

Seventh Eurostudent Survey

Living and study conditions of University students in Italy

2012 - 2015



Executive summary, main outcomes and conclusions

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with the collaboration of



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The main outcomes and conclusions of the Seventh Eurostudent Survey

The Seventh Eurostudent Survey analysed the living and study conditions of students enrolled for the academic year 2011-2012 in bachelor, master or one-block master's degree programmes (*laurea, laurea magistrale, laurea magistrale a ciclo unico*) in public and legally recognised universities (distance university institutions were not considered). The Survey was conducted using interviews based on the CATI (*Computer-assisted telephone interviewing*) method on a sample of 5,403 units representing the whole reference student population.

The Survey was promoted and co-funded by Miur - the Italian Ministry for Education, University and Research – and conducted by the Fondazione Rui in collaboration with the Università per stranieri di Perugia. The Italian survey was carried out as part of the comparative analysis project “*Eurostudent V 2012-2015 - Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe*”. This international comparison involved 29 European countries and was complemented by the publication of the “Eurostudent V 2012-2015 Synopsis of indicators” report, which was presented during the Conference on “*The social dimension in European Higher education*” (Wien, 25-27 February 2015).

1 Living and study conditions

1.1 Student characteristics

The trend towards an increase in the average age of students, which characterized the previous decade, seems to have at least temporarily reached a standstill: the average age (23 years), the median age (22 years) and the distribution of the students as a whole by age group appeared stable compared to the previous surveys. Also the gradual increase in the female component, which was registered in earlier decades, seems to have temporarily stopped. The number of female students exceeded that of males in the lower age groups; the situation is reversed in the over-thirty range. In some groups of subjects there appears to be a gender prevalence: males accounted for the majority of students in the technical-scientific macro-area, females in the area of human and social sciences.

The percentage of students from families with a medium-high education level (parents with a diploma or degree) and from white-collar households is on the increase; on the other hand the number of students from disadvantaged socio-cultural settings (medium-low education level) is decreasing. These variations reflect the growth in the education level and the tertiarisation of Italian society; they are trends associated with a change in the employment structure. At the same time the Survey confirms that the parents' education level is a relevant factor as regards access to university: students in disadvantaged socio-economic conditions find it more difficult to access higher levels of education.

Even though no structural changes are recorded in the social composition of the sample, the effects of access difficulties seem to have been made worse by the economic crisis. As a consequence, there seems to have been a relative reduction in the presence of students from disadvantaged social groups. At the same time, data show that households in a modest socio-economic position still consider it important to invest in their children's higher education. This trend reflects a specific "reaction strategy" to the crisis.

1.2 Housing situation: *in sede*, *pendolari* and *fuori sede* students

In the Italian Eurostudent survey, "*in sede*" students are residents of the city where the university they are attending is located; "*fuori sede*" students are not residents of the city where the programme they are enrolled in takes place, but they have a temporary address there; "*pendolari*" are students who do not reside in the city of the university they are enrolled in and who commute, more or less on a daily basis, to attend lectures or for other study-related activities.

The presence of these three types of students in various geographical areas of the country is due to several factors: these include, among others, the dissemination of universities in the area; the territorial communication and transport network; the accommodation available as part of the student welfare system and on the private market. Mention should also be made, in this regard, of the attraction capacity of some universities, which extends the student recruitment pool beyond the area of reference.

Fuori sede students account for less than 30%; the large majority of students in Italy live at home. The trend towards studying at university without leaving the family home is becoming stronger over the years. Nevertheless, only one out of three of the students who live at home with the family are *in sede* because the other two are *pendolari*.

The share of *pendolari* students has actually increased substantially due to the reforms started by the Bologna Process, at the beginning of the last decade. Commuters currently account for 50.1% of the students who regularly attend lectures; they also account for one of the highest shares among those from families in under-privileged socio-economic conditions. Commuting seems to be a "survival strategy" adopted by students who have to face a significant increase in tuition fees and a reduced support capacity from their families (this difficulty is exacerbated especially by the continuing economic crisis). These students do not intend to give up studying, however they have to make academic choices that are compatible with their conditions and with the resources available, which might mean setting aside more ambitious approaches.

