

BRIEF STATUS UPDATE

- 26 countries contribute to EUROSTUDENT IV
- Data Delivery Module and Technical Handbook released
- EUROSTUDENT workshop in Prague on data conventions and quality control
- 2 upcoming events in autumn 2010

CURRENT PROJECT ACTIVITIES FOR EUROSTUDENT IV

26 countries contribute to EUROSTUDENT IV

At the end of the first half of the project, we now have 26 countries planning to provide data for this round of EUROSTUDENT. That means that despite the financial crisis putting strains on public budgets, the number of participating countries will be higher than in the last round. The table on the right-hand side details which countries are now participating.

Data delivery tools released



The *Technical Manual* for the Execution of the Data Delivery Module (DDM) was released in March 2010. This manual provides details on all data tables and indicators which will be used for EUROSTUDENT IV, including a glossary of technical terms and an explanation of the focus groups of the analysis (e.g. students by socio-economic background, older students, part-time students and lifelong learners). The manual provides national research teams with instructions on collecting, processing and analysing data and for delivering these to the central coordinators.

Besides the paper version of the manual, which was distributed and discussed among the participants of the EUROSTUDENT workshop in Prague, there is also an online-version that is available on our internal wiki-pages.

This will keep partners updated on any changes made to the manual.

Therefore, all users of the handbook are asked to exclusively use the online-version. Furthermore, on the same wiki-page a PDF-file on frequently asked questions is available. Link: http://eurostudent.his.de/wiki/index.php/DDM_Handbook

In the middle of May 2010 the *Data Delivery Module*, which is the tool used for delivering national survey data to the international coordinators, was released. It is accessible via the Internet at: <http://www.eurostudent.eu/eiv/delivery>. Each participating country receives a log-in code on request, which is necessary to enter country data.

The first version of the DDM is a beta version with full functionality. It is, therefore, likely that some of the features (including the graphics) and some of the instructions will be updated or modified during the coming months. Although your national survey data may not yet be ready for delivery, you are invited to register as a test user to check the tool and play around with its features. The data may be delivered either manually by typing them into each field topic by topic or by exporting the whole data set via a flat-file. Anyone interested in the DDM can visit the site and use the log-ins (username and password) "testuser" to explore the tool.

Austria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
England/Wales
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Malta
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Scotland
Slovak Republic
Slovenia
Sweden
Spain
Switzerland
The Netherlands
Turkey

Workshop in Prague on data conventions and quality

On 23rd and 24th March 2010 the EUROSTUDENT workshop *Data Conventions and Quality Control* took place in Prague in the Czech Republic. 40 participants from 23 countries attended the event. The workshop was opened by Dr. Walter Bartos, Chair of the Czech Parliamentary Committee on Education, and Prof. Petr Matějů from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic.

During the workshop the status of work in the partner countries and the central data conventions and measures for quality control were discussed.

The Data Delivery Module and the accompanying Technical Manual for the Execution of the DDM were presented. A special emphasis was placed on identifying “sticky problems” of data analysis such as filter variables, treating missing data or defining valid cases.



"Family photo" of workshop participants

Several working groups discussed these problems and related issues and developed proposals for solutions. Suggestions for dissemination and for further cooperation within the EUROSTUDENT network were presented by Elisabeth Hovdhaugen from NIFU STEP and discussed within the plenum. There was considerable interest in further cooperation of clusters of countries in methodical, regional or thematic respects. For presentations and outcomes, please see: http://eurostudent.his.de/wiki/index.php/Workshop_Quality



Working group at the workshop

Following the workshop, the participants of the *Central Survey Hosting* (CSH) met at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague. The participating countries presented the organisation of their survey and its current stage. Country-specific and common problems were discussed and ideas for solution exchanged. For an update, please see: <http://eurostudent.his.de/wiki/index.php/CSH>

Upcoming events

Two major events will take place during the course of this year. Between 6th and 8th September 2010 an *Intensive Seminar Analysis and Reporting* will be held in Valletta, Malta (the date has not yet been confirmed, but is not likely to change) in conjunction with the Maltese National Commission for Higher Education. The seminar will focus on matters concerning the analysis, interpretation and reporting of delivered data. The target group for participation is a rather small group of country representatives (12-15 participants), which includes both researchers and policy-makers from different regions.

Interested persons are invited to register via email eurostudent@his.de by 16th July. In case there are more applicants than available places, we shall make a selection based on the date of your expression of interest and the need to have a balanced group of participants. Further information about the intensive seminar will be added to our wiki-pages shortly: http://eurostudent.his.de/wiki/index.php/IS_DataAnalysis.

