

Executive Summary

ESIB—the National Unions of Students in Europe is the umbrella organisation of 50 national unions of students from 37 countries and through these members represents more than 11 million students. The aim of ESIB is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at a European level towards all relevant bodies.

This report by the Bologna Process Committee of ESIB summarises the findings from six surveys conducted among ESIB's members during the past year.

Five of the surveys were directed at specific areas of the Bologna process: the social dimension, mobility, student involvement, degree structures and credit systems. The sixth survey asked members to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Bologna process.

Increased mobility, quality improvement and assurance as well as and improved recognition of degrees are identified as the strongest assets of the process. On the other hand, trends towards commodification as well as divergent implementation and a severe lack of information are seen as major drawbacks.

On the social dimension, ESIB members have a long list of suggestions for improvement, and the surveys also show that the difference in systems is sky-wide, to an extent the questionnaires barely could accommodate.

Financial limitations are seen as the prime obstacle to mobility. Many other obstacles, such as language barriers and problems with recognition, accommodation and administrative barriers may be waiting further down the road, but the financial hurdle is what is making European students immobile.

Student involvement is an issue of constant debate. The survey proves that there is still a lot to be done, but also points to good practise in a number of fields. In the context of the Bologna process, many of our members feel that involvement on the national level needs to be strengthened.

The introduction of a degree structure based on Bachelors' and Masters' degrees is very high on the agenda in many countries. In general, the new structure is welcomed, but there are a number of serious challenges.

Introducing credits and credit accumulation is perceived as a major shift of paradigm in systems where credits/points haven't traditionally been used. The calculation of workload and the introduction of accumulation seem to pose the largest problems. In this specific context, the shortage of information also becomes apparent.

This report should be seen as a complement to other documents published on occasion of the Berlin Conference of Ministers, and provides a student perspective on selected aspects of the emerging European Higher Education Area.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to ESIB

ESIB—the National Unions of Students in Europe

ESIB is the umbrella organisation of 50 national unions of students from 37 countries and through these members represents more than 11 million students. The aim of ESIB is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at a European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

Aims and Objectives

ESIB—the National Unions of Students in Europe has the following goals:

- to promote the views of students on the educational system as a whole.
- to promote the social, economical, political and cultural interests of students and the human rights of students which have a direct or indirect effect on education and on the status and welfare of students in society.
- to promote equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their political belief, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, gender, sexual orientation, societal standing or any disability they may have.
- to promote equal chances of access to and completion of higher education for all people.
- to promote European and global co-operation and to facilitate information exchange with students and students' organisations.
- to promote co-operation with other organised groups in matters pertaining to education and student life.
- to provide assistance and support to national unions of students across Europe in their work to protect student interests.

For more information about the structure, members, policies and work of ESIB, visit: <http://www.esib.org/>

Chapter 2

Foreword

As the two-year period between Prague and Berlin draws to a close, ESIB tries to take stock of the developments in the Bologna process. This report is not the only one to assess developments in the Bologna countries, but I believe that the students' perspective makes it a valuable complement to other surveys that have been carried out.

The creation of the European Higher Education Area by means of the Bologna process is the most far-reaching reform European higher education has seen in many years. To make this project successful, it is crucial that all partners in higher education—academic and administrative staff, governments and students—share a common vision. Many of the reforms in the process are welcomed by all partners, but some developments are deeply worrying to students across Europe. Pursuing reforms without the support of the largest group of stakeholders, the students, may jeopardise the success of the entire project.

This is the reason why the ESIB Bologna Process Committee proposed to analyse the implementation of key Bologna objectives as well as the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the process. Our member unions in all member countries of the Bologna process have warmly welcomed this analysis.

Regrettably, ESIB has not been able to secure external funding for the carrying out of this survey, as potential sources for such funding were doubtful about how representative the results would be. I trust that the return rates, ESIB's member structure and the coherence with the findings of other surveys will convince the reader that our results are fairly representative.

As we are approaching the end of the bi-annual period between Prague and Berlin, I would also like to thank the members of the Bologna Process Committee (BPC): Paulo Fontes, Birgit Lao and Stephan Neetens, David Galea and Mads Aspelin as well as Bastian Baumann and Péter Puskás. Their contribution to the work of ESIB and to the Bologna process is the basis for our work towards a European Higher Education Area. Thanks are also extended to the members of the other ESIB committees, the secretariat and last—but not least—our member unions.

Lund, September 2003
Johan Almqvist
Member of the Executive Committee

Chapter 3

Background

First off, we must clearly declare that this is not a scientific publication. It was never intended to be, and could never be.

However, it is three other things:

A proof of concept. This is not the first time that we have surveyed ESIB members, but it was the most comprehensive surveying exercise so far. It has also yielded the highest response rates, and ESIB will continue to survey members on key questions of current policy.

A proof of assumption. Through their close and dedicated involvement in the policy-making process of ESIB—and through numerous phone calls, e-mails and conversations—the members of the BPC have a well-founded overview of the problems and opportunities our member unions see in the Bologna process, an overview is deepened further by the participation in the events of the Follow-Up structures. The surveys significantly substantiate this picture.

A contribution to the debate and further work. This report is being published on occasion of the Berlin Conference of Ministers, to be held on September 18–19 2003. A number of other reports (see chapter C.5) are published around the same time, and they all aim to describe current developments and challenges for the future of the Bologna Process.

After Berlin, a stock-taking exercise will start regarding areas that ministers regard as pivotal for the success of the EHEA. This stock-taking should imply a deeper analysis that has been possible in these surveys, but other areas will remain to be charted by ESIB and other organisations.

3.1 Method

The surveys (see appendix A) on different aspects of the Bologna process were sent out ESIB's 50 member organisations in 37 countries. These are democratically organised national unions of students, representing student opinion in their country.

In a number of countries, ESIB has several member organisations. In some cases, these represent separate parts of the higher education system, whereas in other cases no such clear distinction can be made. We have chosen to present all answers in this study, even where they appear to contradict.

The answers were analysed by the members of the Bologna Process Committee during the summer of 2003. As the surveys contained a large number of open questions, this analysis implies some interpretation, but discussions in the group and with respondents have confirmed the conclusions. ESIB members were given the opportunity to proofread this edition of the report in Frankfurt/Oder.

The data collected on some questions was difficult to compare, as a number respondents did not specify time periods or units for some numbers. Hence, some of the data in this report may be incorrectly represented, but we have done our best to avoid such misrepresentations.

The surveys will be made available upon request to the ESIB secretariat.

Chapter 4

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

In this survey, we asked the members of ESIB to identify five strengths of the Bologna process and five weaknesses. We also asked for five opportunities of the Process within the EHEA and five opportunities in a global context—and for five threats to round off the picture.

Given the open nature of the questions, we refrain from charting in this section, as every analysis will be a matter of interpretation—and so is the analysis presented below. However, the frequencies are mentioned in brackets in the text, and should be compared to a total of 27 surveys. Also, the fact that an ESIB member doesn't mention some topic in this overview does not mean that they do not consider it a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat, as we limited the question to the five main points in each field.

4.1 Strengths of the Bologna Process

The main strength of the Bologna process as identified by ESIB members is quite clearly the promise of greater mobility, this aspect being mentioned by a large majority (18) of the respondents. This is not limited to the mobility of students in exchange programmes, but also concerns free movers and the mobility of teachers and administrative staff. Many respondents indicate high expectations that the Bologna process will strongly address the remaining problems of a social and administrative nature to fulfil the promise of increased mobility.

Many (12) respondents see the recognition of degrees and qualifications between national systems as an important strength. Both transparency tools and the general comparability of systems are seen as crucial factors to this end.

Respondents, particularly from western and northern Europe, name the possibility for co-operation between higher education institutions (10) and the effect of the Bologna process in internationalising (or “Europeanising”) curricula, courses and institutions (10). Many respondents from eastern and central Europe name the introduction of credit systems and the two-cycle degree structure as a main strength (5).

The fact that the Bologna process is a voluntary process but that it nonetheless has the effect of being a motor for long-needed reforms appears very clearly

in a number of countries (8). On the other hand, many other respondents see the voluntary nature as a problem (see below).

Quality assurance and improvement is also mentioned as a strength a number of times (7)—both quality assurance on a European level and the developments in national and regional quality assurance due to the Bologna process.

Another strength for individual students that is mentioned (5) is the increased flexibility of studies that results from the use of transparency tools and redesign of curricula, as well the accessibility of new fields of study that may not be offered in the home country.

Other strengths of the process that are quoted several (4) times are the social dimension and that higher education is considered a public good. These elements, which are part of a common European understanding of the nature of higher education, and the notion that higher education contributes to peace and development, are widely seen as positive and decisive assets of the Bologna process.

Student involvement in the Bologna process and increased student involvement on national and institutional level in the wake of Bologna is mentioned as a main strength by some (3) respondents.

Some respondents mention the possibility for positive competition between systems and institutions (2) and the development of research through the Bologna process (2) as strengths.

4.2 Opportunities within the European Higher Education Area

Many of the points that are seen as strengths also come back when we asked member unions about the main opportunities, such as mobility (17), quality assurance and improvement (12) and co-operation (6). The topics recognition (10) and European comparability on a systemic level (6) as well as the social dimension (5) are mentioned more frequently as opportunities than as strengths, possibly because respondents feel that these fields still remain to be acted upon.

One of the new topics (5) among the opportunities is the possibility of sharing good practice between institutions and between countries. The development a greater understanding of cultural diversity and improved language learning are also seen as opportunities (5).

Some respondents (4) name the creation of the European Higher Education Area as such as the greatest opportunity for the Bologna Process.

Two opportunities in reforms to higher education systems that are mentioned are more flexibility for students (4) and achieving better employability of graduates (3).

Another opportunity that is named is enhancing the competitiveness of the EHEA in general (3), in particular by extending the Bologna process to doctoral, post-doc and research levels (3).

Increased student involvement (3) and improved forms of higher education governance (1) are seen as opportunities as well as the general contribution of the Process to democracy and development (2).

Finally, using the Bologna process to counter trends towards the commodification of education (1) is stated as an opportunity.

4.2.1 Opportunities in a Global Setting

When we asked about the opportunities of the Bologna process on a global level, the most frequent (13) answer is that the Process could increase the attractiveness and the competitiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Some other frequent answers, however, give a particular meaning to this: respondents hope for greater international mobility outside the EHEA (7) and for greater recognition of European qualifications outside the EHEA (6). Making Europe an attractive and competitive area—together with the measures devised for internal mobility and recognition—may be a good way of reaching these aims.

Supporting the development of higher education in other parts of the world is also mentioned as an opportunity by a number of respondents (6).

The possibility of the creation of the EHEA to have a positive impact on the quality of higher education and quality assurance systems world-wide is also mentioned as an opportunity by a number of members (3).

Some respondents express that the Bologna process could be a way of countering unwanted developments such as the further liberalisation of trade in education in the framework of the GATS (2), brain drain of European graduates (1) and problems with transnational education (1). In more general terms, it is hoped the Process would contribute to securing education as a human right (1).

One respondent also mentioned that the EHEA could contribute to better research in general on a global level.

4.3 Weaknesses and Threats

ESIB member unions identify a number of weaknesses and possible threats from the Bologna process. As the threats and the weaknesses are very similar and sometimes identical to each other, no distinction between the two is been made in this chapter. Therefore, the number of respondents which indicated a weakness or a threat represents the answers that are given as either weaknesses or threats.

The weaknesses and threats can be divided into three categories: one category concerns specific points, another category are issues that deal with more general points and the third category concerns the intentions of the Bologna process or the focus in its implementation. On the threats and weaknesses, hardly any geographical differentiation could be made regarding the answers.

4.3.1 General Points

Knowledge / Information

Generally, it is often stated that the knowledge about the Bologna Process is too limited (8). The knowledge of students on national and local levels seems to be too low sometimes and criticism is raised that too little is done in order to inform students about the Bologna Process. Several respondents are also concerned that the institutions have too little knowledge and sometimes even the ministerial level seems to know very little the Bologna process.

The UK mentioned too little knowledge on all three levels.

Implementation

A frequent point of criticism (9) is the difference in implementation of the Bologna process. This refers to a number of differences: the implementation of only certain aspects that fit the general policy of a government was mentioned, leading to an à la carte implementation (7). Differences in the speed of implementation are also mentioned (4). Members mainly from central and eastern Europe criticise that it is happening too slowly, whereas EU and Nordic countries stress that the implementation sometimes is proceeding too fast, leading to an improper implementation (e.g. ECTS). Respondents also consider the time schedule for the creation of the EHEA as very ambitious (4), especially in south-east European countries especially due to the financial limitations and the massiveness of reforms needed.

The lack of rules or concrete definitions and too little regulation from the governmental level and too much freedom for the HEIs is considered as negative (6). This leads to significant differences in the implementation and not to a more harmonised and therefore comparable structure, which in turn causes problems regarding recognition and other areas. Countries also respond that they see it as negative that the Bologna process is not legally binding (4), whereas one respondent fears that it might become legally binding. A fear expressed by one member is that reforms that are being undertaken will significantly change due to changes in the government.

The fact that the social dimension does not receive enough attention or is being neglected (7) is frequently criticised. The increase and introduction of tuition fees is often pointed to and can be seen in this context (7). The social dimension of mobility is mentioned explicitly and in addition to the general problems regarding the social dimension (5). It is seen to be much less present on the political agenda than it should be.

A large number of members raise the point that the reforms are not covered by the increase in funding that would be needed in order to undertake them (10). Sometimes, the implementation is concentrated exclusively on the objectives that can be used to save money.

An important number of respondents fear that the implementation might become too rigid, leading to harmonisation—which would actually be uniformity—and to a loss of individuality (7). Furthermore, the harmonisation of curricula is a fear in some countries (5). Positive features about the national educational system could disappear (5). It is mentioned that sometimes the harmonisation occurs for harmonisation's sake, forgetting the goals of it. A number of members are afraid that poor implementation might also lead to a loss of cultural and linguistic diversity (5).

Another point that is raised several times is that the differences between eastern and western Europe are not sufficiently respected when it comes to the difference of problems the countries are facing when implementing certain objectives (5).

4.3.2 Specific Points

The most frequent specific issue members point out is the access to the second cycle (6). In this framework, the Bologna process might be the pretext for further selection procedures, which members strongly oppose. A number of

countries fear that the quality of education might suffer as a result of the new degree structure and too much harmonisation (6).

Brain drain is mentioned as a severe problem referring to brain drain from third countries as well as brain drain from eastern to western Europe. Hardly any initiatives are taken against this as the mobility of students and graduates becomes easier (6). It is mentioned that the discontinuation of certain subjects is feared, as it now would be possible to study these subjects in other countries, or due to the connection to a general restructuring of the degrees (2). The new structure might decrease the diversity and lead to fewer possibilities for students (2).

Switzerland notes that through the implementation of the Bologna objectives, gender discrimination might increase.

4.3.3 Intention / Focus

A criticism that is often brought forward is the focus on employability both when implementing the objectives and as a major driving force of the Bologna process (4). According to a number of countries, the focus lies too much on the labour market and producing qualified employees and too little on actually improving education (systems) (4). The strong focus on efficiency would undermine several other aspects of higher education and might also threaten academic freedom and students' freedom of choice (3). The market-driven approach behind the Bologna process and the strong focus on competitiveness is not seen as beneficial for higher education (6).