Choosing a place of study with the possibility of commuting has contributed to keeping the access rates to university relatively high after the reform, but it has also strengthened localism – at least partly forced – as regards student choices. Forced localism is an issue made even more serious by the insufficient offer of student accommodation. This is why those who have the means to pay high rents resort to the private market; on the other hand if economic resources are insufficient to meet the costs involved, commuting is the only choice. According to the Eurostudent Survey, less than one *fuori sede* student in ten has found accommodation through the welfare system; the offer of student accommodation from the public sector thus remains much lower than the actual demand.

Most *fuori sede* students live in accommodation rented on the private market and shared with other students. In one case out of three, the assessment of this form of accommodation is not positive. This is not surprising, considering the frequency with which issues regarding the quality of accommodation rented to students on the private market are reported. What is surprising, however,

is that the majority of *fuori sede* students still expressed a positive opinion with regard to their accommodation, in spite of the poor quality, high cost and difficult living conditions which they might have to face. In this respect, the Survey showed on more than one occasion that the formula of shared accommodation seems to be greatly appreciated because it meets the students' need for independence, interaction with peers and socialisation.

1.3 Student employment

Student employment has gone down by about one third, from 39% at the time of the previous survey to the current 26% level. This drop is mainly due to the negative impact of the economic crisis on youth employment. The reduction in student employment reflects regional trends, which is evidence both of the difficulties in finding work in the South of the country and of the crisis in the North-East area, which used to be characterised by a particularly high percentage of working students. Student employment confirms some of its underlying traits. First and foremost, as in all European countries, it is a structural element and not an exception in student conditions. Secondly, the employment opportunities and typology are associated with the age group: among younger students there is a prevalence of temporary employment in its different forms; in the older age groups, on the contrary, the latter is gradually becoming associated with long-term work contracts.

Student employment is apparently related only in part to economic needs. In many cases it has two other objectives in particular: on the one hand there is an aspiration to growing independence by becoming less reliant (not only from an economic standpoint) from one's family; on the other side, the intent is to enhance the hard and soft skills which have already been acquired through academic training.

The more or less widespread presence of individuals who – although they are not employed to the full extent of the word – are no longer only students, is a characteristic of the student condition in most European countries; the Eurostudent Survey classifies them as “de facto part-time students”. From an institutional perspective, in our country full recognition of de-facto part-time students is urgently needed; as a matter of fact this profile has not yet been clearly or univocally defined. From a didactic standpoint, it would make sense to develop a comprehensive range of ad-hoc training packages and dedicated support services.

1.4 Time budget

The time spent studying (lectures and workshops, personal study time) by Italian students amounts to 44 hours/week, to which an extra four hours/week should be added for working students. The effort required of students has gradually increased over the years: the number of hours dedicated to study every week is about 38% higher than it was twenty years ago. Moreover, there has been a gradual readjustment in the balance between times spent at lectures and on personal study time, after the unbalances registered during the last decade. As a matter of fact, in the first years after the Bologna reforms, there had been an increase in the time spent at lectures to the detriment of personal study time. Even though this has involved processes that have been traumatic and not necessarily virtuous in terms of cutting down on the training offer and restructuring teaching schedules, it seems that lecturers are learning to “teach better” and students to “learn better”.

The analysis of the time budget confirms the substantial difference between subjects areas and course types, due to the organisation of teaching, learning styles and the characteristics of the various student sub-groups.

The current trend in the time budget shows that the economic crisis has changed the living and study patterns for most students: the more limited employment opportunities have left more time available which many of them have invested in studying rather than in leisure activities. This behaviour appears to be consolidated by the feeling that the future is now more uncertain than it was in the past. As a consequence of this perception, many students are acting more responsibly on an individual level and choose to put more effort in studying as an investment. This seems particularly clear in the case of *fuori sede* students, who appear to be more committed than others.

2. Students' assessment of their studies and future plans

2.1 Students' assessment of preparation and study relevance

Most of the students gave a positive assessment of the theoretical preparation acquired and sustainability of the workload involved in course-related activities, studying and taking exams (69.7% and 59.7% respectively). On the contrary, two students out of three consider their practical training insufficient (63.7% of negative assessments). The students' assessment started improving again, after having gradually worsened during the past decade. The situation seems to have improved in particular as regards the assessment of workload sustainability, which has changed from mainly negative to positive. The possibility of acquiring adequate practical-professional know-how, on the other hand, is confirmed as a problematic element in terms of learning.

