EUROSTUDENT IV

Newsletter

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BRIEF STATUS UPDATE

5 new countries confirm their participation in EUROSTUDENT IV

Core set of questions and accompanying handbook for EUROSTUDENT IV released

First meeting of the International Steering Board on 15 September in Berlin

Intensive seminar "Planning and executing national online surveys for EUROSTUDENT" on 16-18 September in Berlin

CURRENT PROJECT ACTIVITIES FOR EUROSTUDENT IV

Confirmed participation in E:IV

In the last few months we have collected confirmed participation letters undersigned by the appropriate national authorities from around half of the countries, who have informally confirmed participation. The table on the right shows all countries, which have sent us such a document. We encourage all others to send us this document as soon as possible and at the latest by 30 September 2009. Additionally, we are happy to welcome Belgium (both French and Flemish communities), Denmark, Georgia, Hungary and Poland as new participants to our network.

Countries which officially confirmed participation
Austria
Estonia
Finland
Georgia
Germany
Lithuania
Poland
Romania
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey

Released: Technical manual for the execution of the E:IV survey in national settings

The manual reflects the experience of EUROSTUDENT network accumulated during the previous rounds of the project. It also takes into account the changes in core questions that have recently occurred as a result of the discussions within the working group and especially during December 2008 meeting in Vienna and January 2009 meeting in Sofia. It will assist participating countries to prepare for the start of national surveys. The manual is to be used for adapting the EUROSTUDENT IV core questions to the national environments. It follows the structure of EUROSTUDENT IV questionnaire and it is divided into six sections. Each section starts with a short introduction that explains the topics covered. Each question is then given a special article organised in four units: Question; Explanation and Definition; Purpose and History. The manual was elaborated by the Bulgarian team of researchers under the EUROSTUDENT IV workpackage 2 Development of project conventions and definitions. The Center for Control and Assessment of Quality in Education (CCAQE) was given the task to assure that central conventions and definitions are established and are applicable to a maximum of cases in order to reflect the diversity of the social dimension of higher education in the participating countries. During the whole work process CCAQE and its research team received constant support by the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS, Austria) and the Higher Education Information System (HIS, Germany). The technical manual can be downloaded from the project website and is available on the project wikipages for updates and national comments.

Appointed: 6 European experts for the International Steering Board
On 15 September the International Steering Board for EUROSTUDENT IV will convene in Berlin. The 6-member board encompasses experts from a wide spectrum of stakeholders and interested parties, who will help us clarify an appropriate strategy and development for the project. A member of the Steering Board is expected to stay in touch with developments in the area of higher education policy, especially the social dimension of European higher education and to remain up-to-date with developments within the EUROSTUDENT project. We will arrange three official meetings of the Steering Board, one at the start, one in the middle and one near the end of the project. Additional meetings may be called if they are deemed necessary. The table shows the six experts and the organisations and stakeholders they represent.

Board member	Position	Member organisation	Stakeholder/ Interested Party
Radu Damian	Chair of the Steering Committee for Higher Education and Research	Council of Europe	Wider European interests in higher education
Richard Deiss	DG Education and Culture	European Commission (main funder)	European Policy
Germain Dondelinger	Professeur attaché, coordinator for higher education in the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research and previous chairman of the BFUG working group on the social dimension	Member of Bologna Secretariat or Working Group on Social Dimension	Bologna Policy
Inge Gielis	Member of the Social Affairs Committee	European Students' Unions	Students
Peter Greisler	Director of the department higher education institutions, Federal Ministry of Education and Research Germany (BMBF)	Federal Ministry of Education and Research Germany (main funder)	National Policy
Michael Hörig	Project Officer	European University Association	Universities

Intensive seminar "Planning and executing national online surveys for EUROSTUDENT" on 16-18 September in Berlin
Following the success of our last intensive seminar in December (on the core questions for the EUROSTUDENT survey), we would now like to offer a further intensive seminar, this time on executing national online surveys. As we aim for an intensive exchange of expertise and experiences, we would like to restrict the number of registrations to 15. Further conditions for registration are: only one person per country, this person should be responsible for organising/executing an online survey for EUROSTUDENT IV, and should be prepared to make an active contribution to the seminar. An invitation to participate was sent to all members of the EUROSTUDENT network on 25 June. Further information will be available shortly on the wikipages.