The creation of strong elitism is seen as a big threat (3). Another fear is that the Bologna process might lead to a European fortress of higher education or to an overemphasised "Euro-centrism" (4).

A significant number of countries see a big problem in the abuse of the name of Bologna (8). This refers to certain reforms that are undertaken in the name of the Bologna process but that are contrary to its spirit.

One respondent stresses that the structure of the Bologna process is rather undemocratic on the national level. Regarding the European level, it is criticised that western European countries are taking the decisions with too little consultation of eastern European countries or without respecting the different problems these countries have (4).

The most frequent concern is that Bologna does not sufficiently counteract the process of commodification of education and that it might sometimes even contribute to this commodification (10).

4.4 Conclusion

A comparison between the strengths and opportunities that were raised on the one hand and the weaknesses and threats on the other hand shows clearly that almost all positive features also have a negative side. This is often connected to an uncertainty on how the objectives will be implemented or how much attention they will actually receive.

Improving and increasing mobility is the strength stated most often. Several countries criticise that the social dimension of mobility is neglected. This also explains why increasing mobility is very often seen as an opportunity, depending

on the attention it will receive. The threat of increasing brain drain from eastern to western Europe is also criticised.

The recognition of degrees has also often been mentioned as a strength: having tools for more transparency and a general comparability of systems for facilitating it. Students are however afraid that on the one hand, comparability might soon turn out to become uniformity. Especially the harmonisation of the content of studies is feared, leading to fewer possibilities and less flexibility. On the other hand, because of the different and partially wrong implementation of the objectives due to the lack of more concrete definitions and rules, comparability will not be reached. Therefore, the recognition of qualifications and periods of studies might not improve.

The co-operation between HEIs is seen as very beneficial, as this would lead to the exchange of best practice and thus an improvement of education. The internationalisation of curricula, courses and institutions would also be reached. A fear that persists in this regard is that only HEIs that recognise each other as of high standard will co-operate. This would mean hardly any co-operation between western and eastern European institutions, as western institutions often do not see the eastern ones as peers of equal standard. Therefore, the co-operation of HEIs would only lead to the creation of elitist networks and also increase the differences in quality.

The co-operation in quality assurance is seen as a very good opportunity to improve the quality of education and programmes. This also applies to more and better initiatives and actions on the national level, which are caused by the Bologna process. However, it is criticised that too little actions are taken at the moment and no real improvement can be noticed. Another fear is that as a result of the new degree structure and the shortening of the study duration, there will be fewer possibilities of studies and by giving up good educational practices on the national level, the quality of education and programmes might decrease.

A number of countries see it as a strength that the Bologna process will lead to more flexibility and more study opportunities in new areas. On the other hand some countries fear rather the opposite will happen: the flexibility that exists at the moment would decrease and less study opportunities will be available, as some programmes might be closed down.

Several countries welcome very much that the social dimension has been included in the Bologna process and that education is considered to be a public good. However many see the mentioning of the social dimension only as lip service, as hardly anything is done in this area and sometimes, a development in the opposite direction is visible instead. This was connected in particular to the introduction of or increase in tuition fees.

The student involvement and the acknowledgement of students as partners are mentioned as a positive result of the Bologna process. On the other hand, the involvement regarding changes due to the Bologna process is very much connected to the general knowledge about the Bologna process. Regarding this, the level of knowledge is criticised several times and also that too little is done in order to raise more awareness.

The main opportunities that were stated were seen in the fields of mobility, quality, recognition and the social dimension. On the other hand, the uncertainty and fear that no real progress in those areas will be made persists. This is mainly motivated by the threat that the Bologna objectives will be only be

implemented selectively in an *à la carte* way.

Internationalisation, which would lead to more cultural diversity and better opportunities for learning foreign languages is often mentioned in positive terms. At the same time, a number of countries fear that the Bologna process might lead to a loss of cultural diversity and less language possibilities. A too strong focus on the English language is mentioned in this respect.

The creation of the EHEA is an opportunity in itself according to some members. However, overemphasising the European aspect is seen as negative, as this would mean a very strong “Euro-centrism”. The creation of the EHEA might even lead to a fortress of European higher education.

A number of respondents see it as a possibility that the employability of graduates would be enhanced, but a very strong fear is that too much focus is put on the issue of employability and that reforms are being used to suit the requirements of the labour market exclusively.

Several members mention that another possibility is an increase in mobility and easier recognition on the global level. In this regard, a major fear is that this will lead to an increase in brain drain at the same time, and nothing much is done to prevent it or it is even promoted.

The intention of the Bologna process as an initiative to counteract the process of commodification of education and also to the GATS framework, is seen very positively. However, many respondents stress that too little is done in order to make the Bologna process a real alternative to these developments.

Chapter 5

Social Dimension

In the questionnaire on the social dimension, we ask questions about some key areas of the social conditions for students: grant and/or loan systems, tuition fees, living and working conditions and access to higher education.

The social conditions for students across Europe are very different and hard to even compare. Students' position in society and the responsibility for students' situation vary greatly. The questionnaire also asks about recent changes and the most imminent problems that need to be addressed in the eyes of student unions.

5.1 Grant and/or Loan Systems

The vast majority of respondents indicated that there is a national grant and/or loan system in their country—Croatia and Albania being the two exceptions. However, these systems are very different with regards to their coverage.

In about half of the countries (14), less than a third of all students receive grants/loans (see table 5.1). The number of countries where more than half of the students receive a grant is similar (13). In Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Malta and the UK, more than 70% of students receive grants/loans.

Another significant difference is the amount that students receive per month. We have tried to make these somehow comparable by calculation how many percent of the GDP per capita a student receives per month (see table 5.1). This is of course a very crude comparison, but it gives some indication towards the difference in the amounts available.

We also asked for details about the grant/loan systems: are the grants/loans means tested, do they take into account the family's financial standing, who is eligible and are the grants transferable for studies abroad.

In Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Portugal, Lithuania and Slovakia, the payments are dependent on the parents' income or assets. In Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the students' personal taxable income is the basis for eligibility.

In the Netherlands, all students are eligible for a grant, however the grant is larger for students from low-income families. In Malta, there is a general grant system and an annual for study materials. In Hungary, loans are also available

Country	Percentage
Albania	n/a
Croatia	n/a
Czech Republic	n/a
Slovakia	1-10%
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska)	11-20%
Bulgaria	11-20% 71-80%
Germany	11-20%
Italy	11-20%
Portugal	11-20%
Austria	21-30%
Belgium (Fr)	21-30%
Belgium (Fl)	21-30%
France	21-30%
Romania	21-30%
Serbia	21-30%
Slovenia	21-30%
Spain	21-30%
Switzerland	41-50%
Hungary	61-70%
Iceland	61-70%
Lithuania	61-70%
Norway	61-70%
Denmark	71-80%
Estonia	71-80%
Sweden	71-80%
Finland	71-80%
Netherlands	81-90%
Cyprus	91-100%
Malta	91-100%
United Kingdom	91-100%

Table 5.1: Percentage of Students receiving Grants and/or Loans

Country	Avg. grant/loan per month (€)	GDP	Percentage
Bosnia-Herzegovina (Republica Srpska)	100.00	1800	5.556%
Czech Republic	541.67	14400	3.762%
Denmark	883.00	28000	3.154%
Sweden	740.00	24700	2.996%
Norway	808.33	30800	2.624%
Finland	612.00	25800	2.372%
United Kingdom	500.00	24700	2.024%
Serbia	35.00	2250	1.556%
Germany	365.00	26200	1.393%
Austria	341.00	27000	1.263%
Cyprus	176.67	15000	1.178%
Netherlands	300.00	25800	1.163%
Switzerland	354.17	31100	1.139%
Malta	150.00	15000	1.000%
Hungary	113.00	12000	0.942%
Finland	240.00	25800	0.930%
Estonia	83.33	10000	0.833%
France	209.17	25400	0.823%
Lithuania	60.42	7600	0.795%
Romania	50.00	6800	0.735%
Italy	165.00	24300	0.679%
France	166.67	25400	0.656%
Portugal	100.00	17300	0.578%
Belgium (Fl)	119.17	26100	0.457%
Slovakia	50.00	11500	0.435%
Bulgaria	25.00	6200	0.403%
Belgium (Fr)	55.00	26100	0.211%
Albania	0.00	3800	0.000%
Croatia	0.00	8300	0.000%

Table 5.2: Average Grant/Loan per GDP

for all students, whereas the institutions decide on the award of grants.

In Bulgaria, the results at entrance exams to university decide the type of grant available.

In the Czech Republic, there is no national loan system; students take commercial bank loans guaranteed by their parents. In Estonia, loans are available for all students, and grants are limited to students in state-financed study places with high grades. In Serbia, only students in state-financed study places receive support.

Students in the UK can't take their loan with them for studies abroad. German students can take their loan abroad after a period of study in Germany. Finnish, Icelandic, Italian, Norwegian, Swedish and Romanian students also have portable grants/loans. Students in the Flemish part of Belgium can take their grant along for studies in the Netherlands, while the French-speaking students have no such possibilities. Portuguese students can only take their grant abroad in the framework of organised exchange programmes.

5.2 Work during Studies

Data on the amount of students working during their studies was available from 23 respondents (see table 5.3). In Sweden, Portugal and Spain, less than a fifth of all students work alongside their studies, whereas three quarters of the student population or more work in Cyprus, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland.

We also asked how many hours the average student who does work besides the studies is working per week. Two respondents, from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska) and Romania, stated that they work full time. A large number of respondents (14) stated that students work half time or more, including all respondents from non-EU countries that provided a number. The smallest number of hours per week given comes from Belgium (Fr) and Germany: eight hours per week.

5.3 Average Study Cost

We asked our members what the average study cost for a student is, including accommodation, food, books, tuition fees etc. To make this data comparable, we have again divided this amount with the GDP per capita in table 5.4, and the caveats mentioned above apply.

5.4 Students staying with their Parents

We asked what percentage of students live with their parents. In all the Nordic countries, less than a fifth of all students live with their parents. Less than half of the students live with their parents in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands and Slovenia. In Belgium (Fr), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska) and Romania, between 50 and 60% of students live with their parents, whereas Italy, Croatia and Malta reported higher figures.

Country	Percentage
Sweden	11–20%
France FAGE	11–20%
Portugal	11–20%
Spain	11–20%
Bulgaria	31–40%
Denmark	31–40%
France UNEF	31–40%
Finland SAMOK	41–50%
Belgium (Fl)	41–50%
Slovakia	41–50%
United Kingdom	41–50%
Estonia	51–60%
Italy	51–60%
Lithuania	51–60%
Slovenia	51–60%
Austria	61–70%
Finland SYL	61–70%
Germany	61–70%
Norway NSU	61–70%
Cyprus	71–80%
The Netherlands	71–80%
Norway	71–80%
Switzerland	71–80%

Table 5.3: Percentage of Students Working

Country	Avg. study cost per year (€)	GDP	Percentage
Spain	1500	18900	0.079%
Croatia	720	8300	0.086%
Czech Republic	1800	14400	0.125%
Slovakia	1500	11500	0.130%
Romania	960	6800	0.141%
Lithuania	1080	7600	0.142%
Albania	600	3800	0.158%
Portugal	3000	17300	0.173%
Bulgaria	1200	6200	0.194%
Hungary	2400	12000	0.200%
Cyprus	3350	15000	0.223%
Estonia	2400	10000	0.240%
France	6500	25400	0.256%
Denmark	7200	28000	0.257%
Italy	6600	24300	0.271%
Germany	7680	26200	0.293%
United Kingdom	7314	24700	0.296%
Belgium (Fr)	7886	26100	0.302%
Finland	8400	25800	0.326%
Netherlands	8400	25800	0.326%
Sweden	8400	24700	0.340%
Slovenia	6000	16000	0.375%
Norway	12000	30800	0.390%
Iceland	10560	24800	0.426%
Austria	12504	27000	0.463%
Switzerland	14700	31100	0.473%
Malta	7500	15000	0.500%
Serbia	3000	2250	1.333%
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska)	2500	1800	1.389%

Table 5.4: Study Cost per GDP

5.5 Tuition Fees

The next question was if there are tuition fees in the country. Eleven countries: Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Malta, Romania and Slovakia do not have tuition fees except in special cases.

In the countries that have tuition fees, these are sometimes dependent on the parents' income (Italy, the UK). In other countries, the amounts depend on the subject or on the institution—private institutions usually charging more. In countries with systems of state-financed study places, only the students on non-financed places pay fees.

In some cases, tuition fees are only charged for students taking a second degree or from international students. In the Netherlands, mature students are charged higher fees than students under 30 years of age. Some countries do not have tuition fees, but HEIs charge “registration fees” or “administrative fees” instead.

In western Europe, the average amount charged per semester is between 400 and 700 € in public institutions and over 1000 € in private institutions. Eastern European tuition fee levels vary from 100 to several thousand €.

5.6 Access Restrictions

On access to higher education, we asked if there are any formal restrictions regarding access to higher education, such as *numeri clausi* or entrance exams.

The most common model is to have entrance exams for all programmes (7). This is particularly common in eastern and south-eastern Europe. A *numerus clausus* on all programme exists in 6 countries. Four countries have systems with both *numerus clausus* and entrance exams.

Five respondents indicate that entrance exams are used only for some fields of study, usually arts and music, while two respondents say that a *numerus clausus* exists for some subjects. A combination of open access in general and entrance exams for some fields and *numeri clausi* for some fields is used in three countries. In all of these cases, access is free to other fields of study.

In the Netherlands, study places are distributed by lottery between the applicants.

5.7 Contributions

We asked if students receive any other contributions, in the form of cheaper accommodation, food, health care or transportation. With the exception of Malta, all respondents indicated that some form of such support was present (see table 5.5).

In eastern and south-eastern European countries, accommodation (11) and health care (10) are the most frequent form of contribution. Cheaper meals (7) and transportation (7) are less common.

In western Europe, subsidised meals (15) are the most common form of support, but it is closely followed by health care (14), housing (12) and transportation (11).

5.8 Access Policy

We asked if there are policies to facilitate access for students from low-income and migrant families.

Half of the respondents indicate that there are policies addressed to students from low-income families. These policies have very different forms, from general objectives to increase participation to specific additional grants or loans to students from such backgrounds.

Portugal and Sweden indicate that there are policies for students from migrant families.

5.9 Access Initiatives

We further asked if there are any initiatives at lower levels which cannot be considered as policy.

Members in Italy, Sweden, the UK and Portugal state that there are such initiatives both for students from migrant families and from low-income backgrounds. In Hungary and Albania, initiatives exist for students from less privileged families, whereas France and Norway point to initiatives for migrant students.

The UK respondent mentions activities such as mentoring, summer schools and targeted promotion as examples for such initiatives.

5.10 Results of Policies and Initiatives

Respondents from Romania, Malta, Hungary, Portugal, the UK, Norway, Italy, France and Belgium (Fr) consider that the policies and initiatives have led to greater participation from the groups addressed.

Members in Slovakia, Serbia, Estonia, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), Switzerland and Iceland report that the participation figures have not increased. The Swiss respondent clearly states that the “system does not work”.

5.11 Measures since Prague

In relation to the inclusion of the social dimension into the Prague Communiqué, we asked what measures had been taken regarding the social dimension since 2001.

The majority of respondents (Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Romania, the UK and Albania) reported that no changes had been undertaken.

In Austria, tuition fees were introduced. In Germany, indirect fees have increased, whereas indirect support mechanisms and promising projects have been aborted. In Italy, budgets for grants have been cut. Switzerland reports that grants have been changed into loans.

