



# Key issues for the European Higher Education Area – Social Dimension and Mobility

Report from the Bologna Process Working Group  
on Social Dimension and Data on Mobility  
of Staff and Students in Participating Countries



MAY 2007



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Government Offices  
of Sweden

Key issues  
for the European Higher Education Area  
– Social Dimension and Mobility

Report from the Bologna Process Working Group  
on Social Dimension and Data on Mobility  
of Staff and Students in Participating Countries

Additional copies of the report can be ordered from Skantz Distribution AB  
e-mail [rk@skantzdistribution.nu](mailto:rk@skantzdistribution.nu), tel. +46 8 590 956 50 or fax +46 8 590 956 51  
Production: the Ministry of Education and Research  
Printed by: Edita, Västerås maj 2007  
Article no: U07.008

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflect the views of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

# Table of contents

<b>Part I. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
I.1 Context .....	4
I.2 Composition of the Working Group .....	6
I.3 Summary of recommendations from the Working Group .....	8
<b>Part II. Social Dimension.....</b>	<b>11</b>
II.1 Defining the social dimension .....	11
II.2 Rationale for the social dimension .....	12
II.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents.....	13
II.4 How to transform political commitments into actions .....	14
II.5 Data on the social dimension .....	16
II.5.1 Providers and availability .....	17
II.5.2 Data on main domains within the social dimension .....	20
II.5.3 Synthesis of data on the social dimension .....	38
II.5.4 Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting .....	40
II.6 Recommendations from the Working Group .....	35
<b>Part III. Mobility .....</b>	<b>45</b>
III.1 Defining mobility .....	45
III.2 Rationale for mobility .....	46
III.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents .....	47
III.4 How to transform political commitments into actions .....	48
III.5 Data on mobility .....	51
III.5.1 Mobility of students .....	51
III.5.2 Mobility of staff .....	57
III.6 Recommendations from the Working Group .....	65
<b>Annexes to the report:</b>	
ANNEX 1 Terms of reference: Working group on Social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries.....	67
ANNEX 2 Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension.....	70
ANNEX 3 National reports for the London ministerial meeting: List of answers to question on measures being taken to widen access to quality higher education.....	73
ANNEX 4 National reports for the London ministerial meeting: List of answers to the questions on measures to remove obstacles to student and staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.....	75
ANNEX 5 Schematic synthesis of data availability on the social dimension..	77

# Part I. Introduction

## I.1 Context

This report has been prepared by the Working Group on Social Dimension and Data on Mobility of Staff and Students within the Bologna Process. The basis for the work has been the text on the social dimension and mobility in the Bergen Communiqué<sup>1</sup> agreed by the Bologna Process Ministers assembled in Bergen, Norway, on May 19-20 2005:

### **The social dimension**

The social dimension of the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. We therefore renew our commitment to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. The social dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects and to provide them with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access.

### **Mobility**

We recognise that mobility of students and staff among all participating countries remains one of the key objectives of the Bologna Process. Aware of the many remaining challenges to be overcome, we reconfirm our commitment to facilitate the portability of grants and loans, where appropriate through joint action, with a view to making mobility within the EHEA a reality. We shall intensify our efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. We urge institutions and students to make full use of mobility programmes, advocating full recognition of study periods abroad within such programmes.

### **Taking stock on progress for 2007**

We also charge the Follow-up Group with presenting comparable data on the mobility of staff and students as well as on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries as a basis for future stocktaking and reporting in time for the next Ministerial Conference. The future stocktaking will have to take into account the social dimension as defined above.

The tasks given to the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) concerning the social dimension and mobility, presented in the Bergen Communiqué, were agreed to be taken forward by appointing a joint working group for the two issues.

The terms of reference<sup>2</sup> for the Working Group (henceforth referred to as the WG) on Social Dimension and Data on the Mobility of Staff and Students in Participating Countries were agreed by the BFUG in November 2005. The terms of reference are summarised as follows:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries
- to present comparable data on the mobility of staff and students
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

The social dimension has been an integral part of the Bologna Process since the first ministerial follow-up meeting in Prague in 2001. The social dimension was included in the Prague Communiqué at the suggestion of the student representatives at the meeting. In the subsequent communiqués the social dimension has been recognised as crucial for the success of the European Higher Education Area.

Mobility of staff and students was one of the key objectives when the Bologna Process was established. Mobility was one of the main action lines in the Bologna Declaration in 1999. As a consequence most of the commitments made within the Bologna Process aim at promoting mobility.

At the outset, the WG would like to stress that strengthening the social dimension and enhancing mobility of staff and students cannot be done within higher education systems alone. It calls for the involvement of many actors. Achieving the commitments also depends to a great extent on increasing the aspirations of all children to fulfil their educational potential through the support of families and educational systems. Barriers to education should be addressed and overcome at all education levels. It is important that individuals receive proper support and guidance throughout their education before coming to higher education. Neither can solutions be found solely within the competence of education min-

---

<sup>2</sup> See Annex 1.

isters. When tackling these issues the WG quickly ran into questions related to direct and indirect financial support systems, social security systems, immigration policy and the delivery of visas and work permits etc. Some of these areas will be developed further below.

The WG would like to emphasise that success in strengthening the social dimension and enhancing mobility is partly dependent upon properly functioning and well-resourced public systems. This relates to the first statement of the Bologna Process Ministers in Prague in 2001 on higher education as a public good and a public responsibility. Another important principle stated in the Prague Communiqué is that students are full members of and partners in the higher education community.

Strengthening the social dimension of higher education and enhancing mobility for students and staff is an evolutionary process that requires the ongoing commitment and effort from all relevant stakeholders.

## 1.2 Composition of the Working Group

After the BFUG decision on the terms of reference for the WG was taken in November 2005 the group has expanded. The members of the WG have been:

Austria	Martin Unger Institute for Advanced Studies
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Semra Cavaljuga/Zenan Sabanac Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Croatia (since Spring 2006)	Melita Kovacevic Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
France	Hélène Lagier Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
Ireland	Patrick Dowling/Brian Power Department of Education and Science
Luxemburg	Germain Dondelinger Ministry for Culture, Higher Education and Research
Russia (since Spring 2006)	Victor Chistokhvalov Peoples' Friendship University of Russia
Sweden	Annika (Persson) Pontén and Myrna Smitt Ministry of Education and Research
UK	Keith Andrews Department for Education and Skills

EUA (European University Association)	Nina Arnhold/David Crosier
EI (Education International) – Pan European Structure	Ann Fritzell
ESIB (the National Unions of Students in Europe) Bologna Secretariat	Michael Hörig/Sanja Brus Ann McVie

The WG has been chaired by Annika (Persson) Pontén, Sweden.

The WG established a subgroup. The subgroup has focussed on the collection and exploration of data. The task given to the WG concerning data collection was to explore data within three strands: the socio- and economic situation of students, the mobility of students and the mobility of staff. The two groups have worked in close cooperation, feeding discussions and results into the each other's work. Several members of the WG have also participated in the subgroup. The subgroup was chaired by Germain Dondelinger, Luxembourg.

### Members of the subgroup

Eurostat <sup>3</sup>	Jean-Louis Mercy Education, Science and Culture Statistics Unit
Eurydice	Arnaud Desurmont European Unit Studies and Analyses
Eurostudent	Dominic Orr HiS (Hochschul-Informationssystem), Eurostudent project, Germany
Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)	Thierry Kruten
EUA	Bogdan Voicu Romanian Academy of Science
ESIB	Colin Tück/Sanja Brus

*The following countries also sent representatives to the subgroup:*

Austria	Martin Unger Institute for Advanced Studies
France	Jean-Michel Durr Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research
Switzerland	Laurence Boegli Federal Department of Home Affairs
United Kingdom	Jain Ramnik Department for Education and Skills

<sup>3</sup> Also representing UNESCO and OECD as far as the joint Unesco/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) data collection is concerned.



The WG has been in contact with other working groups within the Bologna Process, including the Stocktaking Working Group, the Working Group on Portability of Grants and Loans and the Working Group on the External Dimension of the Bologna Process. Some members of the WG on Social Dimension and Data on the Mobility of Staff and Students have also been members of these parallel working groups, which facilitated the exchange of information amongst the groups.

Several official Bologna seminars have been held directly related to the issues of social dimension and mobility within the Process<sup>4</sup>. The outcomes of these seminars have been fed into the discussion in the WG.

This report is the responsibility of the Working Group. The recommendations to Ministers are to be taken forward by BFUG as Ministers consider appropriate.

## 1.3 Summary of recommendations from the Working Group

### A. SOCIAL DIMENSION of higher education

Strengthening the social dimension is key to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA. There are, however, considerable differences and challenges in relation to the social dimension of higher education between the participating countries. The WG has found that it is not appropriate to narrowly define the social dimension or suggest a number of detailed actions for all countries to implement. Instead, the WG proposes that the following overall objective for the social dimension should be agreed by the ministers:

*We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.*

Each country should develop its own strategy, including an action plan, for the social dimension. Initially such a strategy will call for the identification of possible under-represented groups.

---

<sup>4</sup> **Social dimension:** *Exploring the Social Dimensions of the EHEA* 19-20 February 2003 in Greece, *Student participation in Governance in Higher Education* 12-14 June 2003 in Norway and *The social dimension of the EHEA and world-wide competition* 27-28 January 2005 in France.

**Mobility:** *Designing policies for mobile students* 10-12 October 2004 in the Netherlands, The EI-ESIB-UCU Seminar *Making Bologna a Reality – Mobility of Staff and Students* 8-9 February 2007 in the UK.

Concerning data on the social dimension, there is no comprehensive survey, which covers the necessary aspects of the social dimension. The WG has also found that there are several important data gaps and challenges in relation to the social dimension: not all Bologna countries are covered, there is no common deadline for surveys, requirements for indicators need to be matched with data availability and comparability, statistics from different sectors need to be brought together to get a fair picture of the social dimension and most of the currently available data is not appropriate for analysis of change. However, the feasibility of a report on the social dimension in the EHEA has been demonstrated by the WG, but further work is required.

The WG proposes actions at both national and European level:

#### *Measures at national and institutional level*

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders should actively participate in and support this work at the national level. The WG suggests an approach to the work on national strategies in Annex 2 to this report.
- Student survey data should be collected with the aim of providing comparable and reliable data concerning the social dimension.

#### *Measures at BFUG level*

- The collection of data on the social dimension needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to develop more comparable and reliable data to inform progress towards the overall objective for the social dimension in all Bologna countries. Data should cover participative equity in higher education as well as employability for graduates. This task should be overseen by the BFUG and a report should be submitted for the 2009 ministerial meeting.
- To give an overview of the work on strategies and action plans carried out in participating countries in order to exchange experiences.

## **B. MOBILITY of students and staff**

The promotion of mobility of students and staff is at the core of the Bologna Process. The objective should be *an EHEA where students and staff can be truly mobile*. However, the participating countries face challenges concerning both the facilitation of mobility itself and finding comparable and reliable data on mobility. Among the obstacles to mobility, issues related to immigration, recognition of study and work periods abroad and lack of financial incentives feature prominently. Data are

scarce and those that are there show significant weaknesses in giving a full picture of mobility. First of all, there is no common and appropriate definition of mobility for statistical purposes. Also, there are no data covering all Bologna countries, no comparable and reliable data on genuine student mobility, hardly any data on staff mobility and the staff data that is there is not comparable between countries. Further work on mobility data is required.

The WG suggests that a wide definition of mobility should be used within the Bologna Process. It should cover all forms and lengths of mobility within higher education in a global perspective:

*Mobility of students:* Refers to a study period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior education (completed or ongoing) for a period of study or a full degree.

*Mobility of staff:* Refers to a working period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior employment (terminated or ongoing) for a limited or extended period.

The WG proposes actions at both national and European level:

#### *Measures at national and institutional level*

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on actions taken at national level to remove obstacles to and promote the benefits of mobility of students and staff, including measures to assess their impact at a future date.
- Countries should focus on the main national challenges: delivery of visas and work permits, the full implementation of established recognition procedures and creating incentives for mobility for both individuals and higher education institutions.
- To address the institutional attitude towards and responsibility for mobility. This includes making mobility an institutional responsibility.
- To facilitate mobility through strengthening the social dimension of mobile students and staff.
- To support the development of joint programmes as one way of enhancing trust between countries and institutions.

#### *Measures at BFUG level*

- The collection of data on mobility of staff and students needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to provide comparable and reliable data on actual mobility across the EHEA.
- The BFUG should also consider how best to overcome the many obstacles to mobility of students and staff. Progress in this work should be reported for the ministerial meeting in 2009.

# Part II. Social Dimension

The WG was given the following tasks in relation to the social dimension:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

## II.1 Defining the social dimension

The 45 countries that participate in the Bologna Process are **extraordinarily diverse**, even considering only the crudest economic and statistical indicators. The countries range in population from less than 1 000 individuals to over 140 million, in the number of public higher education institutions from 1 to over 1 200, and in student numbers from 330 to more than 8.5 million. Seven of the top ten world economies ranked by GDP per capita are part of the Bologna Process, but one participating state came in 136th out of the 181 world economies, and another five are found below 100th place. As well as this immense spread of quantitative factors, there are also very significant differences in social and political culture and in the systems and structures of education in the different states<sup>5</sup>.

Partly due to the vast differences between the Bologna countries the WG considers that the social dimension should be **defined broadly rather than specifically**. It is not appropriate to narrowly define the social dimension or suggest a number of detailed actions that might be unduly difficult or inappropriate to deliver for all countries involved. The social dimension should be regarded as the **process** leading to the objective (see sections II.4 and II.6) that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. This process will be different depending on the country and individuals involved and we have to respect those differences in order to progress in this area.

The broad definition of the social dimension is made through formulating why the social dimension of higher education needs to be developed, what the countries should be aiming at and describing areas and actions that could be considered the core of the social dimension and that would lead us to achieve the overall objective for the social dimension.

---

<sup>5</sup> *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility*, Conor Cradden 2007.

## II.2 Rationale for the social dimension

Strengthening the social dimension is key to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. It will foster social cohesion, reduce inequalities, raise the level of competencies in society and maximise the potential of individuals in terms of their personal development and their contribution to a sustainable and democratic knowledge society.

The rationale behind the social dimension of higher education is at least three-fold:

Firstly, it is a question of **equal opportunity**. Knowledge plays a stronger role in our societies than ever before. All individuals should have equal opportunities to take advantage of higher education leading to personal development, preparation for sustainable employment and life as an active citizen. A strong social dimension is a necessary prerequisite for all students to successfully enter, carry out and complete their studies.

Secondly, taking steps to meet the increasing demand for quality higher education creates opportunities to **reinforce the social, cultural and economic development of our societies**. Education is vital for sustainable economic growth, which is a prerequisite for a stable and wealthy society. Opening up opportunities to higher education for everyone means maximising the potential within societies, contributing to social equity and ensuring the development and maintenance of an advanced knowledge base. This is particularly relevant in Europe with an ageing population. Inequities in education and training systems increase the risk of unemployment, social exclusion and, in the end, result in large costs to society. Higher education also plays a key role in developing and maintaining a democratic culture. Widening opportunities for everybody to participate in higher education will contribute to the strengthening of pluralistic democracy and tolerance.

Thirdly, a strong social dimension **enhances the quality and attractiveness of European higher education**. With equal access opportunities and an active and questioning approach from the students the traditions and practices within the institutions are challenged. Different perspectives meet, challenge and develop the academic culture and approaches to teaching and research. A strong social dimension with a study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience will make European higher education attractive for students and staff from other countries and continents.

## II.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents

The social dimension has been an integral part of the Bologna Process since the Ministerial meeting in Prague. There are a number of commitments concerning the social dimension already made in the official Bologna documents. The commitments concern both the **social dimension in the home country of the student** and the **social dimension of mobility**. The commitments show that the social dimension is relevant to all action lines within the Process.

### *The social dimension in the home country of the student*

1. Quality higher education should be equally accessible to all (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
2. Students should have appropriate studying and living conditions, so that they can complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
3. Opportunities for all citizens, in accordance with their aspirations and abilities, to follow the lifelong learning paths into and within higher education should be improved (Sorbonne Declaration and Berlin Communiqué)
4. Governments should take measures to provide students with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access (Bergen Communiqué)
5. Students are full partners in higher education governance and should participate in and influence the organisation and content of higher education (Prague and Berlin Communiqués)
6. Governments should take measures to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects with a view to widening access (Bergen Communiqué)

### *The social dimension of mobility*

7. Ministers should take measures to facilitate the portability of national loans and grants (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
8. Mobility should be promoted by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
  - for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
  - for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights (Bologna Declaration)

## II.4 How to transform political commitments into actions

The political commitments already made cover the social dimension in the home country of the student as well as the social dimension of mobility. The social dimension of mobility is discussed in the section on mobility (see part II).

The political commitments in the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent communiqués are **to a large extent general in character**, stating for example that “students should have appropriate studying and living conditions, so that they can complete their studies within an appropriate period of time without obstacles related to their social and economic background”. As mentioned earlier the social dimension should be regarded as a process that needs to be dealt with in every country in the Bologna Process. At the same time Ministers have made certain commitments covering aspects of the social dimension.

In order to implement the commitments made the Bologna countries **need to agree on what we are aiming at**. The concept of social dimension needs to be turned into an **overall objective and actions that will deliver these commitments** and lead us to the objective. Therefore, the WG has transformed the political commitments into an overall objective and possible political actions.