Researcher exchange programme
One of the continual aims of the coordinators of EUROSTUDENT is to encourage discussion and exchange of experiences between participating countries. To this aim, Martin Unger (IHS) has proposed a researcher exchange programme. This programme would offer researchers involved in EUROSTUDENT the opportunity to spend some time in a partner institution from the Network. This would be a bilateral initiative between researchers interested in an exchange and institutions able to host a researcher for a period of time. We propose that the duration of the stay should be from a number of days to a number of weeks. For more information, please refer to the project wikipages.
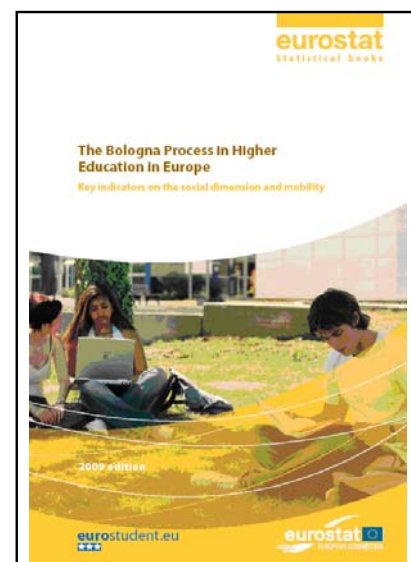
New project websites
We have recently been able to move all component websites of the EUROSTUDENT project onto the same server. This has the advantage that you only need to know one address to access all our online provisions. The main website remains: www.eurostudent.eu. From there you can now get access to the wikipages of EUROSTUDENT – see last menu point on the lefthand side. This move means that you will require new logins for access to the wikipages (and later for the new Data Delivery Module). Please contact us on eurostudent@his.de to receive your new logins and access to the new wikipages. One further innovation is the provision of a rich-text editor for wiki. This editor allows you to contribute to a wikipage as if you were using a normal word processor and without knowledge of syntax. You may also copy and paste directly from Word to enter contributions. We are looking forward to your contributions.

ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE EUROSTUDENT NETWORK

New reports:

- Eurostat/Eurostudent (2009, eds.), The Bologna Process in Higher Education in Europe. Key indicators on the social dimension and mobility.
  http://www.eurostudent.eu/download/bfug_report.pdf
- Johnson, C. et al. (2009), Student Income and Expenditure Survey 2007-2008.
  http://www.dius.gov.uk/research_and_analysis/~/media/publications/D/DIUS_RR_09_05
- Warhurst, C. et al. (2009), Higher and Further Education Students' Income, Expenditure and Debt in Scotland 2007-08.
  http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/06/24115708/3
- NCHE Malta (2009), Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020: Recommendations of the National Commission for Higher Education.
  https://secure2.gov.mt/nche/mediacenter/PDFs/1_F&H%20Strategy%202020%20NCHE%20Recommendations.pdf
- Studentenmonitor Vlaanderen (2009), Preliminary results of the Flemish survey.
  www.eurostudent.eu/download/Studentenmonitor_Vlaanderen.pdf

Presentations, conferences, meetings including members of EUROSTUDENT

- 23-Jun-09 York, Annual conference European Access Network (presentation)
- 27/29-May-09 New Orleans, Retention 2009, Educational Policy Institute (presentation)
- 21/23-May-09 Bucharest, UNESCO HE Forum (attendance)
- 13/15-May-09 Warsaw, Meeting with Ministry and stakeholders & ACA Annual conference (attendance)
- 4/5-May-09 Budapest, Meeting with Ministry and stakeholders
- 28/29-Apr-09 Leuven/ Louvain-la-Neuve, Ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process (presentation)
- 21-Apr-09 Brussels, ESU European Training Conference 2009 (presentation)
- 03-Apr-09 Malta, Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020 (presentation)
- 02-Apr-09 Siegburg, DAAD International seminar: "Bologna from Outside" (attendance)
- 01-Apr-09 Tallin, ESU Equity Training in cooperation with EÜL (presentation)
- 27-Mar-09 Brussels, ACA Policy seminar (presentation)
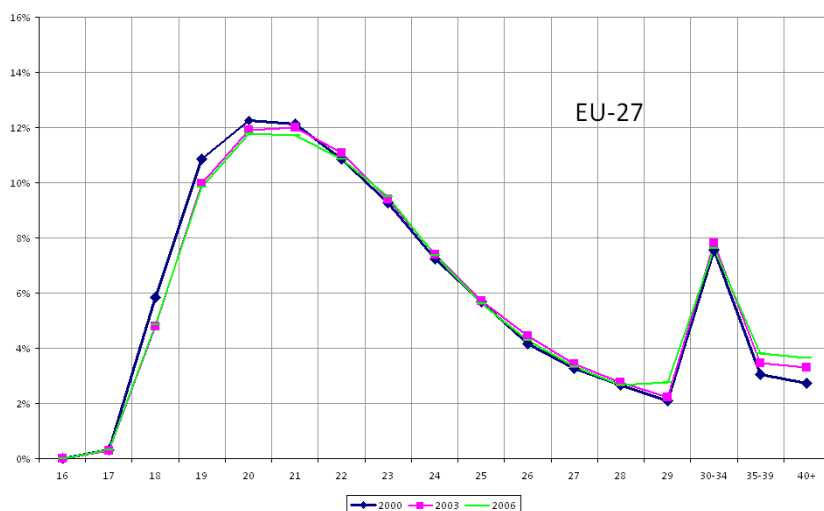- 26/27-Mar-09 Prague, BFUG Meeting (presentation)

