



EUROSTUDENT IV Social dimension of
European Higher Education
Manager's Report

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Project sponsors



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Executive Summary

This report can be taken as a type of manager's report reflecting on the progress and achievements through the three years of the project's lifetime. It is also the public part of the final report submission to the Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA), which is the administrator of this project on behalf of the European Commission.

The main aim of the EUROSTUDENT project is to collate comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education with a focus on the socio-economic background and living conditions of students. Within the framework of this project, the topic of temporary international mobility is also covered. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. It does this through coupling a strong central coordination with a strong network of national partners in each participating country. In this way, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the respective national systems in international comparison can be made with a view to maintaining or improving the effectiveness of higher education.

The project's results provide a framework for discussions on the further development of European higher education for policy-makers, student representatives and leaders of institutions of higher education. They also provide a foundation for further research by researchers in the field of higher education. The discussions currently centre on topics such as widening participation, the affordability of higher education and participation of students in mobility programmes such as Erasmus. For each of these topics areas EUROSTUDENT provides comprehensive analyses and, additionally, short information sheets entitled "Intelligence Briefs".

The project is organised on the basis of shared responsibility between all project partners. The project data comes from national social surveys, which are implemented and funded by each participating country. The project provides these partners with unique expertise in survey execution, with central data conventions for data collection and analysis and with opportunities for experience exchange and advice. It also provides partners with the opportunity to take part in and benefit from international comparison. Partner countries have also used this involvement in EUROSTUDENT to prepare national reports (in their national languages) on aspects of the social dimension of higher education.

The EUROSTUDENT study is the product of a decentralised network coordinated centrally by a consortium of seven member organisations from different countries. The consortium is made up of research institutes, a ministry and a student union, all with proven expertise in various fields of higher education. Due to different institutional backgrounds, the knowledge of the consortium members complements one another in a unique way.

EUROSTUDENT recruited twenty-six European countries to participate actively within the project, although Scotland later dropped out due to budget constraints. Along with the consortium and under the supervisory advice of the International Steering Board, each participating country has been involved in the definition of common project standards and the development of methods for data collection and analysis. The outputs and communication tools utilised include a common questionnaire and corresponding handbooks, which define central conventions and give guidance for standardised collection, preparation and analysis of data, an internal, interactive information portal based on Wikimedia technology and a user-friendly Internet-based Data De-

livery Module to allow for an easy and secure data flow between the participating countries and the central coordinators. All of these are now available on the EUROSTUDENT website.

The achievement of a permanent position as data collector organisation within the Bologna Process alongside Eurostat and Eurydice by HIS, as leading representative of the project, has assured the status of the project as a leading source of data and expertise on the topic of the social dimension in European higher education. One of the outputs of this work will be the Bologna Implementation Report to be published for the Bologna Ministers' Conference 26 April 2012.

Further information about the EUROSTUDENT project is available on the project website www.eurostudent.eu.

Dominic Orr, Hannover

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1. Project Objectives

The main aim of the EUROSTUDENT project is to collate comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education with a focus on the socio-economic background and living conditions of students. Within the framework of this project, the topic of temporary international mobility is also covered. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. It does this through coupling a strong central coordination with a strong network of national partners in each participating country. In this way, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the respective national frameworks in international comparison can be made with a view to maintaining or improving the effectiveness of higher education systems.

The overall long-term objectives of EUROSTUDENT are:

- To deliver comparable key indicators and basic information in order to describe and map out the socio-economic and living conditions of students in Europe
- To provide a structured and standardised monitoring system with which the effects of structural measures and changes can be identified for specific student groups over time
- To describe the current situation and – with the aid of international comparisons – to identify obstacles to an inclusive and effective European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

These long-term objectives can only be achieved if the following three short to medium term goals are met:

- A large number of (European) countries has to participate actively within the project
- The quality, reliability and relevance of the data have to be assured for comparisons of the social conditions of students across diverse higher education systems
- There has to be recognition of the relevance and utility of the collated and analysed data at national and international policy level

Within the time period 2008 - 2011, the coordination team set the following six specific goals, which were each achieved.

1. Further increase the number of countries providing comparable data compared to the last round
2. Both make efforts to recruit more European countries (e.g. Croatia, Denmark, Poland), and form partnerships with other bodies, in an effort to conjoin some EUROSTUDENT data with data from countries outside of Europe (e.g. North and Latin America, Australia)
3. Improve the conformity of data collation, calculation and analysis between country partners
4. Increasingly use multi-lingual output forms to increase the recognition of relevance at national levels
5. Add a longitudinal aspect to the comparisons between countries to some indicators
6. Work more intensively with the policy-makers on national and international levels (OECD, European Commission, Bologna Process)

One of the main target user groups are policy-makers at national and European level in the field of higher education. The project aims to provide them with insights and knowledge, which facilitate evidence-based policy-making. The project is especially important to help evaluation of the Bologna Process because EUROSTUDENT is the only reputable statistical source for providing comparative, reliable and valid data from the students' perspective. Policy-makers at both national and international level are strongly involved in the project. They play an active role in the intensive seminars, workshops and as members of the Consortium. Furthermore, they are part of the International Steering Board, which has the function of assisting the EUROSTUDENT Consortium in the development of policy relevant analyses of the social dimension in European higher education. In this way, policy makers are not simply confronted with the results at the end of the three year project, but made both aware of the results and made sensitive to the possibilities of using these results throughout the three year period. This approach is led by two assumptions: (i) this early involvement will assure that policy-makers make maximum use of the available data once published and (ii) this early involvement means that the needs and wishes of the policy-makers are taken account of during early phases of the project to assure the adequacy of the final reporting.

Another target user group is researchers in the field of higher education. The results of the study are important to them as they allow for an in-depth look at the socio-economic situation of students in Europe in nine different areas:

- Demographic characteristics
- Access and entry to higher education
- Social background
- Accommodation
- Living costs
- Funding and state assistance
- Time budget and employment
- Assessment of studies and future plans
- Internationalisation and mobility

These issues will be of high relevance for the current debate within the scientific community on understanding the differences between European countries in terms of study framework and, particularly, equity in higher education systems. Researchers from the partner organisations in each of the participating countries are strongly involved in the project. They participate actively in intensive seminars, workshops and working groups in order to design the project's methodical approach to data collection, quality assurance and analysis. Some of the researchers are members of the EUROSTUDENT Consortium; in this function they play leading roles in the various work packages of the work programme.

The EUROSTUDENT project is not only a survey *of* students in Europe, but also provides information which is relevant *for* students, as it delivers internationally comparative insights into all important socio-economic aspects of their life. This may help them to objectively assess their

studying and living conditions. For student organisations in Europe the results may help them to identify and evaluate problems in their respective national higher education systems and indicate best practice solutions by international comparison. At the same time, it will help them to make substantive contributions to national debates through a better understanding of the whole context of higher education reform (e.g. through understanding that tuition fees are only one aspect of study costs). Student organisations are represented in the Consortium and the International Steering Board; they also take part in the various workshops.

Finally, higher education institutions are addressees of the project. The national analyses (i.e. National Profiles)¹ and the comparative report will provide them with a deep insight into student life, especially with respect to topics like living and study-related costs students have to cover, the extent of their gainful employment and – related to this – the study intensity of different groups of students. Such information is highly relevant for them in their efforts to provide sustainable, appropriate and effective study programmes.

¹ Accessible via the EUROSTUDENT database: <http://eurostudent.his.de/eiv/report/>

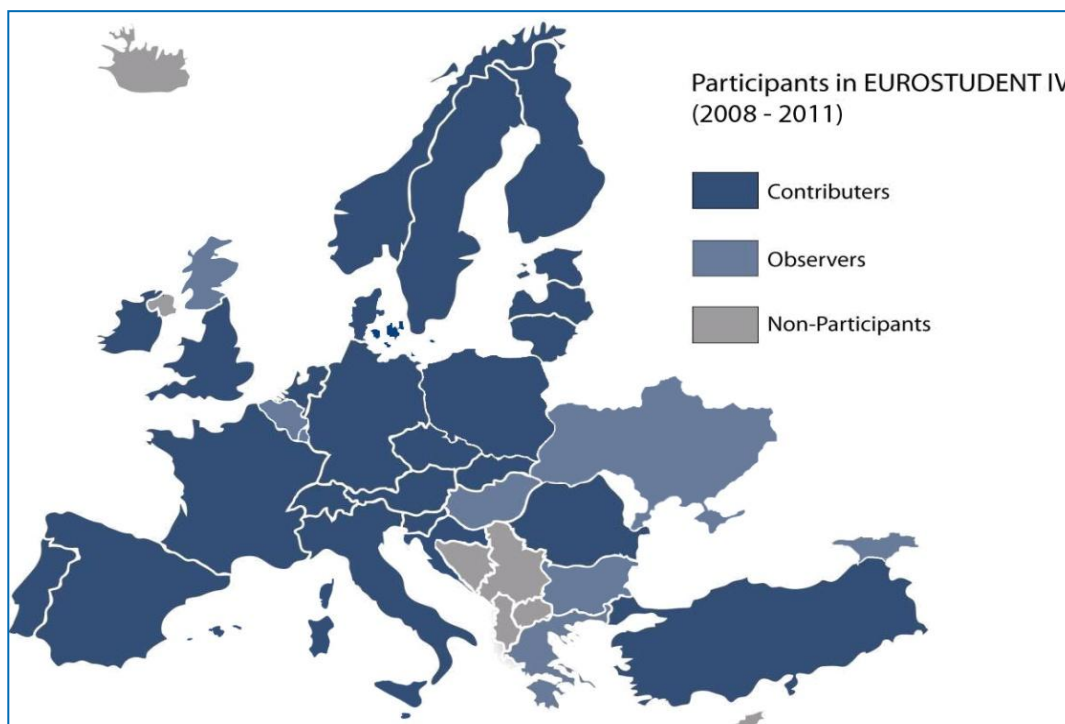
2. Project Approach

A strong network and strong central coordination

The project is organised on the basis of shared responsibilities between all project partners. The EUROSTUDENT project is the product of a decentralised network that is coordinated centrally by a consortium of seven member organisations from different countries. The work programme has been divided up into eight so-called work packages and each of the organisations within the consortium has been assigned specific tasks. Since quality assurance regarding the comparability and reliability of the data collected is such an important topic, one of the work packages is dealing exclusively with quality assurance. The management of the consortium has been given to the HIS-Institute of Research on Higher Education in Hanover, Germany. The coordinators' work is aided by an International Steering Board, whose members cover all major stakeholder groups in European higher education