In a few countries, positive changes have taken place, such as revisions and extensions of grant/loan schemes and lowered tuition fees. In Portugal, le-

gislation was passed to improve students' working conditions at university; in Sweden, government policy on access is being enforced at HEIs.

5.12 Imminent Problems

Lastly, we asked about the most imminent problems regarding social issues. The majority of all respondents answer that there are problems with the current grant/loan system (19). The problems vary from issues with the level of support—the money not being sufficient for a student to live on (Sweden, France, to budget limitations that make the grant/loan system unavailable to some of the eligible students. The respondent from Estonia notes that a study allowance act, which has been under discussion for a long time, has still not been passed; at the same time, changes to the grant system are making the situation for students from low-income families more difficult.

Another frequent problem is the lack of (affordable) accommodation for students. Tuition fees are identified as a major problem or threat (5) in the countries where they exist. A number of respondents also point to problems on the labour market such as graduate unemployment or graduates having to take jobs outside of their field. The German member points out that the German secondary school system is dysfunctional and socially exclusive.

5.13 Conclusions

The survey demonstrates quite clearly that there are enormous differences in the social conditions for students across Europe. The different economical situations of countries is certainly the most important reason for these differences.

Policies and standards of society also play a large role. For example, fees is dependent on parental income in some countries, whereas in other countries, this is not taken into consideration at all. In some countries, the grant/loan is available for (almost) every student and covers the entire cost of studying and living; in other countries, only very few students are eligible or the amounts available are very small. This is reflected in the percentage of students living with their parents and in the percentage of students working.

The support systems across Europe are so different that it is hard to even find a common system to describe them. This survey has been a first attempt, and we hope that other studies will explore the situation in more detail across the entire EHEA. For example, the exact modalities of grant/loan systems and repayment schemes should be compared.

The exchange of best practice regarding policies and initiatives to increase participation should be encouraged within the European Higher Education Area, as such initiatives are in place in

All respondents have suggestions on how social conditions for students can be improved, and this will be necessary to create a coherent European Higher Education Area for students.

Country	1	2	3	4
Austria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Belgium (Fr)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Belgium (Fl)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Denmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finland SAMOK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Finland SYL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
France	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Germany	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Iceland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Italy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Netherlands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Norway StL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Norway NSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Portugal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Spain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sweden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Switzerland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
United Kingdom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Albania	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bulgaria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Croatia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cyprus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Czech Republic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Estonia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hungary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lithuania	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Malta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Romania	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Serbia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Slovakia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Slovenia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- 1 Accommodation/Housing
- 2 Food/Cafeterias
- 3 Health care
- 4 Transportation

Table 5.5: Contributions

Chapter 6

Mobility

Mobility is, as we have seen earlier, seen as one of the main strengths of the Bologna process. The questionnaire on mobility asked member unions about the current situation—numbers and countries regarding incoming and outgoing students as well as provisions for mobile students. We also asked members about the obstacles to mobility they would want to remove.

6.1 Student Flows

6.1.1 Outgoing Students

Free Movers

The numbers of outgoing students outside organised mobility (free movers) are not very well known among the respondents to the questionnaire. A total of nine replies state that the numbers are not known and from the total answers; only seven members provide exact figures when asked (see figure 6.1).

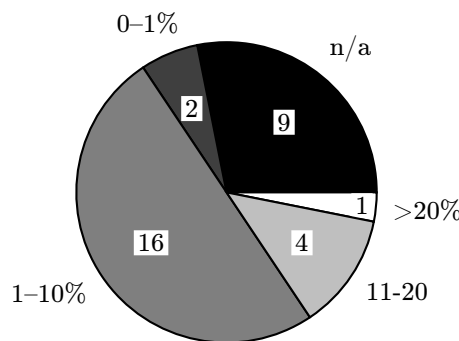


Figure 6.1: Outgoing Free Movers

The majority of questionnaires that provide answers state that the percentage of free movers is situated somewhere between 1% and 10% of the total student population (16 out of 23). Countries like the Netherlands (12%) and Albania (more than 20%) state a high outgoing student population. On the

other end, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska) states that less than 1% of students go abroad as free movers.

Programme Students

The amount of information available for outgoing programme students is higher. Only 6 answers state no knowledge of the numbers, 10 questionnaires provide exact figures and a total of 19 answers place the percentage between 1 and 10% (see figure 6.2).

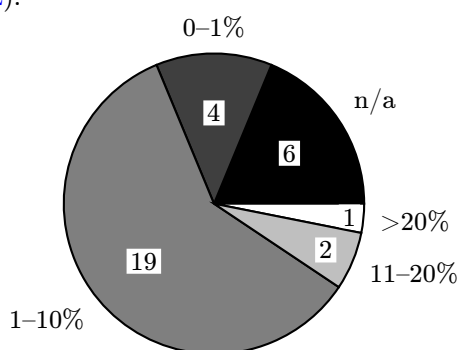


Figure 6.2: Outgoing Programme Students

Socrates-Erasmus is the most popular programme for outgoing organised mobility (23), followed by other European programmes like Leonardo and TEMPUS. Regional programmes like NORDPLUS (Nordic countries), CEEPUS (central Europe) and even country-to-country programmes like DAAD (Germany) and OAD (Austria) play a significant role, especially in countries not yet covered by Socrates, for example in the Balkan region. Networks of institutions are important providers of mobility opportunities in some countries, like in Malta, Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska).

6.1.2 Incoming Students

Free Movers

There is more information available concerning incoming students. Only 5 questionnaires state that no information was available. The majority of NUSes (22) state that the number of free movers is between 1-10% and 9 even provide exact numbers (see figure 6.3). The highest rates of incoming free movers are reported by the UK, Germany and Belgium.

Programme Students

Regarding programme students, 19 respondents place the number of incoming students between 1 and 10%. Exact percentages are provided by 8 NUSes, whereas 10 didn't answer or stated no access to the information (see figure 6.4).

As it could be expected, the Socrates-Erasmus is the most popular programme (18) again, and the importance of regional, bilateral and institutional programmes is also confirmed once again in parallel to the outgoing students data.

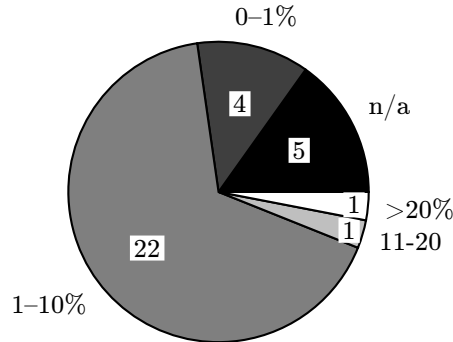


Figure 6.3: Incoming Free Movers

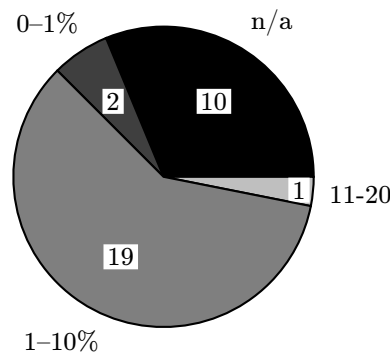


Figure 6.4: Incoming Programme Students

NUSes in countries like Belgium (Fr), France, Germany, Portugal and Iceland state that they have more incoming free movers than programme students.

6.2 Mobility Preferences

6.2.1 General Trends

French, German, Spanish and Italian students are logically among the most common incoming student population participating in programme mobility in the surveyed countries, since those countries have large student populations (see figure 6.5). In terms of free movers, Greek students seem to be the most dispersed student population, even though they prefer to stay in countries geographically close to them. No other trends are visible from the answers.

As can be seen in figure 6.6, Germany, France, the UK, Spain and Italy are the most popular destinations, with the United States close behind in terms of the choices of programme students. Among the free movers the USA, the UK and Germany are the most frequented countries, followed by Italy and Austria.

6.2.2 Regional and Cultural Phenomena

From the analysis of the answers, we can identify cases where the incoming student population is influenced by former colonial ties and by the sharing of a common language, like in the cases of Portugal, Spain and France regarding Africa and south America. Other regional phenomena are also visible, e.g. the

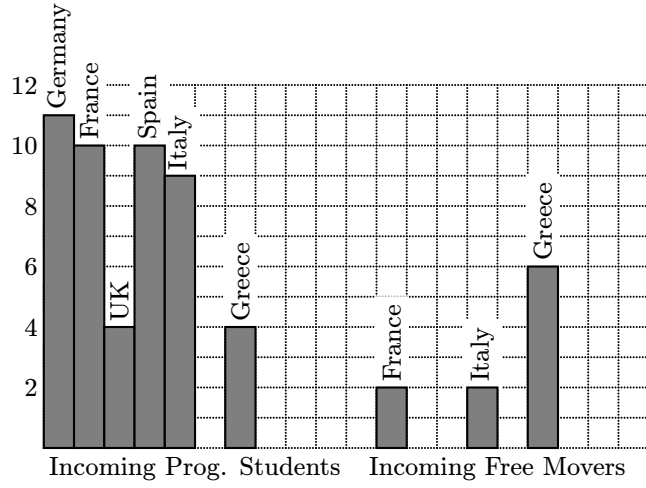


Figure 6.5: Sending Countries

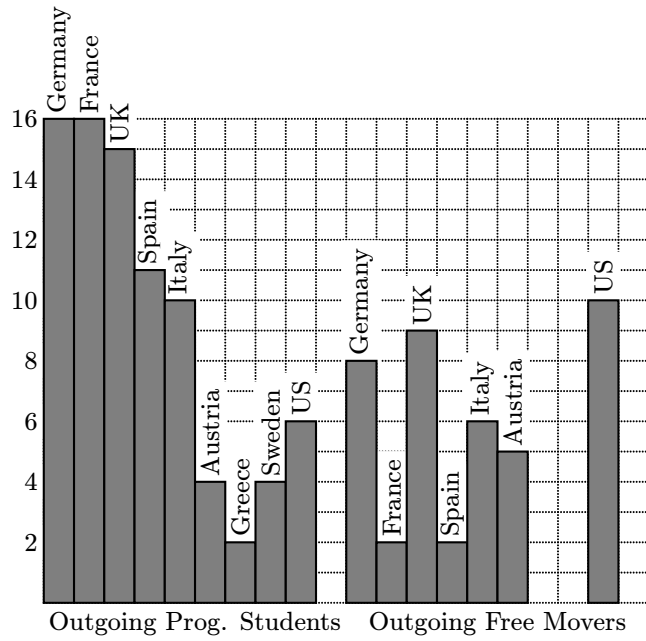


Figure 6.6: Receiving Countries

attractiveness of Austria towards the SEE countries and also the interchange among the Nordic Countries. Several bordering countries also share fluxes of students among each other. Asian and Arabic countries and Russia are also visible among the incoming student population.

6.3 Access to Higher Education

ESIB members were questioned if free movers have to fulfil the same criteria as national students concerning the access to higher education. Generally, free movers are on an equal footing with the local student population since 61% of the answers have a positive reply. Only in 34% of the cases it was stated that there is some kind of positive or negative discrimination. Only one member didn't answer this question.

As positive discrimination examples, members identified easier rules for student populations coming from developing countries, exemption from entrance exams or even special regulations and quotas for students with family or cultural connections to the country or coming from minority groups. Negative discrimination examples are the levying of higher tuition fees and the presence of additional requirements in the entrance for higher education (language proficiency, extra exams, etc.).

6.4 Integration of Incoming Students

HEIs (21) seem to be deeply involved in the integration of incoming students. Student organisations (17) are also very committed and they often complement or co-operate with HEIs at this level. The state (3) involvement in the integration of students is perceived as being very low, but CIMO (Centre for International Mobility) in Finland could be considered as best practice for the involvement of governmental bodies in the integration of overseas students.

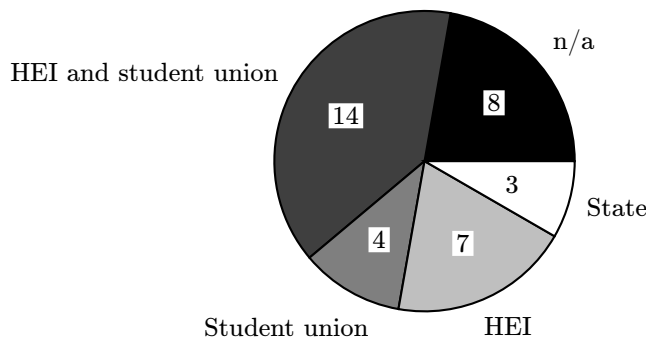


Figure 6.7: Involvement in Integration

Student organisations are usually catering for cultural integration (see figure 6.7). Finland, Austria and Bulgaria represent best practices in terms of student-to-student tutoring experiences. Besides the cultural integration of students, HEIs often provide language courses, accommodation and access to social services. In some countries, it is stated that there is still no special attention towards incoming students.

6.5 Student Representation

Usually, mobile students are integrated into the existing national students' organisations (21). In France (UNEF), Hungary, Austria and Slovenia, they even constitute special departments within the student organisations. In 10 cases, incoming students created and participate in their own organisations. Sometimes incoming students only have voting rights but are not eligible for positions in the student unions. Within the EU, there is sometimes different treatment between EU and non-EU students. Agreements at state level often mean that incoming students enjoy equal rights in the host country.

6.6 Accommodation of Incoming Students

Foreign students usually have the same treatment as local students in terms of housing. They are either living in mixed dormitories with local students or in private accommodation. In Slovakia, Cyprus, Malta, Norway, Latvia, Bulgaria and Croatia, incoming students are often placed in separate housing.

Student unions are much less involved in finding accommodation for incoming students than HEIs. Finland, Malta, Austria and Switzerland could be considered as best practices in terms of active involvement of student organisations in helping students finding inexpensive accommodation.

There are examples of positive discrimination when the best housing is offered to incoming students. Negative examples are when incoming students are charged extra or even the market value for the housing. It was evident in 5 cases that free movers receive less help than programme students. In Slovenia and Norway, there are guaranteed places for programme students.

6.7 Access to the National Grant/Loan System

The national grant and loan system is generally inaccessible for either free movers and programme students. In a few cases, the grant/loan system is accessible under special circumstances, such as if the student has worked there before and contributed to the social security system, when there is special support for specific communities, or in case of bilateral agreements. In Italy, the UK, Switzerland and Norway, a specific financial support system is available for international students. In Bulgaria, Slovakia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), the national system is fully available for international students. In Malta, no system exists even for national students.

6.8 Access to other Social Services

When asked if incoming students have access to the same social services, a majority of respondents state that this is the case both for free movers (20) and for programme students (24). However, in 11 of the answers, it was stated that free movers cannot access all the social benefits and services that local students enjoy. Programme students are discriminated to a lesser degree (5) on this issue. For example, in the Netherlands, free movers don't have access to public transportation benefits and in Germany, Estonia, Switzerland and Sweden, the

public health care system is not accessible. Health care is also noted in some cases as inaccessible for programme students.

6.9 Tuition Fees

Free movers usually have to pay the same amount (7) or more (12) in tuition fees. Education is free of charge also for international students in 7 countries (Germany, Albania, Slovakia, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway). The member from Italy states that free movers pay less tuition fees than national students do. Five countries from the European Union or the accession countries state that EU students pay less tuition fee than students from non-EU countries.

