

### BRIEF STATUS UPDATE

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### 1. Current EUROSTUDENT V project activities

#### NIS-EUROSTUDENT V meeting in Armenia

The consultative Workshop for the organization of the EUROSTUDENT survey in NIS countries that took place in Yerevan on 6-7 September 2012 was highly successful. The open sessions of the workshop were attended by an audience of about one hundred experts, researchers and civil society activists as well as regional media. The Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia Dr. Armen Ashotyan gave an opening speech, followed by welcome notes of the Rector of the Yerevan State Linguistic University Prof. Gayane Gasparyan, the EUROSTUDENT project leader Dr. Dominic Orr and special greetings from the head of the Committee on Education of the Commonwealth of Independent States Prof. Vassiliy Strazhev.

During several working sessions, detailed discussions were held on technical and methodological aspects of the project, as well as related financial and administrative frameworks.

The Initiative Group for the implementation of the fifth wave of the EUROSTUDENT survey in NIS countries includes 26 experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Austria and Germany, most of whom were able to take active part in the workshop.

The Initiative Group adopted a joint declaration, the "Yerevan Communiqué", addressing actual and potential supporters of the implementation of EUROSTUDENT in NIS countries and agreed upon the organization of a subsequent meeting, following the cordial invitation of the Moscow Higher School of Economics on 20 October 2012.

Next steps are the collection of Letters of Commitment, signed by each country's ministry, the organization of a delayed entry to the project and the clarification of funding issues.



#### Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro experts to join EUROSTUDENT V

The Serbian Centre for Education Policy has been successful with its Tempus project on reforming higher education funding in the region. Part of this project involves full participation of the three countries in EUROSTUDENT V. Formalities are currently being completed.

### Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe? The new core set of questions for EUROSTUDENT

When thinking about questionnaires, we have to consider three main points: what do we want to know, how we ask this and how can we assure unequivocal answers? These issues are formed by different interests among researchers and stakeholders of EUROSTUDENT V. International stakeholders like the European Commission have a need for figures and benchmarks to evaluate their policies. Other stakeholders like the European Student Union need information on the students living conditions to adopt their policy to the evidence we provide. And last but not least, researchers seek data to raise new questions and conduct further research on national and international levels.

Facing these different approaches, setting up a core questionnaire for about 25+X countries in Europe and NIS-countries becomes quite tricky, but by the end of summer, the Hainburg working group has succeeded in setting up the core questionnaire of EUROSTUDENT V. It is a compromise between the different interests mentioned. The final decision has been driven by three major issues.

The EUROSTUDENT expertise is well known for focusing on the students and their point of view. Collecting comparable data which puts students at centre is our strength. However, the subjective nature of the data limits its appropriateness for benchmarks – those are more reliably drawn from administrative data.

Quantitative social research has to recognise its limits when developing a questionnaire. No questionnaire can give you the deep insights you get from a two hours personal interview. But what we can do is to develop indicators drawn from focussed questions and compare those on an international level. Therefore, the questionnaire may not depict perfectly students' living conditions in each national or regional context, but will serve well for detecting cross-European patterns and differences concerning students' lives.

An important issue in a project in its fifth round is, of course, comparability over time. But we have to keep in mind, that our data is cross-sectional and not panel data. Thus, improving the questionnaire with the experience of researchers from many countries (participants from 13 countries took part in the Hainburg working group) is more important than sticking to a time series.

The outcome of these considerations is the new EUROSTUDENT V questionnaire, it will be released together with a manual on how to implement it in national settings in November 2012. Following on from the Kick-off meeting in May 2012, the Consortium will be organising three regional conferences for national research teams. ResearchNed and PRAXIS are responsible for coordinating these events.

### Steering Board of EUROSTUDENT V starts operation

The new Steering Board for the fifth round of EUROSTUDENT is complete. The EUROSTUDENT V Steering Board is chaired by Laurence Boegli and Sarah Gerhard Ortega (FSO). Dominic Orr (HIS-HF) and Martin Unger (IHS) are consortium representatives. Further voting members are Maria-Kristin Gylfadottir (European Commission), Florian Kaiser (ESU), Věra Štastná (BFUG), Kathleen Ordnung (BMBF), Marlies Leegwater (MinOCW), Carole Waldvogel standing in for Monique Ronzeau (OVE), Jesper Risom (UBST) and Tomislav Vodička (MZOS).

The main tasks and competences are:

- Approval of annual report presented by HIS-HF
- Approval of financial report presented by HIS-HF
- Strategic advice on the progress and about the future of the project
- Discussion of quality development of the project
- Settlement of disputes between Consortium and fee-paying countries.

The Steering Board generally meets once a year in Berlin, Germany. The next meeting will take place in late January or early February 2013 in order to discuss and approve the annual report as well as the financial report.