The EUROSTUDENT network consists of researchers as well as data collectors, representatives of national ministries and stakeholders who have joined forces to examine the social and economic conditions of student life in higher education systems in Europe. In the lifetime of the project (2008 – 2011), 25 countries were active contributors to the EUROSTUDENT Network. A further 8 countries have an observer status (Belgium, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Scotland, Ukraine); they are updated on the main developments within the project and occasionally attend EUROSTUDENT events. An overview of participating and observing countries is given in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 Organisation of responsibilities within the EUROSTUDENT Network

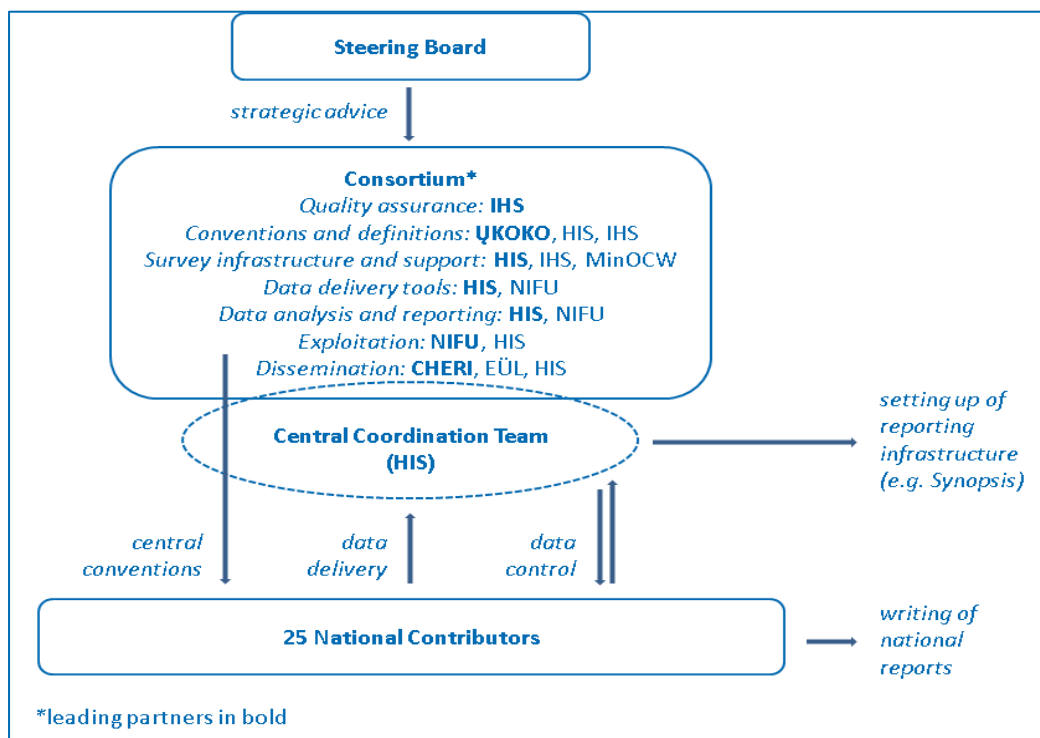


The central coordination is led by the Higher Education Information System (HIS), which is based in Hanover, Germany. In its function as central coordinator, HIS is the head of a consortium consisting of 7 international partners. Next to HIS, these partners are the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS, Vienna, Austria), the Centre for Control and Assessment of Quality in Education (UKOKO, Sofia, Bulgaria), the Federation of Estonian Student Unions (EÜL, Tallinn, Estonia), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MinOCW, Den Haag, The Netherlands), the Nordic Institute for Studies in Innovation, Research and Education (NIFU, Oslo, Norway) and the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI, the Open University, London, UK). Each of these partners has its own responsibilities within the Network (Figure 2). The work of the Consortium is supported by an international steering board, which gives advice in strategic terms. Members of this board represent the European Commission (EC), the European University Association (EUA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the Council of Europe, the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Efficient communication structures and clear central conventions

In order for the network to produce high-quality outputs and to adhere to certain project standards, an efficient communication structure between all members of the project is needed. The instruments used to assure the quality within the network are: intensive seminars, broad workshops, several handbooks based on Wikimedia technology (i.e. led by user-input as in the case of Wikipedia), the use of a Central Survey Hosting (CSH) that offers five countries the chance to host their online survey centrally, and a user-friendly Data Delivery Module based on java technology.

Fig. 2 The EUROSTUDENT Network – Overview of contributors and observers



The project data come from national surveys that are implemented and funded by the participating countries. However, participation in the EUROSTUDENT project is contingent on the adoption of the EUROSTUDENT core questions and central data conventions, which determine a har-

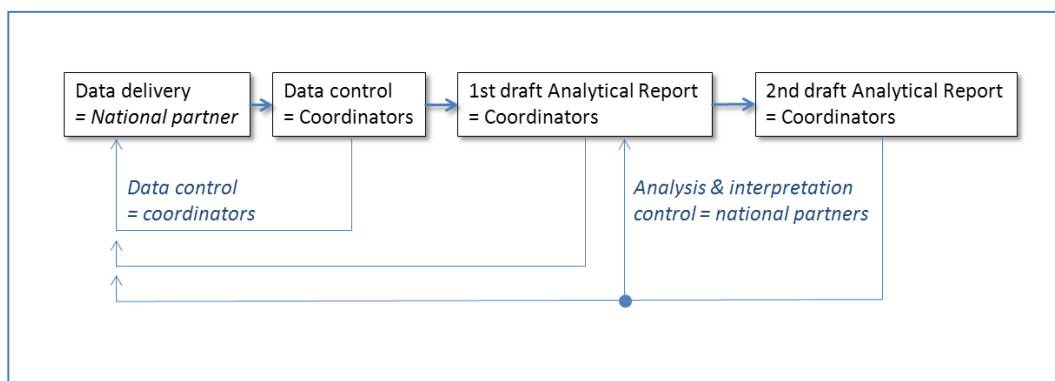
monised list of variables and indicators, including their underlying concepts and definitions. The definition of indicators requires the use of a set of core questions to assure the “fit” of the collected data (around 30 core questions). Methodical guidelines provide additional guidance on criteria that have to be taken into account before carrying out the national surveys. For instance, the criteria concern the target population, the sampling frames, the sampling design, the survey instruments, etc. The guidelines help the national teams to improve and align their national survey methodologies. What is more, the guidelines provide orientation in introducing a large-scale survey at national level for countries that do not yet have a representative survey of their student population. In this way, EUROSTUDENT contributes to building capacity and competences in each of the participating country.

In the past, the project partners have adopted an output harmonisation approach. This has allowed the project to expand rapidly, whilst at the same time ensuring that the national surveys produce comparable results despite being carried in very different national frameworks and against the background of different national traditions. At present, however, the project is more and more developing an input harmonisation approach, as a uniform questionnaire is used and as the majority of countries use online survey tools.

Assuring quality of data and fitness for purpose of reporting

Throughout the project, the central coordinators remain in close contact with the members of the contributing countries to assure a common understanding of and thus the compliance with the central data conventions. Common timelines must also be respected. The assurance of the quality of data is based on a linked chain of delivery – evaluation – feedback – acceptance. This is shown in Figure 3 below.

Fig. 3 Quality assurance process for results of analysis



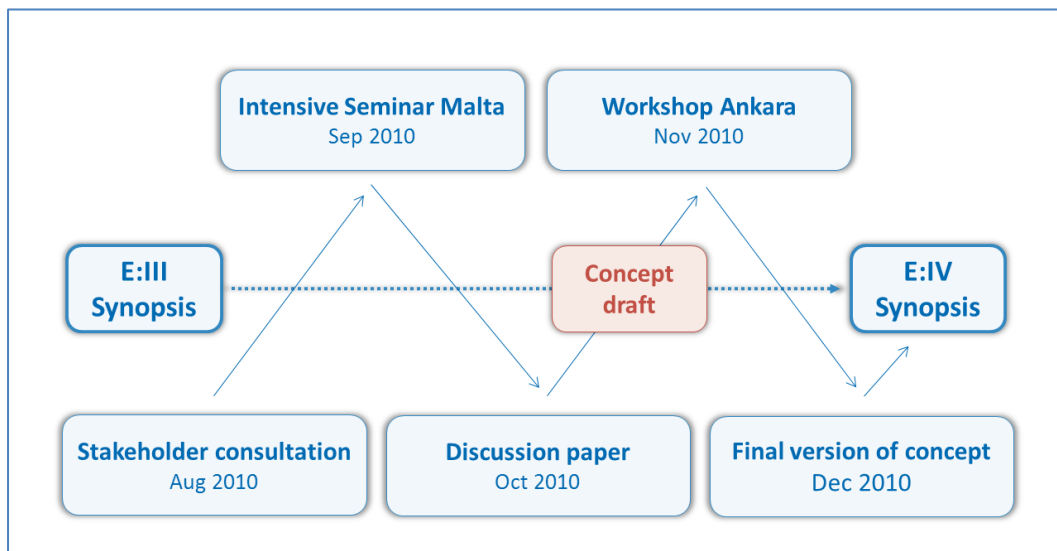
Once data are delivered by the national contributors, they are evaluated by the central coordinators as well as a task force on data quality based at the IHS. Only after further discussions and several plausibility checks with the national teams are the data analysed and published in the comparative data set and reports.