As stated in the rationale, **a basis for the social dimension is the question of equal opportunities**. For equal opportunities to be effectively implemented, discrimination must be absent both in policy and in practice. This may be achieved formally through legislation in line with the European Convention on Human Rights, providing guarantees that higher education is accessible to all without direct or indirect discrimination on any actual or presumed ground such as sex, race, sexual orientation, physical or other impairment, marital status, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national community, property, birth or other status. Beyond such de jure conditions to ensure the absence of discrimination, the Council of Europe recommendation No. R (98) 3 on access to higher education also points out that, “the promotion of effective equality may require the adoption of special measures where this is necessary and consistent with the principle of non-discrimination to take account of the specific conditions of individuals or groups in society.”

In order to find a common aim for the Bologna countries concerning the work on the social dimension of higher education, the WG has agreed on the following **objective for the social dimension**:

We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.

While **committing to the same objective**, the **means** of reaching the objective should be **adapted to national priorities and circumstances**. The objective should be transferred into national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact.

Below, the WG has identified a number of actions that could be considered the **core of the social dimension**. They should be considered a list of possible actions that could be taken in each country. The actions are addressed to governments and higher education institutions or other relevant stakeholders, according to the allocation of responsibilities in each country. In arriving at this list of actions, the WG focussed on actions that would not be covered by the work of other Bologna working groups. The action areas below are possible areas to be covered in national action plans. In Annex 2 to this report, further guidance in the development of national strategies and action plans is provided.

### **Possible actions and tools to be implemented in participating countries:**

#### *Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion*

- Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
- Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

#### *Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education*

- Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
- Flexible delivery of higher education
- Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
- Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
- Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

#### *Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience*

##### A, Provision of academic services

- Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
- Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
- Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

##### B, Provision of social services

- Counselling
- Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
- Appropriate housing conditions for all students
- Provision of healthcare
- Provision of transportation, student canteens etc.



### *Student participation in the governance and organisation of higher education*

- Legislation or other measures to ensure student participation in higher education governance
- Provisions for the existence of and exercise of influence by student organisations
- Student evaluations of courses, programmes and institutions, including action plans and follow-up of actions taken

### *Finances in order to start and complete studies*

- Financial and legal advice for students
- Appropriate and coordinated national financial support systems that are transparent
- Targeted support for disadvantaged groups as defined nationally
- Support measures for students with children

### **Monitoring:**

The participating countries should establish national measures, in conjunction with student representatives, to monitor and evaluate the impact of their social dimension strategies and action plans.

The above areas have **guided the mapping and collection of data** concerning the social dimension and the discussion on stocktaking in this area. **Employability** is not part of our broad definition of the social dimension in higher education. However, the WG recognises that employability is an important factor for students when choosing their field of studies and when seeking their way into the labour market after graduation. To get an education with labour market relevance, to have contacts with the labour market and possible future employers are important during studies.

## II.5 Data on the social dimension

Given the definition of the social dimension, the WG has **looked for data and indicators in the following domains:**

- widening access,
- study framework (study environment and the financial situation of students), and
- completion of studies.

The employability of degree holders has also been under consideration although this item is beyond the definition of the social dimension as put forward by the WG.

To **assess the availability of data** the subgroup on data collection has included international organisations in its composition (see section I.2 for information on the participants).

To ensure the highest degree of **reliability and comparability** of the data assessed, the WG has only analysed data collected by international organisations; therefore, national providers have not been included in the analysis.

At the outset, the WG checked the availability of data for the domains defined above. There is no comprehensive survey for the social dimension of education as such, although multi-purpose surveys do exist which could also answer issues in relation to education and specific information is available regarding, for example, financial aid to students. Moreover, more data will become available over the coming years. The ensuing part of the report will therefore endeavour to clarify what data are available, to identify the data gaps in relation to the four domains mentioned above and to suggest developments in the field.

## **II.5.1 Providers and availability**

### *A. The providers*

In the area of educational statistics, **Eurostat**, which is part of the European Commission services provides comparable statistics and indicators on key aspects of education systems across Europe and on the outcomes of education.

Administrative data cover participation and completion of education programmes, personnel in education and the cost and type of resources dedicated to education. The main source of data is the joint UNESCO Institute of Statistics/OECD/Eurostat (UOE) questionnaires on education statistics, which constitute the core database on education. Countries provide data, which come from administrative records, on the basis of commonly agreed definitions. Data are collected on

- enrolment,
- entrants,
- graduates,
- educational personnel, and
- financing of education.

Specific Eurostat tables also cover regional data, language learning as well as detailed data on the fields of education and the BA/MA structure (to follow-up on the Bologna Process).

Eurostat also collects information on the socio-economic status of households and persons via its specific social surveys. In these surveys, information on students in tertiary education may also be found but it needs specific treatment and analysis (related mainly to the reliability of data). Possible data sources to be explored in this respect are: the EU-Labour Force Survey and the EU-Social Income and Living Conditions Survey. Additionally, in 2009, the EU-LFS ad hoc module on “Entry of the young people into the labour market” will provide more detailed and reliable information on employment related topics (including students at all levels of education).

**Eurydice** is an institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating reliable and readily comparable information on education systems and policies throughout Europe. It has been established by the European Commission and Member States to boost cooperation by improving understanding of systems and policies. Since 1995, Eurydice has also been an integral part of Socrates, the Community action programme in education. It is now part of the new integrated lifelong learning programme (ILLP).

Eurydice has surveyed several aspects of the social dimension of higher education in order to produce with Eurostat the joint publication *Key data on higher education 2007*; in particular, financial support for students and private contributions. The Eurydice network provides contextualised information on educational systems, with the legislative framework, i.e. laws, decrees and regulations, as its main source of information. The joint publication should be available before the London ministerial meeting. Financial contributions to higher education institutions paid by students can be fees, be they administrative fees or tuition fees, or membership of a students’ union. Public financial support is divided into:

- Types: to cover student living costs, accommodation, fees;
- Forms: grants, loans, combinations of grants and loans, family allowances, tax relief for dependent students, minimum and maximum amounts established by regulatory framework;
- Conditions of award: civil status, student income, studies undertaken (level, length, specific year of study, successful study), others (fixed number of years, distance criterion).

**Eurostudent** is a project that aims to provide information that is relevant to education policy, by comparing international social and economic data of student life mainly through student surveys. Since its inception the Eurostudent project has been coordinated by HiS (Hochschul-Informationen-System) in Hanover, Germany. Eurostudent focuses on the student body in higher education and especially on their socio-economic living conditions and their international mobility. Eurostudent provides data on:

- access to higher education,
- study financing and its sources,
- income and expenditures,
- housing,
- students' time budgets,
- language proficiency, and
- study-related stays abroad.

Eurostudent is complementary to the Eurydice/Eurostat joint publication (*Key data on higher Education*) mentioned above. Whereas Eurydice is a system descriptor of the normative framework, Eurostudent gives an indication of how the system works. Its data come from national student surveys based on mutually agreed questions and indicators.

**EUA Trends** series is another relevant survey. It provides the perspectives of the rectors and vice-rectors of European higher education institutions, focusing on the Bologna Process. The latest iteration of the survey, Trends V, was carried out between December 2005 and March 2006. Among other themes, it provides data on:

- access to higher education,
- services provided by higher education institutions to their students,
- promotion of mobility, and
- the importance of employability.

**LIS** is a research centre that maintains a database consisting of harmonised micro-data from social and economic household surveys from different countries and can thus provide information on the socio-economic background of the student.

### *B. Availability of data*

In spite of the absence of a comprehensive data collection on the social dimension of higher education, the surveys of the above-mentioned **international organisations** can nevertheless deliver valuable information. The various angles from which they view the social dimension can be seen as complementary. However it is essential to bear in mind that the studies work to **different timetables and have a differing coverage of the Bologna countries**.

**Coverage** varies greatly, with no one body able to provide all its data for all Bologna countries. Eurostat and Eurydice focus on members of the European Union and associated countries. In the last Eurostudent report from 2005 eleven European countries participated. In its current survey Eurostudent will cover over 20 countries from the Bologna region. EUA covers basically all the Bologna countries in its Trends V report, except Albania, Armenia and Lichtenstein, while for Russia and Ukraine the reliability of the data is lower, due to the lower number of HEIs that answered the survey. LIS can provide data for 17 countries, ten of which are also covered by Eurostudent.

Furthermore, the various organisations work according to **different time schedules**. Eurostudent will report with data from 2006/2007 in 2008, LIS has data predominantly for 2004 and Eurydice will report in 2007 with 2006 data. The Eurostat survey is published annually with data published in 2006 predominantly relating to 2003 and 2004. The Trends V report will be presented in 2007 based on data from 2005 and 2006.

As far as the **different perspectives** are concerned, Eurostat collects administrative data to monitor, inter alia, the Lisbon Agenda, Eurydice provides contextual information on education systems, Eurostudent is a student survey, Trends surveys institutions' responses to the Bologna Process and LIS is an income study.

It is apparent from the above that there are gaps in the participating countries covered, that the perspective changes according to the initial objective of the international organisation and finally, that there is no common date for publication.

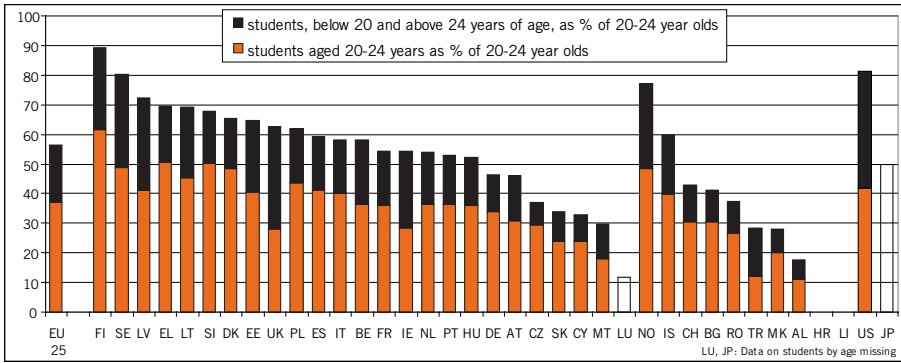
## **II.5.2 Data on main domains within the social dimension**

### *A. Widening access*

According to the rationale for the social dimension higher education systems should provide equitable conditions and relations necessary for the equal and collective realisation of self-development and self-determination of all social groups in higher education.

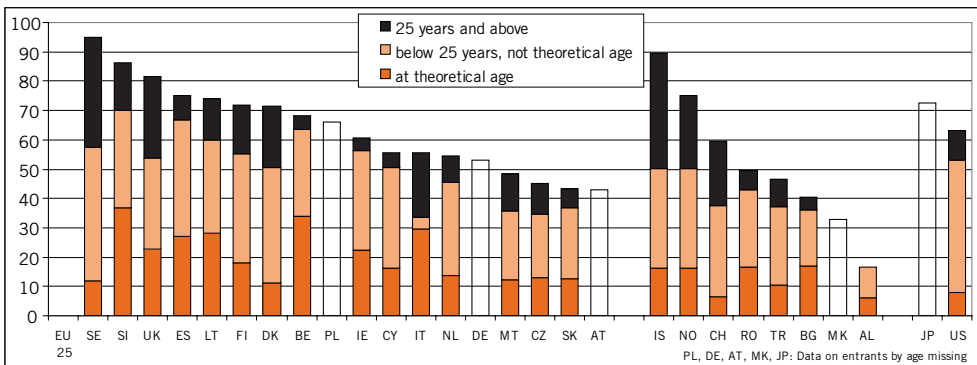
**Participation rates** shed a light on this dimension. Eurostat provides data on the current participation rate by age, region and sex, as well as on the distribution among the different fields of education by sex. These data show that in the EU 25 close to 17 million students were enrolled in higher education in 2002/03, an increase of 2.5 million or 17 % over a five-year period. The total number of students enrolled depends not only on the entrance rates to higher education but also on the duration of higher education studies (see fig. 1). The entrance rate is calculated as the total number of new entrants relative to the population in the theoretical age group for transition to tertiary education (see fig. 2). This needs to be related to the varying output of secondary education both within Member States and across Europe.

Fig. 1: Students in tertiary education 2002/2003 as a percentage of 20-24 years old in the population



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics

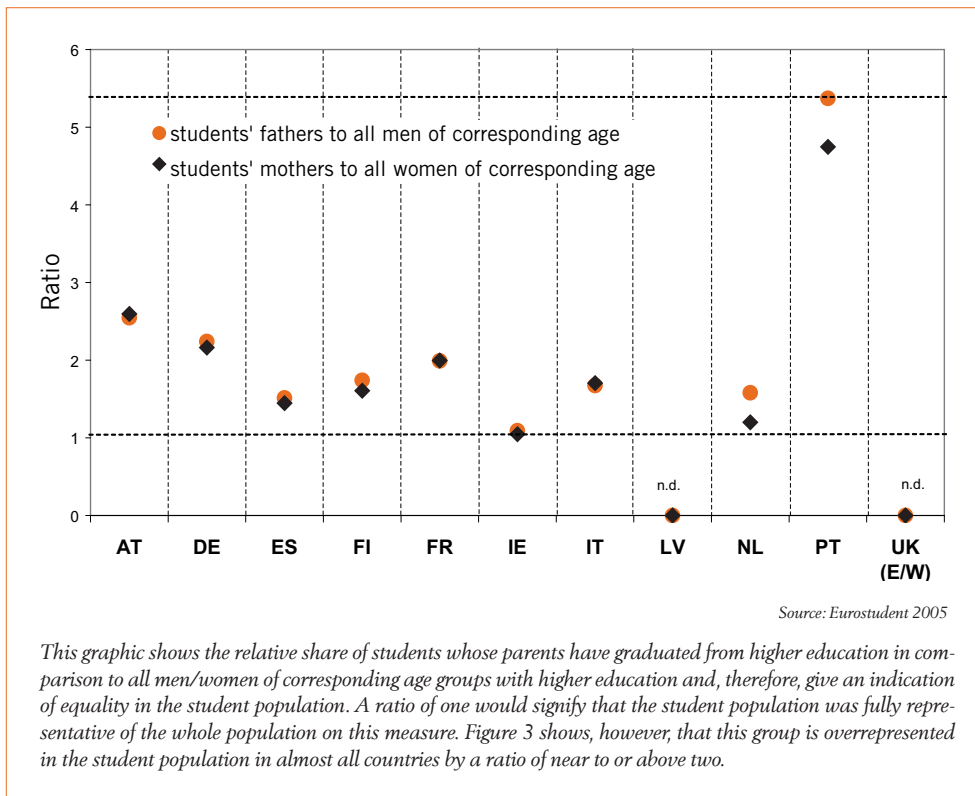
Fig. 2: Entrance rates to tertiary education in 2002/2003 – New entrants as a percentage of population in the theoretical age for entering tertiary education



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics

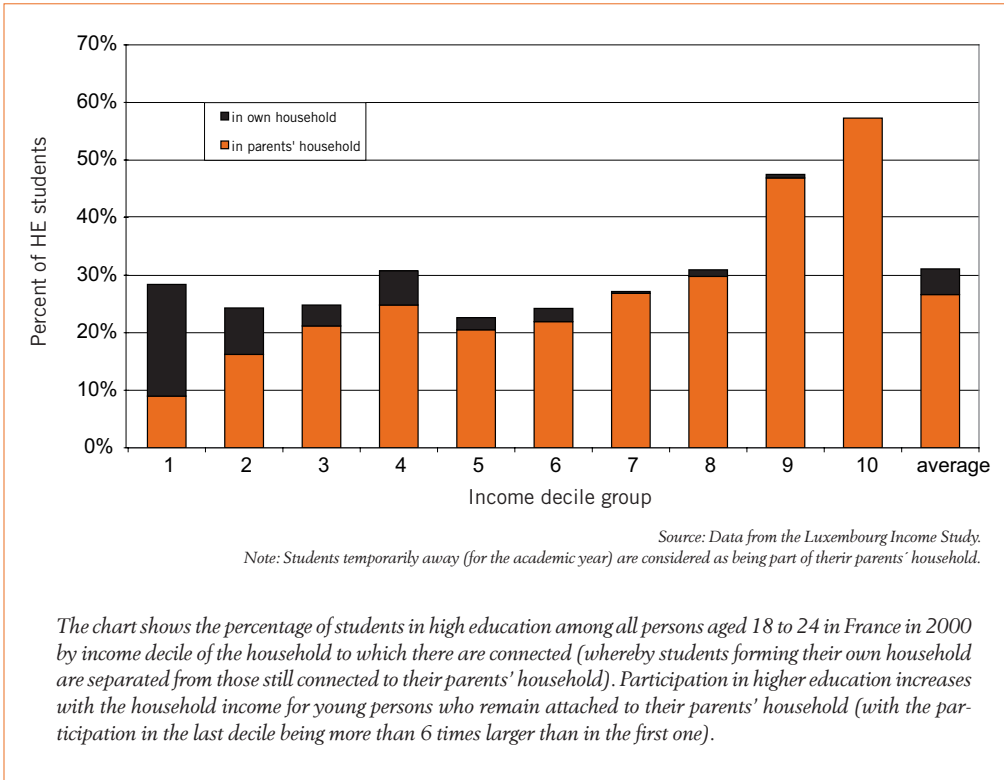
A further indicator for a policy of participative equity in higher education is the **social make-up** of the student body. A review of available studies undertaken by the OECD suggests the hypothesis that a significantly higher percentage of children from parents with professional backgrounds undertake tertiary level studies as compared with children of parents with manual backgrounds. Eurostudent and LIS provide relevant data on the socio-economic background of the student population. Eurostudent focuses on students' parents' educational attainment and in part on parents' occupational status as proxy measures for social make-up (see fig. 3).

Fig. 3: Educational background – share of students' parents with higher education to all men/women of corresponding age groups with higher education



The LIS data is a further source of information on distribution by socio-economic group, mainly by poverty or income distribution deciles, but also by occupation of head of household or skills level (see fig. 4 that shows an example from France).