For early October 2010 we are planning a workshop *Data Interpretation and Context Information* in Ankara, Turkey, in conjunction with the Turkish Council of Higher Education and METU University. The main aim of the workshop is to discuss national findings from EUROSTUDENT partners and their use for the international comparison. This workshop will be prepared by the international coordinators, but also based on the results of the Intensive Seminar “Analysis and Reporting”. There are no restrictions on the number of participants from the EUROSTUDENT network. We expect between 40 and 60 persons and both researchers and policy-makers to attend. The workshop will last for two full days plus one day for arrival and an informal meeting. Further information about the workshop will be added to our wiki-pages shortly: http://eurostudent.his.de/wiki/index.php/Workshop_Analysis.



Valletta skyline



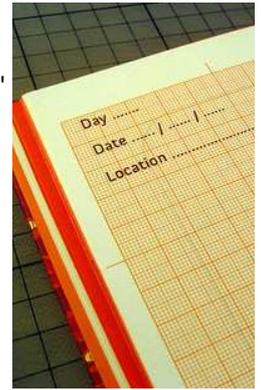
Atatürk Mausoleum, Ankara

- We would like to remind you that proposals are invited from partners for hosting the EUROSTUDENT IV Final Conference in June 2011.

ACTIVITIES IN AND CONCERNING THE EUROSTUDENT NETWORK

Presentations, conferences, meetings including members of EUROSTUDENT

- 16.6.10, Riga: 3rd meeting of the BFUG working group reporting (participation)
- 24.-25.05.10, Málaga: Conference of Spanish EU Presidency "Social Dimension and Responsibility of Universities" (presentation)
- 20.05.10, Madrid: 1st meeting of BFUG working group social dimension (participation)
- 12.05.10, Berlin: 2nd meeting of BFUG working group mobility (participation)
- 29.-30.04.10, Hannover: 5. Jahrestagung der Gesellschaft für Hochschulforschung (2 presentations)
- 26.03.10, Prague: 2nd meeting of E:IV CSH project group (meeting)
- 23.-25.03.10, Prague: E:IV Workshop "Quality Paths" (meeting)
- 22.03.10, Prague: 4th meeting of E:IV Consortium (meeting)
- 11.03.10, Budapest / Vienna: 2010 Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference (participation)
- 11.02.10, Tallinn: National seminar on data for the social dimension in Estonian higher education (presentation)
- 08.-09.02.10, Tallinn: 2nd meeting of E:IV working group on indicator development (meeting)
- 21.01.10, Luxemburg: 2nd meeting of BFUG working group reporting (participation)
- 13.01.10, Berlin: 1st meeting of BFUG working group mobility (participation)



Spanish EU Presidency holds seminar on the social dimension of higher education

Around 150 experts from Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America and Asia attended a special seminar on the social dimension as a responsibility of European universities on 24th and 25th May in Málaga, Spain. Speaking in his role as representative of the Spanish presidency of the EU, the Spanish minister of education, Mr. Ángel Gabilondo, emphasised his view of the social dimension as the "vertebra of academic life". Improving it will lead to improvements in the performance and effectiveness of higher education. There was a lot of interest in the presentation from Dominic Orr, which argued that a focus on student talent is not enough to assure high quality and effective higher education, as student background and personal circumstances affect students' opportunity to study. The official conference conclusions will be published shortly.

Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference 2010 in Budapest and Vienna

On 11th and 12th March, the 47 ministers responsible for higher education in the Bologna signatory countries met to celebrate ten years of the Bologna Process and prepare for the next ten years. Dominic Orr took part in this meeting as representative of EUROSTUDENT and HIS, one of the three official data collectors for the Bologna Process alongside Eurostat and Eurydice. In both the declaration itself and the ministers' comments during the conference there was a noticeable consensus that most structures are now in place, but that more attention should be placed on the implementation of the Bologna reforms in the next phase. Recognition of the role of higher education as a major driver of social and economic development also led ministers to emphasise the social dimension as a lever to assure equal opportunities and high quality education.