The fact that 15 members stated that programme students don't pay tuition fees is motivated by the strong prevalence of Erasmus-Socrates within the mobility programmes, where students pay their tuition fees at the home institution.

6.10 Language Courses

Mobile students often have the possibility to take a language course when they arrive in the host country (24) even if sometimes (5) this course is not for free. 4 respondents in Malta, Italy and France stated that no language course is organised for incoming students. In some countries, the language courses are available for the entire period of study (13), whereas they are only offered for a limited time in other countries.

Outgoing students have more difficulties in finding a proper language course. 13 respondents answered that such courses aren't offered, while 14 answered that such courses exist. In four cases, these courses were not free of charge.

6.11 Obstacles to Mobility

For incoming students, financial and language barriers are perceived as the major obstacles to mobility. These are closely followed by recognition issues and problems with cultural integration. Accommodation, legal obstacles, bureaucracy and the lack of information are also mentioned to a lesser extent. For outgoing students, financial problems and the recognition of studies are the major concerns. The lack of information and language deficiencies are also important concerns.

From the comparison of the answers, some interpretation of the noticeable differences can be put forward (see figure 6.8). Awareness of problems concerning language, cultural integration, accommodation and legal issues increase when students arrive in the host country. On the other hand, lack of information is more of a concern before the start of the period of studies abroad. Additionally, the sheer lack of opportunities for studying abroad is an obstacle that in some countries makes other obstacles irrelevant. The pronounced lack of opportunities for disabled students was mentioned in particular.

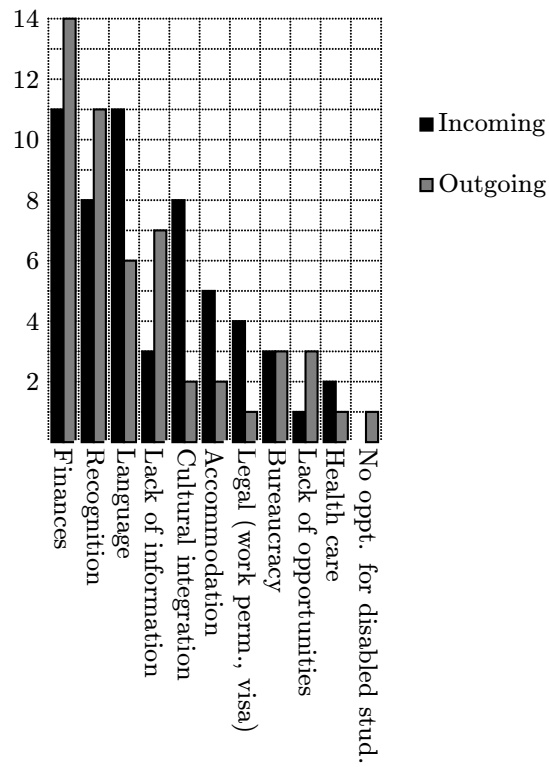


Figure 6.8: Obstacles to Mobility

6.12 Measures Taken

The possibility to transfer grants/loans (10) and the creation of counselling services (9) either abroad or at home are frequently identified as measures to decrease obstacles to mobility. The introduction of ECTS (5) and the Diploma Supplement (5) and the creation of special financial support systems for incoming students (4) are also identified several times as being important. Some members also make reference to the introduction of the Ba/Ma system, the provision of language courses and the promotion of bilateral agreements as ways to decrease obstacles to mobility. Nevertheless, 9 members consider that no measures have yet been taken since the signing of the Bologna Declaration.

6.13 Conclusions

In most countries, ten percent or less of the student population are mobile. Respondents identify a long list of obstacles that need to be addressed if mobility is to become an opportunity for all students.

The survey shows a number of examples of good practice regarding the integration and responsibility for incoming students. However, a number of problems remain, for example regarding access to medical and social services. Integration of incoming students, language courses and student integration are also areas for improvement.

The main obstacle to mobility is to be the lack of (financial) opportunity, and addressing this obstacle is a significant challenge. Providing portable grants and loans is a first step in this direction, but equitable solutions must be found for students who want to study in countries where the level of support is not sufficient.

Chapter 7

Student Involvement

In this survey, we asked at what levels student representatives are involved, how their role is formalised and which rights and possibilities student representatives have. We also asked about recent reforms and about challenges for the future.

7.1 Level of Legal Regulations for Student Representation

We asked at which level student representation is officially regulated by law. In almost all countries, student representation is legally assured at the institutional level. In the majority of countries, there is also regulation on the national level. A smaller number of countries (5) further state that there is regulation on the regional level. However, this is cannot necessarily be considered as too low, as in some countries, there is no jurisdiction on the regional level. Some countries additionally comment that despite existing regulations, the student representation is insufficient. Some countries also state that the regulations are in the form of a framework which has to be specified at the institutional level. In some countries, the representation is not connected to the regulations, i.e. although there is no regulation the representation is informally taking place—or that hardly any representation is taking place although there is a formal regulation.

7.2 Type of Student Representation

We asked how students are represented in the respective bodies. Most unions respond that some relation exists between the national union and the national rectors' conference or other equivalent bodies (28). Almost the same number of unions (26) also say that the national union is a negotiating partner of the ministry responsible for higher education. 13 unions, but only the ones who state that they are negotiating partner, also state that they are either observer or partner of the relevant bodies of the national parliament. On the institutional level, almost all unions (30) respond that the local student union is represented in the relevant bodies of the HEIs, but there is not always a formal connection between the student union and the students in the institutional bodies. A

number of countries state that the representation differs significantly between the institutions. Some respondents mention that the students are represented but do not have any direct influence on the decision-making, as they are only formally involved. Some unions have regular meetings with the minister of education and in a few countries, students are part of ministerial working groups.

7.3 Minimum Legal Requirements for Student Representation at Institutional Level

The next question we asked was whether there are any legal requirements regarding the number or percentage of students in the institutional bodies. In almost all countries there is such a regulation. Only the UK, Austria, Iceland and parts of Germany are lacking such a provision. The requirement for student representation is more frequently a certain percentage than a minimum number of seats. In the majority of countries, this percentage is between 11 and 20%. It sometimes depends on what prerogatives the respective body has. The highest percentages can be found in Hungary (25-33%), Slovakia (minimum 33%) and the Czech Republic (between 33 and 50%). However, the students almost never have the an equal number of votes compared to the teaching staff.

7.4 Type of Voting Rights

We have also asked whether the students in the respective bodies of the HEIs have an active or a passive voting right. In the vast majority of countries students have an active voting right. Only in Cyprus, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia they also have a passive voting right.

7.5 Levels of Involvement

In the next question, we asked what rights and possibilities student representatives have at the national level regarding higher education legislation, quality assurance, national credit systems, accreditation.

We also asked about rights on institutional regulations in general and concerning student representation, quality assurance within institutions and finally, about the student representations' own regulations.

A general observation is that almost all members may form opinion on these areas. One member is involved to the point of writing parts of law text in most of these areas, whereas the member from the Netherlands points out that local and faculty unions have less rights than the national union. The right to form opinion can mean very different things, however—in some cases, the ministry is obliged to take such opinion into consideration, while other respondents refer to their press and lobby work.

National Legislation

Most respondents express that they have the right to form opinion (29) about proposed legislation. Only members in France, Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania

and Bulgaria do not list this right. These members pointed to rights to agree, rights of appeal or lobbying possibilities instead.

Some members point out that they have a right to agree (9) or to initiate (9). The Lithuanian member responds that there are no formal rights, lobbying being the only possibility to exert influence.

Quality Assurance

On quality assurance, almost all members (28) also have the right to form opinion. The exceptions are in Estonia and Croatia, because there is no national quality assurance, as well as Denmark, Iceland and one member each from France, Norway and Bulgaria.

A right to agree is listed by 8 respondents, the right to initiate by 9. Some members also have the right to appeal (5).

Credit Systems

On the national credit system, the number of members (22) indicating a right to form opinion is a bit lower. As some members point out, this may be due to the fact that some countries do not have such systems yet.

Some members also state a right to agree (6), the right to appeal (4) and the right to initiate (4).

Accreditation

Many countries don't have accreditation procedures or are only in the process of starting them up. However, also on matters of accreditation, most unions (21) state that they have a right to form opinion.

The right of initiation (9) and the right to agree (7) are mentioned by a number of members. Several respondents also state that they are or will be members of the accreditation body. Accreditation decisions can be appealed by unions (4) in some countries.

Five members report that they have no rights in this field: Albania, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Iceland and Switzerland. The Swiss students are not involved at all in the accreditation agency that is being set up.

Institutional Regulations

On institutional regulation, both in general (26) and with regards to student representation and involvement (26), the vast majority of respondents feel that they have the right to form opinion.

On general institutional regulations, many unions have a right of initiation (21), whereas fewer have a right to agree (16) or a right to appeal (12). The Latvian union states that student representatives can veto such regulations.

Institutional Regulations on Student Representation

On regulations that concern student involvement and representation, 21 respondents indicate a right to initiate such regulations. The right to agree is

stated 17 times, and the right to appeal 15 times. The member from Belgium (Fr) states that in practice, they have a right to veto—but this right is not guaranteed by law.

No respondent indicated that student organisations have no rights regarding institutional regulations.

Quality Assurance within the Institution

The right to form opinion regarding quality assurance at institutional level is listed by 21 respondents. A number of respondents indicate that student organisations can initiate such procedures (16), whereas fewer have a right to agree (9) or to appeal (7).

The Hungarian respondents lists a right to veto on the issue of quality assurance at institutional level, whereas the Swiss member points out no rights whatsoever in this field. The Croatian respondent states that quality assurance procedures are inexistent at institutional level.

See also section 7.6 on evaluations of programmes and courses.

Quality Assurance on National/Federal Level

Regarding quality assurance provisions on the national or federal level, 20 respondents indicate that student organisations have a right to form opinion. Procedures can be initiated in 7 cases, while seven respondents indicate a right to agree and 4 respondents indicate that there is a right to appeal.

The respondents from Cyprus and Switzerland list no rights regarding quality assurance at this level.

Student Union Regulations

Four respondents indicate that student organisations have autonomy and are free to regulate their own organisations. Many members list that student organisations can initiate such regulations (19) and form opinion regarding regulations (18). The right to agree (12) and even to veto regulations are less common. The member from Albania indicates that student organisations have no rights in this area.

7.6 Evaluations of Programmes / Courses

We asked about the situation regarding the evaluation of programmes and/or courses by students. In 11 countries, this kind of evaluation are required by law (including most countries from Central and Eastern Europe and Sweden); in 14 countries (including all Nordic countries except Sweden) they are required by instructional regulations. 4 countries respond that there are no evaluations carried out by students at all. In some countries, it is voluntary for the provider. These countries also respond that it differs from institution to institution and also within the institution whether evaluations take place.

7.7 Recent Changes

We asked if there had been any changes in the field of student involvement since the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, and if so, what the changes were.

In the majority of countries, no changes whatsoever have been introduced. In the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany and Austria, legislation has been passed that has limited student influence, often through the introduction of corporate models of governance for higher education institutions. Norway noted that the shortening and intensification of curricula due to the introduction of a new two-cycle degree structure could have a negative effect on student involvement because students would find less time to do student union work or participate in quality improvement schemes such as evaluation surveys.

Among the positive changes that had been introduced, many unions noted that the involvement of students in the Bologna process had led to increased involvement on other issues.

Some countries (French community of Belgium (for universities), Finnish polytechnic sector) have passed legislation to guarantee student representation in institution boards.

In Sweden, legislation has been introduced stipulating that students must be represented not only in decision-making bodies but also in drafting committees and that individual officials at institutions have to consult with the student union before a decision that affects students is passed.

In general, respondents from Malta, Romania, Spain, Norway's polytechnic sector, Serbia, Finland and Italy stated that student involvement had increased—in some countries only in practise because older legislation took effect or because student unions had been very active, and in other countries on a formal level.

7.8 Upcoming Changes

About half of the respondents indicate that there were planned changes in their countries that would affect student involvement, but a number of these reforms were either clearly or at least possibly *limiting* student participation. In Austria for example, such a limitation of student involvement is motivated by perceived necessities of the Bologna Process.

Only four countries indicated that there were positive reforms towards more student influence which were caused by the Bologna process: Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), Malta, Spain and Bulgaria.

In France, legislation is under way to establish student vice-présidents (vice-rectors) at all universities. However, these will be appointed by the président (rector) and not by the representative student organisation.

7.9 Room for Improvement

We asked our members in which areas student involvement should be strengthened or changed and how this should be done. All countries, including those that are satisfied with the level of involvement, mentioned issues for improvement.

Almost all countries respond that the involvement in the boards of HEIs should be strengthened. This should be done by increasing the minimum number or percentage of student seats. Several members suggested that the number of

places and votes in all bodies should be equal for all groups represented in the body, including the students. The Italian union suggests that more competencies should be given to those bodies where the involvement of students is stronger. On the departmental and faculty level, more involvement should also be secured. The member from the Netherlands suggests joint governance between councils and the head of the institution.

Members very often mention that especially on the national level, more involvement should be guaranteed. This should either be done by making formal possibilities of involvement into actual possibilities (Estonia) or the other way round, making actual possibilities formal (e.g. Belgium (Fl), Sweden). Generally, the involvement on the national level should be legally guaranteed according to many respondents. The German national union points out that they are not recognised as the national union and the Croatian member suggests that student unions should be legally recognised on the national level.

More specifically, involvement should be increased regarding decisions in the areas of financing of higher education, social regulations, mobility programmes and services for students. Especially in central and south-eastern European countries, the need for more involvement in quality assurance mechanisms and, specifically, student evaluations of courses and programmes was mentioned.

A significant number of members mentioned that student unions both on the local and on the national level should receive more money in order to finance their activities. A few suggest that student representatives should be paid for their work.

A number of member unions see a need to increase the turnout at student elections. Suggestions on how to achieve this are to have the elections around the same time of the year across the country and to launch massive information campaigns, including speaking in lectures. The knowledge of student representatives should also be improved by providing more training seminars for them.

7.10 Conclusions

Out of 35 respondents, 10 were satisfied with the current level of student involvement. These respondents were from Spain, Belgium (Fl), Finland (2), Norway (2), the Czech Republic, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Latvia and Estonia. However, the level of satisfaction or discontent varied greatly, as could be seen from the comments (“Yes, but it can always be better”, “Yes, but who knows what a new government will do”, “No, not with the new law”, “No, absolutely not” and “No, definitely not”).

Among the good practise on the institutional level that can be identified from these surveys, we find the Czech concept of having 1/2 – 1/3 students in every decision-making body to strengthen the role of student representatives. Also the Swedish regulations that students also must be included in drafting committees and that individual decision-makers must consult with students before passing decisions are very valuable.

On the institutional level, guaranteed representation and voting rights in university boards is a common feature. France and Serbia for example have student vice-rectors (also called student vice-présidents or student pro-rectors); however, their competencies and role as well as the method for their selection are somewhat unclear. In some countries, pedagogical and social issues are

handled by special bodies with larger student representation, but it is necessary to ensure the representation of students regarding all decisions.

On the national level, the necessity to formally and actually guarantee student involvement persists. The involvement in the bodies on the national level very often depends on the good will of the ministry. A good example in this respect is Austria, where students are included by law in every body dealing with higher education on the national level.

Both at national and institutional levels, it can generally be said that students aren't considered as full partners, neither in practise nor in theory.