The students' assessment appears to be diversified in respect of the type of course and, especially, of the relevant subject area. The assessment differences registered in the past gradually tend to decrease: this trend could be seen as a sign of improvement and stabilisation of the training package characteristics. This conclusion is supported by the growing positive assessment as regards the workload required of students, even though – as already noted – the amount of time devoted to studying every week has increased.

2.2 Propensity to post-graduate studies

A total of 54.1% of students plan to enrol on a post-graduate programme. The propensity to pursue university studies after a bachelor's degree has become stable over the past few years, following the gradual reduction registered for the whole of the last decade. This reduction confirms the decline of a model based on automatically continuing university studies after a bachelor's degree.

The students' projects as regards continuing university studies after having completed a bachelor's degree are apparently affected by factors acting in different ways. On the one hand, the difficulties on the youth employment market during these years of crisis, in the current phase, seem to support a propensity to keep studying. In this case, such propensity to post-graduate studies is based on the expectation of acquiring a more comprehensive training, better suited to personal aspirations and more competitive on the labour market in the Knowledge society. On the other hand, the increase in tuition fees, associated with the financial difficulties reported by many students, forces them to give up the idea of a post-graduate course, or encourages them to consider more carefully the possible benefits of continuing to study.

The model based on automatically continuing university studies after a bachelor's degree seems to be in decline. Also the concept of an uninterrupted transition from secondary school to university and from one level of university studies to the next seems to be gradually losing ground. The Eurostudent Survey, indeed, shows that delayed access to university and the delayed transition from

one level of university studies to the next are becoming widespread in many European countries. Deferring access to university or the enrolment in a master's degree programme after a bachelor's degree mainly serves the purpose of exploring the labour market, in order to acquire professional skills and increase personal autonomy.

3. Student welfare

3.1 Access to financial aid

The student welfare system size is measured according to the number of students who have availed themselves of financial aid. The growth recorded during the previous decade seems to have reached a standstill over the past three years: the percentage of students who have availed themselves of financial aid at least once is stable at 35%. There have thus been no changes in the student welfare system size; the Survey, however, shows significant changes as regards the type of aid provided: the percentage of students who received a grant has gone down; on the other hand there has been an increase in the number of students totally or partially exempted from tuition fees.

Over the past few years there has emerged a sort of replacement trend, as a consequence of which indirect financial aid has substituted direct support, thus limiting the negative consequences of a substantial reduction in grant funding. Moreover, the increase in the number of students with total exemption, complemented by a reduction in the number of grants, has led to a growth in the number of “*idonei non beneficiari*” (students who have the necessary requirements but do not receive a grant because the allocated funds are insufficient). This means that the system has become less equitable, in the sense that beneficiaries of aid can still be selected, although the possibility of supporting them is dwindling.

The Survey also indicates that there is a growing territorial gap in terms of student welfare support. In Italy this results in a Centre-North, which – in spite of the difficulties – seems better equipped to “hold the fort”, and southern regions which, as a consequence of the fewer resources available and volume of actions implemented, are more and more lagging behind the rest of the country. The growing gap between local student welfare systems appears to be one of the most serious consequences of the economic crisis on student conditions, in terms of equity and social inclusion.

The situation recorded by the Survey may be due to different circumstances: the policies implemented by the various players (regional governments, universities and other entities); the scale of the financial aid investment and, subsequently, the amount of resources and services available; last but not least, the efficient use of resources. It should also be noted that in some regions (most notably Lombardy, Lazio and Campania) local student welfare systems are faced with a demand from an especially numerous section of the population, including a significant percentage of *pendolari* and *fuori sede* students.

Having regard to the ability to select students in needs of support and give them equal opportunities for success, the Survey confirms that the student welfare support system has actually become more efficient. The highest share of access to aid is found among students from families in under-privileged conditions, more in need of support. Nevertheless, they are the ones who seem to have suffered more than others from the system's stalemate, considering that the number of students in an under-privileged socio-economic condition who have not received any form of aid has increased.

3.2 Tuition fees

Those students who had to pay their tuition fees (including contributions and local tax on student welfare) in full, spent on average € 1,431; students with partial exemption paid on average € 1,213. The average amount of tuition fees has increased by about 8% over a period of three years and by 13% in six years. This increase is in line with the funding trends of national higher education systems reported by the OECD and by the Eurydice network.