The quality assurance is also about assuring fitness for purpose. This is why the development of the major comparative report within the project, the so-called Synopsis of Indicators, has been influenced by the opinions and evaluations of members of the network from the start.

In order to benefit from the expertise of the partners involved in EUROSTUDENT and with a view to ensuring the report is perceived of as relevant and therefore accepted in the large num-

ber of participating countries, an open but clearly structured discussion process was designed. This process is illustrated in Figure 4.

Fig. 4 Developing a concept for the comparative Synopsis of Indicators



As a first step, representatives of EUROSTUDENT countries and affiliated network members were invited to participate in an online consultation that aimed at finding out which thematic and structural priorities the network partners had concerning the Synopsis. 50 experts from 24 countries and a number of EU representatives contributed to the stakeholder consultation. The outcomes of this feedback loop were presented and discussed in-depth at the Intensive Seminar in Malta. Taking the Synopsis of Indicators from the previous round (E:III) as a point of departure, four working groups made concrete suggestions on how to improve the structure and contents of the next comparative report. Excerpts of the results from both the consultation and the Intensive Seminar were condensed into a discussion paper. The latter was discussed within the EUROSTUDENT project consortium. Subsequent to these discussion processes, a concept for the new (E:IV) Synopsis of Indicators was drafted and presented at the EUROSTUDENT Workshop on Data Interpretation and Context Information in Ankara. Finally, the feedback received at and immediately after the Workshop was worked into the concept draft.

The involvement of the Network continued throughout the process of drawing-up the final analysis. Each of the 11 topic-focussed chapters was “peered” by someone from the Network. These peers each reviewed a chapter and provided feedback on the choice of indicators, charts and on the balance of analytical interpretation. This mechanism was used to limit the risk of “blindness” in the interpretation and analysis undertaken by the central coordinators.

3. Project Outcomes & Results

1. Goal achievement

The project team laid out six clear goals for the project, geared towards helping it achieve a better coverage of countries, a higher quality of data and a recognised relevance for policy development.

1. Further increase the number of countries providing comparable data compared to the last round

The EUROSTUDENT data set created within the project's lifetime consists of data from 25 countries. This is an increase of two countries in comparison with the previous data set. However, beyond the simple quantitative increase, the geographic and geopolitical coverage has been significantly improved. The set of countries now includes: all of the largest European higher education systems, after the addition of Poland; all the Scandinavian countries, after the addition of Denmark; a second Balkan state, after the addition of Croatia; and a first small island state, after the addition of Malta. These additions occurred at a time when fiscal constraints were evident in many of the new European member states such as Latvia, which experienced a drastic reduction in its educational budget. Whilst Latvia continued to participate in the project, austerity measures led to the loss of Bulgaria, Hungary, Georgia and Scotland, who had all initially signalled their interest in participation. The full coverage of the project is shown in the map, Figure 1, above.

2. Both make efforts to recruit more European countries (e.g. Croatia, Denmark, Poland), and form partnerships with other bodies, in an effort to conjoin some EUROSTUDENT data with data from countries outside of Europe (e.g. North and Latin America, Australia)

In terms of contact with countries outside of Europe, the project team had the opportunity to make presentations in the USA and Canada. In both regions, the significance of the data set was emphasised in important publications.² However, concrete initiatives for cooperation have not yet been pursued. An initial contact to the Australia Embassy and Mission to the EU has also not yet led to concrete measures.³

During the project's lifetime, the EUROSTUDENT data set has been used in other projects. Two specific examples are the Equinet project, which has a focus on access to higher education

² Adelman, C. 2009. *The Bologna Process for U.S. Eyes: Re-learning Higher Education in the Age of Convergence*. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Location reference: www.ihep.org/Research/GlobalPerformance.cfm.

Usher, A. (2009): *Ten Years Back and Ten Years Forward: Developments and Trends in Higher Education in Europe Region* [Paper to be presented at the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the Europe Region: Access, Values, Quality and Competitiveness, 21-24 May 2009, Bucharest, Romania] Orr, D. (2010): *Integrating an aging student population into higher education – challenges for evidence-based policy in Europe*. In: *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*. Vol. 40, No. 3.

³ However, the Australia Universities Review did review the publication from 2008 - Dobson, I. (2010): *Down and out in London and Paris (and Helsinki and Berlin...)*. Vol. 52, no. 1, p.87.

and Mobility Mapping, which looked at trends and dynamics in student mobility.⁴ In both cases, the contribution of the EUROSTUDENT consortium members added to the knowledge and understanding of these themes within these projects. The project data set was also used.

3. Improve the conformity of data collation, calculation and analysis between country partners

A major emphasis within the project lifetime was placed on efforts to improve the communication and explanation of data collation and calculation in the 25 partner countries. This was achieved through three main measures: (i) handbooks, (ii) special events and (iii) the Common Survey Hosting service.

- (i) *Handbooks*: Throughout the lifetime of the project 7 handbooks were released: Project guidelines, Core set of questions EUROSTUDENT IV, Using the EUROSTUDENT core set of questions, Introduction to the Data Delivery and Reporting Modules*, Executing online surveys for EUROSTUDENT, Data delivery handbook and Concept EIV Synopsis of Indicators*. Five of these were subsequently published on the project website (exceptions were the two handbooks marked with *).
- (ii) *Special events*: At the start of each major phase of the project, the project consortium organised an intensive seminar. These seminars had the task of preparing handbooks and conventions for use within the wider network. In order to assure that these seminars were effective and balanced, efforts were made to assure that a good coverage of countries and roles (policy-makers and researchers) was achieved, but also that the total number of participants did not exceed 15 persons. Following these events, the handbooks and conventions were presented at a wider workshop for all participating countries (see Appendix 1).
- (iii) *Common Survey Hosting*: With the aim of capacity building at national level, five countries were offered the chance to benefit from common survey hosting on a central server in the Netherlands. That means, we offered the technical infrastructure to run the EUROSTUDENT questionnaire as an online survey. Participating countries still had to prepare the survey, do the data preparation and analyse the data themselves. There were two big advantages of such a central survey hosting: first of all, it is cheaper if the questionnaire is programmed only once for several countries; secondly, a high standard of online surveying can be achieved more easily. This refers e.g. to layout, filters, error treatments, monitoring of the return rate, the stability of the technical infrastructure and data security. Moreover, the centrally programmed survey implemented common standards for online surveys as agreed by the EUROSTUDENT coordinators and discussed at the Intensive Seminar on online surveys, Berlin 16-18.9.2009. The countries which used this service, were: Croatia, Denmark, Malta, Poland and Slovenia.

4. Increasingly use multi-lingual output forms to increase the recognition of relevance at national levels

⁴ Camilleri, A. / Mühleck, K. (2010): Evolving diversity - An overview of equitable access to HE in Europe. Available online: <http://www.equnet.info/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Evolving-Diversity.pdf> and Teichler, U. et al. (2011): Mobility Mapping. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc922_en.htm

The project language was English. This facilitated communication between partners in a common language. At the same time, the reception of project results and the reflection of these results in policy evaluation and development circles are improved through multi-lingual outputs. The project has achieved this goal through measures to encourage reporting in national languages.

Fig. 5 EUROSTUDENT database (in German language)

The first measure is the provision of the EUROSTUDENT database in a multi-lingual format. Special programming makes it very easy to offer this report component in different languages. However, it is the responsibility of the national teams to provide the translations into their national language. At the close of the project, the EUROSTUDENT database offers short data reports for all countries in the languages English and German. Other country teams may offer translations at a later stage. The German team is leading by example – see Figure 5 and Appendix 4.

The second measure is to encourage national reports in national languages. Many of the teams have published their reports or are in the process of doing so. The French team, for instance, has produced a short report (8 pages) on the central results.⁵ Other teams, such as the Norwegians have a special chapter in their national report on the 25 country comparison.⁶ The German team has also produced a report, which juxtaposes the cross-country comparison with national context data for most of the subtopics covered by EUROSTUDENT.⁷

Moreover, the press coverage of the central and the national reports has certainly been multi-lingual. We published a poster for the European Dissemination Event Brussels, 19 October 2011, which highlighted some of the most interesting headlines – see Figure 6.