Chapter 8

Degree Structures

The purpose of this questionnaire was to map the implementation of degree structures based on Bachelors' and Masters' degrees (Ba/Ma). Some of the key questions were: does the introduction of one of the aims of the Bologna Declaration create any obstacles or not? Is the change welcomed by students and why? Are there any weaknesses and threats?

8.1 Use of Degree Structures based on Ba/Ma

Higher education institutions in Spain, Cyprus, Albania, Bulgaria, the UK, the Baltic countries, Denmark, Sweden, Finland (universities) and Iceland are using degree structures based on Ba/Ma. Some countries, like Albania, Ireland and Sweden, were using Ba/Ma structures even before starting to implement the goals of the Bologna Declaration.

Most national student unions note that the use of a new Ba/Ma degree structure is planned after the implementation of the objectives of the Bologna Process. This is the situation for in France, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), Slovenia, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Finland and Norway.

Students from Switzerland, Finland, France and Malta specified that the new Ba/Ma degree structure will be implemented only in some sectors. In some cases, these sectors will be used as pilot cases for the introduction of Ba/Ma across the board. It may be useful to collect good and bad practices and then proceed to the full implementation of Ba/Ma. However, institutions and governments should foresee a variety of Masters' programme options for students who participate in such pilot programmes to guarantee them continuity of studies.

Croatian students state that they do not have any information about planned activities in the field of Ba/Ma.

8.2 Introducing Ba/Ma Structures

In most countries, Ba/Ma is a commonly used structure, thus replacing older, preceding degree structures. This is the situation in Bulgaria, Iceland, Norway,

Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Belgium (Fl), Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska) and Albania. In Finland however, Ba/Ma is the degree structure commonly used in the university sector, whereas in some areas, old and new structures co-exist. Polytechnics in Finland do not use Ba/Ma, but they will be introduced in the long term. Old degree structures and Ba/Ma also co-exist in France, Germany, Austria and Italy. No Ba/Ma structures exist in Malta, Serbia, Croatia, Spain, Belgium (Fr), the Netherlands, Ireland and Sweden.

In Switzerland, it is a long term goal to replace the existing structure with Ba/Ma. Currently, some HEIs have older structures, some have old structures in combination with a new Ba/Ma structure and some only have the latter. In Italy, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Belgium (Fr) and Spain, institutions are also planning to gradually switch to Ba/Ma in a longer perspective. The Swedish government is discussing to make the current system more compatible with Ba/Ma rather than replace it.

8.3 Duration of Studies

The average duration of studies varies substantially, as can be seen in figure 8.1. However, some of respondents must have stated the actual duration of studies, including all overtime students and students who took study leave.

Differentiation between Sectors or Areas of Study

In Belgium (Fl), there are differences between university and non-university Ba/Ma degrees. The same applies to Slovenia, where university studies take 4–6 years and non-university studies 3–4 years. In Italy and the Czech Republic however, differences depend on the HEIs and not on the sector or area of study. There are also differences Switzerland, where the polytechnics tends not to use Masters' degrees, while in Slovakia, the second cycle lasts for up to 6 years in some areas. In Lithuania, there are also differences between universities and colleges.

8.4 Continuation of Studies after a Bachelor's Degree

The survey showed that in most countries, further entrance exams or specific numeri clausi are required for entering Master level studies. This is the situation in Cyprus, Albania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Finland (polytechnics), Lithuania and Estonia. Only in a few countries (Finland (universities), Slovakia, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark), students can enter university for a Master's degree directly, without any selection between the degrees. In countries like Malta, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), France, Spain, Latvia, Norway and Iceland, students choose a Master's programme after graduating with a Bachelor's degree. In Ireland, the acceptance to a second-cycle degree is based on one's qualifications and how the student performed in the first cycle degree.

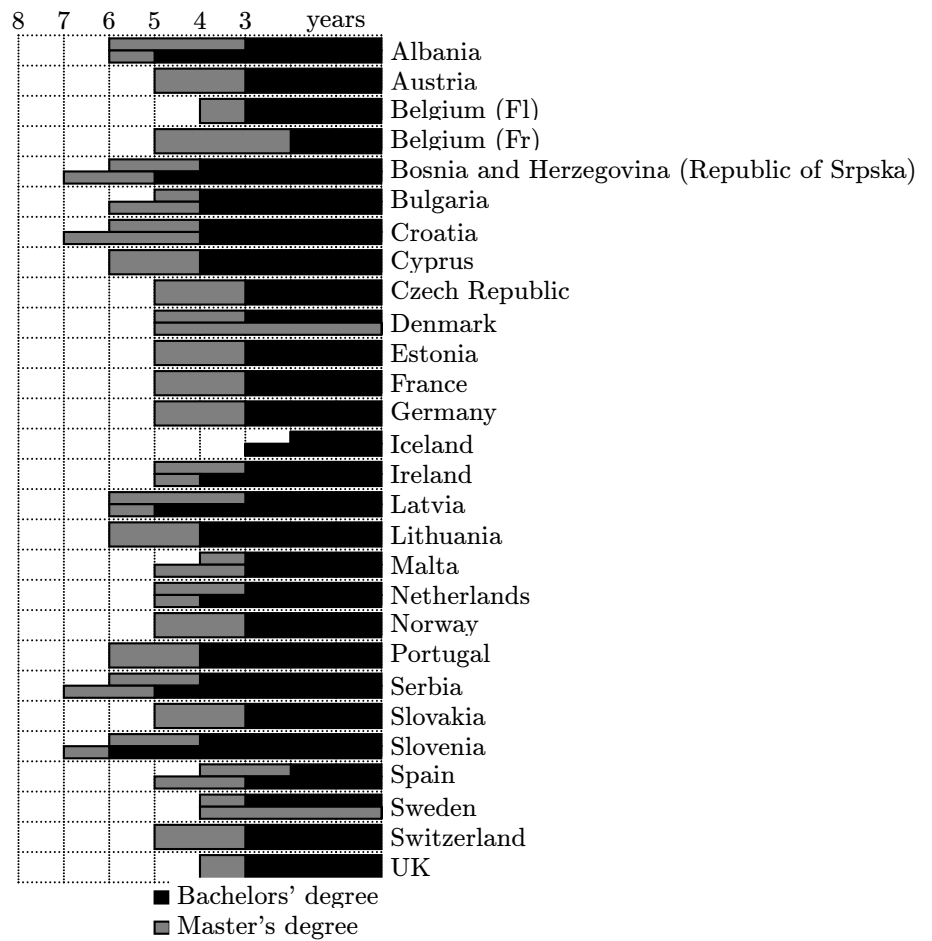


Figure 8.1: Length of Bachelors' and Masters' Programmes by Country

8.5 Affiliation between the Old and New Degree Structure

In most countries, students who are following studies in an old degree structure can transfer their subjects to new Ba/Ma curricula. This is the situation in Cyprus, Malta, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Slovakia, the Netherlands, Germany, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Students who already have an old Bachelor's degree can continue for a new Master's degree in Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia and Estonia.

A totally independent degree structure without any connection to existing structures is introduced in Belgium (Fl), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska), Croatia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Iceland.

8.6 Pros and Cons

20 national student unions think that introducing Ba/Ma was beneficial for students, only 4 thought the opposite and 3 unions do not have an opinion on the topic.

The main keywords for supporting the degree reform are mobility, transparency and flexibility. Students see that the new Ba/Ma structure will increase the possibilities for vertical and horizontal mobility in different universities. Mobility is also seen as one of the most important tools of the Bologna Process that enable more inter-disciplinarity (2). It was also mentioned that the introduction of Ba/Ma will increase student participation (1), but unfortunately this sentence was left without any further explanation. Another attraction was the possibility to graduate in less time, study periods will become shorter and thus enable a new choice of field of study (2). The break between cycles is not always seen as negative, as it allows students to get some work experience between Ba/Ma (1). One answer stated that a shorter cycle is more accessible for some groups of students. Last, but not least, it was answered that the new degree structure will bring more and deeper knowledge, higher standards of education and better employability on the labour market of the future (2).

Those opposing the new degree structure state that the main aim of the reform is to shorten studies, which implies lots of problems for students who also work (1). The degree structure reform is not reforming curricula, which makes the whole implementation process unsystematic and chaotic (1). New study programmes seldom make use of the Diploma Supplement, ECTS or modules (1). One student union thinks that the introduction of the Ba/Ma structure will further lessen the employment possibilities and not widen them as envisioned in the Bologna process (1). There is also a fear that the two-tier system will be limited only to some faculties (1) and that the grass-root level changes within institutions will be too costly (1). Students also note institutions' lack of motivation to introduce student-centred Ba/Ma programmes (1).

8.6.1 Main Weaknesses

The reform to Ba/Ma structures does not take into consideration the diversity of higher education in different countries (1). Radical changes will mobilise resources and energy that could be used elsewhere (1).

Ba/Ma is abused to introduce a number of unwelcome things: tuition fees, *numerus clausus* for Ma, compulsory class attendance and mandatory classes (11). All these instruments make the system less transparent (1); furthermore, there is a clear divergence from the current European model (1). There is also a risk that Ba/Ma removes other existing diplomas in a country (1).

The necessity for change is unclear; there should be reflection on the pedagogical need for change (1). It is also mentioned that the new Ba/Ma degree structure will cause potential confusion on the labour market (1). This makes it difficult for employers to define what they need, because the effects of Bachelors' degrees on the job market are yet unknown (2). There are also fears within society that students with Ba degrees will not be qualified or educated enough (3) and that Bachelors' degrees will be devaluated as every student wishes to get a Master's degree (2). There are cases where new Bachelors' curricula do not fit labour market needs. After graduation, students have difficulties to find jobs (1).

The lack of coordination and information still seems to be a problem, notwithstanding the on-going Bologna processes in every country (2). It is emphasised that reforms to the degree structure will mean too much liberty for HEIs or, even worse, for faculties and institutes (1).

8.6.2 Structure of Ba/Ma

Many student unions state that the new Ba/Ma structure is less flexible than the old one (5). Some underline that the implementation is unfortunately schematic and without real action (2). For example, the rigid Ba/Ma structure fails to appeal to adult learners and is not learner-centred (1). Some answers stress that the degree structure changes are only cosmetic, making degrees less scientific and more market oriented (2). There are tendencies where some universities and faculties will simply divide programmes into two parts without any changes, or rename existing structures (3). The contents of the Bachelor's degree are rather too specific or much too wide (1). Both Bachelors' and Masters' degrees are too academic in their focus, with less regard for vocational skills (1). For the amount of new Bachelors' degrees introduced, there are too few Masters' programs, which makes Masters' courses accessible only for few students (1). In some areas of study, the threshold for qualification to do a Master's degree is too high (1).

Transfer from old programmes to new is less discussed. It is not clear if old-degree students can continue studies for a new Master's degree and on which conditions (5). Transfer regulations can also cause unwanted transition periods between the old and new systems (1).

A programme length of three years enables less vertical and horizontal mobility and forces closed curricula (6). Cutting one year off the undergraduate degree has subsequently led to an increased focus on streamlining, efficiency, productivity and commodification (1).

Students who want to concentrate on a scientific approach towards studies can find it bothering to study together with those students who are only interested in the practical application (1). A lot of time is spent on the general part of the course and specialisation is left until the end (1). While studying towards a Bachelor's degree, students have to study subjects which do not interest

them (2). Because of these mandatory subjects and compulsory secondary areas of study, the system starts to be similar to secondary school (3).

Student involvement and influence on the decision-making process regarding content and structure of Ba/Ma programmes is small (2).

Supportive Tools

Major supportive tools, such as ECTS, have not been used in order to evaluate the relation between contents and the requirement of that content to get a degree. Rather, ECTS is used either as an evaluation of the old contents or as an influence of a single teacher (1). The lack of homogenous credit regulations on the national level was also mentioned (1). The use of curricula is still not perfectly adapted to the Ba/Ma system (1).

Social Issues

There should be no difference in financial student support and student welfare between the first and the second cycle. The second cycle would be obstructed and progression would be made more difficult (1). The introduction of Ba/Ma will strengthen social and gender discrimination (1). Furthermore, because of the “glass ceiling” effect women are more likely to leave higher education after first degree (2).

Some of the weaknesses mentioned are controversial because the details of Ba/Ma structure implementation depends on the country. A few student unions do not see any weaknesses and are satisfied with the change (2).

8.7 Conclusion

The introduction of a degree structure based on Ba/Ma is an ongoing process in most Bologna process countries. Even if the changes are not visible yet, many countries are planning to reform degree structures in the near future. It is clear from the replies that the majority of national student unions supports the reform; even the arguments for this are similar. However, all the arguments mentioned are rather general, which leads to the consideration that students do not question the need for a reform of the degree structure, but question rather the implementation strategy.

The main weaknesses concern the structure of Ba/Ma; however, the majority of answers given was not similar. There is a tendency to see very content specific weaknesses, leaving aside possible influence on HEIs or on society as a whole. Without any further specification, it is hard to say whether this is a result of the lack of discussion and information on national or student union level, of inadequate student participation or even due to low interest of the implementation process.

Chapter 9

ECTS

This survey was carried out independently of the other five surveys presented here. The data was collected from ESIB member unions in autumn 2002 and the results were published in spring 2003. They are presented here again, in brief form, to round of the picture of the emerging EHEA from a student perspective.

9.1 Introduction

When introducing ECTS (European Credit Transfer System), the European Commission issued a guide, which focused on the value of ECTS for students.

Under the title “What does ECTS offer to the students?” the following suggestions can be found:

- ECTS guarantees academic recognition of studies abroad.
- ECTS enables access to regular courses alongside local students, with the benefit of full participation in the academic life of the host institution. This characteristic of ECTS distinguishes it from many other student mobility programmes.
- ECTS enables further studies abroad. A student may prefer not to go back to the home institution after the study period abroad, but rather to stay at the host institution—possibly to gain a degree—or to move to a third institution. The institutions themselves decide whether or not this is acceptable and what conditions the student must fulfil in order to get a diploma or transfer registration.

This survey will attempt to answer:

- How can these goals, set by the Commission, be achieved?
- What might be the possible obstacles?
- Are they really accurate objectives?
- Does reality differ from the goals?

9.2 Overview

9.2.1 National Credit Systems

Before starting to sum up the answers it is necessary to know the status of ECTS: is it connected with the national credit systems? Has ECTS replaced national credit system etc?

Albania has a national credit system, which is connected to ECTS, while the Netherlands have a national credit system, which is in the process of being replaced by ECTS at the moment. The system applies to the universities in Denmark where it is homogenous while the polytechnics don't use the ECTS system. National credit systems exists in Lithuania, Estonia, Sweden, Finland (1 national credit equals 1,5 ECTS points), Iceland, Austria and Norway (1 national credit equals 2 ECTS points) and there is no national credit system in Hungary, Slovenia, Serbia, Belgium (Fl), Iceland and the Czech Republic. Countries like Kosovo, Croatia, Cyprus, Portugal, Germany and Switzerland, meanwhile, are planning to implement a national credit system based on ECTS.

9.2.2 How are Credits/Workloads measured?

ECTS is commonly used in Europe, but before accumulation there has to be something to transfer. The ways of measuring credits before transferring them differs from country to country.

Some countries use set criteria (Hungary, Kosovo, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Belgium (Fl), the Czech Republic and Cyprus). In some countries, like in Germany, there are big problems with the measurement of actual workload, since many institutions use contact hours as the basis for the measuring. In Ireland, workload is measured in national hours, which means that workload depends on the time spent in classroom. In Austria however, credits are not linked to workload: most of the universities in Austria divide the total amount of credits by the number of courses that must be passed for the academic degree to get the single credits for one course.

