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First Circular Letter, EUROSTUDENT IV

Dear friends and colleagues of the EUROSTUDENT network,

this circular will provide you with an update of our activities in the last months of EUROSTUDENT III and the beginning of EUROSTUDENT IV.

1. Publication of final report – Synopsis of Indicators and use of EIII Data in national reports

The final EUROSTUDENT report was released on September 26th 2008 at a special conference in Berlin. Each country, which has contributed data to EUROSTUDENT III, received 15 free copies of the full colour report. Further copies may be ordered through HIS at a cost of 30€ plus post and packaging. As with other such reports, it will also be available for general sale at all good bookshops or online at a price of round 50€. Please let us know, if you require further copies or order directly from the publisher.[1]

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention to a publication by our colleagues from Swiss Statistics. In this report national data on the social and economic conditions of student life in Switzerland is analysed in direct comparison with selected European countries which contributed data to EUROSTUDENT III. This is a very good example of national dissemination.[2]

Another national approach to evaluate EUROSTUDENT data for national purposes was the Italian Seminar on 12 November 2008. Here representatives from Fondazione Rui, the Italian Ministry for Higher Education and Research, HIS and Statistics Switzerland discussed key results of the EUROSTUDENT final report and its relevance for the social dimension of higher education in Italy.[3]

We would like to hear about other initiatives for national dissemination and also reference them on the central EUROSTUDENT website (they do not have to be in English), please let us know.

2. Start of EUROSTUDENT IV from 1 November

The fourth round of the EUROSTUDENT project began officially 1st November, 2008. The funding of the project is assured by contributions by each of the seven consortium partners, the European Commission (DG EAC Lifelong Learning Programme) and the German Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBF).

The fourth major survey of EUROSTUDENT on the social and economic conditions of student life in Europe is coordinated for the first time by a consortium. The consortium consists of seven partners: Austria (IHS), Bulgaria (ЦКОКО), Estonia (EÜL), Germany (HIS), Netherlands (MinOCW), Norway (NIFU STEP), UK (CHERI). HIS remains the main coordinator of the project and will manage the work of the consortium. A brief introduction to the tasks and partners was provided in the seventh circular letter of EUROSTUDENT III.[4]

[1] See: www.eurostudent.eu/eurostudent3/Order_EUROSTUDENT.pdf
[2] The publication is available in German and in French. Please see: www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/15/22/publ.html?publicationID=3322
[3] Please see: www.processodibologna.it/content/index.php?action=read_cnt&id_cnt=6619 and especially it.youtube.com/watch?v=a88wZKwm6Ag
[4] See: www.eurostudent.eu/docs/cl_jul08.pdf and www.eurostudent.eu/projectorg

3. Time schedule EUROSTUDENT IV

The overall time schedule is shown below. Countries planning a contribution to EUROSTUDENT IV, which are not able to adhere to the time schedule should contact HIS as soon as possible.

Task	Start date	Deadline for completion	No. of months
Preparation of the national surveys	Nov. 08	Aug. 09	10
Field phase for execution of national survey and national data calculation	Sept. 09 (earliest Apr. 09)	Apr. 10	8
Data delivery to coordinator	Apr. 10	Sept. 10	6
Data control	Jul. 10	Dec. 10	6
Data analysis by coordinator	Oct. 10	Mar. 11	6
Drawing up comparative report (Synopsis of Indicators)	Jan. 10	Mar. 11	3
Presentation of data from Interim Report at final international conference		Apr. 11	
Publication of final reports for EUROSTUDENT IV		Sept. 11	

4. Intensive Seminar on data conventions and definitions, Vienna 10-12th December 2008

In order to improve the common questionnaire for EUROSTUDENT IV we asked both researchers and representatives from ministries to provide their feedback on the appropriateness and practicability of the core questions of the common questionnaire used in EUROSTUDENT III.

The feedback served as a foundation for the intensive seminar on the revision of the core set of questions for EUROSTUDENT IV, which took place recently in Vienna and was hosted by IHS. The seminar had the purpose of discussing open issues on the core questions and drawing up the new questionnaire for EUROSTUDENT IV. The working group made up of network members, who had replied to an open invitation for participation, focussed on issues concerning the modification and adaption of the questions to the next EUROSTUDENT survey.

The seminar belongs to Workpackage 2 within the new organisational structure of the project. The main task of this workpackage, which is run by Bulgaria, is to assure data conventions and definitions. The new set of core questions will be presented at the Kick-off workshop 12-13th February 2009 in The Hague.

Work in progress on this issue can be followed on the internal wikipages.[5]

[5] See: ice.his.de/eurostuwiki/index.php?title=ReviewQ

5. Kick-off workshop, The Hague 12-13th February 2009

The first major event of EUROSTUDENT IV is the kick-off workshop. This time it is taking place in The Hague in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

The main purpose of the workshop is to clarify the participating countries and inform partners of the concept for the next round. The workshop will focus on data necessary for a contribution to EUROSTUDENT IV, on issues of data availability and sources of data. It is directly related to issues on the development of project conventions and definitions. Furthermore the time schedule, the obligations of participation and general organisational issues will be clarified.

In order to facilitate discussions on data availability and country participation we would like to ask each participant to prepare a poster presentation. More details to follow on the dedicated website.[6]

An official invitation was sent out on 18 December 2008.

As always, please contact us with your comments and suggestions.

Winter greetings!

Dominic Orr
Leader of International Coordination Team
EUROSTUDENT

www.eurostudent.eu | eurostudent@his.de | www.his.de
Dr. Dominic Orr +49 511 1220 372
Andrea Riedel +49 511 1220 379
Nicole Rohde +49 511 1220 269
Christoph Gwosc +49 511 1220 366

[6] See: www.eurostudent.eu/events/denhaag