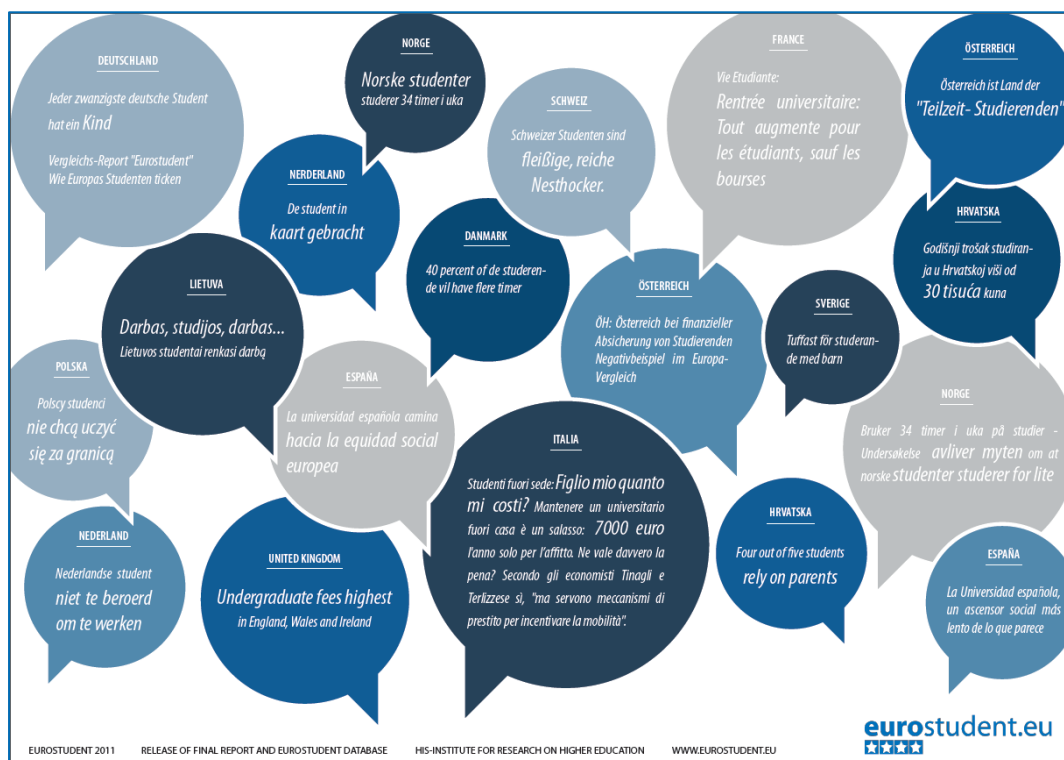


5 http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/OVE_Info_26_pap.pdf

6 <http://www.nifu.no/Norway/SitePages/PublicationDetails.aspx?ItemId=25&PublicationID=736>

7 See: <http://www.eurostudent.eu/results/reports> for all reports.

Fig. 6 Excerpts from press coverage of EUROSTUDENT results



5. Add a longitudinal aspect to the comparisons between countries to some indicators

If EUROSTUDENT is going to provide the opportunity to monitor change and evaluate the effects of reforms, it will need to facilitate comparison over time. The possibility of comparing across years is related to the achievement of goal (3) and the adherence to common data conventions. The developments made in the current data set provide a foundation for future comparisons over time. However, at present the efficacy of such comparisons is limited by the fact that a comparison over time may only show changes related to a better alignment with the common project conventions. The achievement of this goal will have to be set back for a prospective future round of the project.

6. Work more intensively with the policy-makers on national and international levels (OECD, European Commission, Bologna Process)

The main opportunity for cooperation with policy-makers and high level civil servants was provided through the Bologna Process's intergovernmental working group, the so-called Bologna Follow-Up Group. A special report using data from EUROSTUDENT III in combination with administrative data from Eurostat was published at the Bologna Ministers' conference in April 2009. For this report, the HIS-Team (as representatives of the consortium) worked intensively with Eurostat

and the Bologna working group charged with providing the report.⁸ This cooperation continues for a further report, which will be published at the next Ministers' Conference in April 2012. For this report, the HIS-team is now working with Eurostat and Eurydice, an information service of the European Commission.

At the close of this project, a closer cooperation has also been agreed on with the European Commission. This is based on the recognition of the importance and relevance of the data for higher education policy in Europe.

We have had no direct contact to the OECD units dealing with higher education until now. However, they have used the data in a number of their reports.⁹

2. Summary of project outputs

During the project lifetime, the EUROSTUDENT consortium has provided the following outputs:

- Organized and executed 11 project events with a sum total of 395 participants
- Made 41 presentations at external conferences and meetings
- Developed a project website, which in 2011 had 14,204 visits from 86 countries (predominantly from Austria, Germany, Italy and Spain)
- Produced 7 project newsletters
- Written 1 comparative report and produced (via the Data Reporting Module) 25 country reports (so-called National Profiles). The comparative report was downloaded from the project website 1,750 times between October and November 2011.
- Released a full database of comparative data, which can be viewed on-screen in English and German
- Released 4 short Intelligence Briefs, which highlight key results and are meant to encourage readers to refer to the main report for further information and pose questions to prompt further discussion and debate among national policy makers
- Contributed to two major reports within the Bologna Process itself and been used as data source for the Independent Assessment of the Bologna Process

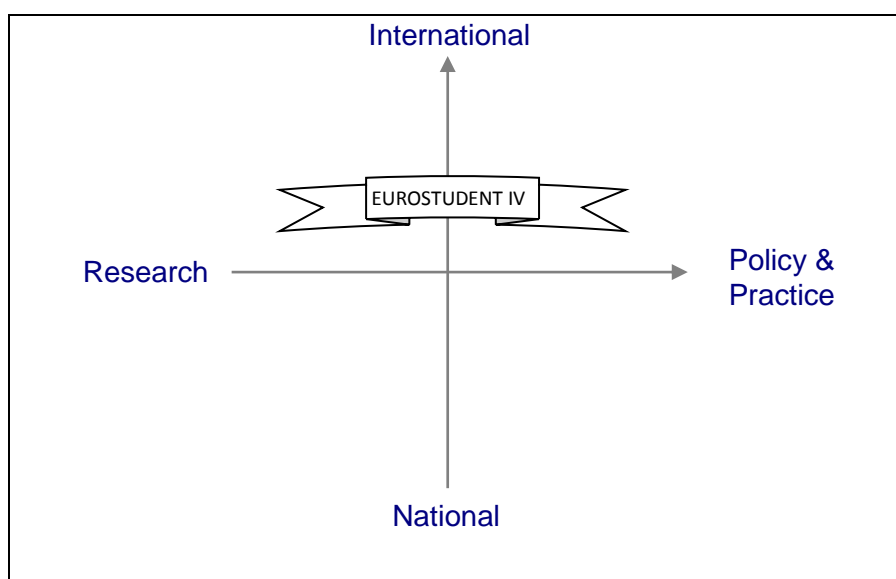
⁸ Eurostat/HIS (2009): The Bologna Process in Higher Education in Europe - Key indicators on the social dimension and mobility, Eurostat, Luxembourg.

⁹ In various review of tertiary education, of routes into higher education and most recently in economic reviews, e.g. OECD Economic Surveys – Slovenia, Feb. 2011.

4. Partnerships

The project EUROSTUDENT can be characterised as being internationally orientated with a balance between research competency and policy focus – Figure 7. This idea is illustrated in the following chart. The character of the project leads to special requirements regarding the partners' involvement.

Fig. 7 Characteristics of EUROSTUDENT network



1. Multi-national partnerships

EUROSTUDENT is a project with an international and comparative focus. In order to achieve an international outlook which goes beyond the boundaries of national knowledge, culture and experience, it is important to develop a sensitivity for differences between countries. This may sound paradoxical, but it is necessary so as not to confuse national ways of viewing things with international developments. For a project such as EUROSTUDENT, which aims to provide quantitative analyses within the realms of the social dimension, this is all the more important. Multi-national knowledge and experience enables us to develop indicators which are applicable in a variety of national settings, but still facilitate international comparison. It also enables us to draw appropriate conclusions from the analyses. This work would not be possible without multi-national project partners. Therefore, the EUROSTUDENT project integrates multi-national project partners on various levels.

Project consortium

The project consortium spans Europe geographically, with members from Anglo-Saxon higher education systems (England/Wales), Scandinavia (Norway), the Netherlands, which displays some characteristics of both the aforementioned regions, Germanic systems (Germany, Austria), and new EU members states (Bulgaria, Estonia). In this way it combines knowledge of higher educa-

tion systems with different traditions and different reform trajectories. In terms of the social dimension, Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries have led debates on student-focused learning and viewing the “total student experience” (i.e. academic plus private life) in the past. Germanic systems are only now taking up the gauntlet and the new EU member states are showing a high level of dynamic reforms despite acute public budget constraints. Bringing together the expertise on different higher education systems, experiences and assumptions can be discussed and weighed up against each other in the discussions on how to provide a balanced and informative international comparison in the project.

Project network

The project coordinators make every effort to encourage contributions to the development of the project from all members of the project network (currently experts from around 30 countries worldwide). This involves passive media, which inform members on developments via the public project website, the occasional newsletter, and the project wiki-pages as well as more active forms of exchange such as workshops and the intensive seminars. Especially the intensive seminars (including preparation and work on outcomes) have proven to be a useful instrument in assuring that more inputs are made to the joint products like the EUROSTUDENT core survey questions, the development of common indicators and drawing-up the final comparative reports. Special efforts are also made to arrange the EUROSTUDENT meetings in different countries, as this exposes the partners to different institutional and country settings and thereby sensitises them to the possibilities and pitfalls of internationally comparative research.

Steering Board

The Steering Board consists of members from international organisations. These experts are used to viewing educational topics from an international perspective. The chairman of the board is both a member of the Council of Europe and a ministerial advisor in his home country Romania.

2. Multi-perspective partnerships

Those involved in the project take the view that the social dimension is one of the key issues for providing high-quality, sustainable and attractive higher education in Europe. For this reason, EUROSTUDENT has set one of its main aims as providing analyses which are relevant for both policy and practice. It is, therefore, important to integrate knowledge and experiences from both the more technical and scientific discussions of researchers and the policy makers, who should reflect the results of the project in their own developmental and evaluative work. Again, this is achieved through organising partnerships on various levels.

Project consortium

The members of the project consortium all have experience in higher education research. However, each has a different focus on the project.

- The leading staff from HIS has experience over many years in steering and managing the previous waves of the EUROSTUDENT study. At the same time, HIS is involved in survey design, indicator development for monitoring and consultancy for universities and ministries in a variety of other national and international projects. This is beneficial for the EUROSTUDENT project as well.

