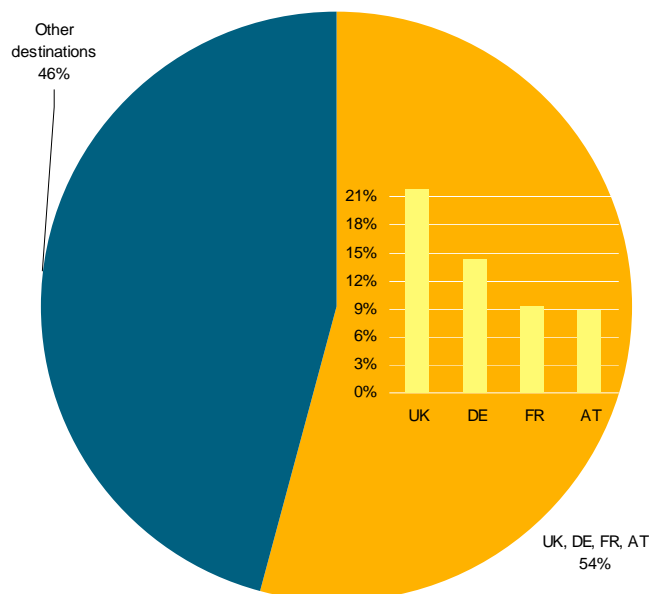
Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Footnotes: Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following countries: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV and MK.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

The majority of countries reporting on total mobility flows record more outward than incoming students. South and east European countries tend to have more outward mobility, while west European countries have more incoming students. The incoming mobility rate in the EHEA (see Figure 7.5) shows mobile students from abroad studying in the country as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in that country. Switzerland, Austria and Liechtenstein have the highest incoming mobility rate in the EHEA ranging from 13.91 % to 74.1 %. All other countries show levels below 10 % out of which all but three (Czech Republic, United Kingdom and Cyprus) are below 5 %. The aggregated value for the EHEA is 1.72 %.

Figure 7.6: Distribution of incoming degree mobile students from abroad from inside the EHEA by country of destination, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

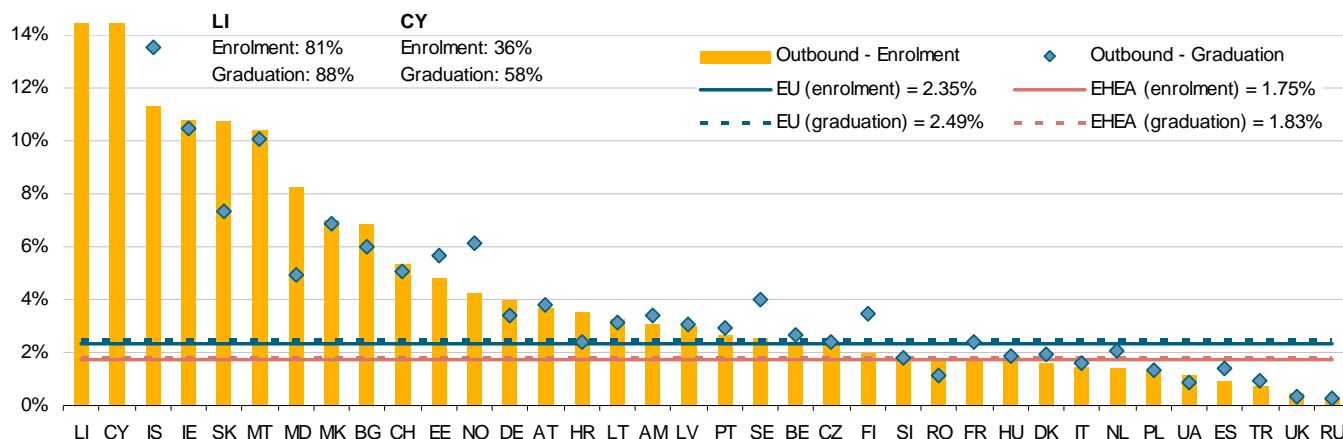
Footnotes: Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following countries: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV and MK.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

Figure 7.6 presents the distribution of incoming degree mobile students from inside the EHEA. It shows that more than half of all incoming students from inside the EHEA choose the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Austria as their study destination.

Figure 7.7 depicts students from a country of the EHEA studying abroad inside the EHEA as a percentage of the total number of students of the same country of origin. The graduation values included in the graph are important for evaluation of progress towards the Bologna 20% benchmark.

Figure 7.7: Outward degree mobility rate – students from a country of the EHEA studying abroad (enrolment) or graduating (graduation) inside the EHEA as a percentage of the total number of students of the same country of origin, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Footnotes: The following destinations inside the EHEA were not included: Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia and Holy See.

For outward mobility in terms of enrolment, data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following countries of destination: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV and MK.

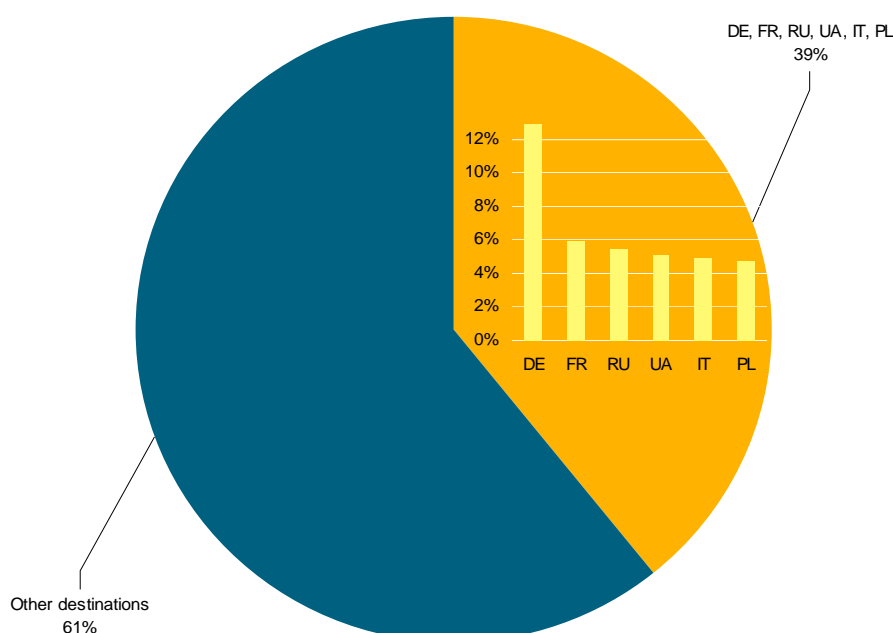
For outward mobility in terms of graduation, data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following countries of destination: BE, BG, CZ, GR, FR, IT, LV, MT, PL, PT, FI, TR, IS, LI, AM, AZ, GE and RU.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

Apart from Cyprus and Liechtenstein with outward degree mobility rates of graduates of more than 50%, Greece, Iceland, Ireland and Malta have the highest values, between 10 % and 14 % (see Figure 7.7). The vast majority of EHEA countries, however, reach values of less than 5 %. Based on these data from academic year 2008/09, the aggregated value for the EHEA is 1.83 %.