9.2.3 Credit Accumulation and Methods Used

The answer to this question can be divided on two parts—"haves" and "have nots":

- Countries that have a credit accumulation system:
 - based on national credits;
 - based on ECTS.
- Countries without any credit accumulation system:
 - about to introduce an credit accumulation system;
 - without any particular activities.

In Germany, there is no uniform credit accumulation system, since there is no national credit system. However, ECTS is used for the accumulation in a few study programmes, but mostly for Bachelor/Master (Ba/Ma) study

programmes. The same applies for Cyprus, where a unified credit accumulation system also is missing. Universities are using different systems and some of them are based on ECTS.

In the Netherlands ECTS, replaced the national credit system this year. The system is still new and will be fully implemented by the year 2004. Since ECTS is the national credit system, Dutch students can not, at the moment, see any problem with credit accumulation in the Low Countries.

An active implementation of the Bologna process has led Albania to starting to use a credit accumulation system.

Portugal uses ECTS for accumulation, but besides this, there are two more systems. The first and more common system is where credits are based on the number of hours passed in the classroom. The second, older, system is based on the number of disciplines of a course adapted to a credit system based on hours spent in the classroom. The variety of methods on the national level makes the system less transparent and creates obstacles for mobility.

Almost the same system exists in Switzerland, where the situation with credit accumulation is incoherent. Some universities have already implemented ECTS (Bern), some have developed system of credits that are similar and compatible with ECTS (Zurich), others don't have any credit system. This all leads to different ways of credit accumulation, but without any credit system at all there is nothing to accumulate. Still, there have been some activities to make the systems compatible.

In Hungary and the Czech Republic, there is no integral credit accumulation system. Every university has its own method.

Northern European countries are mostly using their own credit system for the accumulation. Iceland has its own credit accumulation system, which differs from the other Nordic countries. Lithuania, Estonia, Finland and Sweden all use the same credit system (1 credit point = 1 week of study = 40 hours of work), thus the same measures for the accumulation. In Lithuania however, students have to pay close attention to number of credits achieved by passing free courses. The number of credits must not exceed the number of credits gained in elective courses within the main study programme of the student. In this case, accumulation rules can create a credit waste.

In Denmark, universities and a few polytechnics use a credit accumulation system, but with the help of the ministry of education, a common credit accumulation system for polytechnics will be introduced.

In Serbia, some university faculties did experiments on using credits, accumulation and ECTS, but it is still too early to talk about efforts to establish a national system.

Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Ireland and Belgium (Fl) are planning to introduce a credit accumulation system in near future.

9.2.4 ECTS Legislation

Answers can be divided into two blocks:

- Countries where ECTS is legislated;
- Countries where ECTS is not legislated but used voluntarily by the institutions.

In Albania, Hungary, Kosovo, Denmark, Austria and the Netherlands, ECTS is legislated by law. In Norway ECTS is acknowledged by the new law on higher education.

In Germany, ECTS is legislated but not in a uniform way. Bachelor/Master (Ba/Ma) studies will only get accredited if they use a credit system compatible to ECTS. For other study programmes the use of ECTS is only required in a few states. For newly introduced study programmes (since 2003), the use of ECTS is required.

Countries like Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Slovenia, Serbia, the Czech Republic and Portugal have not yet legislated ECTS systems.

Improvements with regards to ECTS legislation are being made in Cyprus, Belgium (Fl) and in Switzerland, where the system is based on the goodwill of the universities.

In most of the countries surveyed so far, ECTS is not legislated, but universities are using the system voluntarily, mostly for Erasmus students.

9.2.5 ECTS as an Obligation for Institutions

In Albania and Austria, ECTS is mandatory for institutions, while in Denmark it is only obligatory for the universities and not for the polytechnics. In the Netherlands ECTS, replaces the national credit system and is thus mandatory for the institutions.

In Kosovo, Croatia, Serbia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, the Czech Republic and in Portugal, the use of ECTS is voluntary for institutions, sometimes suggested by the government.

Countries like Hungary, Slovenia, Cyprus, Switzerland and Sweden are in the process of making ECTS obligatory for the institutions.

Key Points

- In order to promote student and staff mobility, every institution should use a credit accumulation system.
- The variety of methods of credit accumulation on national levels makes the system less transparent and creates obstacles for both horizontal and vertical mobility.
- Should ECTS be mandatory or voluntary for institutions?

9.3 Current Obstacles

9.3.1 ECTS for Life-Long Learning and Extracurricular Activities

Life-Long Learning

In Sweden, Norway, the Czech Republic and Estonia, ECTS is used for points granted by higher education institutions. It is useful when later continuing your studies in the area of the formal education. In Lithuania the system is the same, but instead of ECTS they use a national credit system.

In Denmark, the adult and further education system uses ECTS.

Countries like Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, the Netherlands, Belgium (Fl), Portugal, Iceland, Ireland, Austria and Finland do not have any connection between lifelong learning and ECTS.

Improvements in starting to use ECTS in this area can be seen in Kosovo, Switzerland and Germany.

Extracurricular Activities

In Albania, Hungary, Kosovo, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Estonia, Switzerland and Denmark, ECTS points are given for some extracurricular activities. In Germany it differs from faculty to faculty and usually, when students get some credit points for extracurricular activities, these will not be taken into account when to obtaining a degree. In Lithuania, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic, Belgium (Fl), Ireland, Austria and Portugal, there is no ECTS usage in this field.

9.3.2 Problems with Credit Accumulation

Structure

After analysing the answers received, the biggest problem is still was the structure of a credit, i.e. how to ensure that x hours of study equal one credit.

In some countries, the time of validity of credits is not regulated (Germany). In Finland, the Netherlands and Slovenia, the question how to measure the real workload with the credits received is still unclear. Some institutions do not acknowledge studies completed in another university and students lose study weeks when changing HEI.

Other Problems

There is still a huge lack of information about credit accumulation, i.e. how it is done, what the students' rights are concerning the accumulation process, where to appeal to if you disagree with the results etc. This lack of information is not true only for students, teachers and administrators are equally affected. As credit accumulation systems are quite new in many countries, the lack of information leads to a lack of transparency.

In Germany, there is often a contradiction to examination regulations, since there is no uniform system for credit accumulation. The Slovenian member also sees the lack of a national co-ordination in introducing the credit accumulation system.

The Dutch members fear that students do not study for the sake of studying, but merely to get ECTS credits. A sufficient grade is enough, but they are not really involved in the study material any longer. The intrinsic value of studying is lost. Danish students also fear that an uncoordinated system could easily turn into a hunt for easy points.

In Austria, extracurricular activities cannot be used in credit accumulation. Austrian students also feel that there is a poor connection to non-university type of institutions.

9.3.3 Problems with ECTS

The problems perceived with the ECTS are very similar to those perceived regarding credit accumulation. The main concerns are related to the structure and recognition issues.

Structure

In Germany, there is no uniform and compulsory system for ECTS and no regulation of how workloads should be measured.

For Icelandic students, the main problem is that when taking courses abroad which are, for example, 5 credits, they count as 2.5 credits in Iceland. Thus, when taking a major where you need 90 credits to graduate, students can be in the position of having finished 89.5 and no half-credit courses are available.

In Ireland, the usage of ECTS differs from institution to institution.

9.4 Summary

ECTS implementation differs from country to country, mainly depending on the existence or non-existence of a national credit system and on the lack of information about the consequences. When governments are trying to introduce ECTS without first having a national credit system, the whole process feels forced and rather intransparent.

One of the main ECTS aims set by the European Commission—“ECTS guarantees academic recognition of studies abroad”—is still not fully achieved. Sometimes, institutions still think that courses from certain universities are better than those from others—with no objective criteria to underpin these claims. This all leads to a need for more solidarity and trust between institutions.

Lack of information seems to be a continuing concern. Or should we rather say a lack of co-ordination between different actors?

Chapter 10

Conclusions

In TRENDS III, the authors summarise the student opinion from their survey as follows:

Student representatives express the highest hopes concerning the principles of the Bologna reforms and the harshest criticisms concerning its implementation and frequently reductive interpretations.

We could hardly find a better conclusion for the surveys we have evaluated. It is difficult to draw any other conclusions from the wide field(s) that have been surveyed, beyond the conclusions in each chapter. However, a few aspects merit some attention.

One of the key findings of this survey is that there is a chronic shortage of information to student representatives. In order to give students the opportunity to take part in decision-making as outlined in the Prague Communiqué, students must have access to information regarding reforms and reform projects—and the backgrounds of these reforms. Formal student involvement is one prerequisite for such participation, but information is equally important.

The surveys have identified a number of areas where good practice could be spread across the EHEA. Hopefully, the Bologna process will provide opportunities for this to happen, and not only focus on the technicalities of comparability. ESIB, as the European umbrella organisation for national unions of students, will continue to provide possibilities for such exchanges for student representatives.

We hope that these surveys have contributed to mapping the European Higher Education Area—a mapping that is necessary to fulfil the objectives of Bologna. Follow-up and evaluation are crucial elements of a process that aims at comparability and compatibility. Students, standing at the centre of the educational systems, should also be at the centre of any evaluation.

Effects of the Bologna Process on other Countries

Another effect that would be interesting to study in the future is the effect of the Bologna process on countries that aren't part of the process, and in particular the effect on students in these countries—and their perspectives on these effects.

Appendix A

Questionnaires

A.1 Weaknesses and Strengths of the Bologna Process

1. Name of your NUS
2. Country of your NUS
3. Contact details of the person filling out this survey
4. Name five main strengths of the Bologna process
5. Name five main weaknesses of the Bologna process
6. Name five main opportunities of the Bologna process
 - (a) Bologna process on European level
 - (b) Bologna process versus the world
7. Name five main threats of the Bologna process

A.2 Social Dimension

1. Name of your NUS
2. Country of your NUS
3. Contact details of the person filling out this survey
4. Is there a grant or loan system in your country?
 - Grant
 - Loan
 - Mixture
 - Both
 - None
5. What is the percentage of students receiving a grant / loan and how much do they receive?

0%	<input type="checkbox"/>
1% – 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
11% – 20%	<input type="checkbox"/>
21% – 30%	<input type="checkbox"/>
31% – 40%	<input type="checkbox"/>
41% – 50%	<input type="checkbox"/>
51% – 60%	<input type="checkbox"/>
61% – 70%	<input type="checkbox"/>
71% – 80%	<input type="checkbox"/>
81% – 90%	<input type="checkbox"/>
90% – 100%	<input type="checkbox"/>
No information available	<input type="checkbox"/>

 - (a) In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it
 - (b) Average amount in €
6. Please describe briefly the grant / loan system (please cover at least the following: is it means tested (depending on parental or personal assets), does everybody receive the same amount of money, is the grant / loan transferable if students go abroad?)
7. What is the percentage of students who have to work in order to finance their studies?

- 0%
- 1% – 10%
- 11% – 20%
- 21% – 30%
- 31% – 40%
- 41% – 50%
- 51% – 60%
- 61% – 70%
- 71% – 80%
- 81% – 90%
- 90% – 100%

(a) In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it

8. What is the average amount of time students are working (hours per week)?
9. What are the average study costs (including “normal” expenses such as accommodation, food, etc. and study related costs (e.g. for books, tuition fees, etc.) in your country in €)?
10. How many students are living with their parents?

- 0%
- 1% – 10%
- 11% – 20%
- 21% – 30%
- 31% – 40%
- 41% – 50%
- 51% – 60%
- 61% – 70%
- 71% – 80%
- 81% – 90%
- 90% – 100%

- In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it

11. Are there tuition fees?
 - Yes
 - No
12. If there are tuition fees, how much are they in € (if you cannot state it in general, please try to outline it briefly)? If there are tuition fees, are there any exceptions (please outline them briefly)?
13. Are there any formal restrictions concerning access (numerus clausus, entrance exams...)?
14. Are there special in kind contributions for students?
 - Accommodation

- Cafeterias
 - Public transport
 - Health care
 - Other (please specify)
- (a) If you think it is necessary, please describe them briefly.
15. Are there special policies and/or initiatives in your country concerning (the improvement of) the access to higher education?
- (a) Policies
- Policies for Students from low-income families
 - Policies for Students from migrant families
 - Other (please specify)
- (b) If there are special policies, please briefly describe them
- (c) Initiatives
- Initiatives for Students from low-income families
 - Initiatives for Students from migrant families
 - Other (please specify)
- (d) If there are special initiatives, please briefly describe them
- (e) Did the policies / initiatives lead to higher percentage of students from the respective group?
- Yes
 - No
16. Which measures have been taken regarding social issues since 2001 (signing of the Prague Communiqué)? Did they help solving problems concerning social issues?
17. Which are the most imminent problems that still exist?

A.3 Mobility

1. Name of your NUS
2. Country of your NUS
3. Contact details of the person filling out this survey
4. What is the percentage of students going abroad in order to study there during their studies?
 - (a) Free Movers

0%	<input type="checkbox"/>
1% – 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
11% – 20%	<input type="checkbox"/>
21% – 30%	<input type="checkbox"/>
31% – 40%	<input type="checkbox"/>
41% – 50%	<input type="checkbox"/>
51% – 60%	<input type="checkbox"/>
61% – 70%	<input type="checkbox"/>
71% – 80%	<input type="checkbox"/>
81% – 90%	<input type="checkbox"/>
90% – 100%	<input type="checkbox"/>
No information available	<input type="checkbox"/>
 - (b) In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it
 - (c) Please indicate the source(s) where you have the information from
 - (d) Programme Students

0%	<input type="checkbox"/>
1% – 10%	<input type="checkbox"/>
11% – 20%	<input type="checkbox"/>
21% – 30%	<input type="checkbox"/>
31% – 40%	<input type="checkbox"/>
41% – 50%	<input type="checkbox"/>
51% – 60%	<input type="checkbox"/>
61% – 70%	<input type="checkbox"/>
71% – 80%	<input type="checkbox"/>
81% – 90%	<input type="checkbox"/>
90% – 100%	<input type="checkbox"/>
No information available	<input type="checkbox"/>
 - (e) In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it
 - (f) If possible, please also indicate which mobility programmes are most frequented
 - (g) Please indicate the source(s) where you have the information from
5. What is the percentage of students coming from abroad in order to study in your country in comparison to the number of domestic students?

(a) Free Movers:

- 0%
 1% – 10%
 11% – 20%
 21% – 30%
 31% – 40%
 41% – 50%
 51% – 60%
 61% – 70%
 71% – 80%
 81% – 90%
 90% – 100%
 No information available

In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it

(b) Programme Students

- 0%
 1% – 10%
 11% – 20%
 21% – 30%
 31% – 40%
 41% – 50%
 51% – 60%
 61% – 70%
 71% – 80%
 81% – 90%
 90% – 100%
 No information available

In case you have the exact percentage, you are very welcome to indicate it

(c) If possible, please also indicate which mobility programmes are most frequented

6. Please also indicate the 4 most preferred countries to go to and the 4 countries most students come from. Please differentiate between programme students and free movers.