- The leading staff from IHS has particular expertise concerning methodological issues with respect to survey research. This institution is also involved in postgraduate studies in the field of the social and business sciences.
- Our member from ЦКОКО has worked on other international studies previously (e.g. PISA) and is involved in providing empirical advice for the national ministry in Bulgaria.
- The staff at EÜL has the double function of representing national students in Estonia and on a European level via ESU, but also of advising national stakeholders in Estonia on higher education reforms.
- The involvement of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) assures a direct link to policy debates within national settings. At the same time, our colleague and member of the consortium is the previous head of the Bologna Secretariat, which means that she has a good insight into the needs and wishes of other national ministries.
- The research centre CHERI is linked to the Open University in the UK and, therefore, provides a good link to the academic world and more importantly has a proven track record of undertaking policy-related higher education research.
- The leading staff from NIFU has extensive experience in looking at issues of equity in education systems. At the same time, the institution has competencies in linking data with policy formulation and assessment.

Project network

The project network which ultimately provides the comparative data used by the coordinators to draw-up the final report is made up of national teams combining researchers and policy makers (usually members of the respective ministry) in each country. It has been an aim of the project to involve both researchers and policy makers in all EUROSTUDENT events. In this way, the majority of discussions and decisions made within the project reflect both points of view and goal perspectives.

Steering Board

The steering board is specifically constructed to bring together all major stakeholders to higher education on an international level.

- European Universities' Association (EUA): represents universities and research-focused institutions of higher education in Europe
- European Students' Unions (ESU): represents national student bodies
- Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG): represents the ministers of the 47 Bologna signatory states and the reform programme entitled the "Bologna Process"
- Council of Europe: represents a critical view on the development of higher education in Europe
- European Commission: represents policy-makers on the European level
- German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF): represents policy makers on the national level

Working with partners with different backgrounds and who argue from different standpoints is not friction-free. However, this leads to the development of a project which is sensitive to such differences and has gone through the process of achieving common standpoints for each of the project elements.

5. Contribution to EU policies

1. Comparable data

The major contribution of EUROSTUDENT to policies on the European level (EU2020, Bologna Process) and internationally is its effort to create a comparable dataset on a subject area which is – and must be – highly sensitive to national differences, i.e. the social dimension. Through the intensive cooperation between partners within the project, which has been built up over many years, the coordinators can be certain that the dataset is becoming evermore insightful and reliable. In this way, it is also becoming more useful as a stimulus for discussions on policy development on international, national and regional levels.

There are many assumptions about the systems of higher education in European member states and within the Bologna Process which can be tested and evaluated based on EUROSTUDENT data. An example is the way students are supported through state grants and loans during their studies. By asking the recipients of support in these often very complex schemes, we can find out how much students really receive, how many students benefit from the schemes and what significance the support has for their monthly expenditure. This goes beyond largely assumption-based typologies of Scandinavian countries as generous, Anglo-Saxon countries as market-based supporters and Eastern European higher education systems as providing negligible support.

This contribution is, inter alia, recognized within the Bologna Process, where EUROSTUDENT has the official status as data collector (Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué 2009).

2. Capacity building

Although the topic of the social dimension has received a lot of coverage within the framework of the Bologna Process, many countries have not yet set up data collecting exercises in order to analyse the students' situation in their country. This, however, is a first step towards facilitating peer learning and the open method of coordination – both central concepts to European higher education policy.

The decentralised approach of EUROSTUDENT in establishing a European-wide network means that the project works as a capacity builder in many of these countries. The expertise offered by the coordinators and generally within the network is available to all countries which take part. This will lead to improvements in the data situation and in the quality of policy debates on equity and efficiency in higher education.

A second benefit of EUROSTUDENT is that it creates opportunities to make similar national problems comparable across countries. In many cases countries have traditionally had slightly different approaches to discussions on the social dimension. For instance, in the UK students from lower classes were seen as socially disadvantaged, whilst in Ireland the discussions focussed on children of farmers and in Germany on the children of blue-collar workers. However, one of the stimuli behind the establishment of the European Higher Education Area is the recognition by policy-makers and practitioners that most higher education systems are being confronted with

similar problems due to global trends in society (particularly demographic trends and those within the labour market). The value added of EUROSTUDENT thus lies in its capacity to create an analytical framework that can be applied to many national settings, thereby still respecting national idiosyncrasies. This is achieved, for instance, by using the core set of questions mentioned above.

It is recognition of the importance of this contribution that has also led EUROSTUDENT to publish all of its handbooks on the project website. This means that other countries and other project teams can benefit from this output.

3. Monitoring

As many European higher education systems are undergoing large-scale reforms, it is important for them to have some way of evaluating the effectiveness of these reforms. One of the driving forces behind the student protests at the ten year celebrations of the Bologna Process in March 2010 was the argument that reform policies originally designed to improve higher education were leading to unintended effects, such as the creation of overburdened curricula.

Comparative projects such as EUROSTUDENT provide a picture of different national higher education systems in comparison to other systems facing similar challenges. These comparisons between countries can provide stimuli for the evaluation of new higher education policies.

The strong interest in both the publications from EUROSTUDENT and the frequency of requests for presentations from the project team (see Appendix 2) are testament to the achievement of this contribution.

4. Equity for access and completion

EU policies, the Bologna Process and many national policies all recognise that higher education systems are the location (if not the cause) of inequality, in that the chances to enter higher education and to finish a programme are distributed unequally. The arguments for improvements in equity relate to three main strands:

- Changes in the demography of European societies, i.e. an aging population and a declining share of young people in society, will mean that countries must make their higher education systems more inclusive in terms of age and social background.
- Changes in the European labour market will lead to a demand for more highly skilled workers. Therefore, more people must be led to the development of high level skills through the successful completion of higher education degrees. Some people must be given the chance to enter higher education later in their careers in order to improve their skill level.
- Expanding higher education and increasing expenditures in public social welfare and health budgets means that higher education has to prove to be worth the investments in this field. That is to say, there is an increasing emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness of investments in higher education. Against this background, measures such as student retention campaigns, which lead to successful programme completion, can be understood.

Furthermore, the EUROSTUDENT data set and analyses can contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 headline target of 40% of young people having attained higher education by 2020. As stated in the Communication from the Commission on supporting growth and jobs (COM 2011, 567 final), achievement of this goal will require attracting “a broader cross-section of society into higher education, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups” (ibid, p.3).

EUROSTUDENT provides comparative data which can characterize the student of the 21st century. Who is this student now and – through comparison – who might this student be in 2020? Intervention measures to achieve the policy objectives leading to a modernization of European higher education include the effective provision of progression routes into and through higher education, outreach initiatives to recruit underrepresented groups and better targeting of financial support (ibid, p.4).

The EUROSTUDENT project reflects these challenges in its comparative dataset. When looking at the framework conditions of studying (income, expenditure, accommodation and time budget of students), it can differentiate between various student groups and therefore provide policy relevant information for different target groups. These groups include: older students, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, part-time students and students who enter higher education after a prolonged period outside the education system. This will help higher education systems review their policies of reform and their measure in country comparison regarding their way of dealing with these particular student groups.

6. Plans for the Future

1. Facilitating exploitation

The work achieved during the project's lifetime must be further exploited through more in-depth discussions of specific results, through combining the results with other data sources and through the adoption of the comparative data as an input to national policy discussions. The consortium has striven to provide examples of how these steps may be achieved during the project's lifetime in order to facilitate them on a larger scale after the project has been completed.

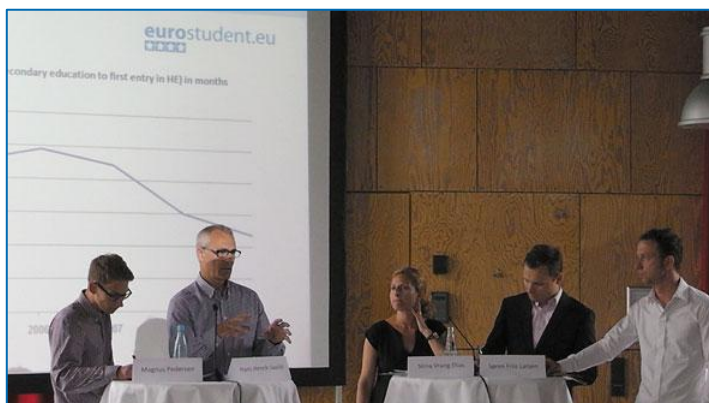
Fig. 8 Example of Intelligence Brief



The Intelligence Briefs have been developed to facilitate more in-depth discussions – Figure 8. This is because although they are short documents, they combine results from the comparative report and set them in a policy context. An example is the Intelligence Brief on student income. It discusses income disparity between students, the composition of student incomes and the principles behind different state support systems. The Intelligence Briefs have been designed in a simple format (Word files) with a relatively strict structure. In this way, it is hoped that others will also adopt this format for new Intelligence Briefs concerning different topics and even in different languages.

The work on the Bologna Implementation Report involves combining data from EUROSTUDENT, Eurydice and Eurostat. For instance, the section on access routes to higher education in the new report compares administrative data on flows between the school and university system (Eurostat), with data on the qualifications students have used to enter higher education (EUROSTUDENT), and information on the organisation and regulation of access to higher education (Eurydice). This exercise enhances the depth and breadth of the possible analyses because of the combination of different data types and data sources. It also provides an opportunity to test the reliability of the data sources (triangulation). It is hoped that this example will encourage other data users to combine these data sources.