Figure 7.8 presents information on outward degree mobility to another EHEA country from the perspective of the country of origin.

Figure 7.8: Distribution of outward degree mobile students from the EHEA to abroad inside the EHEA (enrolment) by country of origin, academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Footnotes: The following destinations inside the EHEA were not included: Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia and Holy See.

Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following country of destination: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV and MK.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

The greatest share of EHEA students enrolled for a degree study in another EHEA country come from Germany, and this is followed by France, Russia, Ukraine, Italy and Poland (see Figure 7.8).

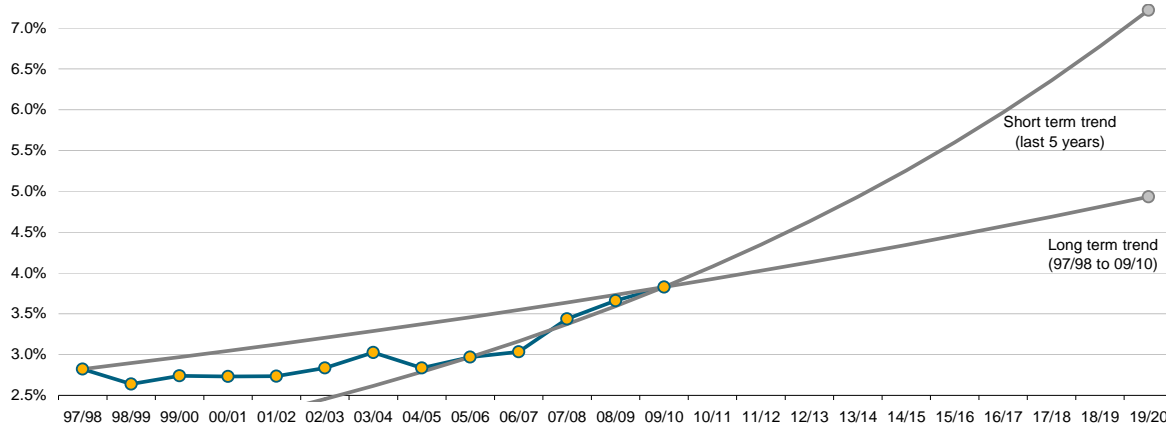
All the figures so far concern degree mobility, and thus there is a significant gap in relation to information on credit mobility. Indeed the only significant source of data concerning credit mobility is currently the Erasmus programme, which is undoubtedly the most widely used instrument of European credit mobility. Nevertheless not all EHEA countries are able to participate in Erasmus and hence there may be many imbalances in credit mobility as a consequence.

The absolute numbers of students abroad under Erasmus have continuously grown since the conception of the programme. Erasmus student exchange in the academic year 2009/10 increased by 7.4 % (European Commission 2011, p.4). If this trend continues, the Erasmus target of three million students by the end of academic year 2012/13 will be reached (Ibid).

Figure 7.9 shows how the Erasmus programme can contribute to the 20 % benchmark by 2020. The chances that a higher education student goes abroad within the framework of the Erasmus programme (in a country participating in Erasmus) have in general increased significantly from 1998 to 2010. If the long-term trend is kept, it should reach around 5 % in 2020. This is the most conservative trend. If the trend of the last years (short-term trend) continues, it may reach 7 % in 2020.

Figure 7.9: Ratio students participating in Erasmus / Enrolment over 4 academic years

(Chances that a student has been abroad under Erasmus if he spends 4 years in higher education)



Source: Eurostat.

Footnotes:

- Long-term trend calculated based on the average yearly growth rate of the ratio between 1997/1998 and 2009/2010.
- Short-term trend calculated based on the average yearly growth rate of the ratio between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010.

7.2.3. Balanced vs. imbalanced mobility

The London Communiqué³ was the first one in the Bologna process to highlight more equitably balanced mobility, and thus turned attention to mobility flows across the EHEA. The aspiration of more balanced mobility was reinforced by the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué which states that mobility should lead to a more balanced flow of incoming and outward students across the EHEA.

