



Institute for the
Development of Education



Current state of play of the social dimension in the EHEA

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Content

- Paris Communiqué 2018
- Yerevan Communiqué 2015
- A Strategy for the Development of the Social Dimension
- Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension
- 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report



Paris Communiqué 2018

Paris Communiqué 2018

- “We therefore commit to **developing policies**
 - that encourage and support **HE institutions** to **fulfill their social responsibility** and
 - contribute to a **more cohesive and inclusive society** through [...] ensuring **equitable access** to HE.”

Paris Communiqué 2018

- Subtitle: *Beyond 2020: a more ambitious EHEA*

“We recognize that further effort is required to strengthen the social dimension of HE.

- In order to meet our commitment that the **student body entering and graduating** from European HEIs **should reflect the diversity of European populations,**
we will improve access and completion by underrepresented and vulnerable groups.
- [...] we mandate the BFUG to take this issue forward by the next EHEA Ministerial conference.”



Yerevan Communique 2015

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

- “Making our HE **systems more inclusive** is an essential aim for the EHEA [...]
- We undertake to widen participation in HE and support institutions that provide **relevant learning activities in appropriate contexts for different type of learners**, including lifelong learning.
- We **will enhance the social dimension** of HE, improve gender balance and widen opportunities for access and completion, including **international mobility**, for students from **disadvantaged backgrounds**.”

Yerevan Communiqué 2015

- Appendix II. Commitments:
 - To make our **HE more socially inclusive** by **implementing the EHEA social dimension strategy**



*Widening Participation for Equity and
Growth:*
**A Strategy for the Development of the
Social Dimension**
and
**Lifelong Learning in the
European Higher Education Area to
2020**

Social Dimension Strategy 2015

- This strategy is **based on the fundamental social dimension policy objective of the EHEA**
 - that the student body entering, participating in and completing HE at all levels **should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations.**

Overall objectives:

- „We agree that all **member countries** in the EHEA **will develop** a coherent set of **policy measures**
 - to address participation in HE which identify underrepresented groups in HE and
 - **outline specific, measurable actions** to improve access, participation and completion for those groups [...]. An effective way of doing this is through national access plans or strategies [...]

Overall objectives:

- „We will continue to [...] promote the **use of peer learning on the social dimension** [...] with a view
 - to assist EHEA members in elaborating their national plans or strategies [...]
 - or reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of their implementation.
- We support evolving **data collection on the social dimension**
 - to enable Eurostat, Eurydice and Eurostudent to monitor progress.”

Overall objectives:

- [...] we will work towards the **development of flexible and transparent progression routes** into HE and
 - the introduction of [...] the **recognition of prior learning** based on [...] the implementation of qualifications frameworks.
- We will improve opportunities for **flexible learning** by **encouraging diversification** of the way in which learning content is delivered
 - for instance by adopting student centered approaches to teaching and learning,
 - by expanding part-time provision,
 - by developing credit-based traineeships [...]



Report of the 2012-2015 BFUG Working Group on the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning

Problem description

- In many EHEA countries, there are already measures in place to address the underrepresentation of particular societal groups in HE,
 - but [...] the question remains as to **whether national HE education policy gives sufficient priority** to these issues.
- The analysis of data on HE participation and attainment has shown that
 - the **goal of providing equal chances for all** in the EHEA has not yet been achieved.

Social dimension and lifelong learning

- **Access and equity are critical to lifelong learning**, and lifelong learning itself is critical to advancing the social dimension of HE
- **Interwoven themes** that share such central issues as
 - the provision of appropriate education support,
 - guidance and counselling,
 - student-centered learning,
 - recognition of prior learning.

Guidelines

- The aim is to **assist countries in developing national plans or strategies** for access, participation and completion in HE
- Guidelines provide a “roadmap” for member countries in order to ensure that national plans or strategies are developed
 - **using a systematic approach** to identifying barriers into and within the higher education system,
 - **based on relevant data** providing evidence for action

Guidelines

- Advice: the process should [...] **be embedded** into the existing systems
 - of quality assurance,
 - data collection and
 - transparency tools

in order to mainstream the social dimension into ongoing work.

PL4SD project 2012-2015

- Peer Learning for the Social Dimension (PL4SD) Project
 - an initiative to foster **peer learning for the social dimension** in HE among EHEA countries: to learn from each other about practices and policies
 - it aims at **increasing transparency of different national approaches** to enhance the social dimension in HE
 - core elements of the project:
 - building up and maintaining an **online database of measures**,
 - conducting **country reviews** - assisting them in merging national measures and initiatives into a coherent strategy



The European Higher Education Area in 2018: **Bologna Process Implementation Report**

Opening HE to a diverse student population

> Data collected through: **Eurostudent**, Eurostat, UOE, BFUG data collection

1. Inclusiveness of access and participation

- Overview of **policies on widening access** in the EHEA:
 - **Monitoring** the composition of the student body (**collection of students' background data**)
 - **Quantitative objectives and targets** for improving diversity
 - The **openness of admission systems** and support provided through different access routes
 - Fees and **financial support** for disadvantaged students

Opening HE to a diverse student population

2. Attainment and completion

- Increasing participation and completion > **linked with the widening participation agenda**, since students coming from under-represented groups are more likely to drop out from HE than their peers
- Overview of **policies for improving completion** in the EHEA:
 - **Monitoring drop-out and completion** (in general + disadvantaged)

Opening HE to a diverse student population

2. Attainment and completion

- Overview of **policies for improving completion** in the EHEA:
 - **Quantitative objectives and targets** for improving retention and completion among disadvantaged learners
 - **Measures introduced** to reduce drop-out and to enhance retention and completion
 - **Recognition of non-formal and informal learning** for progression and completion of studies
 - **Incentives for HE institutions** to reduce drop-out and improve completion rates



Conclusion

Conclusion

- **Recognized importance for the social dimension** in HE for enhancing social inclusion and social cohesion in all key EHEA policy papers
 - But the question remains as to **whether national HE education policy gives sufficient priority** to this policy
 - Very **few countries have developed national strategies** or plans for fostering social dimension systematically
- The majority of countries have some targets related to widening participation in HE
 - However, most of these objectives are about widening overall participation, **without making reference to specific underrepresented groups**

Conclusion

- **Increased data collection** on the composition of the student body and on policies to enhance the social dimension
 - However **not all HE systems monitor the same characteristics of students** from entry to completion
 - Only a minority of HE systems actually calculate completion and/or drop-out rates for under-represented groups systematically.



Thank you for your attention!

For more information please contact

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