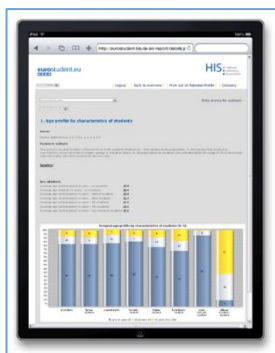
Fig. 9 Photograph from public debate in Copenhagen



Two specific initiatives were adopted to show the use of the data for national debates. The first was the public debate in Copenhagen following the final conference in June 2011 – Figure 9. On the second day, students and stakeholders from Danish higher education were invited to take part in a public debate on the relevance of EUROSTUDENT data for their national debates.

Following this event, the incumbent minister for education and science expressed her gratitude to the EUROSTUDENT project for providing such helpful comparative data.¹⁰ The second initiative was supported by the German government. Although Germany had already published its national study, it was decided to commission a project report, which combined the European comparison with more detailed data on the German system. The role model for this report was a similar report in German and French from Swiss Statistics in 2008.¹¹ This report, written in the German language, was published on 12 December 2011.¹² However, knowledge of it has already encouraged other country teams to do the same type of report for their country.

Fig. 10 EUROSTUDENT database



All of these initiatives are facilitated by the existence of the EUROSTUDENT database, which was released with the final report and will be available on the project website for as long as possible – Figure 10. It provides direct access to the detailed country data through charts and key indicators, but it also allows users to download all data as an Excel file for further calculations.

2. Sustainability of the EUROSTUDENT network

In the project proposal of 2008, the project consortium formulated the goal of creating an active network of researchers and policy makers, which would exist after the project's completion. This is always difficult to achieve because people have new projects and new tasks following the completion of a specific project. However, there are currently great efforts to organise and carry out a fifth round of the EUROSTUDENT project and so to further expertise and renew the data set. This new round would require each participating country to pay a participation fee and sign a direct contract with the project consortium. If successful, this would help the project to reach a new level of maturity and become a more sustainable entity, because it would be less dependent on only a few budget sources. The efforts currently being made to support this plan within the European Commission, the Bologna Process and in individual countries, gives evidence to the existence of a network, which is keen to continue working together.

10 See Danish press releases and materials for EUROSTUDENT conference: <http://en.fivu.dk/press/2011/eurostudent-shines-light-on-student-conditions>

11 http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/BFS_Schweiz_im_europ_Vergleich_111765.pdf

12 Gwosć, C. / Netz, N. / Orr, D. / Middendorff, E. / Isserstedt, W. (2011): Soziale und wirtschaftliche Bedingungen des Studiums – Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich. W. Bertelsmann Verlag

7. The Challenge of Comparative Studies

1. General approach

Organising and executing a large scale comparative study is a challenging exercise. The challenge is related to the questions of know-how, process control, transparency and engagement. There are perhaps two basic approaches to the task of making a meaningful comparison. There is a choice between a very centralised and a very decentralised approach.

In a very centralised project, all building blocks for the comparison are developed at the centre and the units to be compared (in this case “countries”) are given the task of execution. In this case, the know-how emanates from the centre and is adopted by the country teams, the involvement in execution is very deep for the central coordinators, which simplifies process control and transparency. The full engagement of the periphery – of the countries – is not necessary for the completion of the task. The opposite approach relegates the centre to the task of bringing the results collated in the countries together for a limited comparison.¹³

In fact, the EUROSTUDENT project largely started out following the second approach. This is because the stimulus for comparison was the recognition that there were a number of countries carrying out similar surveys and it might be possible to draw-up a limited comparison.¹⁴ As the project moves on and matures, there is a temptation to adopt the former approach, as it would give the central coordinators a higher level of input, process and output control. The main dangers of doing this, however, are a loss (or disregard) for local know-how and a lack of engagement in country teams.

The first risk is especially acute in an expanding project dealing with a dynamic field of study. In this project (2008-2011) countries as different as Poland, Croatia, Malta and Denmark joined the participating countries and, therefore, the comparative framework. The local know-how of researchers and policy-makers is necessary to facilitate an understanding of what is ‘normal’ in these countries, both in terms of how a higher education system is organised and how to carry out a survey. The dynamism of national higher education systems and multitude of reforms affecting students and higher education institutions make this local knowledge an important building block for a meaningful comparison.

The second risk – a lack of engagement – can occur easily if the value of the work for the national context and the possibility to engage in development processes within the project are not apparent. It is for these reasons that EUROSTUDENT has adopted the approach of a strong central coordination and a strong decentral network of country teams. This is achieved by opening up processes to participation, which then have the goal of determining the central conventions, which must be respected by all participants. The progress through the EUROSTUDENT work programme is, therefore, a process of opening – *for participation* – and closing – *for control*. This process was used in this project for the development of the core questionnaire, the comparative

¹³ This characterisation reflects to some extent McGregor’s management theories X (strong, centralized control) and Y (strong, decentralized participation).

¹⁴ Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW)/HIS (1997): Euro Student Report. Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life. Deutsches Studentenwerk, Bonn.

indicators and the structure of the comparative report. Handbooks and workshops were used to communicate the results and Wikimedia-technology to map the process of reaching results and providing transparency.

At the same time, this approach does not assure that all conventions are adopted as prescribed. The manner in which this issue is dealt with has been threefold: (i) through partial data and process control as shown in Figure 3 and provided through the quality assurance team, (ii) through providing opportunities for knowledge exchange both at workshops, but also in the rare country visits and (iii) through direct assistance and supervision provided to five countries in the Common Survey Hosting (CSH) module (see p.10).

A further – more subtle – instrument is the encouragement of all countries to publish their national results in a national report in their own language. It is presumed that this will improve the quality of the data, as the data are not being solely utilised in an abstract comparison “for Europe”, but used directly in the national context, where national press and policy-makers have to interpret the results. It is further presumed that this will assure the engagement of the national teams, since they are producing reports for their own use. The numerous national reports available on the project website and on national ministry websites are testament to the interest in these analyses at national level.¹⁵

In this project’s lifetime additional efforts were made to involve country teams in all processes. However, should the project continue, the project consortium would like to devote more efforts to direct contact – on location – with each of the national teams. This should further enhance the comparability and reliability of the project results.

2. A note on converging input and process within the project

A very crucial point for the comparison of student survey data is how students are invited to take part in the survey. Has every student the same random chance of participating? The problem is that national authorities in different countries have very different possibilities to contact “their” students.

In some countries, a national registry exists containing postal and electronic contact information of all students in a country. In other countries, the registry contains e.g. only information from students at public institutions, or students who at one time or another applied for a public grant, or students from younger cohorts (because the registry was installed only recently), and in some countries no nationwide registry with student contact information exists at all. Therefore, different solutions have to be found, to ensure random selection among all students in a country. As a consequence, sampling and surveying methods differ from country to country. Hence, the role of the coordinators of EUROSTUDENT, and most of all the quality assurance team, is to ensure comparability of the survey data despite the different possibilities for sampling. In most cases, this is only possible in very close contact with the countries. However, matching countries with similar (technical) preconditions enables the exchange of ideas and may stimulate new, creative ways of solving these crucial issues in different countries and increasing comparability of the data at the same time. This process was supported through the seminars and workshops during EUROSTUDENT IV and will be intensified in EUROSTUDENT V.

¹⁵ <http://www.eurostudent.eu/results/reports>

The more students participate in the survey, the more valid the data usually becomes, as more subgroups of students can be analysed and indeed more analyses overall are possible. However, depending on the sampling and survey methods chosen, more participants increase the cost of surveying, data cleaning and analysis. Hence, each country has to find a trade-off between available resources and desired depth of analysis. In EUROSTUDENT IV, a working paper written by the quality assurance team assisted the countries in defining the optimal sample size, which also depends on minimum requirements for comparability and the heterogeneity of the higher education system in a country.¹⁶

When the data has been collected, a common method of weighting, data processing and cleaning must be followed by all countries to ensure comparability. Again, preconditions in different countries vary in this step of the research process, e.g. because countries have a long tradition of national reporting on the situation of students and cannot easily switch their rules of data processing which would cause breaks in national time series or because weighting procedures must depend on the different procedures adopted for sampling. However, EUROSTUDENT identified several crucial variables in the data sets where different methods of data processing would indeed cause very different results and hence prevent comparability of the data. For example the treating of “0” in financial issues as a valid amount or as a missing data (because no answer was given) results in very different average values (means) for students’ income. These “tricky issues” have been discussed in several intensive seminars and workshops and, as a result, common conventions were defined and integrated in the handbook for data analysis.¹⁷ A very special case is the calculation of a certain indicator, where SPSS (the mostly used software for statistics) produces wrong results. Again, training sessions with the researchers from all EUROSTUDENT member countries were organised at a workshop in Ankara and a special section of the handbook is devoted on how to avoid these calculative errors.¹⁸ The handbooks (on data collection and analysis) themselves have been checked in several rounds by the quality assurance team and improved continuously during the project.

The last step in ensuring comparability is the analysis of the data provided online in the data delivery module (DDM) by the participating countries. This data has been checked with plausibility checks already implemented in the DDM, compared with results from last EUROSTUDENT rounds and other international data (e.g. from EUROSTAT) to ensure plausibility and validity. Another round of checks identified outliers and countries where asked to recalculate these data or provide an interpretation of these outliers. A few countries had severe problems in analysing their data for them (e.g. Slovenia), hence members of the consortium assisted them intensively in these procedures – far beyond the role of the consortium to just collate national data.