The Survey shows significant gaps in terms of the fees paid by students in various geographical areas, for different types of programme or field of study. By the same token, marked differences emerge in relation to the different socio-economic conditions and/or to differing life and study conditions. Such a wide diversification shows that Italian universities use different contribution models, with the goal of both funding the quality of training and services, and developing the attraction capability through an increase or reduction in tuition fees. The more or less widespread possibility of being granted total or partial exemption is part of this strategy. The increase in fee exemptions has played a crucial role over the past few years, when in spite of the virtuous practices recommended by international organisations, the increase in tuition fees in Italy has not been accompanied by more financial aid to students.

4 Revenues and expenses of students not living with parents

4.1 Revenues

Families are still the primary source of revenue for students who are not living with parents, because they provide more of 70% of the resources available to them. Work is the second source of revenue for students, contributing to more than 20% of total average revenues. The impact of work income on total revenues increases as the student's age rises. Public funding provides a limited contribution because it accounts for no more than 5% of revenues for students not living with parents; of course this share becomes much higher in the case of students benefitting from the welfare system.

The role of the family tends to decrease as the age and percentage of working students increase. If there is a work income, support from the families is more limited, although it does not disappear completely, even in the case of students with a long-term employment contract. The results of the Survey confirm the importance of the family in Italian society, where access to employment and the creation of new legal or de facto families are not necessarily associated with economic independence. Support provided by the family mainly takes the form of extra financial aid if the work income is insufficient and/or of care services. Even though it may be limited to extra financial aid, support from the family is essential in order to pursue a student's academic goals.

As for students in under-privileged socio-economic conditions, the additional revenues from employment and from the welfare system are a pre-requisite for a successful academic career and investment by the families. It is therefore important to increase the resources available for student welfare, in order to boost the possibility of receiving economic aid, especially for *fuori sede* students. It is just as important to make sure that it is possible for students to work while they are studying by enhancing part-time academic programmes, with timetables facilitating those who work, as well as through appropriate tuition fee policies.

4.2 Expenses

Regardless of the total amounts spent by students not living with parents, accommodation is always the most substantial expense, accounting for 35,6% of the total. As a whole, accommodation, transport and tuition fees amount to 56.7% of the expenses directly sustained by students. The situation reported in our country is fully in line with the large majority of countries participating in the Eurostudent Survey.

The impact of accommodation expenses varies considerably across the country: it tends to decrease from North to South, and to increase as the size of the city becomes larger. As regards transport, there is reverse variability, in the sense that the impact is greater for students enrolled at universities in small-medium sized cities and in university cities of Southern Italy.

4.3 Assessment of the economic conditions

In most cases students have reported that they experienced little difficulty, if any at all, as a consequence of the economic crisis. On the other hand, for one student out of four, the economic impact has been severe. This result suggests that the most serious effects of the crisis have been experienced before enrolling at university, thus reducing the scale of access. In most cases there seems to be no clear connection between the stated difficulty and the available resources, expenses sustained or unbalanced revenues and expenses. The perception of difficulty seems to show a relevant subjective component, associated with the peer environment and lifestyle chosen.

Generally speaking, female university students report greater economic difficulties than males. For all students, the economic difficulties tend to increase with age, especially as regards those older than twenty-five. This trend seems to be associated with a greater need for independence by adult students, in a position where expenses tend to grow but not proportionately to the economic resources available.

Among students enrolled at universities in the South, the percentage of those experiencing hardship is nearly 32%. In the case of these students, the Survey reported the lowest level of resources available and the largest gap between expenses and revenues. Also in this case the student conditions reflect the unbalances in Italian society, which have been exacerbated by the economic crisis, with an ever-increasing gap between North and South. There seems to be a direct connection between the reduction in public funding and the increase in students' economic hardships. Most of the economic difficulties experienced by students in the South may help explain situations such as the increase in migratory flows to universities in the Centre-North. In these regions the expenses for university students are higher, but there are better prospects for access to the labour market (to complement financial support from the family) and to the student and local welfare system.

5. International mobility

5.1 The scale of international mobility

The students who have taken part in an international mobility programme as part of their university curriculum are about 10%; if we also include other study-related mobility programmes, such as language courses, internships, research work or summer schools abroad, this share reaches about 18% of the total. International mobility has started to grow again, especially among students in master's degree programmes, after the reduction registered for most of the last decade, soon after

the Bologna reforms were introduced. European programmes contribute in a substantial way to the development of international mobility. In spite of this growth, international mobility from Italy is lower than the average in other European countries.