Fig. 4: Share of higher education students among 18-24 year olds in France, by income decile 2000

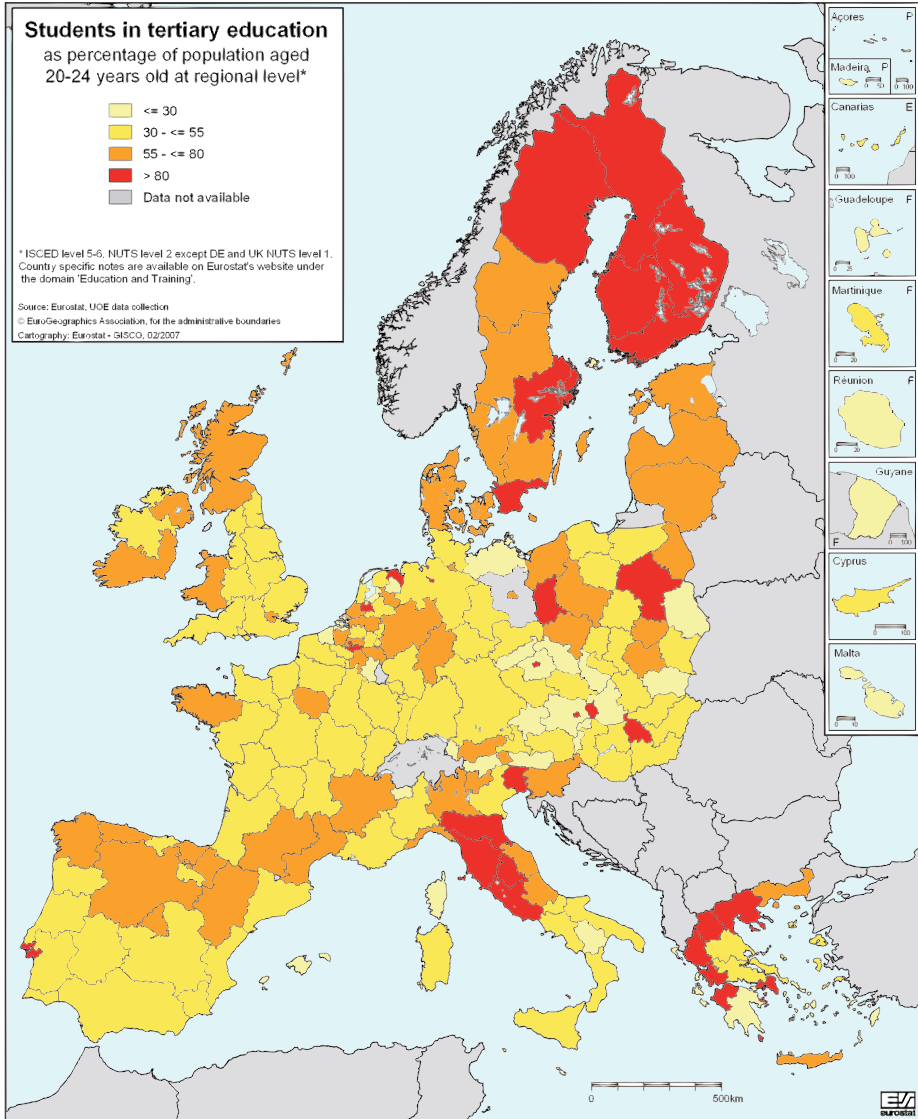


The LIS data set is available as micro-data and can, therefore, also be used to model participation in higher education in respect of the impact of various demographic and economic characteristics of individuals (such as age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, household composition and income, region). Country level data on institutional factors (as taken from other sources) could also be added to the model to better explain participation into higher education. Such analysis would require a substantial research component and should be focused on a limited number of countries.

Another less frequently cited dimension of participative equity relates to **geography**. In some countries like Norway geographical inequity in tertiary-level access is a policy concern. For potential university students commuting distance to the higher education institution has a significant impact on students with low incomes. However, although data on participation by geographic region are available (see fig. 5), there is limited data which can be differentiated by socio-economic factors.



Fig. 5: Students in tertiary education 2002/2003 as percentage of 20-24 years old in the population at regional level

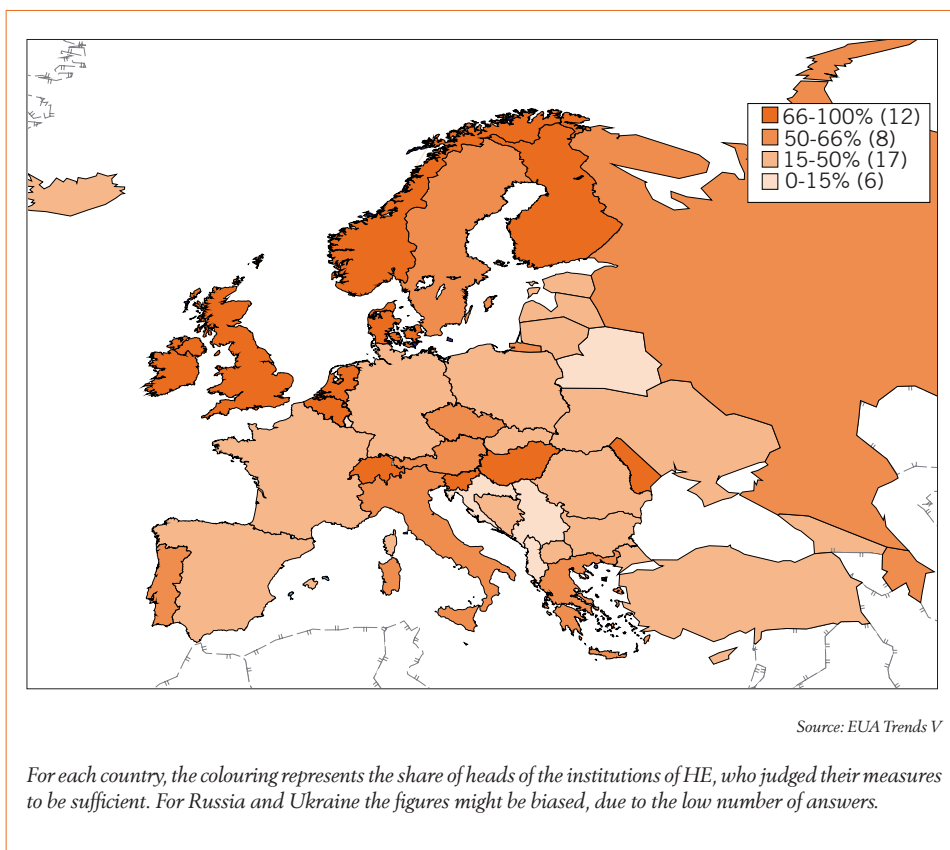


Source: Eurostat, Education statistics

*The participation rate is based on the number of students registered in an establishment located in the concerned region and the resident population aged 20-24. It shows both the general national level of participation, and also the concentration of establishments in some regions.*

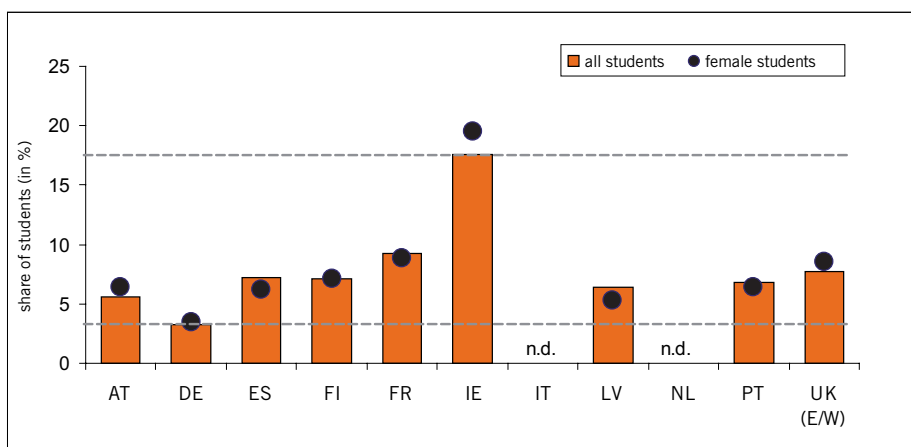
The attainment of the objective of participative equity also needs to be set against **other strategies used to promote and widen access**. The promotion of positive role models like image campaigns such as girls' day, outreach programmes for under-represented groups feature among them. The EUA Trends Report will touch upon such measures initiated by institutions of higher education (see fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Share of institutions of higher education per country who judge their measures to improve access for disadvantaged students to be sufficient



A specific policy in this area is the **recognition of prior learning** and the existence of **flexible learning paths** into higher education. Eurostudent uses non-traditional routes into higher education as an indicator, leaving it to the countries to define these routes themselves (see fig. 7). Work experience prior to higher education is also reported as an indicator of prior-experience pre-entry into higher education in the Eurostudent survey; work being defined as having been in employment for longer than six months, apprenticeships included and holiday jobs excluded.

Fig. 7: Proportion of students entering higher education via 'non-traditional' routes



Source: Eurostudent 2005

*This figure shows the proportion of students enrolled in higher education who have entered through "second-chance" or "non-traditional" routes, which are usually part of widening access programmes. According to the two-tier reporting system of Eurostudent, the specific qualifications are reported in the Eurostudent National Profiles for individual countries. For instance, the Irish National Profile reports that whilst most students enter higher education on the basis of traditional upper secondary qualifications (the Leaving Certificate), 9% obtain access on the basis of years (i.e. being over 23 years old), 2% through further education qualifications, 3% through special access programmes and the remainder through other qualifications.*

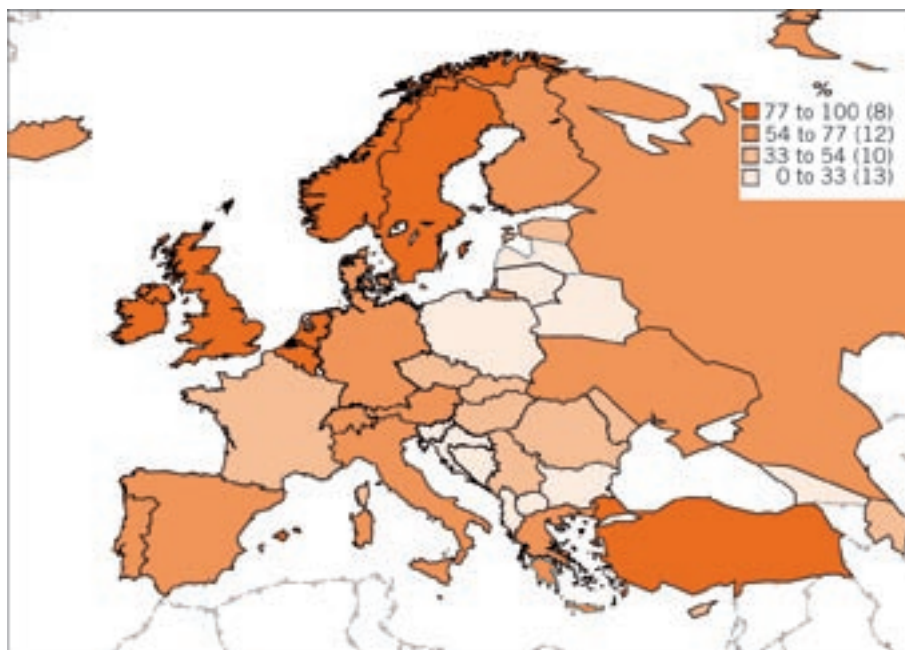
## B. The study framework

### *The study environment*

The social dimension is also defined as a study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience.

The study environment includes the **provision of academic and social services**. The **social services** include, for example, counselling, health care, childcare, canteens and accommodation, but also transportation. The EUA Trends Report contains information on the provision of counselling at institutional level (see fig. 8), and the *Key data on higher education* (Eurydice/Eurostat joint publication) inform on the number of places available in public halls of residence and on the awarding criteria and the minimum and maximum amount of cost for renting.

Fig. 8: Share of institutions of higher education per country providing counselling services

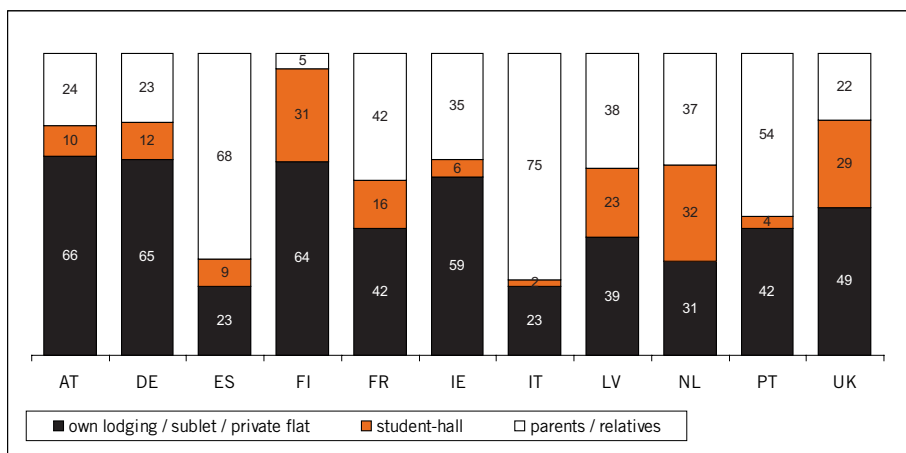


Source: EUA Trends V

*For each country, the colouring represents the share of heads of HEIs, who responded that their institutions provide counseling services. For Russia and Ukraine the figures might be biased, due to the low number of answers.*

Eurostudent contains information on both the type and the cost of accommodation (fig. 9 and 10). The LIS surveys also provide indicators such as distributions by household composition to get answers on issues like whether students are the head/spouse of a household and if so whether they have children or if they still live with their parents. In both the Eurostudent and LIS reports accommodation is analysed as an indication of different lifestyles, as well as of income/expenses. Accommodation is therefore closely related to the student's financial means and thus also pertains to the overall cost of tertiary education.

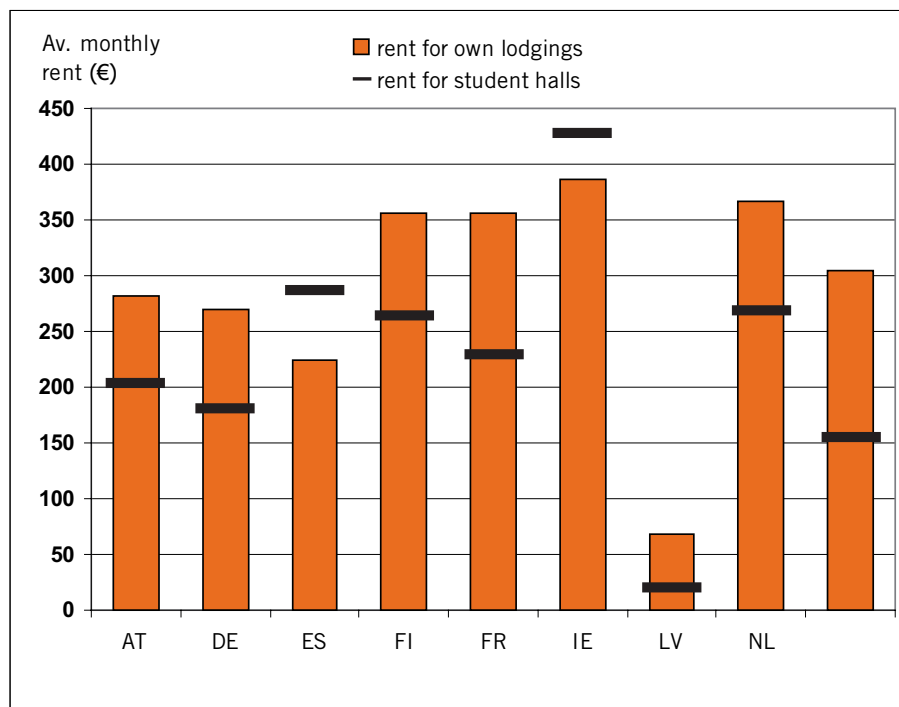
Fig. 9: Share of students living in various forms of accommodation



Source: Eurostudent 2005

*In Figure 9 the indicator describes the place of residence and the conditions under which students live during their studies. A comparison of the countries here shows two clear patterns: In some countries the majority of students live in their own lodgings, whilst in others a large share continue to live with their parents. Student halls offer a third form of accommodation. The rent is often subsidised by the state. Analysing these shares by age highlights the fact that the older students are, the more likely they are to live in their own household.*

Fig. 10: Comparison of cost of accommodation



Source: Eurostudent 2005

Figure 10 compares the monthly rent for halls of residence to rent for private accommodation (own lodgings). The diagram confirms that in the majority of countries – irrespective of the amount paid for rent – it is cheaper to stay in halls of residence. The exceptions to this situation are Spain and Ireland. However, in these countries less than 10% of students take up this form of residence. The highest shares of students living in halls are to be found in the Netherlands, Finland and UK, where near to a third of all students reside in this form of accommodation.

### Finances in order to start and complete studies

This chapter looks into the availability of data on student income and student expenses. **Student income** is defined by state assistance, employment and family support. State assistance is subdivided into:

- the type of financial support, i.e. what it covers: administration costs, tuition costs, living costs,
- the form of financial support, i.e. grants (non-repayable), loans (repayable) or a combination of grants and loans and
- the conditions of awarding this state assistance.

Eurydice provides information on the regulatory framework for the items above including existence of specific support for students who are parents while Eurostudent defines the student's income both in terms of its composition and its amounts. The Eurostudent study differentiates between students maintaining their own household and students living with their family/relatives. Financial analyses

focus on students maintaining their own households following the assumption that students' assessment of the income-mix is more robust when they are largely responsible for the management of their own finances. Eurostudent correlates the various sources of income by students' socio-economic group using the highest education qualification of students' parents as a proxy (see fig. 11, 12, 13 and 14).