EUROSTUDENT IV made a great step forward in analysing the social situation of students in Europe. This was achieved, firstly, by redesigning the common set of questions (with involve-

¹⁶ See: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/Initial_Sample_Size_151009.pdf

¹⁷ See: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EUROSTUDENT_IV_-_Data_Delivery_Handbook_-_2010_11_23.pdf

¹⁸ See: *ibid.*

ment of many participating countries), providing far more elaborated handbooks, tools and instructions for the participating countries, but also by developing new indicators. These new indicators were developed and tested (with data from a few countries) by the coordinating and quality assurance teams (WP1, WP6) and then discussed in a special working group, because they were rolled-out. A review of these new concepts remains to be done at the beginning of the next round of EUROSTUDENT, but the questionnaire as such will largely be consolidated and kept widely unchanged. This is in line with the main goal for the next round of EUROSTUDENT, which wants to focus more attention of assisting countries in dealing with the challenges of providing comparable data, which is in accordance with the common project conventions, despite the decentral approach of the project.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 - The following table lists all specific project events and sketches their outcomes.

Date	Place	Name of event
31.10.08	Hanover	<p>1st meeting of the Consortium</p> <p>Despite the fact that EU support was not yet confirmed, it was felt necessary to start the project's work programme. All members of the consortium attended.</p>
10.-11.12.08	Vienna	<p>Intensive Seminar on project conventions and definitions</p> <p>The seminar had the aim of developing common project conventions and definitions as the basis for data collection. A core set of questions and definitions of core target groups for the current round of the project were discussed. Subsequent to the seminar a common questionnaire for the participating countries was developed.</p>
16.-17.02.09	The Hague	<p>Kick-off workshop EUROSTUDENT IV</p> <p>The main aim of the workshop was to personally get in touch with representatives from participating countries and to explain the composition of the project. At the workshop, the time schedule, the obligations in case of participation and general organisational issues were clarified. Potential participant countries were also invited to discuss their involvement. The EUROSTUDENT core set of questions and the Dynamic Handbook on how to use the core set of questions were presented. These products standardise the data collection and assure the comparability of the data collected. The Consortium met for the 2nd time.</p>
14.09.09	Berlin	<p>3rd meeting of Consortium</p> <p>The Consortium was informed about the participating countries and the allocation of the budget throughout the project. Status updates on the work packages in process were given.</p>
15.09.09	Berlin	<p>1st meeting of the International Steering Board</p> <p>At this meeting the tasks of the International Steering Board were introduced, the chair was elected, current and completed works on the project were reported and future</p>

		plans and strategies were discussed.
16.-18.09.09	Berlin	<p>Intensive seminar "Planning and executing national online surveys for EUROSTUDENT"</p> <p>The seminar provided information on the use of online surveys within the EUROSTUDENT project. Researchers from different countries presented their experiences with preparing and carrying out national online surveys. Working groups identified questions/problems related to online surveys and compiled solutions to that. Subsequent to the seminar a handbook containing the results was released. This supports especially countries with less experience in executing online surveys.</p>
11.11.09	Hanover	<p>1st meeting of Working group on indicator development</p> <p>The first draft of the Technical Manual for the Execution of the Data Delivery Module and the planned Data Delivery Interface were discussed among a small group of Consortium members.</p>
17.-18.12.09	Vienna	<p>Kick-off meeting Common Survey Hosting (CSH)</p> <p>The meeting informed about the basic and optional deliverables of the service provider, the workflow and time schedule.</p>
8.-9.02.10	Tallinn	<p>2nd meeting of Working group on indicator development</p> <p>The current status of the Data Delivery Module was presented and specific topics of the second draft of the Technical Manual for the Execution of the Data Delivery Module were discussed.</p>
22.03.10	Prague	<p>4th meeting of Consortium</p> <p>This meeting provided an update on the work programme, a discussion of the budget administration, the planning of the next project events later this year, and a discussion of measures to disseminate the project results.</p>
23.-25.03.10	Prague	<p>Workshop "Quality paths"</p> <p>The aim of the workshop was to prepare researchers involved in the project for the data collection, review, calculation and delivery. It contained the presentation of the online Data Delivery Module, the release of and introduction to the Technical Manual for the Execution of the Data</p>

		Delivery Module, a presentation of the CSH and a general discussion on online surveys, a discussion on data dissemination and other cooperation plans within the network as well as a group discussions on various methodical problems related to data preparation. The workshop prepared the researchers for the data delivery phase.
26.03.10	Prague	<p>2nd meeting of CSH-Project</p> <p>Subject of the meeting were the introduction to the organisation of and activities in the CSH, the presentations of participating countries on the intended use of the results and future plans for the EUROSTUDENT survey as well as a general exchange of ideas.</p>
06. – 08. 09.2010	Valletta	<p>Intensive Seminar on data analysis and interpretation</p> <p>The main purpose of the Intensive Seminar ‘Analysis and Reporting’ is to sensitise both the national data providers and the central coordination team to the potential pitfalls of analysing and comparing national survey data within the EUROSTUDENT framework. To do so, specific context factors relevant for the interpretation of data from particular countries shall be identified and discussed. A secondary objective of the seminar is to initiate the discussion process through which the comprehensive list of indicators can be condensed to a number compatible with the format of an international reporting instrument. Finally, the seminar functions as a preparation of the Workshop on Data Interpretation and Context Information to be held in Ankara, Turkey, between 30 November and 1 December 2010.</p>
9.8.2010	(video conference)	<p>5th meeting of the Consortium</p> <p>The objective of this meeting was an update on activities and to plan the next stages of the project, especially analysis and reporting.</p>
30.8.2010	(video conference)	<p>6th meeting of the Consortium</p> <p>The first video was followed up by further discussions on the next stages of work. It was decided that both dissemination and exploitation activities should be started earlier than originally planned.</p>
24.09.2010	Berlin	<p>Steering Board Meeting II</p> <p>At this second meeting of the International Steering Board, the topics were project progress, preparation for data</p>

		reporting and dissemination and plans for EUROSTUDENT V.
1.11.10	(video conference)	1st meeting of the working group on dissemination and exploitation Brainstorming amongst members led to first ideas on how to pursue dissemination and exploitation directly through the EUROSTUDENT products, but also to encourage countries to develop their own strategies (including national workshops and reports)
10-11.11.2010	Hannover	1st meeting of the working group on quality assurance A common programme of work to assure the quality of the data delivered to HIS and used for the comparative analysis was discussed by HIS and IHS.
18.11.10	(video conference)	2nd meeting of the working group on dissemination and exploitation A strategy for dissemination and exploitation was developed, which was then published in the ensuing project newsletter.
19.11.2010	(video conference)	2st meeting of the working group on quality assurance The programme agreed in Hannover was discussed in more depth and a division of labour agreed.
30.11. – 01.12.2010	Ankara	Workshop on data interpretation and context information This workshop on “Data Interpretation and Context Information” in Ankara, Turkey, was organized in conjunction with the Turkish Council of Higher Education and METU University. The main aim of the workshop was to discuss national findings from EUROSTUDENT partners and their use for the international comparison. It was an obligatory workshop for all countries participating in EUROSTUDENT.
20.05.2011	Berlin	Steering Board Meeting III At this final meeting of the International Steering Board, the topics were the comparative report, dissemination and exploitation strategy and plans for EUROSTUDENT V.
15.-16.06.2011	Copenhagen	Final conference of EUROSTUDENT IV - Closing the gap - New data on the social dimension of higher education in

		<p>Europe</p> <p>This event took place on the campus of the IT-University Copenhagen, Denmark. The conference was organized in conjunction with the Danish University and Property Agency and the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. The results of the new study were presented and discussed with many national and international experts in the field and a public debate with students and stakeholders from Denmark took place in a student hall of residence entitled “Danish higher education in the light of the results from EUROSTUDENT”.</p> <p>This conference also involved a final meeting of the consortium.</p>
8-9.09.11	Tallinn	<p>3rd meeting of the working group on dissemination and exploitation</p> <p>After the development of Intelligence Briefs as a major element for disseminating key results and encouraging further data exploitation, the final draft of 4 Intelligence Briefs were worked on and completed.</p>
19.10.2011	Brussels	<p>Dissemination Event in the Dutch Permanent Representation in Brussels</p> <p>At this dissemination and networking event, key topics of the Eurostudent survey were presented and put up for discussion. Additionally the Eurostudent IV final report “Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe. 2008-2011” was released.</p>

Appendix 2 - List of meetings and presentations in the framework of EUROSTUDENT IV

Date	Place	Name of event
27-29.05.09	New Orleans	EPI Retention 2009 (presentation)
07.09.09	Brussels	ESU European Stakeholders' Forum 2009 (presentation)
09-12.09.09	Bad Wildbad	GEW-Wissenschaftskonferenz „Endstation Bologna? Zehn Jahre Europäischer Hochschulraum“ (presentation)
01.10.09	Barcelona	"Looking at Bologna - Education in debate", Fundació Catalunya Europa (presentation)
8-10.10.09	Rome	10th anniversary of European Council on Student Affairs (presentation)
04.11.09	Luxembourg	1st meeting of the BFUG working group on data reporting (participation)
07.12.09	Montreal	Using social statistics to illuminate the issues, processes and outcomes in higher education: International viewpoints (presentation)
10-11.12.09	Montreal	Measuring issues in higher education: From survey design to result dissemination (presentation)
13.01.10	Berlin	1st meeting of BFUG working group mobility (participation)
21.01.10	Luxembourg	2nd meeting of BFUG working group reporting (participation)
11.02.10	Tallinn	National seminar on data for the social dimension in Estonian higher education (presentation)
11.03.10	Budapest/Vienna	2010 Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference (participation)
29.-30.04.2010	Hannover	5. Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Hochschulforschung (2 presentations)
12.05.2010	Berlin	2nd meeting of BFUG working group mobility (participation)