5.2 Gaining and recognising international mobility credits

About 45% of the students who enrolled in an international mobility programme did not gain any credits. The scale of this situation is not acceptable because failure to gain credits tends to weaken the added value of mobility, as well as leading to a waste of human, organisational and financial resources. For more than two thirds of students who have gained credits as part of international mobility programmes, these credits have been fully recognised. This is a positive result because it points to a change in approach compared to the recent past, when failure to recognise credits was seen by students as a significant problem in terms of international mobility. Nevertheless, if the assessment of the international mobility experience is solely limited to a recognition of extra-curricular credits, the added value of mobility is reduced; on the other hand the perception of mobility as slowing down their course of studies or as a hindrance to rapidly completing their degree programme is strengthened. This risk is indeed indicated as a significant barrier by students who have not taken part in international mobility programmes.

5.3 International mobility funding

Families are still the main source of funding for international mobility. The resources which families are able to invest determine the possibility of this experience: students from a privileged socio-economic background have almost twice as many opportunities to study abroad than other students. For one student out of five, mobility has been supported especially through domestic and/or European funding. In the large majority of cases, these students have an under-privileged socio-economic background. European programmes are still unreplaceable instruments to organise and support international mobility for students from Italy. Moreover, government funding – for students from an under-privileged socio-economic background appears to be a pre-requisite for access to international mobility.

6 Student conditions and the economic crisis

The goals of the Eurostudent Survey include monitoring the life and study conditions of university students in Italy, as well as a comparative analysis of the most relevant aspects of student conditions in European countries. The transition from secondary school to university and the trends as regards access to higher education are not included in the Survey. Therefore, the purpose of the Survey is not to quantify a possible reduction in access and to what extent the said reduction may be due to the impact of the economic crisis over the past few years. This topic has been inadequately discussed in our country, and only in a small number of cases have the available data been analysed with the necessary scientific care; in most instances they were used to support pre-existing assumptions.

The Survey is unable to say much about someone who is not – but under other conditions could have been – a university student. By the same token, the Survey does not explain whether this failure to access is a consequence of exceedingly high costs – if, therefore, the reduced access is the result of a constraint – or whether it is a consequence of a negative assessment as regards the effectiveness of investing in training to improve one's social standing, to find a good job and to

rapidly reach the desired income level – and, therefore, of a rational value-for-money analysis. On the other hand, the Survey can outline the changes induced by the crisis as regards life and study patterns. It can also show how personal choices for the future may be affected by the need to counteract the effects of the crisis. From these perspectives, the Eurostudent Survey points out four main elements.

First of all, it appears that there has been a drop in the number of students from under-privileged socio-economic conditions. Since the composition of the student population does not seem to have undergone structural changes as a consequence of this downturn, the result should probably be regarded as evidence of the fact that the most serious effects of the crisis have been felt before enrolling at university.

Secondly, a certain number of students appear to have delayed enrolling at university with a view to exploring the labour market, in search of more or less permanent employment, or with the objective of acquiring the necessary resources to pay for their studies, by complementing any financial support received from their families. The international comparative analysis also suggests that delayed access to university is a trend found in most European countries. Moreover, delayed transition from bachelor's to master's degree programmes is becoming less and less infrequent, due to the search for early contacts with the labour market in order to improve personal employability prospects.

Thirdly, an initial choice made under conditions of hardship and greater uncertainty as regards the future, has in several cases led students to opting for a “survival strategy”, which means studying as *in sede* or *pendolari* students. In other cases, instead, students have opted for a “success strategy”, based on maximising the success prospects of their investment in terms of financial and personal resources. This could help explain why, over the past few years, the reduction in the number of matriculations has affected differently the degree programmes and university cities, or it could be the reason for what is known as “education migration” from the South to the Centre-North being on the rise.

Last but not least, most of the students have changed their approaches as a consequence of the crisis. The most apparent behaviour in this respect is the increased study effort in terms of time, especially by *fuori sede* students. Even though the Survey is unable to say whether such increase in time corresponds to better performances, it is clear that the number of “forced” or “occasional students” in Italian universities has been decreasing and that the awareness of existing difficulties had led to more assertiveness as regards accepting personal responsibilities.