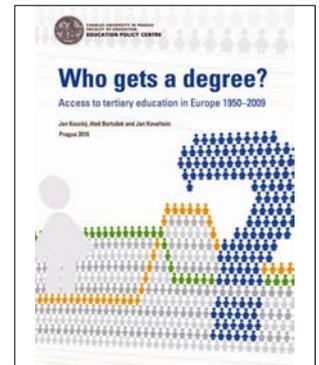
Ministers and members of the BFUG in Hungarian parliament (photographer: Eszter Gordan)

In their comments in the plenum, most ministers mentioned the social dimension explicitly and many made reference to EUROSTUDENT as a key source of comparative data. We may, therefore, conclude for our project that there is now a common acceptance of the importance of our work. We now have to work together in our countries and in international fora to assure that our data contributes to evidence-based debates on improving higher education for all those people, who can benefit from it. The declaration can be downloaded here: http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/2010_conference/documents/Budapest-Vienna_Declaration.pdf

The next Ministerial Meeting to take stock of progress and to drive the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve agenda forward, will be hosted by Romania in Bucharest on 26th and 27th April 2012.

Recent reports

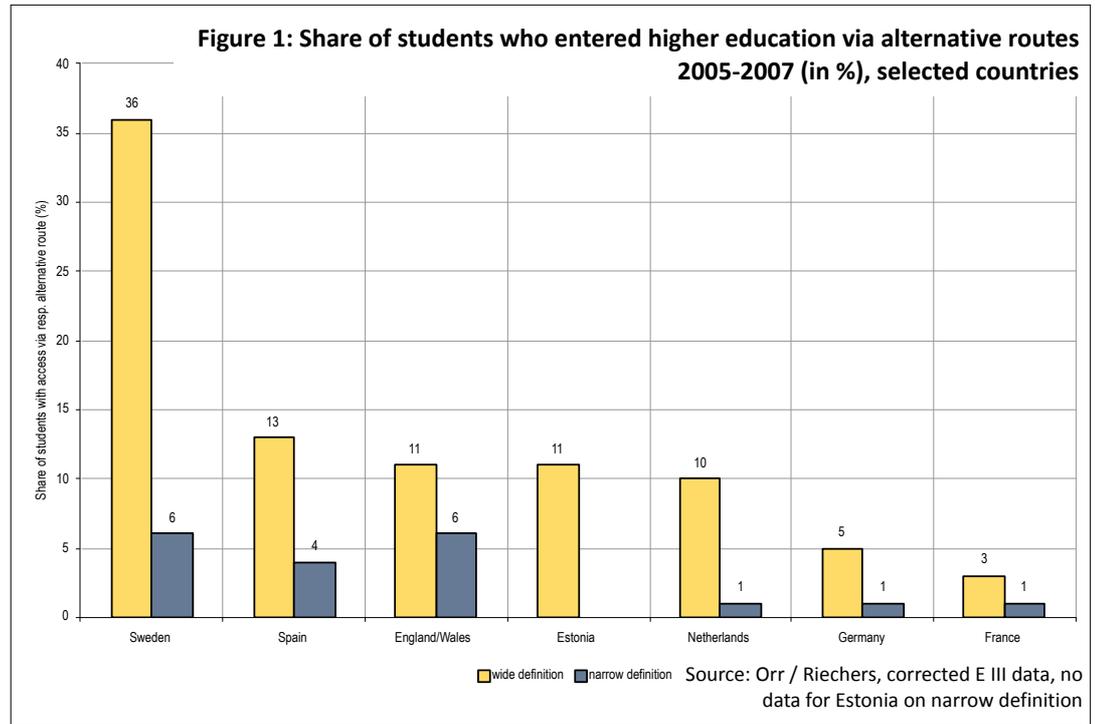
- Koucký, J. / Bartusek, A. / Kovarovic, J. (2010): Who gets a degree? Access to tertiary education in Europe 1950-2009. Online under: www.strediskovzdelavacipolitiky.info/download/Whogetsadegree.pdf
This publication is part of a longer study, looking at various aspects of higher education access in cross-country comparison and over time. The results are based on an inequality index developed by the authors. (English)
- Orr, D. (2010): Lohnt sich das Studium im europäischen Hochschulraum? HIS Magazin. Online under: http://www.his.de/pdf/pub_mag/mag-201001.pdf
This brief article looks at two specific results of the Eurostat/Eurostudent publication for the Bologna Process concerning wage differences and employment mismatch. (German)
- Orr, D.: Die soziale Dimension des Europäischen Hochschulraums, in: Himpele, K., Keller, A., Staack, S. (2010, eds.): Endstation Bologna? Zehn Jahre Europäischer Hochschulraum (No. 116)
This short article looks at the need to focus on study framework conditions in the next phase of the Bologna Process, especially flexibility of studies. (German)
- 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
This is a comprehensive study on the social and economic conditions of students in Germany, which is the basis for Germany's contribution to EUROSTUDENT. (German)
- OECD (2010): A Family Affair - Intergenerational Social Mobility across OECD Countries. Online under: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/2/7/45002641.pdf>
This paper assesses recent cross-country patterns in intergenerational social mobility and examines the role that public policies play in affecting mobility. (English)
- Unger, M. et al. (2010): Studierenden-Sozialerhebung 2009. Online under: www.sozialerhebung.at
This is a comprehensive study on the social and economic conditions of students in Austria, which is the basis for Austria's contribution to EUROSTUDENT. (German)
- Brennan, J. et al. (2010): Higher Education and Society - A research report. Online under: <http://www.open.ac.uk/cheri/documents/HigherEducationandSociety.pdf>
Does higher education make a difference and to whom? This review examines this question on the basis of empirical research. (English)
- Brennan, J. et al. (2010): Improving What is Learned at University - An exploration of the social and organisational diversity of university education. Routledge.
This book investigates the following questions: What is learned in universities today? Is it what students expect to learn? Is it what universities say they learn? How far do the answers to questions such as these differ according to what, where and how a person studies? (English)
- Business in the Community (2010): Race into higher education. Today's diverse generation into tomorrow's workforce. Online under: <http://www.bitc.org.uk/document.rm?id=10802>
Provides a snapshot of where and what Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are studying at UK universities and whether this has changed since 1995-96. Looks at the success of ethnic minorities in finding employment after completing their education. (English)
- Harris, M. et al. (2010): What more can be done to widen access to highly selective universities? Online under: <http://www.offa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Report-on-access-to-highly-selective-universities.pdf>
Reports on an official review by Sir Martin Harris on access to highly selective universities in the UK for those from underprivileged backgrounds. (English)