Fig. 11: A comparison of total income (all sources) by parents' education

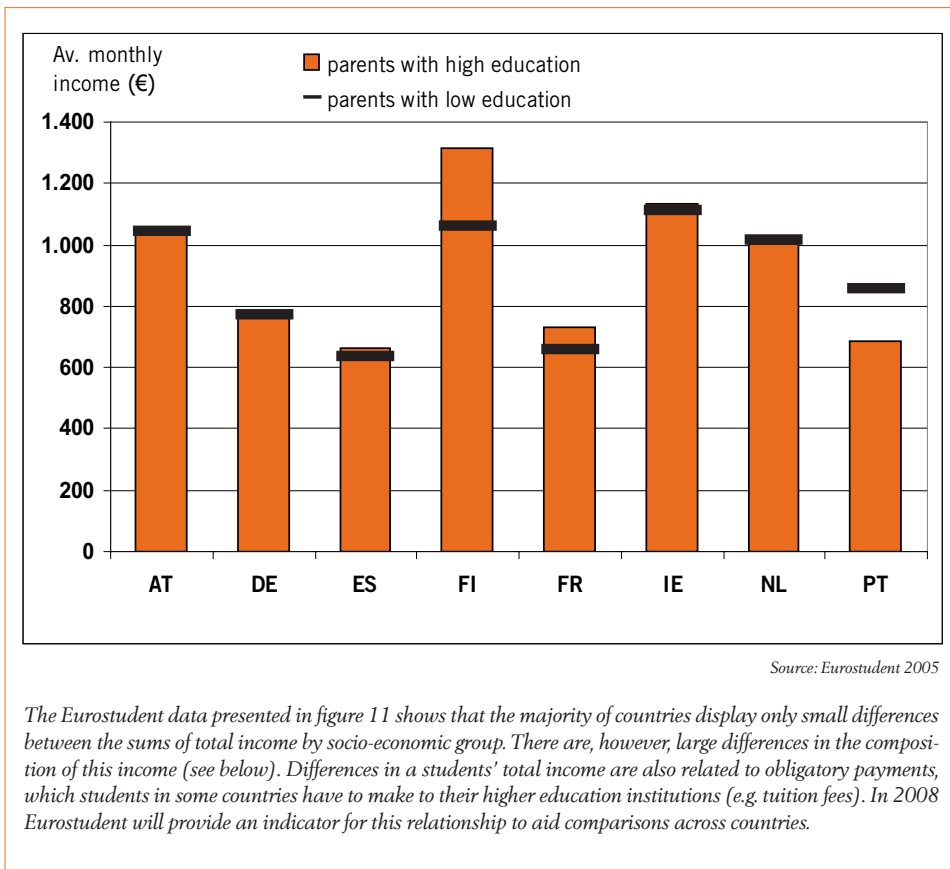
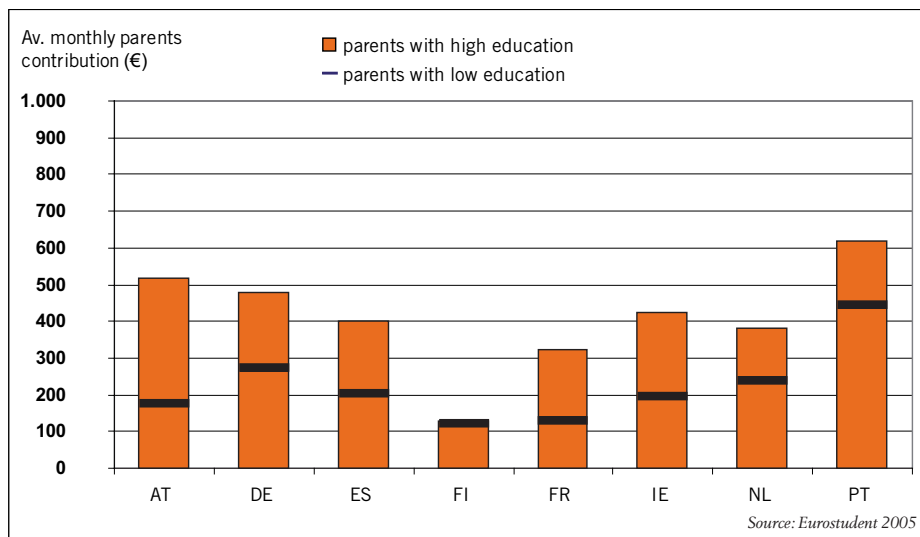
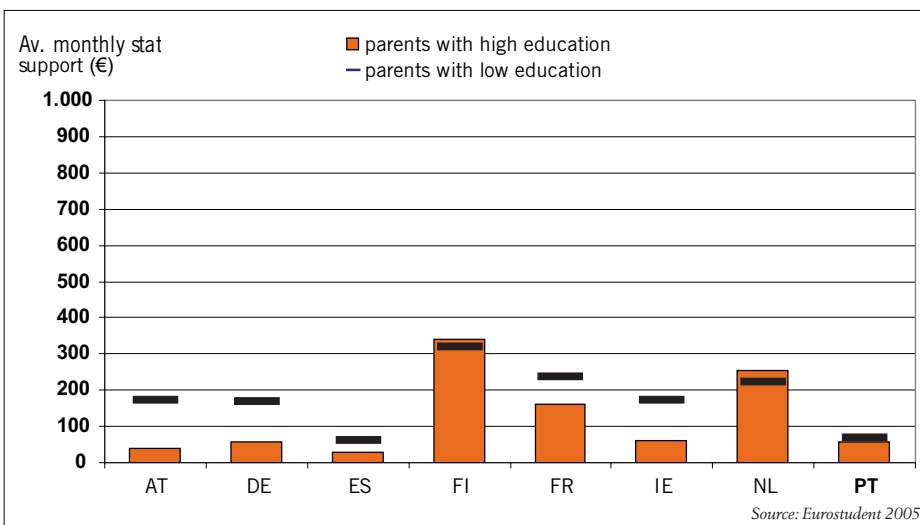


Fig. 12: A comparison of parents' contributions by parents' education



This figure shows that students whose parents have graduated from higher education receive the highest contributions to their income from their parents. In all countries the majority of students receive contributions from their parents ranging from 50% (Finland) to around 90% (Portugal and Germany) making this source central to students' income. In some countries (e.g. Germany) this contribution is part financed by indirect state contributions (in this case child support).

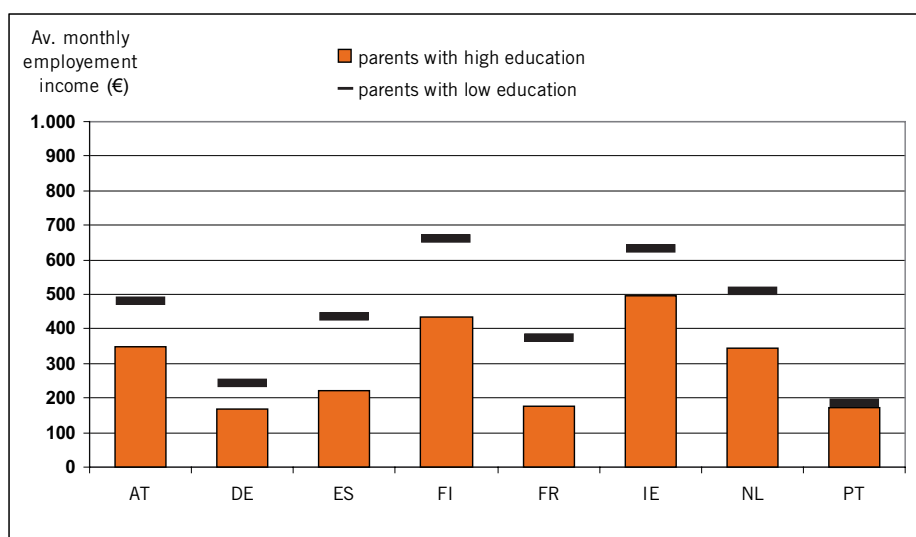
Fig. 13: A comparison of state support by parents' education



This figure shows how state support compensates for the social skew in parental contributions in most countries. The countries which target the low socio-economic group most explicitly are Austria, Germany and Ireland. Students from the low education group in these countries receive between two and four times more support than their national counterparts with high parental education. The share of students receiving support range from 79% (Finland) and 28% (Austria, Germany and Spain). The allocation procedures in Finland and the Netherlands are clearly not related to social background. The data in 2008 will be able to differentiate between state support which is repayable (loan) and support which is non-repayable (grant). This will facilitate a comparison between state support measures.



Fig. 14: A comparison of income from employment by parents' education



Source: Eurostudent 2005

*This figure clearly highlights the fact that a social skew remains in the use of employment income to supplement living and study costs. This fact is evident for all countries, although least prominent in this dimension for Portugal. With the exception of Portugal, where only a relatively small share of students receive income through this source (19%), this income source is relevant for between 42% (Spain) and 84% (Austria) of all students.*

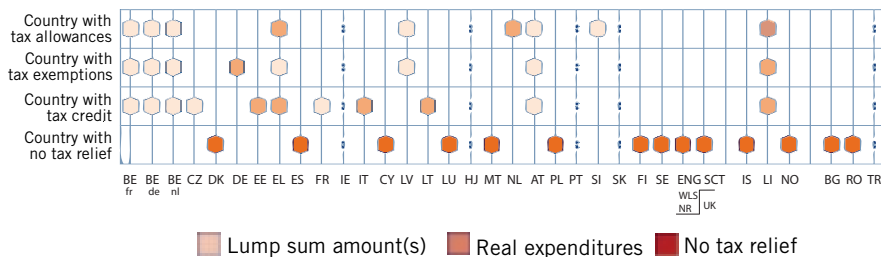
A comprehensive assessment of the contribution of the state to student support is not complete without an analysis of the existence or not of family allowances and tax relief schemes and in how far these are transferred to the student's income. This issue is related to the progressivity or regressivity of the national tax system. In general terms, a tax and expenditure system is more progressive to the extent that it redistributes from those who are better off to those who are worse off. International comparison is underdeveloped in this area; it is also hindered by the complexity of tax systems.

Eurydice provides some contextual information on this issue. Tax relief designed to help parents when funding the tertiary education of their children is analysed in the Eurydice/Eurostat study (*Key data on higher education 2007*). Besides family allowances and financial support for students, which respectively constitute direct funding transfers to the families of students or students themselves, the tax reliefs discussed in the study result in a decrease in the financial transfers from families with dependent students to the public authorities. By definition, it is for the benefit of taxable households. Tax systems may provide for various techniques that can be equated with financial support for the parents of one or more dependent students, namely tax allowances, tax exemption or tax credit.

In all countries providing tax relief, this form of support is exactly the same irrespective of whether students are enrolled in public tertiary education or (where

it exists) government-dependent private tertiary education, as well as for students at ISCED level 6. The fact that tax measures are the same for students at ISCED level 6 should be qualified by the fact that an age limit is often among the stated eligibility criteria (see fig. 15).

Fig. 15: Existence, categories and methods of calculating tax relief for the parents of students, ISCED 5-6, 2005/06 [PROVISIONAL DATA]



Source: Eurydice.

#### Explanatory note

*Tax relief represents an allowance for a dependent child that may result in the payment of less income tax, either through a decrease in taxable income (tax allowances and exemption) or tax credit.*

*Tax allowances involve reducing gross income by a certain amount, or increasing by a certain amount the income levels at which the taxpayer passes from one tax rate to another.*

*Tax exemption is the same operation as in the case of tax allowances except that it affects one or more initial income bands, rather than the highest, without altering the points in the scale of gross income at which there is a transition from one tax rate to the next.*

*A tax credit is a sum of money that the taxpayer is allowed to deduct from the amount of tax payable. As a rule, this sum is not income dependent. In some cases, where the taxpayer's income is below the tax threshold, or the amount of tax payable is less than that of the credit, a direct cash transfer can be made to the taxpayer. Tax credit is granted to persons who have incurred some form of expenditure, if for example they have a child or dependent person enrolled in higher education.*

*Lump sum tax relief (in the form of tax allowances, tax exemption or tax credits) consists of statutorily defined amounts considered to be approximately equivalent to the expenses actually incurred by the taxpayer. This involves fixing a sum, which is the same for all taxpayers, whatever their actual expenditure. The amount of this sum may nevertheless vary according to the number of dependants.*

*Tax relief based on real expenditure involves an obligation on the taxpayer to provide supporting documentation in relation to certain specific expenditure. Here, taxpayers are allowed to deduct from their taxable income, or tax payable, all or part of the expenses necessarily incurred in the education of persons who are their dependants. The amounts deducted will depend on actual expenditure on the basis of receipts supplied as proof of purchases. A maximum amount may be fixed<sup>6</sup>.*

#### <sup>6</sup> Additional notes

Estonia: Training expenses are certified expenses for tax deduction purposes if incurred in study at a state or local government educational establishment, university in public law, a private school which holds a training licence or has been positively accredited for the study programme concerned, or foreign educational establishment with the same status of any of the foregoing. The same applies to training expenses for studying on fee-charging courses organised by any such educational establishments. The deductions provided for in the Income Tax Act are altogether limited to 100 000 kroons per taxpayer during a period of taxation, and to not more than 50 per cent of the taxpayer's income of the same period of taxation.

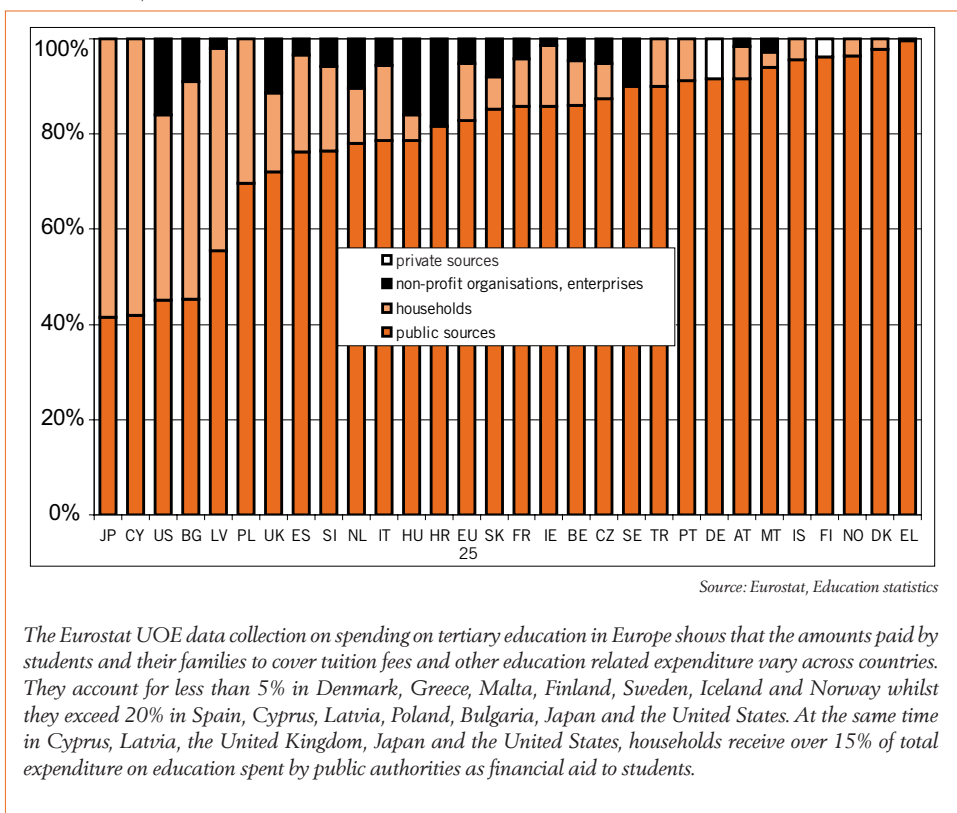
Latvia: The sums spent by a taxable household into order to raise the qualification level of one of its members, or to help a member of the household specialise or acquire training (irrespective of the age of the person concerned) are deducted from annual taxable income.

Netherlands: Financial support for students is taken into account when determining the level of tax allowances.

The LIS data could possibly also be used to estimate the difference in redistribution for households with HE students versus similar households without students, by comparing pre and post tax and transfers.

**Student expenses** are covered by both Eurostudent and Eurostat. As in student income, the Eurostudent indicator covers composition and amounts of expenses. There are eight categories: living costs (accommodation, food, clothing, transport); study related costs (tuition fees, contribution to student union, social welfare, books), other. Eurostat collates information on the public and private expenditure on institutions of higher education (fig.16).

Fig. 16: Relative proportions of public private spending on educational institutions, at tertiary level of education, 2002

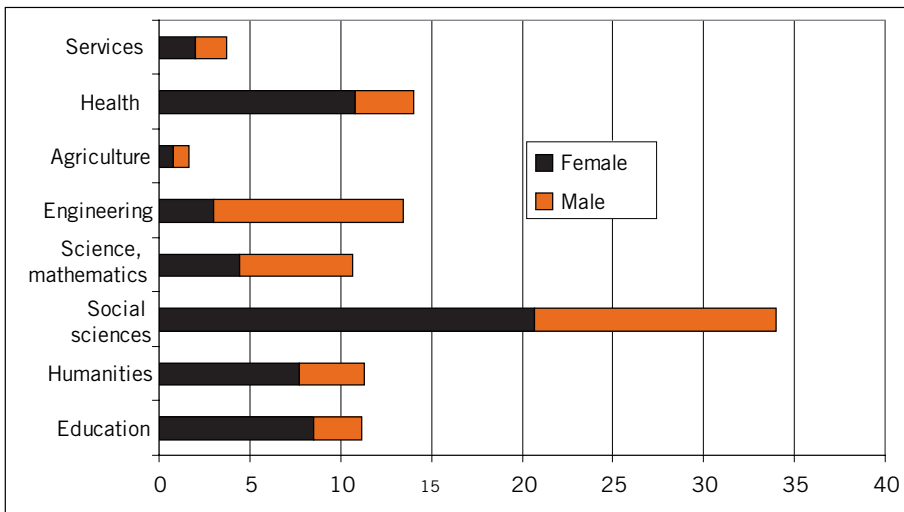


### C. Completion of studies

While data on participation, i.e. entrance and enrolment are available, the same does not apply for **retention rates** especially by socio-economic background. Indeed, such data would necessarily be based on surveying a cohort over a given time period. None of the organisations use this approach.