Living and study conditions in Italy: twenty key figures

22.6	average age of students enrolled in bachelor programmes
72.5	percentage of students whose parents do not have a degree
50.1	percentage of <i>pendolari</i> students
28.7	percentage of <i>fuori sede</i> students
26.6	percentage of students who have a paid job
44.0	average time in hour/week spent at lectures and on personal study time
57.9	percentage of students who consider the study workload “acceptable”
54.1	percentage of students who intend to continue studying after a bachelor’s degree
72.7	revenue percentage from the family for students not living with parents
4.9	public funding percentage received for students not living with parents
264	average monthly expenditure (in €) on accommodation for students not living with parents
35.6	average monthly accommodation expenditure percentage for students not living with parents
35.3	percentage of students receiving some form of financial aid at least once
1.7	percentage of students staying in student welfare accommodation facilities
7.3	percentage of students totally exempted from tuition fees
6.7	percentage of students who received a scholarship by the regional student welfare
1,431	average amount (in €) spent by students on tuition fees (excluding exemptions)
1,213	average amount (in €) spent by students on tuition fees (including exemptions)
10.1	percentage of students who have completed an international mobility period
20.4	percentage of students who are fluent in at least two foreign languages

The “downsides” of student conditions in Italy

1. The size of localism, commuting and forced North-South mobility which point to the impossibility for many students of making free academic choices
2. The stalemate of the regional student welfare system, which has been at a standstill for years and is dwindling in Southern regions
3. The reduction in the percentage of students receiving a grant
4. The reduction in the number of working students, with a subsequent drop in the self-support capacity, greater dependency on the family and fewer prospects for employment
5. The negative assessment of the practical training offered in the various programmes
6. The percentage of students in economic difficulty due to the crisis, especially at universities in the South and among women over 25
7. The increasing gap between South and Centre-North of the country, and the worsening of students' conditions at universities in the South
8. The unbalanced revenue sources: financial support from the family is 1.5 times higher than the European average, public funding less than half compared to the European average
9. Unequal opportunities for access to international mobility as regards students in disadvantaged socio-economic conditions (whose possibilities are reduced by half compared to the others)
10. The share of students who complete international mobility periods without having gained any credit, which leads to wasting human and financial resources

The “upsides” of student conditions in Italy

1. The diversification of the social composition of the student population, higher than the Eurostudent average
2. The value attributed to education as development driver for human capital and the social mobility of students (university as a “social elevator”)
3. Studying as a way to counteract the crisis effects (education as a “lifeline”)
4. The increasingly positive assessment of the study experience
5. The mainly positive assessment of the students' “workload” sustainability, a trend reversal compared to previous years
6. More time being devoted to studying and a better balance between the time spent at lectures and on personal study time
7. The increase in available time spent studying as a consequence of fewer students having a job
8. The reduction in the trend of automatically moving on from bachelor's to master's degree programmes, and the prevailing choice of continuing to study while working
9. The personal responsibility of students, especially *fuori sede*: the increasing costs and economic hardship are counteracted by virtuous behaviours
10. The quantitative growth of international mobility, especially as regards master's degree programmes, and the increasing opportunities at domestic and European level

The Eurostudent Project in Europe and in Italy

The Eurostudent survey on the living and study conditions of university students was conducted in Italy as part of a comparative European survey carried out by a group of countries forming the Eurostudent Network. The Eurostudent Project was started in 1993 by four countries (Austria, France, Germany and Italy); it involves conducting surveys on a three-year basis. The international comparison is then completed using data and statistical indicators provided by the participating countries in respect of the students as a whole and of specific sub-sets (*standard target groups* and *focus groups*). These data and indicators are finally processed according to the usual methodology standards, accompanied by analyses of the national scenarios.

The Eurostudent Network

The Eurostudent Network is made up of researchers, representatives of national ministries in charge of higher education, the European Commission and stakeholder groups. The goal of the Network is to implement joint actions aimed at analysing the social and economic conditions of student life in higher education in Europe.

The Network is coordinated by a consortium led by the German institute DZHW - Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung and it includes members from thirty-one countries: Armenia, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, Hungary. Its coordination is supported by a Steering Committee which includes representatives from: European commission; Esu - European Students' Union; Bologna Follow-up Group; Croatian Ministry for Science, Education and Sports; Danish Ministry for Higher Education and Sciences; German Federal Ministry for Education and Research; Dutch Ministry for Education, Culture and Sciences; Ove - Observatoire de la vie étudiante.