Statistical background

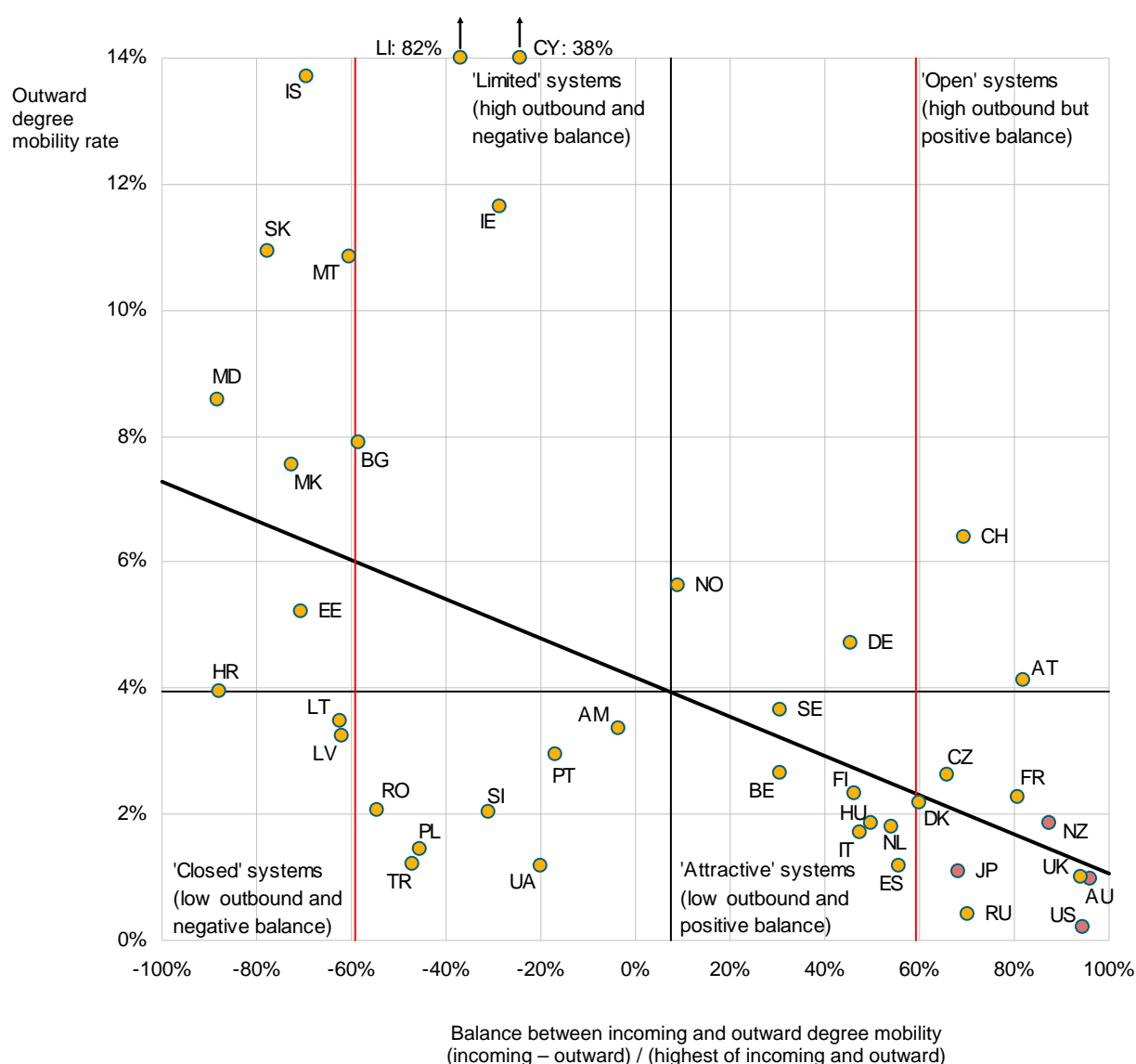
While the notion of balanced mobility may appear intuitively to be desirable, reality in this area is complex. For example, low incoming and low outward mobility rates would be balanced – but the reality would not be positive - assuming that mobility is considered to be positive. High incoming and high outward mobility rates would also be balanced, but without knowing more about the populations involved in the mobility flows and in the reasons for these flows, it is impossible to assess their

³ See: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/London_Communique18May2007.pdf

desirability. This section demonstrates the balance between outward and incoming mobility flows and identifies four types of mobility systems.

An interesting comparison can be made between incoming and outward mobility in the EHEA (see Figures 7.5 and 7.7). Overall, the differences are highest in Cyprus and Austria (30.59 %, 13.30 % respectively) followed by Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Slovakia and Switzerland (ranging from 6 to 9 %). In all these countries, with the exception of Austria and Switzerland, the difference is in favour of outward mobility. At the other end of the scale are countries with very balanced rates of European incoming and outward mobility flows. Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine have a difference of less than 1 %. The mobility flows in these countries can therefore be considered to be balanced – but only if only mobility within the EHEA is the only form of mobility taken into account. Indeed the flows are not necessarily balanced between specific countries or regions. The general tendency is towards east-west imbalances where incoming students come predominantly from eastern or southern Europe and outward students head towards western or northern Europe.

Figure 7.10: Balance as a measure of the attractiveness of the education system of the country (mobility flows including EHEA and outside EHEA) – academic year 2008/09, ISCED 5-6



Source: Eurostat (UOE data collection)

Footnotes: Data refer to foreign students instead of mobile students for the following countries: FR, IE, NO, FI, AT, MT, AM, IT, AZ, RU, UA, CZ, MD, TR, PL, LV, MK and JP.

Destinations of mobility considered are the EHEA (except Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia and Holy See), Australia, New Zealand, United States and Japan.

ISCED level 6 excluded for the following countries: AM and DE.

Regression line and averages computed excluding LI and CY (which were considered outliers).

Guide to the chart:

Chart plots balance against outward mobility.

Dots represent countries.

Countries more to the right have a high imbalance towards incoming, countries more to the left have a high imbalance towards outward and countries closer to the middle are balanced.

Countries up in the chart have high levels of outward mobility and countries down in the chart have low levels of outward mobility.

Negative balance means that outbound mobility is higher than inbound mobility.

Positive balance means that inbound mobility is higher than outbound mobility.

The most balanced countries (defined as the more balanced 50 % among the countries where data is available) are between the two vertical red lines.

The vertical black line represents the average of the balance and the horizontal black line represents the average of outward mobility rate (countries un-weighted). The crossing point of the two black lines marks the centre of the cloud of country dots.

Thick black line: countries above the line show a level of outward mobility higher than what one would expect given their balance; countries below the line show a level of outward mobility lower than what one would expect given their balance.

The chart in Figure 7.10 is split into four quadrants (yellow, green, orange and red) with the following characteristics:

The bottom right (yellow) quadrant includes countries with relatively low outward mobility and an excess of incoming over outward mobility. These countries can be characterised as highly attractive.

The upper right (green) quadrant includes countries with an excess of incoming over outward mobility, indicating that they are attractive, but at the same time they indicate a relatively high outward mobility. These countries can therefore be characterised as "open" with a relatively high number of students going abroad to study but even more students coming from abroad.

The upper left (orange) quadrant includes countries with relatively high outward mobility and an excess of outward over incoming mobility; for whatever reasons these education systems appear to lack the capacity to attract students while significant numbers of students leave to study in other systems. They can therefore be characterised as "limited" systems.

The lower left (red) quadrant includes countries with a relatively low levels of outward mobility and rates of incoming mobility that are even lower; the education systems in this quadrant are not attractive compared to other European countries, and students do not seem to have the same opportunities to go abroad as in other countries. Thus the systems here can be characterised as "closed".

On the basis of this data, currently only four countries have higher education systems that can be considered as open – Austria, Germany, Norway and Switzerland. Two of these countries, Germany and Norway, manage to have both an open and a balanced system.

When considering the most balanced countries (between -60 and 60 %), thirteen have an outward mobility rate that is below the EHEA average.

National perceptions of balanced mobility

As there is no definition of balanced mobility at European level, countries were asked whether they have such a definition in their national steering documents. Around half of the countries have a definition or a common understanding of balanced mobility, defining it as a number of incoming and outward mobile students "approximately the same" or even more strictly as, "the same". Turkey has even given a numerical expression to the concept, and considers mobility as balanced if the difference between incoming and outward students is within 15 %.