However, Eurostat provides data on graduation and duration of studies. The duration depends both on the theoretical duration of programmes, which differs between countries, and the actual duration of studies, to graduation or drop-out. Eurostat collected data on drop-outs or duration in 2005 (see fig. 17). Overall, as seen in figure 17, 3.377 million students graduate each year within EU 25. This number is rapidly increasing, especially for females.

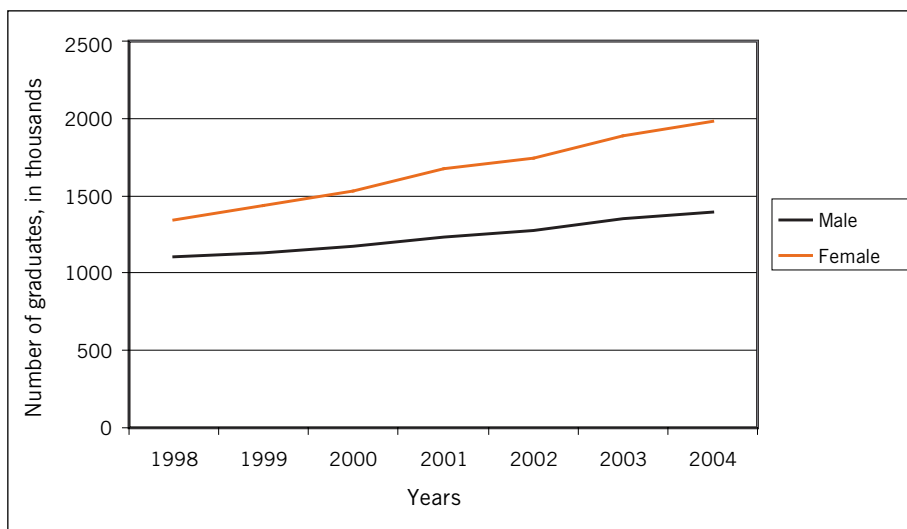
Fig. 17: Graduations by fields of study, EU 25, 2003, in percentage of total graduations



Source: Eurostat, Education Statistics

*The figure shows the graduation pattern for the EU countries: Social sciences are by far the main field of graduations. Females are the most represented in the education and health fields, males in engineering.*

Fig. 18: Number of graduates, per year and by sex, EU 25, in thousands



Source: Eurostat, Education statistics

### *Employability*

Employability, though not part of the definition of the social dimension, nevertheless should be taken into account if we want complete information on students' biographies, putting them in the larger context of the prospective labour market. It can explain, to a certain extent, choices of fields of study within tertiary education and increases in participation in the areas of education offering more opportunities on the labour market.

The Eurostat Labour Force Survey shows the importance of education in general. University degree holders (ISCED 5A) are more active and have a lower probability of unemployment (fig. 19). Furthermore, this survey provides data on employment rates for graduates entering into the labour market by field of study (fig. 20). More analysis could be done in this respect, e.g. of the need to match skills and jobs among the newcomers to the labour market.

Fig. 19: Employment status by level of education, EU 25, 2005

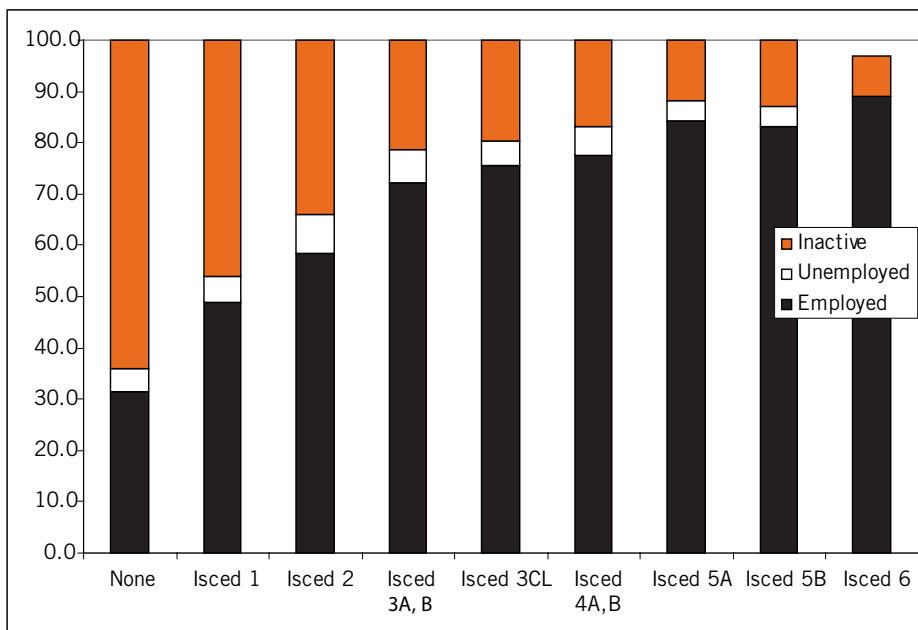
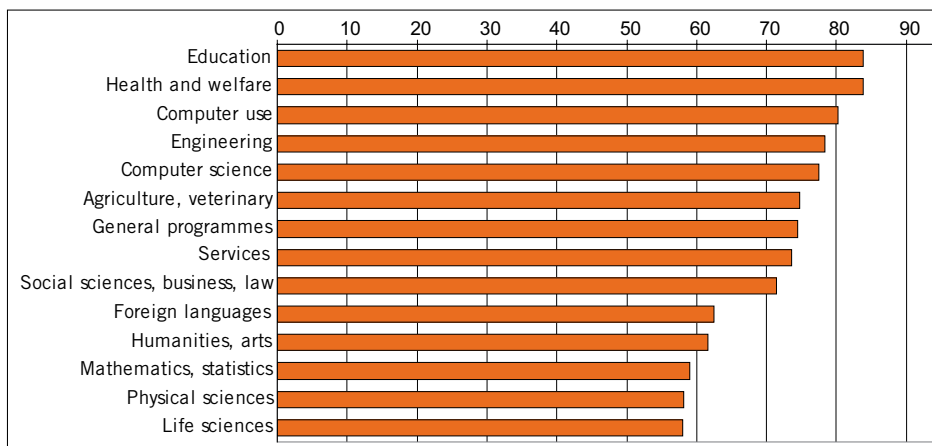


Fig. 20: Employment rate for graduates of tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6), two years after having completed their studies, by field of education, EU-25, 2004



Source: Eurostat, LFS

### II.5.3 Synthesis of data on the social dimension

As can be seen from the above analysis, there is **no comprehensive survey** of the social dimension, which covers all the necessary aspects. However, the working group has shown the feasibility of cooperation between different data providers, who – on the basis of their complementary data sources – can provide such a report. In general, data is available and the **two most important data providers are Eurostat and Eurostudent**.

However, **challenges and data gaps** remain:

The first challenge is to **match requirements for indicators with data availability and comparability**. The figure in Annex 5 shows that only few of the available indicators can be provided to the ideal degree of differentiation, which would cover differences by age, gender, socio-economic background and region. Indeed characteristics used to differentiate by socio-economic background need special attention: Eurostudent focuses on educational background of parents to differentiate between student groups as this measure is most robust for student surveys and international comparison. Other data providers (e.g. LIS, Eurostat) may be able to further analyses using other characteristics (parents' income, occupation, cultural characteristics).

The second challenge of bringing together international statistics and the regional procedures, structures and legal frameworks of individual higher educational systems has already been mentioned with regard to different systems of state support for students (fig. 15). Indeed **student income and expenditure cannot be determined outside the overall taxation and social security system of the country**: tax relief, child benefits, subsidised housing or transportation need to be taken into account when defining a student's budget. One consequence of this issue is that a clustering of systems on the basis of data analysis is advisable before starting any benchmarking activities.

Thirdly, most of the **currently available data is appropriate for analytical “snapshots” as opposed to analysis of change**. Establishing a monitoring report on the basis of this working group would improve this situation in time. However, one particular issue in relation to measuring retention rate would remain. While Eurostat provides data on the number of new entrants, on enrolment figures and also on educational attainment, there is no indication of who drops out. The methodological difficulty arises out of how to define a cohort of students, how to follow it and generally how to assess whether it is economically feasible to carry out such a study.

Fourthly, **geographical coverage** of all Bologna Process countries remains a challenge. The Trends Report is the only publication that encompasses most of the 45 Bologna countries. Yet, it is essential that progress towards the achievement of the objective as defined above should be measured across the whole spectrum.

In conclusion, the feasibility of a report on the social dimension of higher education in the European Higher Education Area has been demonstrated, but further work is required. The WG therefore recommends that Eurostat and Eurostudent be entrusted with a mandate for data collection in order to produce a state of the art report on the social dimension. In particular regard of the challenge of finding the right indicators, this work should be informed and supervised by a Bologna working group.

Fig. 21 : Schematic synthesis of data availability concerning the social dimension – overview

Available?	Parameters of differentiation				
	by age	by gender/sex	by socio-economic background	by region	
<b>Key topic: Widening access</b>		<b>Aim:</b> To widen participation and to achieve participative equity			
<b>Key information</b>					
New entrants	●	A	G		
Enrolment	●	A	G	S	R
Share of students entering via second chance (non-traditional) routes to HE	●				
Institutions' initiatives to improve access	●				
<b>Key topic: Study framework</b>		<b>Aim:</b> To create study environments which are conducive to successful studies			
<b>Key information</b>					
Accommodation, provision and costs	●	A			
Student counselling and social services	●				
Student income sources and expenditures	●			S	
Tuition fees and public support schemes	●			S	
Student time budget (workload)	●				
Mix of public and private funding	●				
<b>Key topic: Effective outcomes</b>		<b>Aim:</b> To achieve a high graduate rate and assure the relevance of course provision			
<b>Key information</b>					
Educational attainment	●	A	G		
Educational attainment by field of study	●				
Retention rate					
Institutions' initiatives to assure the relevance of course provision	●				
Employment post-studies	●				



In Annex 5 there is also a schematic synthesis of data availability on the social dimension in relation to the different data providers.

#### **II.5.4 Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting**

An additional source of information is the national reports provided by the Bologna Process countries as a preparation for the London ministerial meeting in May 2007. In the template for the national reports 2005–2007 **several questions relating to the social dimension were included**. The questions were:

1. describe any measures being taken in your country to widen access to quality higher education
2. describe any measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background
3. describe the arrangements for involving students (and staff trade unions/ representatives bodies) in the governance of higher education institutions

The WG has **summarised the information from the national reports** in order to give some indication of the actions being taken to strengthen the social dimension of higher education.

The Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna, Austria has made an attempt to categorise the answers to the questions on the social dimension in the national reports according to groups of countries. The Institute came to the conclusion, however, that such an exercise would be of limited use in a report such as this one. The questions put to the countries were very open and the descriptions do not give a complete picture of what the countries do. The questions were also asked before the definition of the social dimension in this report was presented. Several countries may have a particular measure in place, but not all of them might mention this measure since it may have been introduced a very long time ago, it is not considered relevant in this context or for other reasons. The most common measures are mentioned below. Annex 3 shows all the different measures mentioned by the countries in reply to the question on widened access above. The answers to the question on completion are very similar to the answers to the first question and there are often cross-references made between the two answers. The list of measures related to widened access presented in Annex 3 could in the future be used as the basis of a checklist in order to get a more complete picture of measures in place in the future.

The question about **student involvement in the governance of higher education institutions** was not included under the social dimension heading in the national report template. However, the possibility to influence one's own situation as a student is a fundamental part of the social dimension. The WG has therefore chosen to also include a summary of the national reports on student involvement in higher education governance.

## *1, Measures taken to widen access to quality higher education*

The following measures are most common according to the national reports:

- Financial support measures – a range in place
- Grants and loans for students to cover living costs and/or tuition fees
- Scholarships – based on merit or the need for financial assistance, provided by the state, higher education institutions or private foundations
- Assistance with housing, meals, transportation etc.
- Tax exemptions for tuition fees or loans and full/partial exemption from fees
- Incentives for higher education institutions
- Monitoring by or reporting to state
- Premia for the inclusion of underrepresented groups, e.g. disabled students
- Publication of performance indicators
- Targets set (by percentage of the total student cohort)

Other measures, which appear to be less common, include:

- Anti discrimination law in place
- Surveys and research on living or study conditions of students
- Mentoring and support programmes
- Increasing higher education provision, including Open Universities
- Flexible admissions criteria – extra points for underrepresented groups
- Use of recognition of prior learning and recognition of non-formal and informal learning

## *2, Measures to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background*

Generally, efforts presented in the national reports focussed on:

- Provision and enhancement of guidance and counselling services in school and in higher education institutions
- Range of financial support or incentives for students
- Scholarships based on merit
- Access to hardship funds
- Time-limited financial support
- Increasing the level of grants/loans available
- Provision of student welfare services, housing, healthcare, social and sports facilities
- Increasing tutorial and mentoring support, which may include the development of Personal Study Plans
- Allocation of credits for modules, and possibly requiring the student to achieve a set number of credits before being allowed to continue their course
- Improving access to, and information about, the range of courses available, thereby enabling more informed choices

- A number of countries have undertaken monitoring exercises, surveys and research, with dissemination and follow up events being set up to enable higher education institutions to exchange good practice
- A few countries are moving to output based funding
- At least one country cited the introduction of shorter Bachelor courses as a factor in reducing drop-out rates

There is a **growing recognition of the need to address equity issues** according to the national reports from the Bologna countries for the London ministerial meeting. The countries seem to focus primarily on financial measures in order to strengthen the social dimension. A continued focus on financial incentives and measures is needed, but the WG also considers that the **focus needs to be widened** to cover other aspects such as legislative measures, the development of services and outreach programmes, flexible curricula etc. The area of completion of studies was not addressed as systematically as the question about widening access to higher education. There is evidence of work to improve completion rates in the national reports, but the WG wants to stress that countries **need to put equal focus on widening access and achieving retention**.

### *3, Arrangements for involving students in the governance of higher education institutions*

Almost all countries have **legislation in place to ensure student participation in the governance of higher education institutions**. Many set a ratio for the number of students on the higher education institutions' boards; this ranges from 10 percent to a third. Most also have arrangements in place to involve students in national governing or advisory bodies. Students are also routinely engaged in quality assurance in a number of countries. Despite this high level of involvement, some countries are considering how they might increase student involvement further. At least one country is planning to undertake a formal evaluation of student participation in governing structures in 2009.

In 2003 and 2004 the Council of Europe carried out two separate surveys on the issue of *Student Participation in the Governance of Higher Education and Europe*<sup>7</sup>. The first survey covered 48 countries and the second one was a separate study on seven of the countries. The surveys showed that the formal provisions for student participation were to a large extent already there and the attitude towards increased student influence in higher education governance is very positive. The surveys show, however, that there are a number of **challenges concerning student participation**: the influence at national and department level needs to be developed, the relationship between the formal provisions for student participation and the actual practices at the different governance levels need examination, the role of student organisations needs to be looked into as well as the low participation in the election of student representatives and the dissemination of information about student rights and possibilities to influence decisions.

<sup>7</sup> *Student Participation in the Governance of Higher Education in Europe*, Council of Europe, 2003 and *Student Participation in the Governance of Higher Education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine*, Council of Europe, 2004.

## II.6 Recommendations from the Working Group

There are considerable differences and challenges in relation to the social dimension of higher education between the participating countries. This needs to be acknowledged and respected in the further development of the social dimension within the Process. The WG has found that it is not appropriate to narrowly define the social dimension or suggest a number of detailed actions that might be unduly difficult or inappropriate to deliver for all countries involved. The social dimension should be seen as a progressive process within the EHEA.

Instead, the WG proposes that an overall objective for the social dimension should be agreed by Ministers. While committing to the same objective, the means for reaching the objective should be adapted to national priorities and circumstances. The overall objective should reflect the importance of equal opportunities for access to and participation in quality higher education as well as of widening access to and participation in quality higher education. It should also reflect the importance of ensuring the successful completion of studies. Furthermore, it should be made clear that equal opportunities should extend to all aspects of higher education and all three cycles. The WG suggests the following overall objective to be agreed by the Ministers:

*We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.*

The WG also wants to start a process towards achieving this objective and proposes that each country develops its own strategy, including an action plan, for the social dimension. Initially such a strategy will call for the identification of possible underrepresented groups, eg gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography, within each country. Annex 2 to this report provides some guidance on the development of national strategies and action plans.

The work of the WG has shown that it is difficult – and not yet possible – to find data that are reliable and comparable and that cover the whole EHEA. Concerning data on the social dimension, there is no comprehensive survey, which covers the necessary aspects of the social dimension. The WG has also found that there are several important data gaps and challenges in relation to the social dimension: not all Bologna countries are covered, there is no common deadline for surveys, requirements for indicators need to be matched with data availability and comparability, statistics from different sectors need to be brought together to get a fair picture of the social dimension and most of the currently available data is not appropriate for analysis of change. However, the feasibility of a report on the social dimension in the EHEA has been demonstrated by the WG, but further work is required.