	Programme Students (Incoming)	Free Movers (Incoming)
	1	1
(a)	2	2
	3	3
	4	4
	Programme Students (Outgoing)	Free Movers (Outgoing)
	1	1
(b)	2	2
	3	3
	4	4

7. Do the free movers have to fulfil the same criteria as national students concerning access to HE?

- Yes
 - No
- (a) If you ticked “No”, please briefly outline what the differences are (positively or negatively discriminated; what are the major differences)
8. Which measures are taken to integrate foreign students by the state, the HEIs and the student unions? If possible, please differentiate between Free Movers and Programme students.
9. How are foreign students represented by student unions? If necessary, please differentiate between Free Movers and Programme students.
10. How are foreign students accommodated (e.g. they are all put in one dormitory) and what assistance for finding accommodation is offered? If necessary, please differentiate between Free Movers and Programme students.
11. Do foreign students have the same benefits as domestic students concerning social services (accommodation, cafeterias, public transport, health care...)?
- (a) Free Movers
- Yes
 - No
- (b) If you ticked “No”, please briefly outline what the main differences are.
- (c) Programme Students
- Yes
 - No
- (d) If you ticked “No”, please briefly outline what the main differences are.
12. Is the national Grant / Loan System accessible for foreign students?
- (a) Free Movers
- Yes
 - No
 - Special support system for foreign students
- (b) If you indicated that there is a different system for Free Movers, please briefly describe what the major differences are.
- (c) Programme Students
- Yes
 - No
 - Special support system for foreign students
- (d) If you indicated that there is a different system for Programme Students, please briefly describe what the major differences are.

13. Do foreign students have to pay tuition fees?
- (a) Free movers
 - Yes, same as domestic students
 - Yes, but less than domestic students
 - Yes, more than domestic students
 - No, and not domestic students either
 - No
 - (b) If Free Movers have to pay either more or less than domestic students, please indicate whether there is a difference between EU foreigners and Non-EU foreigners
 - (c) Programme students
 - Yes, same as domestic students
 - Yes, but less than domestic students
 - Yes, more than domestic students
 - No, and not domestic students either
 - No
14. Are language courses in the domestic language(s) offered for foreign students?
- Yes, free of charge
 - Yes, but they are charged
 - No
15. For which period are these language courses offered?
- Throughout the whole period of studies in your country
 - Only for a limited period free of charge
 - Only for a limited period
16. Are language courses offered for domestic students (in preparation for their study period abroad)?
- Yes, free of charge
 - Yes, but they are charged
 - No
17. Which measures have been taken since 1999 (signing of the Bologna Declaration) to remove obstacles to mobility for foreign and domestic students?
- Grants / Loans are transferable
 - Special support system established
 - Increased / improved counselling
 - None

- Other (please specify)

18. What are the major problems occurring for students coming to your country and the ones going abroad, respectively the ones who want to come to your country and the ones wanting to go abroad?

A.4 Student Involvement

1. Name of your NUS
2. Country of your NUS
3. Contact details of the person filling out this survey
4. At which level does your country have legal or constitutional mechanisms to ensure student representation in higher education governance? (If yes please write the adequate letter(s) next to the answer “yes”)
 - A At national level
 - B At regional/federal level
 - C At the level of Higher Education institutions
 - Yes, at the level of
 - None
5. How is the student representation involved in the relevant bodies? (Please mark all existing)
 - The NUS is an observer / partner of the relevant bodies of national Parliamentary Assembly
 - The NUS is negotiating partner of the ministry responsible for higher education
 - The NUS is in relation to the national rectors conference or other equivalent bodies
 - The student unions at institutional level are represented in the relevant bodies of the institution
 - There are no such possibilities
 - Other (please specify)
6. Is there a minimum legal or constitutional requirement for student representation, for example as a percentage or a certain number of seats that have to be reserved for students within the board of the institution?
 - Yes
 - No

(a) If yes, what percentage or number?

 - Percentage
 - Number
 - Out of how many seats
7. Do the students have the right to vote in the governance bodies concerned?
 - Yes, active voting right
 - Yes, passive voting right
 - No

8. What kind of rights do student representative organs have at various levels? (National and/or institutional levels—please write the adequate letter(s) to the adequate rights)

- A veto
- B right of appeal
- C right of initiation
- D right of agree
- E right to form opinion
- F no rights

- Legislation on Higher Education
- Quality Assurance regarding Higher Education
- National Credit System
- Accreditation of institutions
- Institutional regulation (in general)
- Institutional regulation (concerning student representation)
- Quality Assurance within the institutions
- Quality Assurance on national/federal level
- Student representations' own regulations
- Anything else where students have special rights (please specify)

9. How are student evaluations of courses and/or programmes ensured in your country?

- | Courses | Programs | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Required by law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not required by law, but required at instructional regulations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exists in some institutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exist only as principle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Voluntary made by the provider (professor, HEI) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no student evaluations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other regulations (please specify) |

10. Are there initiatives and/or actions regarding student involvement undertaken at the moment? Which are planned? Is the Bologna process used as an argument to do these reforms?

11. Do you feel the level of student involvement in HE governance satisfactory in your country?

- Yes
- No

12. What are the 5 major fields where student involvement in HE should be strengthened/changed? How should it be changed?

A.5 Degree Structures

1. Name of your NUS
2. Country of your NUS
3. Contact details of the person filling out this survey
4. Do institutions in your countries use a degree structure based on BA/MA?
 - Yes, before the Bologna Declaration
 - Yes, after implementing the goals of the Bologna process
 - Yes, only in some sectors
 - No, but we plan to introduce it in a near future
 - No, not planned
 - No info about the developments
 - It was already the structure
5. Has BA/MA replaced the old degree structure?
 - Yes, it is a commonly used degree structure
 - No, old and BA/MA coexist-exist
 - No BA/MA degree structure exists
6. What is the average period of duration of studies?
 - (a) First Cycle
 - (b) Second Cycle
 - (c) Is there a relevant differentiation between sectors or areas of study?
(Please specify)
7. After having a BA degree, can you automatically continue to study for MA degree?
 - Yes, you enter university for MA degree directly
 - Yes, if you choose it after graduating BA degree
 - No, further entrance exams/specific numerus clausus is required
 - Has not been the case yet since the introduction of BA/MA
8. Is there any affiliation between the old and new degree structure? (i.e. student graduating “old” BA—4 years continuing to study 1 year for MA etc)
 - Yes, students following old degree structure can transfer their subjects to new BA/MA curricula
 - Yes, students following old degree structure can continue studies for new MA degree
 - No, no connection between those two degrees

9. Do you think introducing BA/MA was beneficial for students?

- Yes
- No

(a) Why?

10. Please name, from a student perspective, five main weaknesses of BA/MA degree system

A.6 ESIB Questionnaire on ECTS

- *Contacts*
 - Name of the organisation
 - E-mail
 - Contact person
 - E-mail
 - Phone
 - Fax
1. *General*
 - (a) What is the current situation concerning credit accumulation in your country? Which methods are used?
 - (b) Is ECTS legislated in your country? Could you please attach the text/act of law, preferably in English.
 - (c) Is ECTS obligatory or voluntary for institutions?
 - (d) How credits/workloads are measured?
 2. *Specific*
 - (a) Do you have national credit system?
 - If YES, then is it connected with ECTS? How?
 - If NOT, do you plan to implement ECTS without having the national credit system?
 - (b) Is ECTS used in the context of Lifelong Learning? If YES, then how?
 - (c) Does your national credit system take in account extra-curricular activities?
 - (d) Name from student perspective 5 (each) main problems with credit accumulation and ECTS in your country?
 - Credit accumulation
 - ECTS
 - (e) What initiatives and/or actions regarding ECTS are undertaken at the moment in all levels and which are planned?

Appendix B

Response rates

This needs a tad more work...

Country	Union	1	2	3	4	5	6	Note
Albania	UPSSH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Austria	ÖH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Belgium (Fl)	VVS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Belgium (Fr)	FEF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bosnia and Herzegovina (Republic of Srpska)	SURS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bulgaria	ASC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Bulgaria	UBS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Croatia	CSU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Croatia	CSC	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Cyprus	POFNE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Czech Republic	SK RVS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Denmark	DSF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Denmark	FHS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1
Estonia	FESU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Finland	SAMOK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Finland	SYL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
France	La FAGE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
France	UNEF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Georgia	SUGTU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
Germany	fzs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Hungary	HÖOK	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Iceland	BÍSN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Iceland	SHÍ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Ireland	USI	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Italy	UdU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kosovo	UPSUP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2
Latvia	LSA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Lithuania	LSS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Macedonia	NSUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Malta	KSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
The Netherlands	ISO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The Netherlands	LSVb	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Norway	NSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Norway	StL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Portugal	FAIRe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Romania	ANOSR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Serbia	SUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Slovakia	SRVS SR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Slovenia	SSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Spain	CREUP	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Sweden	SFS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Switzerland	VSS-UNES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
United Kingdom	NUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

1 Survey on Strengths and Weaknesses

2 Survey on the Social Dimension

3 Survey on Mobility

4 Survey on Student Involvement

5 Survey on Degree Structures

6 Survey on ECTS

■ Survey received

□ Survey not received

Comments

1 ESIB membership ended October 2002

2 Consultative member

Table B.1: Response rates

Appendix C

ESIB and the Bologna Process—Creating a European Higher Education Area for and with Students

C.1 Preamble

ESIB—the National Unions of Students has existed since 1982 and seeks to promote the social, cultural, political and economic interests of students in Europe towards decision makers and partners at national, European and international level. ESIB currently has 50 members from 37 countries and thus represents more than 11 million students in Europe.

C.2 Introduction

Beginning with the Sorbonne Declaration in June 1998, a discussion has been emerging about the setting up of a European Higher Education Area on the continent. In 1999 the group of countries signing the Bologna Declaration had already further increased from the four that signed the Sorbonne Declaration to 29 countries, and at the first follow up meeting in 2001 in Prague the group increased to 31 countries. While students had to invite themselves to the Bologna conference, they were included in Prague and ESIB has been actively and constructively participating in the follow-up to this process and has adopted a large number of policies on various aspects of the Bologna objectives. At this point, where almost half of the time dedicated towards reaching the goals of Bologna has passed, ESIB aims at providing an overall position on the various aspects of the process, also evaluating the reforms that have already taken place in the Bologna signatory countries.

This paper should be seen in the context of existing ESIB policy papers.

C.3 The International Trends surrounding Bologna

In recent years, the world has seen an overall trend of privatisation and deregulation of higher education systems throughout the world. The massification of education has not been met by a sufficient increase of public funding. Rather, HEIs have been pressured to engage in commercial activities, selling research and education products to customers and thus generating an increasing proportion of their income through these activities. This trend involves the establishment of governance structures that abolish collegial bodies in favour of streamlined corporate governance models, where the power is located in the hands of a few managers rather than all students, staff and researchers in HEIs.

The introduction of various forms of fees for studying is another trend that is to be observed in Europe throughout the last years. ESIB considers education a human right and calls upon governments to meet their obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, Article 13, which calls for a progressive introduction of free education rather than an introduction of fees.

On a global level, trade in education becomes more and more relevant and generates an increasing profit. The ongoing negotiations about the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) about liberalising trade in education services are a further step along the privatisation agenda. However, increasing public pressure and protests have resulted in a growing interest of governments and reluctance to go any further in this trade. ESIB has clearly stated its objection to trade in education services on several occasions and pointed out clearly that education is not a commodity from our point of view.

UNESCO and other UN agencies have been increasing their work in recent years to safeguard education as a public good and have called upon governments to ensure that trade in education does not jeopardise existing commitments of governments under international human rights legislation. UNESCO has furthermore developed frameworks for recognition of qualifications and codes of good practices for transnational education.

Lastly, the European Union has set the goal of becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010 in the Lisbon Summit in 2000 and has since been working on the future objectives of the education and training systems in Europe in a number of working groups, which involve national governments and NGO representatives.

On the other hand, a number of reforms have been implemented in European countries and have led to big changes in the systems of higher education. The mobility programmes of the EU have been successful in significantly increasing the number of mobile students. Curricular reforms as well as more flexible programmes have allowed for a larger number of students from non-traditional backgrounds to enter HE. Lastly, by implementing ICT in the universities and other HEIs and implementing pedagogical reforms, more learner and thus student centred patterns of learning and teaching have evolved.

All these European and global trends form the context in which the Bologna process has started and is continuing in Europe and these trends have to be taken into account when evaluating the outcomes and objectives of Bologna

and forming a student opinion.

C.4 The Bologna Process and ESIB's Positions Towards the Objectives

ESIB generally welcomes the increasing co-operation in Higher Education in Europe and supports the idea of establishing a European Higher Education Area. When it comes to the general rationale behind the process, ESIB would like to stress that we see co-operation in Europe and beyond, based on core academic values as the main driving factors of the creation of the EHEA and its relation to other regions of the world. The strong focus on the competitiveness of Europe in the world is a two-edged sword. It can on the one hand lead to an increase in quality and transparency, can on the other hand further the privatisation agenda and brain drain, which are trends which ESIB clearly and heavily opposes. Therefore, the inclusion of attractiveness in the Prague Communiqué and the shift towards this more co-operative approach is very much welcomed by ESIB. ESIB would also like to stress that a clear pursuit of the objectives of the Bologna process is essential for reaching its aims and that the Bologna process must not be abused to carry out other reforms which are only on the national agenda in the name of the Bologna process. A number of countries seem to be abusing the Bologna process for these kinds of reforms and ESIB strongly condemns these attempts of governments to hijack the process. Such hijacking jeopardises the creation of the European Higher Education Area, because stakeholders will oppose the process and the implementation will become increasingly difficult.

The strong focus on economic goals in the Bologna process has been counterbalanced by the inclusion of the social dimension and the reaffirming of HE as a public good in the Prague Communiqué. However, more work will need to be done to ensure that these objectives do not remain empty formulas but are met to ensure social inclusion and equity in the EHEA.

However, ESIB strongly believes in the potential for positive change in the Bologna process and welcomes the process as an opportunity to reform the higher education systems as to make them more responsive to students and society, including the labour market.

When it comes to the concrete objectives, ESIB stresses the following:

C.4.1 Quality Assurance

ESIB welcomes the increasing European co-operation in quality assurance between countries and in the framework of ENQA. However, existing problems should not be overlooked. The lack of a common definition of accreditation, its aims and procedures, for example make it difficult to work on this issue into a clear direction. In accreditation diversification rather than a convergence seems to be the trend in Europe. A common European accreditation does not seem feasible and realistic from our opinion and the process should rather be steered into a mutual recognition of national systems.

ESIB also stresses that accreditation has to be accompanied by a continuous process of quality assurance and quality improvement through evaluation and

that the set up of such systems where they do not yet exist is essential to guarantee not only the keeping of minimum criteria at a given point in time but a continuous assurance and enhancement of the quality of higher education. Quality assurance with a focus on formative improvement of the quality of courses and institutions should be properly implemented in all signatory countries and should focus on courses, programmes and institutions as such, assessing the quality culture of HEIs and how they work with quality internally at different levels.

National guidelines and bodies should be developed for both quality assurance and accreditation, which clearly state the responsibilities of different actors and must involve students, teachers, employers and other societal actors to make sure that the education system meets their expectations and demands. Transparency of quality assurance and accreditation must be ensured, particularly by widely disseminating the proceeding of such activities. Students, as the biggest stakeholder group in education, must always be included in both quality assurance and accreditation and this inclusion should be legally guaranteed.

C.4.2 Degree Structures: Adoption of a System of two Main Cycles

ESIB observes with great interest the adoption of the new degree structures. While it seems to be fairly easy and well done in a lot of eastern European countries and the Scandinavian countries, a lot of western and southern countries seem to have more problems in adopting this system.