It is also true that a country might be aware of some imbalances and may consider this positively. High rates of incoming mobility may be perceived favourably for a national education system and economy. The reasons range from additional income to higher education institutions to declining numbers in the working age population and hence desirable influx of highly skilled people. Outward mobility may also be considered positively too - strengthening links to other countries and preparing graduates for the European and global market place.

While mobility between two particular countries might be balanced, overall mobility is in general usually imbalanced. Indeed 34 higher educational systems report that they consider their mobility flows as not balanced. Yet only eleven countries⁴ address this issue consciously through a mobility strategy or higher education action plan. In these cases, they acknowledge the need of more balanced mobility and they primarily declare the necessity of additional funding, strengthening language skills and increasing motivation for students to be mobile.

The EHEA countries also reported more specifically whether there are significant imbalances with particular countries, regions or continents. As many as 35 educational systems indicate this phenomenon. Armenia identifies the EHEA and the USA as the main regions for outward mobility while the Middle East and India are the sources of incoming students; Norway sees the USA, Australia and the United Kingdom as the main destinations for outward students while Russia, Germany and France are the main countries providing incoming mobility. Similarly, Cypriot students head towards Greece and the United Kingdom, while incoming students come from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India and China. Overall, significant imbalances with countries of other continents are observed with outward mobility flows predominantly heading towards the USA, and incoming mobility flows coming from Asia, and in particular China and India , as well as the Middle East. Thus the east-west flows that can be identified within the EHEA are echoed by east to west global mobility flows.

7.3. Measures to promote and support student mobility

Countries across Europe take various measures in order to enable and foster student mobility. These include the adoption of programmes at European, national and institutional level. Financial support measures, including ensuring the portability of student support, are a significant challenge for many countries. There is also a strong focus on identifying and removing obstacles to mobility.

7.3.1. Programmes at European level

Firstly, it is important to point out that European policy on mobility is pursued through a number of different programmes and measures – rather than through a single instrument or programme. While Erasmus is the most significant instrument for the countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes create conditions for mobility in non-EU

Bologna countries - although the scope of eligible countries for these programmes extends beyond the EHEA. The sub-regional exchange programme CEEPUS also supports student mobility and cooperation between universities in central, eastern and south-eastern Europe.

European programmes are a valuable source of information and usually the only form of monitoring and reporting on mobility. As mentioned in the *Focus on Higher Education* (Eurydice 2010), these programmes give a great boost to national action to promote mobility, which is very often built around European programmes.

7.3.2. Programmes and strategies at national level

Mobility is usually a part of internationalisation strategies and initiatives for higher education. When it comes to conceptual documents at national level, half of the countries in the EHEA report that they have a national strategy or action plan to foster mobility. Moreover, a number of countries adopt steering documents highlighting an issue of quality in the field of mobility (DE, IT, NO) and some launch separate programmes implementing financial support measures to stimulate mobility.

An interactive bottom-up approach of drafting a national strategy can be found in Finland. Over 1 200 respondents shared their views on internationalisation of higher education institutions via web-based open consultation. In addition, six thematic workshops have been organised where a total of 130 experts participated.

The majority of countries that have a national strategy or action plan prioritise particular geographical regions for student mobility. Most often it is the EHEA, and this is followed by USA, Canada and Asia. While the majority specifies a geographical region, a few countries stipulate particular countries or sub-geographical areas for privileged cooperation on student mobility. For instance Denmark focuses on China and India, Austria on the EHEA, but highlighting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in particular. Similarly, Slovenia focuses on the western Balkan countries and the Mediterranean area. It is also interesting to note that some countries may have a different focus for ingoing and outward mobility. Thus one geographical region may be privileged for students who want to study abroad while students from a different region may be targeted for incoming mobility.

A vast majority of countries⁵ with national strategies or action plans monitor their impact or at least certain aspects of their strategies. Monitoring is mainly undertaken by ministries and other central authorities on an annual basis and is often based on reports of higher education institutions. At the same time, even if student mobility is monitored, it is difficult to ascertain whether the changes in mobility flows are due to specific measures or external factors such as the financial crisis (NO).

While around half of the countries claim to have a national level strategy, almost all countries report that their higher education institutions have mobility strategies. Thus institutional strategies may or may not relate to the national level. Some countries suggest that national strategy can serve as an impetus and support to institutional strategy.

⁴ BE(fr), CZ, DE, DK, EE, GE, LV, LT, MT, PL, SE

⁵ AT, AR, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GE, HR, IE, IS, IT, LT, MT, NO, RO, SI, SE, TR, UK(en)

7.3.3. Target setting

On the whole, less than half of the countries⁶ in the EHEA stipulate specific mobility targets. On the other hand, when looking only at countries with national strategies or actions plans, around three quarters set a target for at least one type of mobility.

The agreed target of at least 20 % of those graduating in the EHEA having a study or training period abroad as formulated by Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué is often mentioned by those countries⁷ that state their targets for different forms of outward mobility. Only Austria, Germany and the Netherlands set more ambitious targets. Germany set a target for all forms of mobility, namely credit and degree mobility. The target should reach 50 % of higher education institution graduates staying abroad of which at least 20 % shall study at least one semester at a foreign institution. Austria and the Netherlands set the targets in credit mobility. In the case of Austria, it is 50 % of graduates by 2020. The Netherlands stipulates the range of 17 to 25 % by 2013.

The majority of targets are linked to a mid-term horizon of 2015, although the range is between 2011 and 2020. Target differences in cycles appear mainly with respect to third cycle students.