After discussing the task to “prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking” the WG has come to the conclusion that the identification and collection of social dimension data needs to go beyond the present Bologna Process stocktaking method. Data on the social dimension should comprise system descriptors as well as information on how these systems work and not be narrowed down to stocktaking indicators. The data gathered must be reliable and comparable. We consider that the development of the social dimension needs to be followed and compared between countries in a more ambitious way than the stocktaking method allows for<sup>8</sup>. The WG therefore recommends that Eurostat and Eurostudent be entrusted with a mandate for data collection in order to produce a state of the art report on the social dimension. In particular regard of the challenge of finding the right indicators, this work should be informed and supervised by a Bologna working group.

The WG has a number of suggestions for measures to support the development towards the overall objective:

#### *Measures at national and institutional level*

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders should actively participate in and support this work at the national level. The WG suggests an approach to the work on national strategies in Annex 2 to this report.
- Student survey data should be collected with the aim of providing comparable and reliable data concerning the social dimension.

#### *Measures at BFUG level*

- The collection of data on the social dimension needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to develop more comparable and reliable data to inform progress towards the overall objective for the social dimension in all Bologna countries. Data should cover participative equity in higher education as well as employability for graduates. This task should be overseen by the BFUG and a report should be submitted for the 2009 ministerial meeting.
- To give an overview of the work on strategies and action plans carried out in participating countries in order to exchange experiences.

---

<sup>8</sup> For an explanation of the stocktaking method please consult the first stocktaking report at [www.bologna-bergen2005.no](http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no) under the heading “Bergen Ministerial Meeting”.

# Part III. Mobility

In the terms of reference the WG was given the following tasks in relation to mobility:

- to present comparable data on the mobility of staff and students
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

## III.1 Defining mobility

Mobility has many aspects. The purposes of higher education mobility vary. They could be educational, research-related, connected to teaching or other forms of work – but also personal, cultural, social, connected to immigration, linguistic or part of larger ambitions for the quality of higher education and research or other societal goals.

The countries participating in the Bologna Process should **continue to strive for an EHEA where students and staff can be truly mobile**, with mutual benefits for the parties involved. There should be a reasonable balance of mobility flows. This can be achieved by raising the attractiveness of each national system for higher education and by encouraging the development of cross-border cooperation in education and research.

In the report *EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education* published by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in 2006<sup>9</sup>, the authors say that most policy and analytical documents do not present any detailed definition of student mobility, because it can be taken for granted that there is a conventional wisdom of what student mobility means. An internationally mobile student is a student having crossed a national border in order to study or to undertake other study-related activities for at least a certain unit of a study programme or a certain period of time in the country he or she has moved to.

In the report *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility* (2007) the author Conor Cradden has categorised the different types of academic staff mobility according to their “institutional anchoring”. Cradden prefers this to defining mobility according to the length of time a member of staff is away from his or her home coun-

---

<sup>9</sup> *EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education* by Maria Kelo, Ulrich Teichler, Bernd Wächter (eds.) published by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in 2006, Lemmens Verlag.

try. There are four types of anchoring: visits, exchanges and sabbaticals; grants and fellowships; untenured employment; and tenured employment. In combination with the socio-cultural and labour-market justifications for mobility, Cradden argues that this gives rise to four categories of mobility:

1. traditional academic exchange,
2. early career training and experience,
3. importing cheap academic labour and
4. targeting the international labour market.

In the view of the WG, it is no longer appropriate in our multi-cultural societies to use nationality as a statistical basis. The WG has created a definition of mobility for the purposes of the work within the WG. The WG suggests a **wide definition of mobility** that covers all forms and lengths of mobility within higher education in a global perspective and that is not limited to mobility within the EHEA:

*Mobility of students:* Refers to a study period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior education (completed or ongoing) for a period of study or a full degree.

*Mobility of staff:* Refers to a working period in a country other than that of prior permanent residence or prior employment (terminated or ongoing) for a limited or extended period.

## III.2 Rationale for mobility

Mobility is at the core of the Bologna Process and a key to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Promoting mobility creates opportunities for personal growth, develops international co-operation and understanding between individuals and institutions, enhances the quality of higher education and research, responds to the needs of European societies, and thus gives substance to the European dimension. We want a European Higher Education Area where students and staff can be truly mobile.

Mobility is beneficial for the **mobile individual**, but also for **students and staff at the home institution**. Mobility also has positive consequences for the **quality of higher education and the higher education institutions** as well as for **society** as a whole.

To experience another country and study environment gives the individual a new cultural, social and academic experience and creates opportunities for personal growth. This enhances the employability of the individual and their ability to take part in the international labour market. Mobile students and staff also contribute to an internationalised environment at the host institutions. Staff mobility creates the mutual trust between institutions that is necessary for in-

creased cooperation and recognition of study periods abroad, and it therefore also supports student mobility.

The advantages for an individual can also be transferred to institutional assets. Through mobile individuals, in-coming and outgoing students as well as staff, higher education institutions gain new insights that challenge established traditions and practices. Mobility thereby provides possibilities for the development of academic work through new contacts and ideas as well as an opportunity for comparison and benchmarking between systems. Together with an open-minded atmosphere, it reinforces international cooperation and networking and the development of the quality of higher education and research.

The experiences of mobile individuals are brought into society and contribute to the development of society. Individuals with experience of other countries will also help to reduce prejudice and cultural as well as language barriers between people, countries and cultures. Trans-national exchanges provide both cooperative and competitive advantages for society and will drive change and the improvement of society.

### III.3 Commitments already made in the official Bologna documents

One of the **key objectives** when establishing the European Higher Education Area is to increase the opportunities for mobility of both students and staff. Most of the commitments made within the Bologna Process, for example concerning issues related to the three cycle system, recognition and quality assurance, aim at promoting mobility. These are some of the most prominent commitments regarding mobility in the official documents:

1. The Sorbonne declaration of 25th of May 1998 (...) emphasised the creation of the European area of higher education as a key way to promote citizens' mobility and employability and the Continent's overall development. (Bologna Declaration)
2. Mobility should be promoted by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:
  - for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services
  - for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights. (Bologna Declaration)
3. Ministers emphasised the social dimension of mobility. (Prague Communiqué)



4. Ministers should take measures to facilitate the portability of national loans and grants. (Berlin and Bergen Communiqués)
5. Ministers call for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encourage the institutions concerned to increase their cooperation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers. (Berlin Communiqué)
6. Ministers shall intensify their efforts to lift obstacles to mobility by facilitating the delivery of visa and work permits and by encouraging participation in mobility programmes. (Bergen Communiqué)

### III.4 How to transform political commitments into actions

One of the main aims of the Bologna Process is to promote citizens' mobility. Within the Process the Ministers have agreed to implement a number of actions to facilitate mobility for example the creation of easily readable and comparable degrees through the full use of tools aimed at facilitating recognition, the development of national action plans to improve the quality of the recognition process, the adoption of a system based on three main cycles and an overarching framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, the establishment of a system of credits (eg ECTS) for the transfer and accumulation of credits applied consistently throughout the EHEA, the portability of national loans and grants, the facilitation of the delivery of visa and work permits and the encouragement of increased participation in mobility programmes.

Other commitments within the Process either relate to the promotion of mobility in a less visible way or are expressed in a more general manner such as "overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement" or the emphasis on the social dimension of mobility. Obstacles to mobility vary depending on who you are, what your family situation is, how and where you live, what the purpose of mobility is, different systems for higher education and incentives for promoting mobility periods etc.

The WG has made an attempt to look more closely into **possible actions to promote mobility for both student and staff** that have not yet been as developed as the above-mentioned actions. The actions should be considered a list of possible actions that could be taken in each country. They cover different policy areas, levels and actors.

#### *Information, transparency and preparation (equal opportunities for mobility)*

- Easily accessible and transparent information about possibilities to study or teach abroad
- Simple, fair and transparent admission and selection methods
- Actions to reduce language barriers

### *Active action for widened access to mobility opportunities*

- Information on admission rules and application processes in other countries for potential foreign students
- Information on appointment procedures for academic staff in other countries for potential applicants from abroad
- Information on studies and living conditions as well as administrative procedures in other countries for potential foreign students and teachers
- Actions and support targeted at underrepresented groups
- Recognition of study periods abroad by higher education institutions and employers
- Recognition of staff qualifications and working periods abroad by higher education institutions and other employers
- Encouragement of and incentives for mobility by higher education institutions and employers
- Flexible curricula and an educational structure that promotes mobility
- Attention to individual student needs – including students with disabilities

### *Information, administration and services in the hosting country*

- Access to academic and social services in the host country
- Fast and efficient issuing of affordable visas
- Access to student accommodation

### *Financing mobility*

- Information on how to finance mobility periods
- National financial support systems that are portable
- Scholarships/solidarity funds for the mobile students who most need it
- Possibilities for support to cover tuition fees
- Compensation for additional costs in host country and possible loss of earnings
- Considering finance possibilities for students from countries without financial support systems

### *Welfare systems and labour market regulations*

- Possibility to obtain work permits
- Portability of social security and pension rights and other benefits for staff
- Consideration of consequences of staff mobility for employment status, for example for civil servants or employees of institutions, and possibilities for promotion

At numerous meetings and seminars it has been concluded that among the obstacles to mobility, issues related to **visas, immigration, work and residence permits, social security protection for students and staff engaged in mobility, recognition of study and work periods and lack of financial incentives** are some of the most commonly observed problem areas<sup>10</sup>.

The application requirements for getting a **visa or a residence permit** can be very detailed and time consuming as well as expensive. To apply for a short stay Schengen area visa costs 35 euros. Within the European Union, two council directives have been issued in order to facilitate and speed up the admission for entry and residence of third-country nationals in the Community for the purposes of studies, pupil exchange, unremunerated training or voluntary service (Council Directive 2004/114/EC) and of scientific research (Council Directive 2005/71/EC). These directives need to be properly applied and procedures that facilitate this process further are welcomed. Some countries provide free visas or residence permits for third country nationals who are higher education students, doctoral candidates or researchers and who are travelling for education or scientific research.

As a first step towards liberation of visa regimes it is important that negotiations for the visa agreements<sup>11</sup> that have been started in November 2006 between the EU<sup>12</sup> and some non-EU countries<sup>13</sup>, are successfully completed as soon as possible. It is important that these kinds of discussions are carried out also on a bilateral or multilateral basis between non EU countries.

---

<sup>10</sup> Some recent events include Council of Europe Resolution 1517 (2006), 4th Informal Conference of Ministers of Education from Western Balkan (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". UNMIK, Provisional Institutions of Self Government, Kosovo also participated in the conference) held in Strasbourg in November 2006, Informal Conference of Ministers of Education from the new countries in the Bologna Process (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine), The rectors' and students' conference of South East Europe held in Ljubljana in October 2006 and the official Bologna Process seminar *Making Bologna Reality – Mobility of staff and students* held in London in February 2007.

<sup>11</sup> on easier procedures for students, researchers, business people and journalists, multiple entry visas and cutting visa-handling fees.

<sup>12</sup> except UK, Ireland and Denmark.

<sup>13</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Montenegro and Serbia.

## III.5 Data on mobility

### III.5.1 Mobility of students

#### *A. Availability and quality of data*

The UNESCO *Global Education Digest* (2006) features indicators that track the flow of internationally mobile students from the perspectives of both the sending and receiving (host) countries. Key findings include: Six countries host 67% of the world's foreign or mobile students: with 23% studying in the United States, followed by the United Kingdom (12%), Germany (11%), France (10%), Australia (7%) and Japan (5%). Yet, in spite of these data, one of the most elusive statistics in education today is student mobility. According to the findings of the WG, **current mobility statistics are based on available rather than the most appropriate data**, resulting in the best available mobility index, rather than one that would serve real information needs.

In the report *EURODATA – Student mobility in European higher education* published by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) in 2006<sup>9</sup>, the authors state that the most comprehensive data base available does **not register genuine mobility, but rather the number of foreign students** and students of a certain nationality that study abroad. ACA defines “genuine mobility” as mobile students either having lived permanently abroad before they enrolled at an institution of tertiary education in their current country of study (data indicator: foreign country of permanent residence) or having been awarded their entry qualification for tertiary education abroad (data indicator: foreign country of prior education). ACA explains that there are a number of problems with using nationality as a basis for mobility statistics. A substantial number of people move to other countries already at an earlier stage and attend both school and universities in a country different from their nationality. Some individuals live abroad and return to their home country for the purpose of study. An increasing number of students also criss-cross various borders in course of their studies. So far, the majority of countries have only data on foreign students, while outwards mobility can only be captured by adding up the nationalities of foreign students in the other countries of the world. Also, students studying abroad for a period up to and including one year are excluded in the most recent international mobility survey.

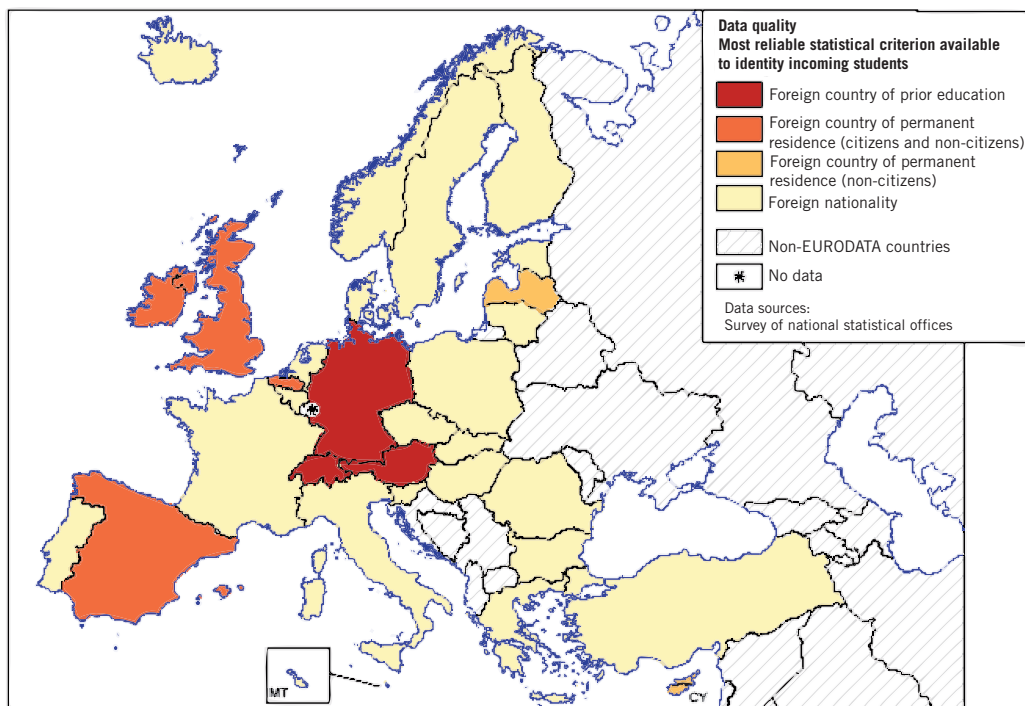
In the EURODATA-report, international statistical data on foreign students (UOE data) obtained from Eurostat and UNESCO are presented for the so-called EURODATA countries<sup>14</sup>. ACA also presents data on genuine mobility into and

---

<sup>14</sup> All the 25 EU member states, the 4 EFTA-members and Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

out of the EURODATA countries from the national statistical offices. However, only 10 of the 32 EURODATA countries provide data on what ACA calls genuine mobility. In the following figure the **quality of data on mobility** in the different EURODATA countries as presented is shown. The most reliable statistical criterion available (according to ACA) to identify incoming students is presented for each country.

Fig. 22 Data quality – most reliable statistical criterion available to identify inwards mobile students 2002/2003 (from EURODATA report by ACA)

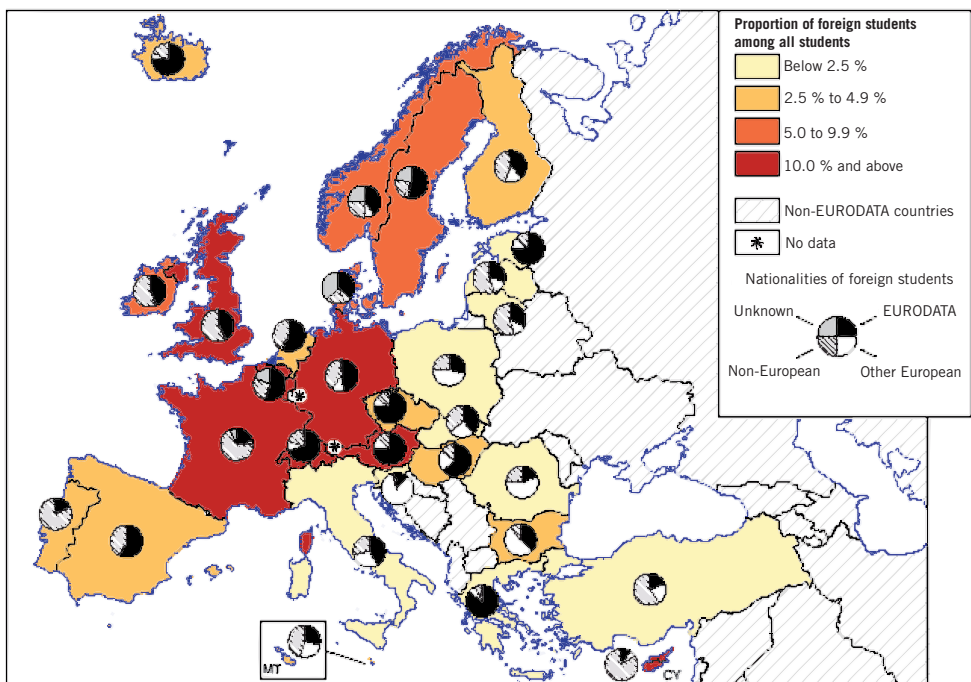


Source: Eurostat

ACA has compared data on foreign students with data on genuine mobility in the nine countries where this is possible. The comparison demonstrates **the strengths of data on genuine mobility** as compared to data based on nationality. It shows that the **foreign student total** corresponds to more than 150 percent of the **genuine mobile student total** reported to Eurostat for the countries that report on genuine mobility as well. To give some of examples, the UK reported 388 400 foreign students among all their tertiary students and 300 000 inwards mobile students, based on prior foreign country of permanent residence. The difference for Spain is 49 200 to 33 600 (based on prior foreign country of permanent residence), but the largest difference in percentage is noted for the Flemish Community of Belgium that reports 8 100 foreign students and 4 500 inwards mobile student (prior foreign country of permanent residence).