20.05.2010	Madrid	1st meeting of BFUG working group social dimension (participation)
24.- 25.05.2010	Málaga	Conference of Spanish EU Presidency "Social Dimension and Responsibility of Universities"(presentation)
16.6.2010	Riga	3rd meeting of the BFUG working group reporting (participation)
11.-13. 07. 2011	Berlin	The Social Dimension – Stocktaking and Future Perspectives of Student Affairs in the European Higher Education Area (presentation)
14.- 16.09.2010	Nantes	EAIE/ACA seminar: International student mobility in the post Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve era (presentation)
16.- 17.09.2010	Berlin	ERASMUS Regionaltagung (presentation, panel discussion)
27.- 28.09.2010	Dubrovnik	International Forum: Foresight in Higher Education Reform 2020 (presentation)
30.09.- 01.10.2010	Berlin	Employability and Mobility of Bachelor graduates in Europe (presentation)
07.10.2010	Hanover	ESU Kickoff Meeting (participation)
07.- 08.10.2010	Konstanz	ERASMUS Regionaltagung (presentation, panel discussion)
03.- 04.11.2010	Budapest	3rd meeting of BFUG working group mobility (participation)
15.- 16.11.2010	Luxemburg	3rd meeting of BFUG working group reporting (participation)
22.- 25.11.2010	Nicosia	Social Dimension in higher education (presentation)
03.12.2010	Brussels	ACA Seminar on Mobility (presentation)
13.- 14.12.2010	Berlin	Der Bologna-Prozess aus Sicht der Hochschulforschung – Analysen und Impulse (presentation)
28-29.03.11	Berlin	Berlin: From Imbalanced to Balanced Mobility in the EHEA – Current Challenges and Perspectives for the

		Future (DAAD) (presentation)
29.03.11	Berlin	BFUG Working Group Mobility (participation)
2-3.05.11	Tallinn	ESU Board Meeting (presentation)
24.-25.05.11	Helsinki	We learn together! Conference on mobility, Nordic languages and Nordplus (presentation)
01.07.11	Riga	BFUG Working Group Reporting (participation)
11-13.07.11	Berlin	Development of the Social Dimension – Stocktaking and Future Perspectives of Student Services and Student Affairs (ECStA) (presentation)
12.07.11	Berlin	BFUG Working Group Social Dimension (participation)
24.08.11	Berlin	BFUG Working Group Mobility (participation)
23.09.11	Valencia	II Jornada sobre la Dimensión Social de la Educación Universitaria en España (presentation)
14.10.11	Brussels	ACA seminar on the social dimension of higher education (presentation)
18.10.11	Brussels	GUE/NGL seminar on participation and higher education, European Parliament (presentation)
17-19.10.11	Bucharest	The Future of Higher Education-Bologna Process Researchers' Conference (presentation)

Appendix 3 – List of all national reports produced within the framework of EUROSTUDENT

AT: Unger, M. et al. (2010): Studierenden-Sozialerhebung 2009. Online under: www.sozialerhebung.at

CH: Boegli, L. / Gerhard, S. / Teichgräber, M. (2010): Studieren unter Bologna - Hauptbericht der Erhebung zur sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Lage der Studierenden an den Schweizer Hochschulen 2009. Online under: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/National_Report_Switzerland_German.pdf

DE: Isserstedt, W. / Middendorff, E. / Kandulla, M. / Borchert, L. / Leszczensky, M. (2010): Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Lage der Studierenden in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2009. Online under: http://www.sozialerhebung.de/pdfs/Soz19_Kurzfassung.pdf

DK: Danish University and Property Agency (2011): Selected Results for Denmark - EUROSTUDENT IV. Online under: <http://www.ubst.dk/uddannelse-og-forskning/eurostudent/rapport-om-studerendes-forhold/EUROSTUDENT%20IV%20-%20Selected%20Results%20for%20Denmark.pdf>

EE: Praxis (2011): EESTI ÜLIÕPILASTE ELUOLU 2010. Online under: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/Praxis_Eurostudent_trykis.pdf

ES: Ariño, A. / Llopis, R. (2011): ¿Universidad sin clases? Condiciones de vida de los estudiantes universitarios en España. Online under: https://sede.educacion.gob.es/publivena/descargas.action?f_codigo=14909&codigoOpcion=3

FI: Saarenmaa, K. / Saari, K. / Virtanen, V. (2010): Opiskelijatutkimus 2010 Korkeakouluopiskelijoiden toimeentuloja opiskelu. Online under: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/Natinal_Report_Finland_Finnish.pdf

FR: Belghith, F. / Verley, E. / Vourc'h, R. / Zilloniz, S. (2011): La vie étudiante repères. Online under: <http://www.ove-national.education.fr/publications/notes-rapports-et-autres/83,La%20vie%20C3%A9tudiante%20-%20Rep%20-%20Edition%202011>

HR: Cvitan, M. / Doolan, K. / Farnell, T. / Matković, T. (2011): Socijalna i ekonomska slika student-skog života u Hrvatskoj. Online under: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/National_Report_Slovenia_English.pdf

LV: SKDS (2009): Studentu sociālie un ekonomiskie dzīves apstākļi Latvijā. Online under: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/petijumi/Atskaite_EUROSTUDENT_IV_10_11_2009.pdf

NO: Arnesen, C. Å. / Hovdhaugen, E. / Wiers-Jenssen, J. / Per Olaf Aamodt, P.O. (2011): Studie-situasjon og studentøkonomi Norske resultater fra den europeiske studentundersøkelsen Eurostudent IV. Online under: <http://www.nifu.no/Norway/Publications/2011/NIFU%20Webrapport%2033-2011.pdf>

RO: Apostu, O. / Fartuşnic, C. / Florian, B. / Horga, I. / Voinea, L. (2010): EUROSTUDENT IV Con-diții economice, sociale și mobilitatea internațională a studenților din România

SE: Rurling, Å / Gillström, P. (2010): Eurostudent – om svenska studenter i en europeisk undersökning, hösten 2009. Online under: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/1020R-eurostudent-2009.pdf

SI: Slovenian Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (2010): EUROSTUDENT SI 2010 Economic, Social and Housing Conditions, and the International Mobility of Students in Slovenia. Online under: http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/National_Report_Slovenia_English.pdf

SK: Šulanová, M. / Srnánková, L. (2010): Sociálne a ekonomické podmienky života študentov denného štúdia verejných VŠ na Slovensku. Online under: http://www.uips.sk/sub/uips.sk/imag/Vs/soc_post_st_2009_def.pdf

Appendix 4 – Highlights of international press reception of EUROSTUDENT results

AT: Österreich bei finanzieller Absicherung von Studierenden Negativbeispiel im Europa-Vergleich. Online under: http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20110626_OTS0028/oeh-oes-terreich-bei-fi_nanzieller-absicherung-von-studierenden-negativbeispiel-im-europa-vergleich

AT: Österreich ist Land der "Teilzeit- studierenden". Online under: <http://derstandard.at/1308679606752/Europa-Vergleich-Oesterreich-ist-Land-der-Teilzeitstudenten>

CH: Studenten sind reiche Nesthocker. Online under: http://www.20min.ch/news/kreuz_und_quer/story/26857330

DE: Vergleichs-Report "Eurostudent" - Wie Europas Studenten ticken Online under: <http://www.spiegel.de/unispiegel/studium/0,1518,768363,00.html>

DK: 40 procent af de studerende vil have flere timer. Online under: <http://www.undervisere.dk/ObjectShow.aspx?ObjectId=68972>

ES: La universidad española camina hacia la equidad social europea. Online under: http://www.aprendemas.com/Noticias/html/N9170_F26092011.html

ES: La Universidad española, un ascensor social más lento de lo que parece. Online under: http://www.elpais.com/articulo/Comunidad/Valenciana/Universidad/espanola/ascensor/social/lento/parece/elpepiespval/20110924elpval_16/Tes

FR: Vie Etudiante : "Rentrée universitaire : tout augmente pour les étudiants, sauf les bourses". Online under: <http://www.imaginons-ensemble-lavenir.com/categorie-11449304.html>

HR: Four out of five students rely on parents. Online under: <http://dubrovacki.hr/clanak/32250/four-out-of-five-students-rely-on-parents>

HR: Godišnji trošak studiranja u Hrvatskoj viši od 30 tisuća kuna. Online under: <http://www.suvremena.hr/20335.aspx>

IT: Studenti fuori sede: figlio mio quanto mi costi? Online under: http://tg24.sky.it/tg24/cronaca/2011/09/01/universita_studenti_fuori_sede_costo_investimento_terlizzese.html

LT: Darbas, studijos, darbas...Lietuvos studentai renkasi darbą. Online under:

<http://www.laikas.lt/lt/info/3139/darbas-studijos-darbaslietuvos-studentai-renkasi-darba/>

NL: De student in kaart gebracht. Online under:

<http://scienceguide.nl/201106/de-student-in-kaart-gebracht.aspx>

NL: Hollandse jongeren verslaan Belgen op de arbeidsmarkt! Online under:

<http://www.studentenwerk.nl/weblog/222-hollandse-jongeren-verslaan-belgen-op-de-arbeidsmarkt>

NO: Norske studenter studerer 34 timer i uka. Online under:

<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/aktuelt/nyheter/2011/norske-studenter-studerer-34-timer-i-uka.html?id=655276>

NO: Bruker 34 timer i uka på studier - Undersøkelse avliver myten om at norske studenter studerer for lite. Online under:

<http://www.studenttorget.no/index.php?show=3799&expand=3796,3799&artikkelid=9863>

PL: Polscy studenci nie chcą uczyć się za granicą. Online under:

http://studia.dlastudenta.pl/artyku/Polscy_studenci_nie_chca_uczyc_sie_za_granica,69982.html

SE: Tuffast för studerande med barn. Online under:

<http://hd.se/inrikes/2011/01/03/tuffast-for-studerande-med-barn/?from=rss>

UK: Undergraduate fees highest in England, Wales and Ireland. Online under:

http://www.researchresearch.com/index.php?option=com_news&template=rr_2col&view=article&articleId=1069064