7.3.4. Obstacles to student mobility

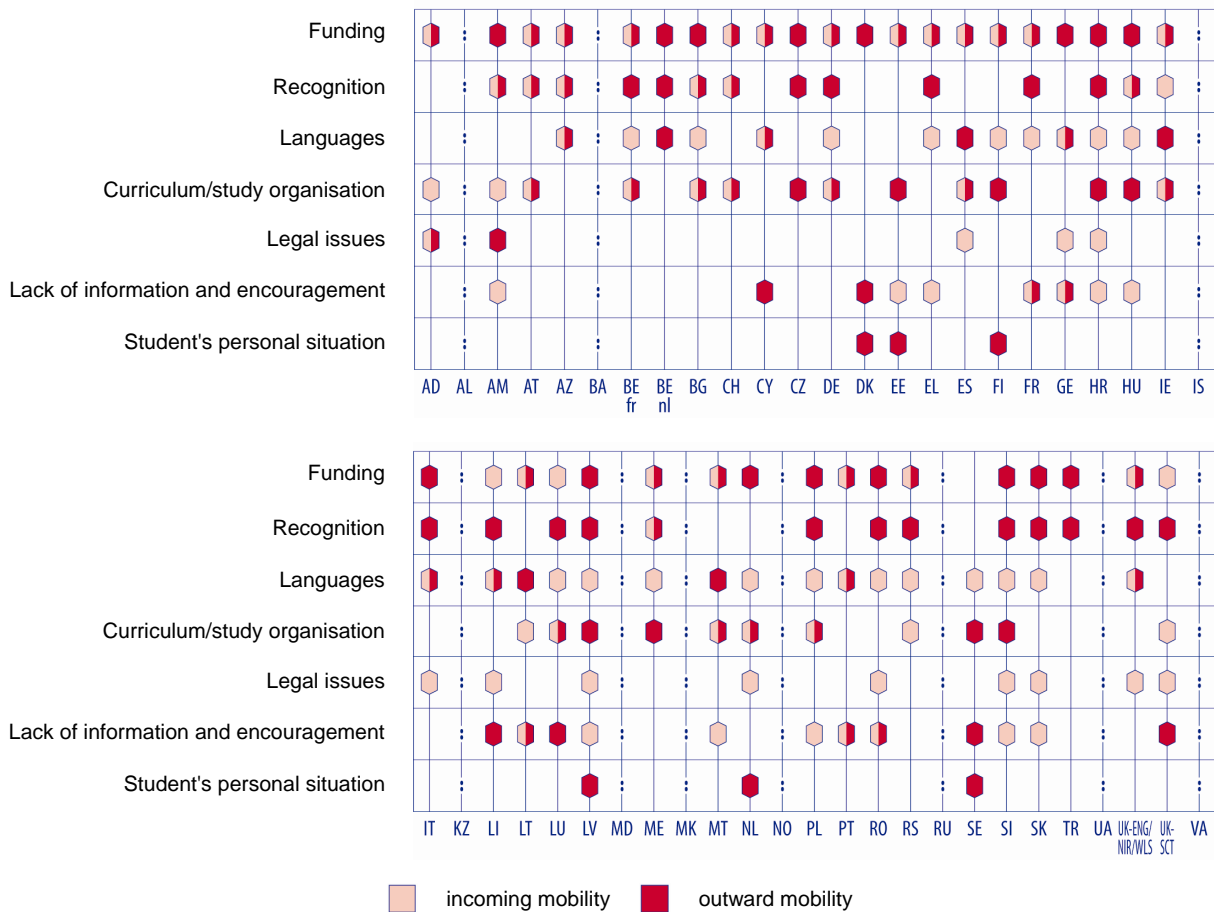
In order to reach the targets and foster mobility, around half of the EHEA countries⁸ have prepared reports and surveys analysing obstacles to student mobility. Based on reporting where countries identified the most important ones, the obstacle that dominates for outward mobility and is the second most commonly cited for incoming mobility is funding. This concern is equally spread across EHEA countries. A lack of support services and accommodation for international students is also commonly expressed, as well as immigration and visa difficulties. The issues for outward mobility differ slightly. Apart from bureaucratic and organisational difficulties, students' personal situations such as leaving family, friends and work place, are commonly mentioned.

⁶ AD, AT, BE(nl), DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, SI, UK(en)

⁷ AR, DE, DK, IE, IT, MT, SI, SK

⁸ AT, BE(fr+nl), DE, DK, EE, FI, IE, FR, HR, SE, TR, UK(en+sc), AR, CH, IT, ME, PL, SI, RS, MT, NL, CZ, BG, GE

Figure 7.11: Obstacles to student mobility



Source: Eurydice.

For both incoming and outward mobility approximately the same number of countries mention curriculum/study organisation and a lack of information and encouragement as obstacles to student mobility. However, significant differences can be observed when looking at issues such as recognition and languages. Difficulties with recognition of mobility periods are mentioned by only six countries for incoming mobility, but by 23 countries in connection with outward mobility. 24 countries identify insufficient knowledge of language by incoming students whereas only eleven countries do so for outward mobility.

These findings suggest that there is a tendency for countries to see their own systems and students more positively than those elsewhere. Thus these perceptions on mobility obstacles might not reflect reality objectively (recognition may well be a problem for students wishing to enter the system, as well as for those wishing to go abroad, for example), but rather provide a picture of how attitudes to "nationals" and "foreigners" are also critical in addressing mobility obstacles.

Countries have also reported whether some obstacles as identified above are particularly relevant for a specific study cycle, field of study and type of mobility. The majority of countries highlight persisting difficulties with recognition and overloaded study programmes which often prevent students being able to take advantage of opportunities to study abroad. This phenomenon is most commonly reported within bachelor programmes, where re-designed curricula often do not provide space for mobility windows. Regarding various fields of studies, medical and natural sciences, law, architecture and engineering appear in many countries to be more challenged in promoting mobility. When comparing

credit and degree mobility, the most common concern for credit mobility lies in recognition, while the most relevant obstacle of degree mobility is funding. The second most significant challenge for both is often language.