The figure below (fig. 23) shows the **proportion of foreign students among all tertiary students** in the different EURODATA countries 2002/2003. Regardless of the problems with this definition of mobility it is the **definition that is currently used by most countries**. The figure also shows the regional distribution of foreign students' nationalities (EURODATA nationalities, other European nationalities, Non-European nationalities or other nationalities) in the countries.

Fig. 23 Foreign students – the proportion of foreign students among all tertiary students and the regional distribution of foreign students' nationalities 2002/2003 (from EURODATA report by ACA)



Source: Eurostat

ACA reports that in 2002/2003, 1.1 million foreign students were enrolled at institutions of tertiary education in the 32 EURODATA countries. This figure corresponds to almost six percent of all tertiary students in the region. The most frequent nationality of foreign students in the EURODATA regions is Chinese, in 2002/2003 more than six percent of foreign students in EURODATA countries were Chinese. The largest communities of foreign students in individual countries are constituted by Chinese students in the United Kingdom and Turkish students in Germany (more than 30 000 and 27 000 students respectively). The United Kingdom, Germany and France host by far the largest absolute numbers of foreign students in EURODATA countries (each of them more than 200 000 students). More than 60 percent of all foreign students in the EURODATA countries study in one of these three countries.

In the UK students from other English-speaking countries (Ireland, the US, India) constitute a considerable part of foreign students next to Chinese, Greek, German and French students. In Germany, apart from Turkish and Chinese students, students from eastern European countries (Poland, the Russian Federation and Bulgaria) constitute large shares of foreign nationals. In France, the foreign student population is dominated by African (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Senegal, Cameroon) and Chinese students. If the **number of foreign students are compared to the largest immigrant groups** in these countries there is generally a direct correspondence. This shows the difficulties with using nationality as a basis for mobility statistics.

ACA emphasises the importance of adapting national data collection to internationally agreed standards of the supranational organisations such as UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat, in order to allow comparability and reliability.

**The relative merits of different statistical criteria** which might serve as substitutes for foreign citizenship as a criterion to determine the extent of international student flows need to be discussed. The criterion “foreign country of prior education” might prove useful in this context. International student mobility is thus defined as any form of mobility that takes place throughout a student’s programme of study in higher education. The length of absence ranges from a short trip to a full-duration programme of study such as a degree. In addition to study at a foreign higher education institutions, mobility can involve a period in a workplace or other non-higher education environments. As suggested in the definition of mobility proposed by the WG, the criterion “country of prior permanent residence” might also need consideration.

Besides shedding light on methodological issues, publications by both the Academic Co-operation Association (ACA) and Erasmus<sup>15</sup> provide **a number of insights**. Mobile students are essentially of two types: those who go abroad as a compulsory part of their studies and those who choose mobility for a range of personal, educational and professional reasons. Generally speaking, Erasmus students are more likely to be younger, female, white and from families in the higher social classes with usually both parents university educated, when compared to non-mobile students. Besides, most Erasmus students come from a town or a big city.

According to the Erasmus survey, mobile students generally feel very positive about their foreign experience, thinking that it has enhanced their personal development and feeling that it was relevant to the development of an international career. Strict academic benefits are stressed less often in these surveys. Few mobile students encounter major problems while abroad. The most cited problems are finance (22%), with 50% of Erasmus students saying their grant is insufficient, and absence from close friends and relatives.

---

<sup>15</sup> Erasmus Student Network Survey, 2005, <http://www.esn.org/documents/articles.php>.

However, finance, together with language, is seen as the major barrier to mobility. Other factors, in the eyes of the students, are lack of information (or having information too late), actual or perceived academic/institutional barriers (course structures, credit transfer, worries over grades), and attitudinal factors (fear of the unknown). The next Eurostudent survey, that will be presented in 2008, will come up with data on barriers to mobility. The data is based also on the opinions of student not being mobile.

The institutions' approach also plays an important part in student mobility. Institutional funding in all systems is affected by the number of enrolled or graduating students, and thus promoting outward mobility may be a secondary consideration when there are no financial incentives. Student mobility within the European Union is also governed by anti-discrimination legislation, and by program rules that prevent the charging of tuition fees (eg within Erasmus). If mobility flows are unbalanced, this may result in considerable financial burdens - especially to the more attractive institutions. International or third country mobility is not, however, subject to these regulations, but rather depends on national and/or institutional policy. International student mobility is therefore often perceived to be driven primarily by market concerns, and particularly when public funding is stagnating or diminishing, the recruitment of international fee-paying students may take precedence over mobility that does not generate income for institutions.

The above indications give rise to three main **challenges for future work on mobility and mobility data**:

- Access to mobility should be broadened; at present too many students are "socially excluded" from mobility opportunities because of their financial situation, family and class background, and linguistic limitations.
- There is no common and appropriate definition of mobility for statistical purposes.
- There is a need for complete, comparable and reliable data on student mobility for all Bologna countries. Work needs to be done to try to capture genuine student mobility in all EHEA countries.

#### *B. Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting*

An additional source of information is the national reports from the Bologna countries. In the template for the national reports 2005-2007 **two questions related to student mobility were included**. The questions were:

1. describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to students' mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.
2. describe whether there are portable loans and grants in your country.

The WG has **summarised the information from the national reports** in order to give some indication of the actions taken to promote student mobility in higher



education. As for the social dimension the Institute for Advanced Studies in Vienna, Austria, has made an attempt to categorise the answers to the questions on mobility in the national reports according to groups of countries. The Institute came to the conclusion that such an exercise would be of limited use also in the case of mobility since the questions put to the countries were very open and the descriptions do not give a complete picture of what the countries do. Below the most common measures are mentioned and in Annex 4 to this report all the different measures mentioned by the countries for student and staff mobility are shown.

*1, Measures taken to remove obstacles to student mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes*

The measures mentioned in the national reports focus on:

- Participation in Tempus, Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Leonardo Programmes, bi-lateral agreements between countries and higher education institutions
- Language courses to assist inward mobility, together with increasing provision in English and other widely used European languages
- Promoting Diploma Supplements and ECTS as tools to enable mobility
- Provision of scholarships for inward and outward mobility
- Provision of housing for mobile students
- Increasing the number of joint degrees and increasing information about, and access to, courses available
- Taking part in Education Fairs and giving information on studies abroad

A smaller number of countries are also taking additional measures, which include:

- Studies on mobility programmes to identify both barriers to participation and ways to overcome them
- Setting targets for inward and outward mobility for higher education institutions
- Supporting short sabbaticals overseas for academic staff
- Setting minimum number of credits that must be obtained outside the home higher education institutions
- Introducing portable grants and loans
- Running an Erasmus Student Prize to publicise the programme and its benefits
- Taking inward and outward mobility into account in funding formulae

A range of measures have been implemented in the Bologna countries to promote inward and outward student mobility according to the national reports, with little variation across the EHEA. The conclusion of the WG is that it is clear that there is **much room for improvement** and that **measures related to the national systems in place need to be considered**. We have noted some positive examples of this, such as taking mobility into account in funding formulae for higher education.

## 2, *Whether there are portable loans and grants*

Over 50 percent of Bologna Process countries have some form of portability within their student support system. Sixteen countries took part in the Portability of Grants and Loans Working Group, reflecting a high level of interest in portability amongst the Bologna countries. Twelve countries have stated that they already have fully portable grants or loans in place. A further four are considering introducing fully portable student support systems. More limited portability is in place in a significant number of countries. Typically, portable grants and loans are available for students taking part in exchange programme, such as Erasmus and CEEPUS, or joint programmes. Portable scholarships are also available to third cycle students in some countries, or to first or second cycle students wishing to study programmes not provided in their home country

### III.5.2 Mobility of staff

#### A. *Availability of data*

The same thing is true about staff mobility as for student mobility – it is fairly easy to agree what it is, but difficult to agree on how to capture it in statistics. As has been shown by Conor Cradden in his report *Constructing Paths to Staff Mobility in the European Higher Education Area: from Individual to Institutional Responsibility* (2007) **any kind of statistics on staff mobility are difficult to come by**, let alone information that would permit comparisons between countries. The Cradden report, prepared for the EI-ESIB-UCU Official Bologna Seminar in London 8-9 February 2007, is the most comprehensive study on staff mobility identified by the WG. The information on staff mobility presented in this section is from the Cradden report.

Cradden says that the basic problem is that national data collection systems tend to focus on those individuals who are currently ‘in the system’, and are unconcerned with where they were before they came into it and where they go when they leave it. Methodological innovation and a willingness to make imaginative use of the available information sources<sup>16</sup> can only partially compensate for the absence of dedicated data collection.

The small amount of research evidence that does exist concentrates on the **mobility of researchers rather than the teachers and teacher-researchers**. One likely reason for this imbalance is the imbalance in mobility itself, mobility for teaching purposes being much less common than mobility for research.

Cradden makes a combination of economic and political indicators for the Bologna Process countries in order to give a very rough indication of the ability of participating states to organise and finance a stable and effective higher educa-

---

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Gurney and Adams (2005), who use information on the citation of academic articles to track the careers of certain academics.

tion system that is likely to be attractive to mobile staff and students. Cradden's grouping into four (geographically non-contiguous) zones can be found in the following table.

Fig. 24 Division of countries into zones based on ability to organise and finance a stable and effective higher education system

Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D
Austria	Bulgaria	Albania	Russian Federation
Belgium	Croatia	Armenia	Ukraine
Denmark	Cyprus	Azerbaijan	
Finland	Czech Republic	Bosnia- Herzegovina	
France	Estonia	Georgia	
Germany	Greece	Serbia & Montenegro	
Ireland	Hungary	FYR Macedonia	
Iceland	Latvia	Republic of Moldova	
Italy	Lithuania	Turkey	
Luxembourg	Malta		
The Netherlands	Poland		
Norway	Portugal		
Spain	Romania		
Sweden	Slovak Republic		
Switzerland	Slovenia		
UK			

In order to arrive at this division into groups, Cradden takes the 2004 figure for GDP per capita, and weighted it according to the average of a series of six quantitative indicators of the quality of democratic governance developed by researchers at the World Bank<sup>17</sup>. The Russian Federation and Ukraine ought to be included in Zone C. However, for historical reasons the higher education systems of these two states are very different from those in the other countries of Zone C, particularly in terms of the participation rate and the sheer scale of the systems. For this reason these two states are listed separately as Zone D. The three remaining member states (Andorra, the Holy See and Liechtenstein) have been excluded from the ranking simply on the grounds of the lack of availability of data.

### *B. Traditional academic exchange*

While it is clearly the most common category of staff mobility, traditional academic exchange remains the least-reported and least-monitored. For this reason Cradden has found it **impossible to judge its extent** – this would require a major international survey – and neither is it apparent whether there are any serious inconsistencies in

<sup>17</sup> The indicators are: voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption. See Kaufman et al 2006.

the availability of opportunities to engage in it. There are a very limited number of facts to hand, however.

We know that in 2005 the Tempus programme – an EU scheme to support co-operation between higher education institutions in the EU and those in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia – allocated 120 individual mobility grants to staff from Bologna Process member states. Of these, 70% were for re-training and study periods, 18% for preparatory activities for Tempus-funded joint projects and the remaining 12% for participation in conferences and seminars.

We also know the extent and breakdown by country of the EU's Erasmus Teacher Mobility programme, which in the academic year 2004/2005 enabled close to 21,000 staff to depart on visits of an average of 6-7 days<sup>18</sup>. Cradden says that we can treat this as representing a kind of sample of the whole population of traditional academic exchanges, although we should be wary that the distribution of grants reflects not just the pattern of "spontaneous" cooperation between academic staff in different countries but also the powerful influence of the European Commission. Nevertheless, looking at the distribution of grantholders by country of origin and destination gives us at some idea of the more general picture.

The statistics suggest that there is a slightly greater tendency for staff from Zone B countries (in this case also including Turkey) to engage in teaching exchange. Almost 35% of grant holders (outgoing staff) were from Zone B countries, whereas this zone only has 31% of the total number of staff in the EHEA. The overall distribution of host institutions, on the other hand, was not significantly different from the distribution of staff. 70% of grant holders were hosted by institutions in Zone A, while 70% of staff worked in HEIs in Zone A. Perhaps not surprisingly, Zone B grant holders showed a greater tendency to seek exchange destinations in Zone A. Almost 80% of Zone B participating staff visited a destination institution in a Zone A country, as opposed to 65% of grant holders from Zone A.

Cradden ranks the higher education systems participating in the Erasmus teacher exchange programme according to the propensity of staff to move, and also according to the propensity of higher education institutions to host grant holders. These propensities can be measured simply by the ratio of each country's percentage share of grant holders departing or grant holders hosted to the country's percentage share of the total number of staff across all the participating higher education systems. If the number of grant holders originating in a higher education system as proportion of the total number of grantholders across all systems is the same as the total number of staff in that system as a proportion of the total number of staff in all systems, this ratio will be 1. A ratio higher than 1 indicates that there is a greater than average propensity to undertake an academic visit or to host visiting staff.

---

<sup>18</sup> Statistics available at <http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/statisti/table5.pdf>.

The top 10 member states in terms of propensity to move and propensity to host are shown in figure 25.

Fig. 25: Top 10 Erasmus teacher mobility movers and hosts by propensity to undertake or host visits 2004/05

Top 10 Movers		Top 10 Hosts	
Malta	5.65	Malta	5.85
Slovenia	4.13	Finland	3.86
Finland	3.15	Slovenia	3.32
Czech Republic	2.94	Cyprus	2.17
Lithuania	2.50	Belgium	1.88
Estonia	2.15	Latvia	1.75
Latvia	2.11	Czech Republic	1.72
Belgium	2.03	Iceland	1.64
Iceland	1.88	Portugal	1.53
Cyprus	1.57	Lithuania	1.52

Source: Cradden's calculations based on EC and UNESCO Figures

The top 10 in terms of absolute numbers of staff sent or hosted are shown in figure 26.

Fig. 26: Top 10 Erasmus teacher mobility movers and hosts by absolute numbers of visits undertaken or hosted 2004/05

Top 10 Movers		Top 10 Hosts	
Germany	2573	Germany	2621
Spain	2109	France	2260
France	2091	Italy	1897
Poland	1394	Spain	1852
United Kingdom	1308	United Kingdom	1339
Czech Republic	1 226	Finland	1216
Italy	1086	Poland	1026
Finland	992	Portugal	945
Belgium	884	Belgium	818
Romania	796	Czech Republic	720

Source: EC

Cradden concludes that the two figures suggest that the “prize” for participation in the Erasmus teacher mobility programme should go to Finland, closely followed by the Czech Republic.

### *C. Indefinite migration (includes all other types of mobility)*

Cradden has found that there is **slightly more information available** about the indefinite than the strictly temporary forms of mobility/migration, but this is not to say that it amounts to a great deal. It should be noted here that the categories of staff mobility other than traditional academic exchange is here described as “indefinite” and treated as a single category. The reason for this is that in all cases the member of staff retains no institutional anchoring in his or her home higher education system, there is no guarantee that she or he will return to it, even in the very common case of an initial engagement in the host institution of a limited duration. In any case, in many of the Bologna countries the indefinite forms of mobility are next to impossible to distinguish from each other in statistical terms and must of necessity be treated together.

### *Evidence from the UK*

The UK is an interesting example as it is widely recognised to have one of the most open and transparent recruitment systems in Europe. UK higher education institutions also appear to have the greatest autonomy in recruitment, with the majority of decisions about new appointments being made at faculty level. Generally, no reference even to any institution-level machinery is required, still less any supra-institutional authority. The information about the migration of staff in the UK HE system comes from a series of studies carried out by or on behalf of the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) (Bekhradnia and Sastry 2005; Gurney and Adams 2005; Sastry 2005).

The first and perhaps most important finding is that over the period from 1995/96 to 2002/03, between 60 and 70% of staff who entered or left the UK to take up academic positions were researchers. This is a category of staff which is in the main relatively junior, and employed on fixed-term contracts funded from research grant income. Some of this movement was accounted for by UK nationals, and so around “half of all migrations in both directions are accounted for by non-UK nationals on research grades” (Bekhradnia and Sastry 2005). Sastry comments that “of particular interest are the numbers of foreign nationals amongst emigrants. In the context of overall net immigration, these figures suggest that many of those who leave the UK have previously entered the country in order to take up academic posts” (Sastry 2005).

The number of migrants in established, permanent academic posts was, obviously, considerably lower. Bekhradnia and Sastry estimate that the emigration rate among senior staff was below one percent. The immigration rate was slightly higher and showed more fluctuation, something that the authors suggest may be because of peaks in recruitment activity connected to the UK’s research assessment cycle.