Demographic change has become a subject of concern in European societies and elsewhere. The population is ageing through a combination of longer lives and less births. This development has particular relevance for the future development of higher education as the typical student age group is declining in many countries. The following two charts show, respectively, the typical age of a European student and a Eurostat prognosis for the development of this age group through 2020. The data substantiate the state of the Bologna Ministers in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve that, "(f)aced with the challenge of an ageing population, Europe can only succeed (…) if it maximises the talents and capacities of all its citizens and fully engages in lifelong learning, as well as in widening participation in higher education."
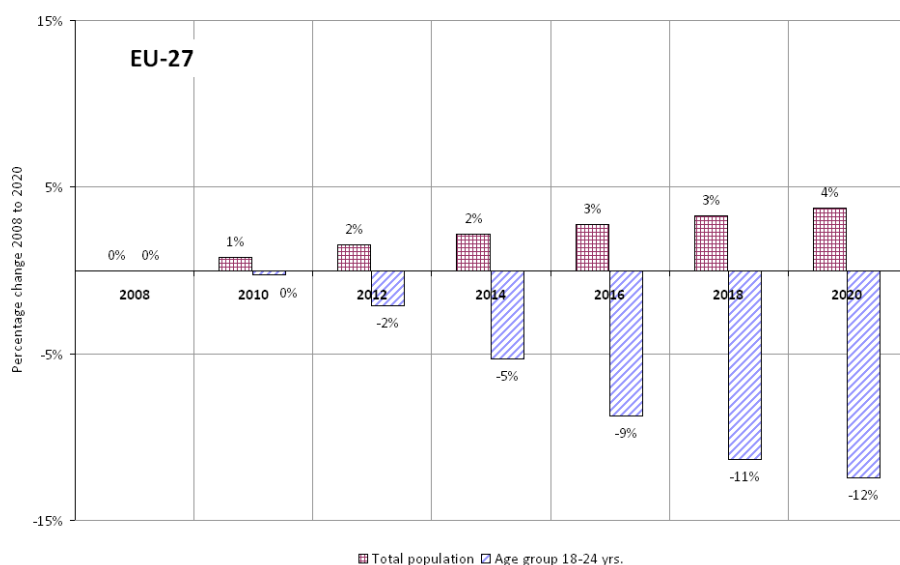
The data on the current age profile of European students shows that two-thirds are under the age of 25 and that 85% are under the age of 30 years old. The population prognosis shows that this typical student age group of 18 to 24 year olds will have decreased in size by 2020 by 12%, whilst the total population is expected to grow by 4%. Naturally, this picture of a reduction of students is more diverse on a country level (e.g. prognosis UK -7%, Germany -14% and Slovakia -33%). However, the conclusion must be that higher education systems look beyond the "normal" students in this age group. Countries which are more inclusive will ensure their sustainability and the fulfilment of skill requirements for a knowledge society.[1] This means evaluating the appropriateness of study conditions.

Recently for instance, a European wide survey of students found that 32% of all students

Age profile of students (ISCED 5a) for Europe, 2000-2006 (EU-27, Eurostat)
- Share of all students by age

The changing size of the typical student age group and the size of the total population between 2008 and 2020 for Europe (EU-27, Eurostat prognosis)[3]

strongly agree with the statement that universities and colleges should provide more programmes for part-time students – and 39% of students over 25 years are of this opinion.[2] One of the tasks of EUROSTUDENT is, therefore, to describe these study conditions and help evaluate their appropriateness for sustainable higher education systems.

[1] European Commission (2009): New skills for new jobs – Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs. Luxembourg.

[2] Gallup (2009): Students and higher education reform – Special target survey (coordinated by the Directorate-General Communication), p.15

[3] Based on Europop2008, convergence scenario