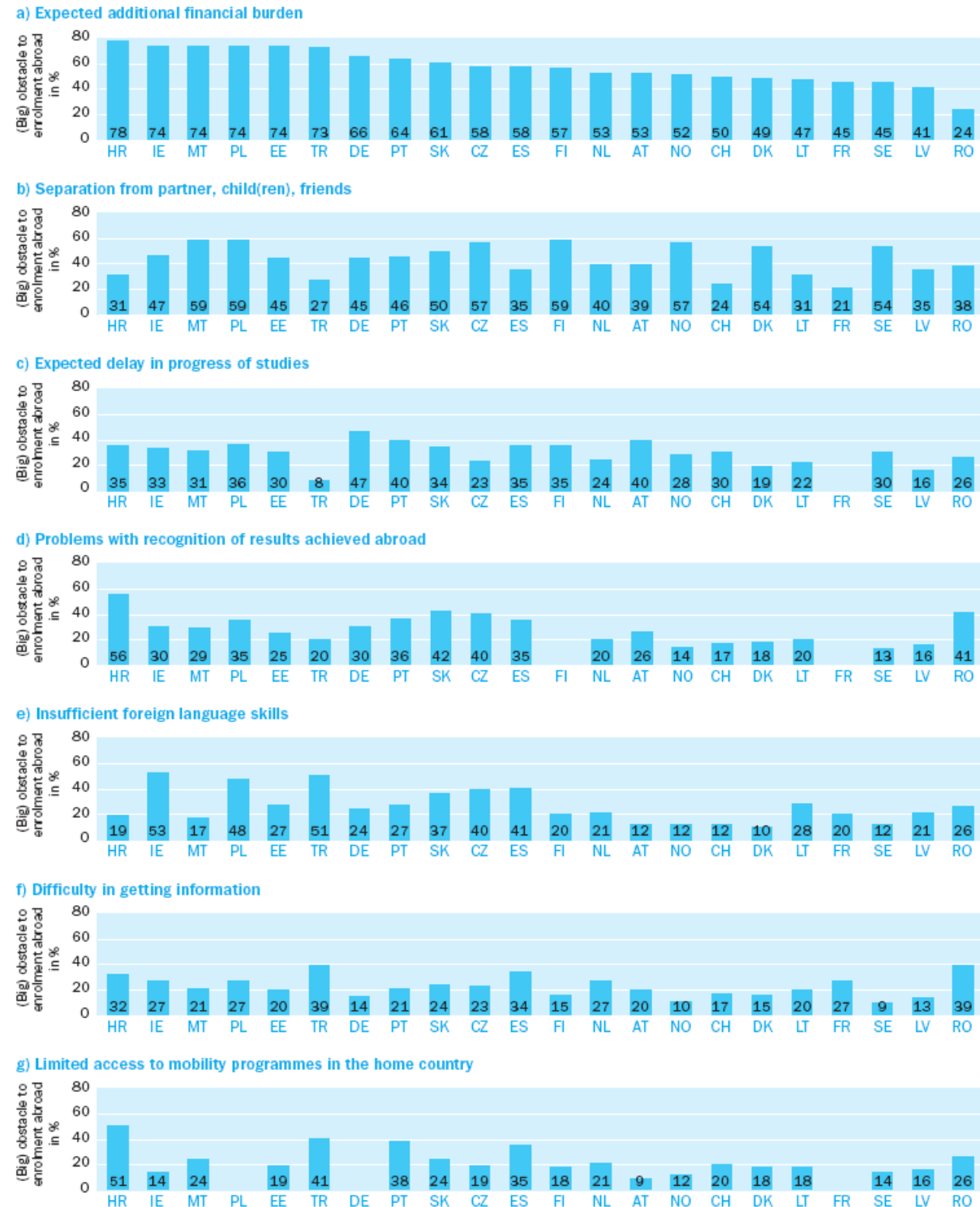
Countries in the EHEA implement a range of measures in order to foster mobility and tackle these obstacles. Some obstacles such as re-organisation of programmes and workload, strengthening of information provision and motivating students can be addressed more easily – provided that there is the will to do so. Funding, improving language skills, recognition and legal issues are more difficult to tackle as they require either increased financial means or further dialogue and coordination among various stakeholders at national or European level.

Obstacles as reported by the countries above present only a part of the picture. The Eurostudent survey (Eurostudent 2011) shows obstacles (see Figure 7.12) as perceived by students when considering enrolment abroad (outward mobility), and these findings complement country reporting in a very interesting way. The obstacle ranked in both cases in first place is funding. However, the second most common obstacle identified by the Eurostudent survey is a separation from family and friends, an obstacle ranked among the least significant by the reporting countries. Moreover, while countries highlight recognition as the second most significant obstacle, this was ranked "only" in fourth place by students. Curricula, study organisation and delay of studies is ranked identically in third place by countries and students. Insufficient skills in foreign languages also scored fifth in both cases. The difficulty in getting information is considered in sixth place by students, but is ranked higher – in fourth place - by country experts.

Thus both countries and students give a similar priority to funding, study organisation and languages. On the other hand, country experts highlight formal obstacles such as recognition and information provision more significantly than students, who instead point to factors related to their personal situation.

Figure 7.12: Share of students who have not been enrolled abroad considering certain issues as (big) obstacles to enrolment abroad (in %)

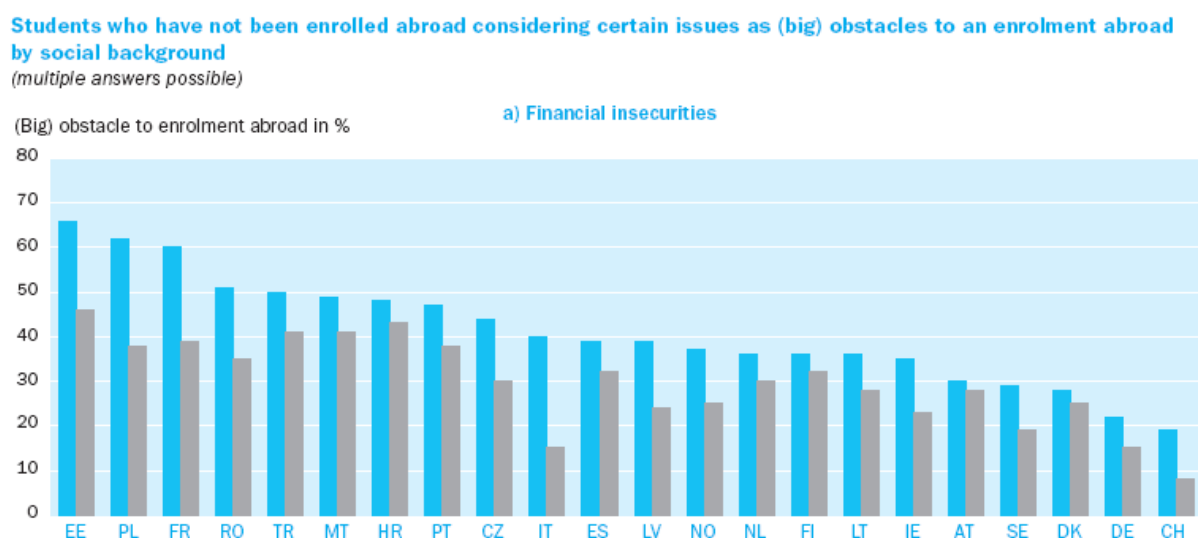
Students who have not been enrolled abroad considering certain issues as (big) obstacles to an enrolment abroad
(multiple answers possible)



Source: EUROSTUDENT IV, I. 8. No data: E/W, IT, SI. No data for chart (c): FR. No data for chart (d): FI, FR. No data for chart (g): DE, FR, PL.
EUROSTUDENT Question(s): 4.1 Have you been enrolled abroad in a regular course of study?, 4.5 To what extent are the following aspects an obstacle to an enrolment abroad for you?

While funding is commonly highlighted as the most significant obstacle to mobility, Eurostudent findings also show that the financial burden plays a different role according to the social background of students. Figure 7.13 shows that in all surveyed countries, the share of students from low parental education background who consider financial insecurities as an obstacle is higher compared to those from high parental education background. The differences in perception of this obstacle among the two groups of students are particularly visible in the cases of Italy and Poland while Austria, Denmark and Finland show the smallest differences.