For the first-cycle degree, ESIB stresses that the first cycle degree such as a Bachelor should allow for different profiles (i.e. practical vs. scientific profile), even though the inclusion of a certain number of both practical and scientific aspects of a subject has to be ensured. The employability of the graduates holding such degrees as well as societal gains should be more clearly defined than stating that first-cycle degrees shall be employable. Also, a focus should be placed on transferable skills that are gained in certain subjects. This will make qualifications not directly relevant to the labour market more easily relatable to the question of what a person with a certain degree can actually do in practice. Governments need to ensure that the labour market and employers recognise these degrees more easily as the reform of increasingly introducing those degrees will otherwise fail and face serious problems, a trend already apparent in a number of countries.

The successful completion of the first cycle must allow for entry into the second degree. ESIB opposes any additional selection mechanism, be it special entry exams or *numerus clausus*. The second cycle programme also must be provided free of tuition fees. Both first cycle and second cycle degree have their own specific value, as they provide answers to different and sometimes complementary needs. There is no “normal” degree. Instead both should be equally valorised and students must be free to choose if they want to continue or stop after the first cycle.

ESIB recognises that issues of progression rates between first and second cycle vary widely for socially disadvantaged and discriminated minority and indeed majority groups. Further to its commitment to access and progression at all levels ESIB calls for research to establish which barriers exist for these students. In this process students from the disadvantaged groups and student

unions should be consulted and instruments have to be developed to remove these barriers.

The aim of the reforms to degree structures should be more flexibility also in the light of lifelong learning and not to get the largest number of students out of the universities and polytechnics as quickly as possible. ESIB calls upon governments to ensure free access to the second cycle and also engage into a clearer definition of employability to ensure the success such reform. If these objectives are met, the reforms could decrease drop out rates as well as create the above mentioned flexibility which will allow a bigger and more diverse number of students to successfully reach different levels of higher education.

Lastly, ESIB would like to stress that a reform of the structures necessarily should involve a reform of the content of programmes rather than pressing old contents into a new form and then believing that all problems of these degrees will be solved. A thorough assessment and reform of the curricula is essential to ensure the success of the BA/MA structures.

C.4.3 Promotion of Mobility

While a lot of progress has been achieved with the new generation of Socrates programmes and an increasing number of students are mobile in Europe, there are a lot of issues still to be resolved.

The proper implementation of credit systems is essential to foster mobility and guarantee recognition of the gained qualifications. Also, reforms of national student support schemes to make grants and other state funded financial support approved by students fully portable are necessary to make it easier for students to be mobile. Additionally, European mechanisms have to be developed to counterbalance the enormous differences between countries in the Bologna process.

Also, to foster mobility, it is necessary to change and relax foreigner laws and further simplify the granting of visas and working permits both for the period of study and after graduation.

Furthermore, it has to be properly assessed in how far mobility affects brain drain within Europe and beyond and proper mechanisms addressing both the needs of individuals and the needs of countries have to be devised to balance these trends.

As an additional concern, ESIB would like to stress the need of continuous and tuition-free language courses of the language of the country of destination for studies to enhance the integration of the mobile students into the local communities and make mobility not only an academically but also a culturally challenging experience, contributing to more understanding, respect and tolerance for the diverse cultural differences in Europe.

Lastly, HEIs and student unions have to devise proper counselling mechanisms for foreign students to ensure their integration into the academic community and the social well-being of students from other countries.

C.4.4 Establishment of a System of Credits

The introduction of a system of credits both for transfer and accumulation seems essential for a large number of aspects related to the creation of a EHEA. ESIB

believes that it is essential that compatible and comparable credit systems be developed in all European countries.

When it comes to measuring workload, ESIB believes that students must be involved in this process.

The ECTS is a useful tool for credit transfer within the realm of mobility for the moment. However, more work is needed to develop it into a proper accumulation system. ESIB also stresses that governments should not be forced to introduce ECTS as a generalised credit system but that other compatible systems should coexist.

C.4.5 Recognition of Degrees: Adoption of a System of Easily Readable and Comparable Degrees

ESIB welcomes the efforts to facilitate the recognition of degrees and qualifications to stimulate mobility on the European labour market.

A proper implementation of the use of the Diploma Supplement is a means of easily facilitating this process. The Diploma Supplement should be issued automatically without students having to request it and free of charge. It should at least be issued in the language of the institution and another widely spoken European language.

For intermediate recognition, compatible credit accumulation systems should be used, which make it easier for students to get parts of their studies recognised when they change the country and/or city of studies.

A ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention by all signatory countries of the Bologna process is urgently needed, especially if that is to be made a prerequisite of joining the process. ESIB believes that it is not possible to demand something from someone else, which one has not achieved oneself before. Therefore, we call upon all signatory countries to eliminate existing legal barriers and sign and ratify the Lisbon Convention. Furthermore, the Lisbon Convention should be made more legally binding, e.g. by making it part of their national higher education legislation. This legislation should also contain a more general paragraph on recognition issues to foster pre-degree recognition by credit accumulation. Lastly, the labour legislations of signatory countries need to be adjusted to facilitate recognition of qualifications in vocational higher education for labour market purposes. An observation of the discussions in the Bruges/Copenhagen process on these issues could help to solve the questions linked to professional recognition in government regulated portions of the labour market.

In the light of these challenges, the mandate of the ENIC/NARIC network should be expanded to deal with all these recognition issues in different departments but in one main organisation responsible for assisting with the process.

It is also in this context, ESIB would like to highlight the issue of national and international qualification frameworks. ESIB calls for further research in this area in order to help and further policy development of all stakeholders.

C.4.6 Higher Education Institutions and Students

The inclusion of higher education institutions and students is essential for the success of any real student oriented reform. ESIB therefore calls upon all gov-

ernments to include students into the national Bologna Follow-Up structures and all other reform bodies.

Furthermore, reforms of higher education governance structures must not lead to a process of abolishing democracy in higher education institutions. Efficiency in governance structures might be a useful goal, but efficiency must never mean that students, teachers and staff are being excluded in favour of corporate steering models for universities and polytechnics.

Furthermore, the autonomy of institutions should be designed in a way that gives a collective responsibility to all stakeholders of the higher education community, not by transferring all decision-making powers to the university leadership.

Lastly, ESIB considers it of importance to deepen the dialogue also with the teachers and researchers who have to implement the Bologna reforms in the faculties and departments. Leaving them out of the process will in the medium term have negative effects on the proper implementation of reforms and on the re-design of curricula and structures of studies.

C.4.7 Promotion of the European Dimension in Higher Education

ESIB welcomes the design of new degrees with a specific European content. We believe that to create a European identity, European educational programmes are essential. This can be best achieved through joint bachelor and master programmes. For a joint degree, a stay abroad should be the norm. However, the needs of students with disabilities and parents have to be taken into account and means will have to be developed to allow for their access into these programmes as well.

Also, it seems essential that all degrees contain European aspects. This “Euro-mainstreaming” could be achieved by comparative analysis in social sciences for example. It has to be ensured, that these European aspects of programmes lead to a better understanding of similarities and differences between people on the continent and also critically reflect upon the concept of Europe. Furthermore, it is essential that these contents respect the huge cultural diversity on the continent and promote understanding, co-operation and tolerance between Europe and other regions of the world. It must never lead to the evolvment of a European nationalism which puts Europe above other regions of the world. Also, the autonomy of HEIs has to be respected in curricular matters.

C.4.8 Promoting the Attractiveness of the EHEA

ESIB believes that the shift of focus towards attractiveness is a positive development, as the term competitiveness can have a very negative meaning, especially when it comes to competing at all costs, which undermines academic values such as co-operation.

ESIB further believes that attractiveness can best be reached by a high quality of education and research and by a good international network of co-operation with various partner institutions around the globe.

When discussing the attractiveness of the EHEA, the problems of brain drain need to be tackled and resolved. Although ESIB believes in the freedom of each student, researcher and member of teaching staff to choose their place of study,

work and life, special attention must be paid to the following points. Making Europe one of the most attractive higher education areas, countries have to act responsibly in relation to the problem of brain drain, both between Bologna signatory countries and outside. Since a lot of talented students, researchers and teaching staff in developing countries and countries in transition are emigrating, the creation of a cohesive higher education area is endangered, as is the economic and social development of the countries encountering brain drain. Signatory countries should respond to the fact that the process of brain drain also has highly negative implications for the development and quality of higher education and research.. Guaranteeing safe employment and working conditions for students, staff and researchers in the qualification phase can reduce the problem of brain drain and enhance the attractiveness of the EHEA. This also means that PhD candidates should be employed by the universities, and enough full time jobs have to be provided for young researchers to make the academic workplace an attractive option for them.

With regards to the GATS, ESIB reaffirms its strong opposition against making any further commitments in education. ESIB calls upon governments to not make further commitments in education while at the same time reviewing existing commitments and legally assessing their impact on the public system. ESIB further calls upon governments to engage in a constructive dialogue with teachers, students and universities about the issues surrounding trade in education services, as the existing trade in the framework of TNE arrangements has to be steered to make it beneficial. Generally, ESIB reaffirms its commitment to education as a public good not a tradable commodity.

C.4.9 Life-Long Learning

ESIB welcomes the steps towards implementing lifelong learning in Europe. However, we feel that it is important to stress that lifelong learning should not only mean to upgrade professional skills but also to realise the right to education in an overall lifelong perspective.

ESIB believes that the flexibility that can be reached through a proper implementation of the Bologna objectives can have a positive effect on the role of higher education in the lifelong learning framework. Lifelong learning however must not mean that people's knowledge is automatically considered outdated or expired after a certain time period and everyone is obliged to update their skills.

Governments, HEIs, teachers and students have to continue their work to accommodate the needs and expectations of these new and non-traditional students in the lifelong learning framework, which has to provide multiple entry and exit points to HE.

C.4.10 The Social Dimension

ESIB believes that the social dimension should be at the heart of the Bologna process. This involves questions linked to equity in access as well as equal chances of completion of studies. Furthermore, the national support schemes for students need to be sufficient to cover the living costs of students. While ESIB acknowledges potential benefits from students working during their studies, ESIB stresses that this employment should primarily be linked to the study

subject and students should not be forced to work in order to pay subsistence costs.

Additionally, ESIB stresses that grants are preferable to other financial support systems. Loan-based systems can seriously damage the financial situation of students with a weaker socio-economic background. Furthermore, study financing systems should be portable, to enhance mobility, and independent of parental income. Lastly, ESIB stresses that a social support system for students, which covers housing, health care, food and other counselling and social services should be properly implemented and enhanced to guarantee the social well-being of students. In the design and steering of these systems, students should form an integral part since they know student needs best.

C.5 The Road Ahead—Opportunities and Threats

ESIB believes that a proper implementation of the Bologna process can lead to the biggest changes in the landscape of Higher education in Europe since the early 1970's in Western and the early 1990's in Central and Eastern Europe.

ESIB considers that it is of utmost importance that the students' voice is being heard in the process. If students' concerns are not met this will provoke dissatisfaction and protests among students whereas if students concerns are met, the Bologna process and its implementation will have a beneficial effect for students, as well as teachers and universities.

However, a few shortcomings of the process have to be mentioned: The strong focus on the economic role of education and the strong focus on competition and competitiveness can foster market driven reforms and increase the trend of privatisation and de-regulation of public education systems. One of the main dangers is that the structural reforms towards greater transparency of European higher education make this education tradable on a global market. Therefore, ESIB believes that a renewed commitment to education as a public good and a public responsibility is necessary within the Bologna process. Furthermore, ESIB believes that it is essential that governments ensure sufficient funding of education, so that HEIs are not forced to engage in commercial activities. Only if this objective is met, the Bologna Process will be a European model that counterbalances the global developments as exemplified by the GATS negotiations. In this light, ESIB also feels that it is necessary within the Bologna process to develop alternative frameworks to the GATS, for example within the UNESCO framework and to enhance existing UNESCO and Council of Europe regulatory structures.

As an additional point, ESIB considers it to be of great importance that the research dimension is included in the Bologna process, because a true European Higher Education Area does not merely consist of study structures and recognition of degrees but has to encompass the research dimension of Higher Education as well.

Lastly, ESIB reaffirms that addressing the social dimension of mobility, as well as the general question of study financing systems, have to be addressed to guarantee free and equal access for all students in the EHEA.

ESIB also believes that cultural diversity in Europe is an asset worth protecting. While adjusting the structures of higher education, the cultural and linguistic diversity of the continent should be respected and reaffirmed.

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned criticism and weak points of the process, ESIB reaffirms its commitment to engaging in a constructive work within the Bologna process to ensure that the student voice is heard and that the objectives of setting up a European Higher Education Area for and with students are met by 2010.

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Profile of the Authors

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Johan is a member of the Executive Committee of ESIB and responsible for the work of the Bologna process Committee (BPC). He is 26 years old and a student of computer science and mathematics at Lund university. Johan's been active on the local and national Swedish level for the past 4 years and was vice president of The Swedish National Union of Students last year. Johan's first ESIB event was the first European Student Convention in Paris in 2000.

Bastian Baumann

Bastian Baumann is a 25 year old law student from Germany. He is a member of ESIB's Bologna Process Committee and of the management committee of the "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe" project. He also is in charge of international higher education for the German national union of students. For 2004/2005 he is a member of the executive committee of the German Academic Exchange Service.

Paulo Fontes

Paulo Fontes is a 28 year old Portuguese Student. He studies public management and currently he is the executive officer of FAIRe—Academic Forum for Information and External Representation from Portugal. He started working on 1999 in issues related to the internationalisation of Education in his local union and also was the promoter for Portugal of ESIB's project "Socrates on The Move". He has attended several Bologna related events and he was present, as a member of the National Delegation, in the Prague Ministerial Summit. He is a member Bologna process Committee (BPC) specialising on topics such as obstacles to mobility and Life Long Learning. In the BPC he is also responsible for Internet solutions.

The opportunity to give the student's input and be actively involved in the construction of the future of education in Europe was the reason for his application to the BPC.

Birgit Lao

Birgit Lao is a 25 year old Law student from Estonia. She worked with the Bologna process issues on the national level while being a chairman of the board of the Federation of Estonian Student Unions (EÜL). Currently, her commitment to the Bologna process has moved from the national to the European level. Birgit has attended several ESIB seminars and conventions, also the Conference of European High Educational institutions in Salamanca and she was also the Socrates promoter for Estonia. While being a member of the BPC, she wishes to be continuously active in the Bologna process.

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Stephan Neetens is a 25 years old Law student from Belgium. Being a board member of VVS—National Union of Students in Flanders, he is also working with Bologna process issues in national level.

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Peter is a 24 years old student from Hungary. He studies medicine and at the same time finances in Budapest. He had a part of his secondary education in Denmark. He is member of the EC of HÖOK, the National Union of Students in Hungary as international officer. There he had an experience with Bologna process on national level, HÖOK had common projects and work with the Hungarian Rectors Conference, Government and Parliament.

He is also member of the Committee of International Programs of the Hungarian Ministry for Youth and Sport (mandated by HÖOK), and representative in the Hungarian Civil Cooperation for the European Integration. He participated in a study visit to the European Institutions in 2002.

He took part in ESIB events since the second half of 2000 so he has attended many seminars, conventions regarding to the different topics of the Bologna process. He is interested in higher education politics, and believes that the student input can put value in the European higher education.