FEATURED INTERNATIONAL STATISTICS

In connection with policies to widen participation in higher education, there is a current interest in how entry to higher education is organised in different countries. The EUROSTUDENT III report presented some comparative data on access routes into higher education with a focus on “traditional” and “non-traditional” routes.¹ Both the analysis in the EUROSTUDENT report, which is based on student survey data, and analyses using administrative data from universities² have shown that there are differences in the organisation of education systems and the structure of entry routes which make international comparisons difficult. A new report from HIS has re-looked at the data from EUROSTUDENT for seven countries and has attempted to map the data to context information.³ This process has led to some corrections of the data first reported and some interesting insights into the context of access routes.

Figure 1 shows the results for seven countries with a differentiation between a wide and a narrow definition of “non-traditional” routes. In fact, the new HIS report suggests using the term “alternative routes” as compared to the direct route through upper secondary education, as this term does not get confused with what is traditional and what is not. The wide definition is based on a country-specific understanding of “alternative” route, but focuses on students who have not taken an academic stream in upper secondary school and have nevertheless entered higher education.⁴ The narrow definition



focuses – as was done previously in EUROSTUDENT III – on students who have largely used the accreditation of prior learning, vocational training and work experience or an aptitude test to enter higher education. This latter definition might be seen as a little restrictive. On the other hand, it allows for a more reliable comparison between countries.

The analyses has shown Sweden, Spain and England and Wales to have the highest share of students entering higher education via alternative routes according to both the wide and the narrow definition.

One interesting result is that both Sweden and Spain use standard entrance examinations in order to assure the quality of applicants. This appears to allow them to widen the access routes leading to these examinations. England and Wales do not use such standard examinations, but the universities and colleges have traditionally made use of their autonomy by applying specific selection procedures including interviews. Despite the possibility of using various qualifications to enter higher education in England and Wales, a credit point system has been developed, which enables each applicant’s educational biography to be expressed as a number of standard credit points. It is furthermore instructive to see that the Netherlands has a large share of students, who enter higher education via alternative routes according to the wide definition, but not according to the narrow definition. In fact, the Dutch educational system provides potential students with many opportunities at both upper secondary education level and in further education, which may make the provision of procedures of accreditation of prior learning and experience less necessary for policies of widening participation, i.e. there are few dead-ends in the Dutch educational system.

¹ EUROSTUDENT 2008, p.39ff – see: http://www.eurostudent.eu:8080/download/Eurostudent3_Final

² Eurostat / EUROSTUDENT 2009, p.56ff – see: <http://www.eurostudent.eu:8080/download/KS-78-09-653-EN.PDF>

³ Orr, D. / Riechers, M. (in press): Organisation des Hochschulzugangs in sieben europäischen Ländern - Eine vergleichende Betrachtung. HIS:Forum Hochschule. Soon available here: <http://www.his.de/publikation/forum>

⁴ The report contains a basic scheme for comparing the organisation of access routes, which was then used for the analyses of the seven case study countries. This basic scheme is now being used for data collection in EUROSTUDENT IV.