Figure 7.13: Students who have not been enrolled abroad considering financial insecurities as (big) obstacle to an enrolment abroad by social background



Source: EUROSTUDENT IV, I.1.0. No data: E/W, SI, SK. Too few cases for chart (b), low education background (ISCED 0–2); LV.

EUROSTUDENT Question(s): 4.1 Have you been enrolled abroad in a regular course of study?, 4.5 To what extent are the following aspects an obstacle to an enrolment abroad for you?, 6.1 What is the highest level of education your father and mother have obtained?

Note: The category 'financial insecurities' is an aggregate of the following items: expected additional financial burden, loss of opportunities to earn money, loss of social benefits, problems with accommodation in the home country (>Data Delivery Handbook).

7.3.5. Financial measures to support student mobility

As the most common obstacle identified was funding, financial measures encompassing grants and scholarships as well as loans shall be analysed in more detail. Less than half of the countries provide loans for outward students in credit and degree mobility and only a few do so for incoming students (BE(fr), EE, FR, HU, LV, UK(Sct)). More financial support measures to foster mobility can be observed in the field of grants and scholarships. However, the situation differs slightly between credit and degree mobility. The number of countries (28) providing grants and scholarships for outward and incoming students for degree mobility is the same. In contrast, the difference between grants and scholarships for incoming students and outward students in credit mobility arrangements is higher (20:30). Some scholarships are targeted only to certain programmes prioritising a number of countries or study fields. Indeed, a few countries or, more specifically, higher education institutions conclude bilateral agreements with their counterparts abroad, and provide funding to foster student mobility. It is also important to stress that no financial instrument at European or national level, be it a loan or a grant, has yet been designed specifically to foster mobility across the EHEA.

An important issue linked to grants and scholarships is their portability. This is a particularly important measure for promotion of mobility and is mentioned throughout the Bologna process. The concept of portability shows whether students who study in a higher education institution in another country can

use their grant or loan under the same conditions as at a home institution. Based on information from reporting countries, almost half of them enable students to do so, while other countries allow such a practice for either credit or degree mobility. Only five countries (BiH, GE, HU, IE, LT) report that it is not the case for either of the two main types of mobility.

Portability is, however, often subject to restrictions. These are related to specific countries or their groupings (for instance EU, EEA, EHEA) and programmes. Countries with grants and scholarships restricted to specific programmes often mention European and national mobility programmes. Other restrictions concern accreditation of programmes and/or whether the study programme is offered in the home country, or whether it falls under a priority area. Only Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway and Switzerland report that they impose no restrictions on students who receive a grant or scholarship abroad.

The last measure mentioned by countries for supporting mobility is additional funding to higher education institutions to create conditions for promoting mobility, or to reward institutions that support mobility. In some case, this may be done by including a mobility element in funding formulas. Several countries also include subsidies for transportation, accommodation and canteens among their supporting measures.

7.3.6. Other measures to support student mobility

Other measures are linked to other obstacles of student mobility as presented in Figure 7.11. Recognition continues to be perceived as a significant barrier halting student mobility, and thus an issue in need of improved practice. However no specific measures have been mentioned by reporting countries.

Language competency is an ultimate pre-condition for studying abroad and thus often one of the main obstacles. Consequently, around one third of countries (AR, AT, BE(fr), CZ, CY, DE, FI, GE, HR, IT, LU, PL, RO, ES, SE, NO, TR) outlines provision of language courses for outward and incoming students, and developing curricula/programmes in English or other foreign language including joint degrees. Despite an increasing offer, the situation for credit and degree mobility differs to some extent. Teaching in a widely spoken foreign language might be sufficient for a period of credit mobility, but often knowledge of the language of instruction for the whole period of study may be required for degree mobility. This poses the question of which language the degree programme or its vast majority is taught and whether the student has a sound knowledge of this language. To this end, the Norwegian example shows that a country might support learning languages by providing financial measures in a form of a state loan to spend an extra semester to learn the language and culture of the country prior to the studies abroad.

In spite of introducing and enlarging programmes in foreign languages, studies at higher education institutions in a language different to the official language of the country might fall under restrictions. This can be the case when, based on national legislation, higher education institutions are allowed to organise only a certain percentage of learning activities in a foreign language. Joint programmes might however be exceptions from this rule.

Support services, including the provision of better information on mobility programmes, need to be continuously strengthened. Several countries have launched campaigns with the aim of motivating students to study abroad. Additionally, former Erasmus students as well as incoming students may be engaged to help in promotion activities (PL, UK(Sct)).

Finally, a number of countries mention persisting legal issues including visa arrangements (AT, IE, MD, MN, TR). Dialogue with the authorities concerned aims to improve conditions of mainly incoming non-EU students.

7.3.7. Monitoring

Not all the countries that adopt programmes or measures to tackle obstacles to student mobility monitor their effects. Even those that undertake monitoring do so often in the framework of general statistical monitoring or they focus only on certain vertical or horizontal student mobility issues. For instance, they monitor recognition, update statistics on financial measures or prepare overarching Erasmus reports summarising various mobility indicators together. Hence, monitoring tends to be focused on reporting on European mobility programmes and often does not extend into a comprehensive national framework.

7.4. Staff mobility

All Bologna communiqués mention mobility of staff together with student mobility. The Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve communiqué dedicates a paragraph to staff mobility when setting out goals for the decade 2010 – 2020. It mentions teachers, researchers and other staff⁹ outlining the value of staff mobility and the necessity to attract highly qualified staff to higher education institutions. In addition, it highlights the obstacles related to access and portability of social security rights.

7.4.1. Concept

Discussions on staff mobility at European level are ongoing but difficult. The concept of staff mobility is not defined at European level, and can cover many forms and purposes. It is therefore important to be precise in defining and formulating policy objectives, as well as in defining the information required for different purposes. Currently European statistical data is limited to information collected within some European programmes (e.g. Erasmus staff exchanges) and more widespread operational definitions have yet to be developed. Statistical data are therefore extremely limited.

At national level, all but three countries (BE(nl), FR, SK) include staff mobility in higher education in a national strategy or action plan. Nonetheless, only six countries include quantitative targets for staff mobility (EE, ES, FI, LT, RO, SI). The quantitative expression can have a form of absolute numbers of incoming and outward lecturers/teachers and research staff either per year, or with respect to a certain target year (2015), as in the case of Lithuania and Finland. The given targets can be recalculated and shown in percentages too. Slovenia sets a goal of at least 10 % by 2020 and Estonia 3 % of foreign academic staff with a further target of at least 10 % of post/doctoral students of other than Estonian origin by 2015. Romania targets an increase of 5 % of outward staff under Erasmus per year and Spain 50 % more mobile staff than in 2008 by 2015.