Immigration to the UK was concentrated in research-led institutions. Sastry (2005) reports that in 2002/03, just four institutions were responsible for employing 31% of immigrants, and 12 for recruiting 50%. He also reports that a disproportionate number of migrants in both directions specialised in the biological, mathematical and physical sciences. 37% of immigrants and 41% of emigrants worked in these disciplines as compared to only 19% of staff in the UK academic workforce as a whole. Given the high proportion of researchers among migrants, and the high level of grant funding associated with these disciplines, Sastry suggests that this finding is not surprising.

The other highly relevant finding from this project is that over the period studied, the number of immigrants to the UK higher education system from the (pre-enlargement) EU grew by 20%, while immigrants from the USA fell by 16%. Bekhradnia and Sastry conclude that “There may be some evidence that researchers from European countries are beginning to treat the UK as UK researchers regard the USA, coming here to begin their career and establish their reputations, and then returning to their home countries to continue their careers”(2005).

#### *Evidence from the rest of Europe*

A less reliable but nonetheless interesting part of the Higher Education Policy Institute project also sheds a little light on the situation outside the UK as well as within it. Gurney and Adams’ work on tracking highly-cited researchers in the natural sciences was based on cross-referencing citation data with biographical information to track the careers of individual academics. However, apart from the UK, the sample sizes were very small, and the data reported in the work is rather difficult to interpret. Furthermore, as the authors themselves concede, it cannot be taken as given that the mobility patterns of highly-cited researchers are representative of those of the academic population as a whole.

This having been said, the authors’ own conclusions about mobility in Europe are worth repeating. They conclude that there are “diverse patterns of mobility ranging from the Swiss, who appear to be extremely mobile, to the French, who are the least mobile. Over 90% of highly cited researchers currently based in Switzerland have had some research training or employment in another country. In addition, most of these researchers were not born in Switzerland though they are predominantly European. Conversely, highly cited researchers based in France, typically, were born there, were awarded a higher degree from a French institution, did postdoctoral research there and have not held tenured research posts elsewhere. The mobility of Italian highly cited researchers is similarly low, though less extreme” (Gurney and Adams 2005).

Fig. 27: Patterns of highly-cited scientific researcher mobility in Europe

	% of highly-cited researchers born in this country and working elsewhere	% of highly-cited researchers working in this country and born elsewhere	% of highly-cited researchers with any non-home work experience
France	7	18	22
Germany	43	27	53
Italy	19	0	61
Netherlands	10	10	50
Switzerland	0	64	88
UK	9	19	45

Source: Cradden adapted from Gurney and Adams 2005, Tables 3.2 and 3.6

From the limited information that is available, it appears that

- Young researchers are the most mobile category of staff.
- The ‘hard’ sciences account for a greater proportion of mobile staff than their presence in the population as a whole.
- Well-resourced institutions are responsible for the greater part of foreign staff recruitment.
- Temporary mobility for teaching purposes is clearly less ‘market-driven’, with no obvious distinction between the better- and less-well-resourced HE systems in terms of their propensity to participate in exchange.

There are several **important data gaps** identified:

- There is very little data on staff mobility.
- The data that is there is not based on a common definition of staff mobility and not comparable between countries.
- There is very little reporting on traditional academic exchange, apart from the European Union exchange programmes. There is slightly more information on indefinite migration of higher education and research staff.
- The small amount of data on staff mobility concentrates in researcher mobility.

#### *D. Information from national reports for the London ministerial meeting*

An additional source of information is the national reports from the Bologna countries. In the template for the national reports 2005–2007 **one question relating to staff mobility was included**. The question was to describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.



The WG has **summarised the information from the national reports** in order to give some indication of the actions being taken to promote staff mobility in higher education (see also Annex 4).

*Measures taken to remove obstacles to staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes*

According to the national reports a number of countries are taking specific measures to increase staff mobility further:

- Participation in exchange programme such as Tempus, Copernicus, CEEPUS and Erasmus Mundus
- Experience of working in a foreign higher education institutions is taken into account in staff selection and promotion exercises
- Guest lecturers and participation in international conferences
- Participation in international networks and research collaborations
- Bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements with other higher education institutions

Language is occasionally cited as a barrier to staff mobility. However, language tuition appears to be increasing and should therefore help mitigate this barrier.

Other, more specific, measures include:

- Holding a percentage of staff positions free for visiting professors
- Setting targets at institutional level for staff mobility, as part of a wider internationalisation strategy
- Conducting a study on staff mobility, to disseminate good practice
- Simplifying work permits for researchers
- Asking higher education institutions to prepare measures to increase staff mobility
- Staff development programmes being run in conjunction with neighbouring higher education institutions

Staff mobility **does not appear to be an area of particular concern** according to the national reports. While not complacent, countries were generally positive about the degree of staff mobility within their higher education systems. The WG has, however, concluded that less action is shown in this area than for student mobility. There therefore remains much **room for improvement** for staff mobility and **measures related to the national systems in place need to be considered**. Mobility for researchers seems to pose less problems than teacher mobility, partly because of better funding schemes for trans-national research cooperation. However, the main reason is that everybody agrees that international cooperation is vital for high quality research, whereas there is no such general agreement on the importance of international mobility for the quality of teaching.

### III.6 Recommendations from the Working Group

The promotion of mobility of students and staff is at the core of the Bologna Process. The objective should be *an EHEA where students and staff can be truly mobile*. However, the participating countries face challenges both concerning mobility as such and finding comparable and reliable data on mobility. Among the obstacles to mobility, issues related to immigration, social security protection for mobile individuals, recognition of study and work periods abroad and lack of financial incentives feature prominently.

Today data on staff mobility are scarce and those that are there show significant weaknesses in giving a full picture of mobility. First of all, there is no common and appropriate definition of mobility for statistical purposes. Also, there are no data covering all Bologna countries, no comparable and reliable data on genuine student mobility, hardly any data on staff mobility and the staff data that is there is not comparable between countries.

It is important to follow-up the development of mobility for students and staff since it is one of the core elements of the Bologna Process and a measurement of its success. The WG has discussed the task to “prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking” and has come to the conclusion that in order to find comparable and reliable mobility data we need to think beyond the present Bologna Process stocktaking method. We need an accurate picture of genuine mobility. We need statistical expertise to gather reliable and comparable data for the whole EHEA before stocktaking could be made. The WG therefore recommends that Eurostat and Eurostudent be entrusted with a mandate to develop mobility data.

To meet these challenges the WG has a number of suggestions for measures to support the development of mobility:

#### *Measures at national and institutional level*

- By 2009 the countries should report to the BFUG on actions taken at national level to remove obstacles to and promote the benefits of mobility of students and staff, including measures to assess their impact at a future date.
- Countries should focus on the main national challenges: delivery of visas and work permits, the full implementation of established recognition procedures and creating incentives for mobility for both individuals and higher education institutions.
- To address the institutional attitude towards and responsibility for mobility. This includes making mobility an institutional responsibility.
- To facilitate mobility through strengthening the social dimension of mobile students and staff.
- To support the development of joint programmes as one way of enhancing trust between countries and institutions.

*Measures at BFUG level*

- The collection of data on mobility of staff and students needs to go beyond the present stocktaking method. The BFUG should entrust Eurostat, in conjunction with Eurostudent, with a mandate to provide comparable and reliable data on actual mobility across the EHEA.
- The BFUG should also consider how best to overcome the many obstacles to mobility of students and staff. Progress in this work should be reported for the ministerial meeting in 2009.

# Annex 1 Terms of reference

## Working group on Social dimension and data on the mobility of staff and students in participating countries

Mission statement:

- to define the concept of social dimension based on the ministerial communiqués of the Bologna Process
- to present comparable data on the social and economic situation of students in participating countries
- to present comparable data on the mobility of staff and students
- to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking

In the Bergen communiqué it states that the social dimension in the Bologna Process is a constituent part of the EHHA. The Ministers therefore renew their commitments to making quality higher education equally accessible to all, and they stress the need for appropriate conditions for students so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. Furthermore it is stated that the dimension includes measures taken by governments to help students in e.g. financial aspects and to provide them with guidance and counselling services with a view to widening access. The Ministers stressed these actions during the Bergen conference.

The collection of data on the social and economic situation of students implies fundamental responsibility that rests with the home country to make sure that there is equitable access to higher education. Data will be collected within in the following domains: access and participation rates, social make-up of student body, student income/living expenses as well as the provision of guidance services, but a few other parameters could be added after the definition of the concept has been determined.

The Bergen communiqué targets two groups for the task of presenting data on mobility, i.e. staff and students. Questions pertaining to the mobility of the former are related to working conditions (terms of employment) pension schemes, access schemes, access to labour markets and are given specific treatment according to whether mobility is short term, medium term or definitive access to long term employment.

The mobility of students is determined by number of factors including the financial support systems of the sending country and is thus related to the issue of portable grants as well as by the conditions (housing among others) of the receiving country. This point relates to the internationalisation of higher education.

The BFUG working group is to define the extent to which existing data are already collected and to identify any gaps as a basis for future stocktaking. This also means that the BFUG working group should prioritise the data that are collected or would require being collected and should endorse a restricted number of key indicators.

It also arises from the above that the working group has three broad missions: to define the concept of social dimension, to collect and explore data and to prepare proposals as a basis for future stocktaking.

### **Organisation of work**

The working group will be led by a steering committee including e.g. Luxembourg, Sweden, ESIB and others established by the BFUG. The work will be organised along three broad projects and with subsequent subgroups working with a) and b) and c) will be the responsibility of the steering committee:

- a. Definition of the social dimension using the previous communiqués as a starting point for discussion.
- b. The collection and exploration of data with three strands: socio- and economic situation of the students based upon the definition, mobility of students and mobility of staff. This group needs support from experts in the field and of statisticians.
- c. Recommendations on the scope of a future stocktaking exercise on the social dimension and on mobility, according to the definition emerging from subgroup (a) and the availability of comparable data as identified by subgroup (b).

### **Preliminary time schedule to be elaborated into a work plan:**

- December 2005: First meeting and establishment of the steering committee and the sub-groups. At this meeting an initial discussion on the definition of the social dimension will take place.
- February 2006: The two sub-groups meet as a working group where the definition of the concept of social dimension will be finalised and for the fine-tuning of data collection.
- February 2007: working group seminar led by the steering committee where the indicators for future stocktaking are defined.

The work should be supported by Eurostudent, OECD, Eurostat and others.

## **Resources**

Considering the tight time schedule and considering the need to cover all the 45 participating countries, it may be necessary to foresee two full-time experts for the duration of the project (November 2005-June 2007). The working groups meetings should be organised and financed by the hosting countries. Socrates funding should be applied for.

## **Chairs**

Sweden is willing to lead the steering committee and subgroup a).  
Luxembourg is willing to lead subgroup b).

## **Proposed membership**

Austria

Bosnia and Herzegovina

France

Ireland

Ukraine

UK

EUA

EI – Pan European Structure

ESIB

Eurostudent

OECD

Eurostat

# Annex 2 Suggested approach of the work on national strategies on the social dimension

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the WG suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The countries should use the overall objective as a starting point for their work and formulate a strategy in line with national priorities:

*We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.*

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the WG proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

- **Measures to promote equal opportunities**
  - What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education?
  - What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal?
  - What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

- **Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)**

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc?

What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels?

What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

- **Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience**

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio?

Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures?

What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions?

Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means?

What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms?

How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable?

Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups?

Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

- **Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues**

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education?

Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well?

Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education?

Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that can organise elections to fill elective posts? Is it possible to find enough candidates to fill the posts available? If not – how could this be improved?



- **Finances in order to start and complete studies**

What kind of information and guidance is provided for students regarding financial issues?

How does the average student make his or her living during studies? What kind of state support is provided? Is it appropriate for all groups and individuals? Do certain groups run the risk of being excluded from, or not able to finish their studies, due to financial reasons? Which are these groups or individuals? What could be done to help them?

Are students informed about possible employment possibilities after finishing their studies? How is the labour-market relevance of the studies secured? Are former graduates tracked to follow-up their employment rates?

- **Monitoring: The participating countries should establish national measures to monitor and evaluate the impact of the national strategy and action plan.**

What monitoring mechanisms would be the most appropriate? How could success in strengthening the social dimension be measured short-term and long-term? What quantitative and qualitative data are needed? How is the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation allocated and divided? Are there student surveys carried out to measure the impact of a social dimension strategy? How can student surveys be used in this work?

- **Stakeholder involvement**

Which stakeholders should be involved in the development of a strategy and an action plan? What should be the responsibility of the different stakeholders when carrying out the agreed strategy and plan?

# Annex 3

National reports for the London ministerial meeting:  
List of answers to question on measures being taken to  
widen access to quality higher education:

## **Financial**

- scholarships - means tested
- scholarships - merit based
- research grants
- grants for studying abroad
- grants or loans for (nearly) every student
- unspecified social support system
- free education (at least 1st cycle)
- reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
- financial assistance for certain groups/areas
- improved funding systems

## **Structural**

- new /expanded routes of access
- broader teaching or learning strategies
- information and preparation at secondary schools
- increase student places
- indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
- subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
- provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
- counselling/guidance services

## **Certain groups**

- measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
- measures for disabled (not financial)
- measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
- allocation of study places to certain groups
- promote access from all national areas

## **Policy and practice**

- explicit widening access policy (devoted funds/units/laws)
- carry out surveys (study & work, disabled students,...)
- evaluations/research of policies and practices
- monitoring access (and retention) by students

## **Rare answers**

- planning to tackle social-background inequalities
- planning to improve the situation of older (>26) students
- enhance relevance of HEIs by increasing research quality
- improving the opportunities for students part time job engagements

## **Further answers**

- reference to legal declaration/laws of unrestricted higher HE access
- description of access
- no complementary measures necessary
- mention of problems, self criticism, justification or commendation
- cross-reference/s to read on

The answers to the question on completion are very similar to the answers to the question on widened access and there are often cross-references made between the two answers. The answers to the question on completion are therefore not presented in this Annex.

# Annex 4

National reports for the London ministerial meeting:  
List of measures taken to remove obstacles to student and staff mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes

**Question:**

Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to **students'** mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Outward / Inward Mobility	participation in EU or other Exchange Programs
	participation on Development or LLL Programmes
	bilateral /multilateral or inter-institutional Agreements
	joint programmes/degrees are offered/increased
	explicit widen mobility policy (regulations and funds, networks)
	simplification of the recognition-procedures, Bologna-conformity
	establishment and use of the Europass portfolio
	requirements/incentives to HEIs to encourage mobility
	surveys, monitoring, evaluations, improvement efforts
establish a body to promote/guide mobility/internalisation	
Inward Mobility	promotion / (multilingual) Information for foreign students
	courses/curricula available/possible in foreign languages
	languages courses or Preparatory Courses, Induction
	certain national scholarships /loans /grants for foreign students
	(nearly) the same social conditions like domestic students
	provision of hostel facilities
	entrance examinations are being organised abroad
	possibility to enter without passing national admission exams
	assistance for incomings, reception, administration
	easier procedures/regulations for visa, work permit or residence

Outward Mobility	promotion / Information about existing mobility programmes
	guidance/counselling/teaching aids for interested students
	mandatory completion of courses/credits abroad
	portability of grants and loans
	financial assistance for needy students/ recognition of social dimension
	additional grants/scholarships/loans or travel cost support for domestic
	students, participating mobility programmes are available
	mobility scholarships with focus on master, PHDs, staff or merit
	offering work placements, research work, skill upgrading
	improving the legal regulations to enable mobility for certain groups
	release of tuition fees at the domestic HEIs
(legal guarantee of ) recognition of credits gained abroad	

### Question:

Describe any measures being taken to remove obstacles to **staff** mobility and promote the full use of mobility programmes.

Outward	possibility of sabbatical leave / flexible configurations on period abroad
	encouragement / better recognition of staff mobility and language skills
	information / assistance for (potential) outgoings
	mobility scholarships for academic staff, or funding of travel costs
Inward	introduction of courses w. internat. dimension / teaching in foreign languages
	recruitment of foreign staff/lecturers is required or obliged
	funding Scheme to attract foreign researchers and scholars/staff
	simplification of labour or residency permits
	information / assistance for (potential) incomings outward and inward
Outward and inward	financial support or funds for staff mobility (governmental)
	bi-/multilateral agreements (with partner institutes)
	joint degree programmes (at least under consideration)
	statistics, monitoring, evaluations or improvement policy
	participation on European mobility programmes
	international contacts and networking
	collaborations concerning visas
	laws or requirements (accreditation) for staff mobility others
Others	cross-reference to read on
	staff mobility policy is seen as responsibility of each HEI
	no measures taken or mentioned

# Annex 5

## Schematic synthesis of data availability on the social dimension

Summary of availability and differentiation	Data deliverer (number of countries covered)			
	Eurostudent (21)	Eurostat (27+)	European University Assoc. (EUA) (44)	Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) (17)

<b>Key topic:</b> Widening access
<b>Key information</b>
New entrants
Enrolment
Share of students entering via second chance (non-traditional) routes to HE
Institutions' initiatives to improve access

<b>Aim:</b> To widen participation and to achieve participative equity									
●	A	G							
●	A	G	S	R					
●									
●									

<b>Key topic:</b> Study framework
<b>Key information</b>
Accommodation, provision and costs
Student counselling and social services
Student income sources and expenditures
Tuition fees and public support schemes
Student time budget (workload)
Mix of public and private funding

<b>Aim:</b> To create study environments which are conducive to successful studies									
●									
●									
●			S						
●			S						
●									

<b>Key topic:</b> Effective outcomes
<b>Key information</b>
Educational attainment
Educational attainment by field of study
Retention rate
Institutions' initiatives to assure the relevance of course provision
Employment post-studies

<b>Aim:</b> To achieve a high graduate rate and assure the relevance of course provision									
●	A	G							
●									
●									
●									

Legend: ● = data available, A = by age, G = by gender, S = by socio-economic background, R = by regions within countries





This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflect the views of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