The Eurostudent Project in Europe and the 5th Eurostudent comparative Survey 2012 - 2015

The first pilot edition (published in 1997) was followed by five international comparative surveys (published in 2002, 2005, 2008, 2011 and 2015), thanks to the involvement of a growing number of countries. In 2005 the Eurostudent Survey was added to the working plan of Bfug - Bologna Follow-up Group, dedicated to the “social dimension” because of its having been singled out as the most authoritative and reliable source of data regarding students in Europe. As a consequence, the Eurostudent Network was then asked to conduct national surveys and comparative studies on an on-going and regular basis.

The final Communiqué¹ by the Conference of Ministers of Higher Education from the forty-seven countries involved in the European Higher Education Area, which took place in Bucharest in 2012, included an invitation to the Eurostudent Network, Eurostat and Eurydice to monitor any progress

1 http://www.processodibologna.it/content/index.php?action=read_cnt&id_cnt=6717.

made as regards reform implementation in respect of the Bologna Process and of the 2020 Mobility Strategy for the European Higher Education Area “Mobility for better learning”, with a view to presenting a report on this during the Conference in Yerevan (Armenia, May 2015). The Ministers recommended that data collection and analysis should concentrate on the following topics: social dimension, employability, lifelong learning, internationalisation, portability of students grants and student loans, international mobility.

In compliance with this mandate, and based on the results of the surveys conducted in member states of the Network, the “*Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. Eurostudent V 2012 - 2015*” survey was completed. Its outcomes are published in a book and in an online database; they were presented during the international Conference on “*The social dimension in European Higher Education*” (Vienna, February 2015) and provided the documentation used in “*The European Higher education Area in 2015: Bologna process implementation report*”.

The Eurostudent Project in Italy

The general goal of the Eurostudent Project is to make available quantitative data and assessment indicators for a definition of European and domestic policies aimed at strengthening the European Higher Education Area. In this regard, the Italian survey has the following goals:

- ensuring that the international commitments by our country are continuously followed up;
- facilitating the integration of our university system within Europe and at international level;
- monitoring the impact of reforms on the students’ conditions, also by means of historical data records and a diachronic study.

Starting in 1993, seven editions of the Eurostudent Survey have been completed in Italy, on a three-year basis. Information about each edition and the relevant final reports are available on the website www.eurostudent.it.

The Seventh Eurostudent Survey in Italy

The Seventh Eurostudent Survey, completed during the period 2012 - 2015, was co-financed by MIUR - the Italian Ministry for education, university and research and by the European Commission, with the collaboration of the Università per stranieri in Perugia and of the Statistical Office at MIUR.

The Seventy Eurostudent Survey was conducted by a working group consisting of: Giovanni Finocchietti (Director), Judit Jasso, Andrea Lombardinilo, Domenico Lovecchio, Alessandro Melchionna, Maria A. Pannone (Statistical Analysis Manager).

The Survey also involved the following entities: Italian universities which provided the lists of students enrolled; the Contact centre at Istat - the Italian national institute for statistics, which provided the data for comparison used in the Survey; the Institute for statistical analysis and public opinion studies Doxa S.p.A., which was in charge of telephone interviews and data weighting.



The Italian Eurostudent survey is part of the project “Eurostudent - Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe”, conducted by the Eurostudent Network, a European-wide network including researchers, data collectors, representatives of national ministries, and other stakeholders. The Eurostudent Survey comprises data from student surveys conducted in about 30 countries within the EHEA - European Higher Education Area.

The main aims of the Eurostudent Project are to monitor the social dimension of Higher Education, and make data and analyses available for policy-making at European and national level.

Specific aims of the Italian Eurostudent Survey are:

- monitoring the impact of the Bologna reforms on students’ living and study conditions
- fostering the integration of the national Higher education system in the EHEA
- implementing the commitments made by national authorities within the EHEA.

Since the first round in 1993, seven editions of the Italian Eurostudent Survey were conducted on a regular basis every three years. The Seventh Eurostudent Survey 2012 - 2015 was promoted and co-funded by MIUR - the Ministry for Education, Universities and Research, and conducted by Fondazione Rui with the collaboration of the Università per stranieri di Perugia.

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