Overall, however, it seems that staff mobility appears rather as a general declaration without specific targets to be reached. Hence countries identify priority areas, set a goal and follow developments in a particular sphere. Concerning indicators at European level, Eurostat monitors mobility of teachers and academic staff only in the framework of the Erasmus programme.

⁹ See: http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/Leuven_Louvain-la-Neuve_Communique%C3%A9_April_2009.pdf

7.4.2. Obstacles and measures to staff mobility

As almost all countries mention support to staff mobility in their conceptual documents, but only a small percentage of staff is actually mobile, more attention needs to be focused on identifying and removing obstacles. Based on information provided by reporting countries, one third of educational systems¹⁰ are informed by surveys or research about obstacles to staff mobility. Three large categories of obstacles can be identified, namely language knowledge, legal issues and personal situation.

The most common obstacle identified is a language barrier for both incoming and outward staff mobility. The other most reported reasons halting mobility are linked to a range of legal difficulties stemming often from a lack of cooperation at European level or persisting problems in real-life situations in spite of a legal basis on the matter concerned. This mostly concerns differences between social security systems. Furthermore, legal issues include double taxation in certain countries along with immigration restrictions and the difficulty to obtain visas - as reported by some non-EU countries. The third group of obstacles concerns personal and family situations, such as a lack of support services for a spouse and children or a separation from them in case they do not follow the partner/parent for a period of mobility. Additionally, a lack of motivation and clear paths for career development as well as heavy workloads at home institutions were also referred to. Last but not least, insufficient funding opportunities and lack of information are also among the reasons reported as a hindrance to staff mobility.

less than a half of the EHEA countries report any measures to tackle obstacles to staff mobility – indicating that this is still an issue to be taken forward in the future.

The measures encompass the following issues: funding, information provision, working conditions, immigration policy and language courses.

Countries such as the Czech Republic and Finland stress the autonomy of higher education institutions in adopting appropriate measures to foster staff mobility, and thus shift a large part of responsibility to institutional level. Nonetheless, they highlight funding mechanisms adopted at central level to support mobility of researchers. A starting point for mobility is comprehensive information provision for employees interested to make use of opportunities to work abroad. The provision of information is, according to the reporting countries, generally insufficient. Yet, some countries have taken some initiatives in this area designing online platforms and networks for the academic world (e.g. Euraxess, Imwas and Kisswin in Germany).

After the initial stage of obtaining appropriate information on mobility and individual exchange programmes, the next stage is to check concrete working conditions, including social security provision in the chosen country. Knowledge on the portability of social security rights is insufficient, and several countries try to provide more detailed information and advice on these topics for both incoming and outgoing staff.

While these legal issues are common to both EU and non-EU staff, immigration and visa policy often acts as barrier to non-EU staff. Higher education institutions continue their dialogue with public authorities regarding immigration policy (IE, UK) and some countries have already adopted measures lessening immigration restrictions for non-EU researchers (AT) and/or have regular reviews of such matters (DE). Thorough implementation of the EU Scientific Visa Directive and its two accompanying

¹⁰ AR, AT, BE(fr), CZ, EE, FI, DE, LT, MT, MD, NL, PL, SI, SE, TR, UK(sc)

recommendations (the so-called Scientific Visa Package)¹¹ is an important step forward. It facilitates short and long stays (less than or more than three months) of researchers from third countries in the EU Member States for the purpose of scientific research.

Once obtaining all necessary information on mobility opportunities and related legal conditions, the issue of language remains. There are higher education institutions that provide foreign language courses for their outward staff and others that offer language courses for incoming staff. Nevertheless, while some countries highlight provision and financing of language courses as a challenge (AR, ES, LT, TR), others, such as Hungary, consider that language learning is a personal responsibility. Another aspect concerning languages is national legislation that may impose rules on the use of the official language (SI). Poland points to the problem of a lack of courses taught in a foreign language at higher education institutions - thus limiting incoming staff mobility to countries with a knowledge of the official language of the country.

While a relatively low number of countries implement measures to tackle and remove obstacles to staff mobility, even fewer countries monitor the effects of these measures. Those that do tend to undertake such monitoring in the framework of annual statistical data collection or publish reports on national and European mobility programmes such as Erasmus.

Conclusion

In order to step up action to promote mobility, a benchmark of 20 % has been set and the first steps have been taken to monitor progress. The collection of statistical data is an ongoing process and this report reveals the first findings for degree mobility. However, more work on statistical definitions and more comprehensive collection of information is still required - particularly on credit mobility.

Currently, all but three countries show an incoming degree mobility rate of less than 10 % in the European Higher Education Area. The majority of countries have values below 5 %. This is also true concerning outward degree mobility rates of graduates inside the EHEA. The aggregated value for this mobility flow is currently slightly below 2 %. As these figures are related only to degree mobility, statistical information on credit mobility has to be added and taken into consideration when assessing progress towards the 20 % benchmark. The current projection of short-term trends in the framework of the Erasmus programme anticipates 7 % by 2020, while other sources of reliable credit mobility data still need to be identified.

When looking at mobility flows worldwide, the students studying in the EHEA coming from any country abroad reaches less than 4 % of the total number of students in the EHEA. Meanwhile the percentage of EHEA students studying for a degree outside the EHEA is, in relative terms, very small indeed. The reporting also reveals that flows typically follow east-west patterns both in European and global terms. In the EHEA, south and east Europe tend to have more outward students and west and north European countries more incoming students. Hardly any country can claim to have genuinely balanced mobility and even when flows reach similar numbers, the countries sending and receiving students differs significantly.

The main reasons that prevent students from benefitting from mobility periods abroad have been identified by reporting countries and Eurostudent information. However, many countries lack a clear strategy and measures to change the situation. Similarly, monitoring mechanisms are also absent in many parts of Europe.

¹¹ See: <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/services/scientificVisa>

Although staff mobility is mentioned in all Bologna communiqués the situation, comparing to student mobility, is less clear. It is thus firstly important to agree on the scope and definition(s) of staff mobility. Currently, only a few countries set quantitative targets towards staff mobility. Based on data available from the Erasmus programme, incoming staff mobility affects relatively low numbers of staff. Better monitoring and tackling of identified obstacles is also essential if countries are to foster staff mobility across Europe.

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