(EUROSTUDENT V Steering Board, from left to right: Marlies Leegwater, Tomislav Vodička, Carole Waldvogel, Martin Unger, Kathleen Ordnung, Dominic Orr, Laurence Boegli, Maria-Kristin Gylfadottir, Sarah Gerhard Ortega, Jesper Risom. Not in the picture: Florian Kaiser, Věra Štastná)

## 2. Activities related to the EUROSTUDENT V network

### BFUG meeting in Cyprus, 28-29 August 2012

The main subject of the meeting was the new work programme for the period leading up to May 2015. The BFUG Board confirmed four working groups:

- WG on Reporting on the Bologna Process implementation;
- WG on qualifications frameworks, recognition, quality assurance and transparency;
- WG on the social dimension and lifelong learning;
- WG on mobility and the external dimension of the EHEA/ internationalisation.

EUROSTUDENT expects to make contributions to Reporting, Social Dimension and Mobility. In the WG Reporting (chaired by LU and LV) EUROSTUDENT will again be asked to work with Eurydice and Eurostat as experts and data collectors, and Eurydice will be drawing up the study for the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015. The WG Social Dimension wants to continue its focus on peer learning for improvement in the social dimension of higher education provision. The project "Peer Learning for the Social Dimension PL4SD" (HIS-HF; IHS, IDE from Croatia, ESU), which is co-funded by the European Union, hopes to contribute directly to these efforts. In Mobility (chaired by DE and AT) EUROSTUDENT will remain a central source of information on mobility barriers and non-mobility trends.

At the close of the BFUG meeting in Cyprus, Vera Stasná of the Czech Republic was nominated BFUG representative in the EURSTUDENT Steering Board.

The next BFUG meeting will take place in Dublin, Spring 2013 under the EU presidency of Ireland.



### Portability of loans

ACA has just signed the contract for a new EU project, on state grants and loans for mobility. The project is entitled "State Grants and Loans as a Means to Increase Outgoing Mobility" (STIME) and is funded under the Accompanying Measures of the Lifelong Learning Programme and will span the period from October 2012 to September 2013. ACA will cooperate in this endeavor with the *Deutsches Studentenwerk* and Dominic Orr from EUROSTUDENT will join the advisory board for this project.

The first objective of the project is to create a comparative overview and propose a typology for so-called state grants and loans. The particular emphasis will be on the 'portability' of these study funding instruments, i.e. on the possibilities to use them not only for domestic study, but also for study abroad. The project's second objective is to evaluate the 'quantitative importance' of state grants and loans for overall study abroad. Follow the link to get to the ACA [Website](#).

### Peer Learning for the Social Dimension

The social dimension has been the subject of many European and international discussions, but there is very little on the measures that are taken and can lead to improvements for the social dimension. This gap was recently pointed out by the EUROSTUDENT study which points to the need to provide the framework for fostering mutual learning between countries and between leaders of higher education institutions. It is also explicitly mentioned in the [Bucharest Communiqué](#) of the Bologna-Ministers.

The project "Peer Learning for the Social Dimension PL4SD" (HIS-HF; IHS, IDE from Croatia, ESU), which is co-funded by the European Union, hopes to contribute directly to these efforts.

The initiative should fulfil the following objectives in a structured and transparent way:

- Monitor relevant aspects of the implementation of initiatives related to the social dimension across EHEA (i.e. national targets and national action plans on social dimension).
- Examine and compare how EHEA countries collect and analyse data on the social dimension of higher education.
- Facilitate peer learning by collecting good practices and successful examples of "what works" at national, regional and institutional level (i.e. exchange good practice on how to increase participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, access routes, flexibility of studies).

The strategies and practices which are being used throughout the EHEA will be collected and systematically catalogued. They will then be made available on an open website, where other actors from various countries or institutions can look up what is available and use it to inform their own development of policy and practice.

The kick-off of the initiative will take place on 6-7. November 2012 in Vienna, Austria.

## 3. New reports

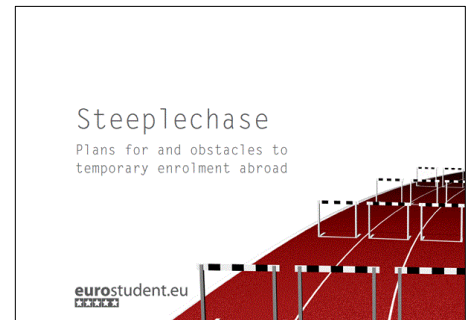
### National report Malta

Malta's National Commission for Higher Education has just published their EUROSTUDENT VI national report. Click on the picture to get to the full report and the executive summary. For other national reports using the EUROSTUDENT data see our webpage <http://www.eurostudent.eu/results/reports>



### Steeplechase

The Steeplechase discussion paper has been released. Follow the link to get to the project's webpage and documents. You will find a 5 country comparative analysis of what deters students from going abroad. The final report, but also the data set and the manual used to calculate the data are available on the project website: <http://www.eurostudent.eu/about/associated/steeplechase>



### Intelligence Brief: Students' Commuting Time and its Implications

EUROSTUDENT's Intelligence Briefs provide short pieces of analysis on specific topics. Check out the 5th EUROSTUDENT Intelligence Brief on the topic **Students' Commuting Time and its Implications** to find out which effect the students' housing situation has on their daily commuting time and to what extent their travel costs burden their budgets. Click on the picture to get to the full Intelligence Brief.



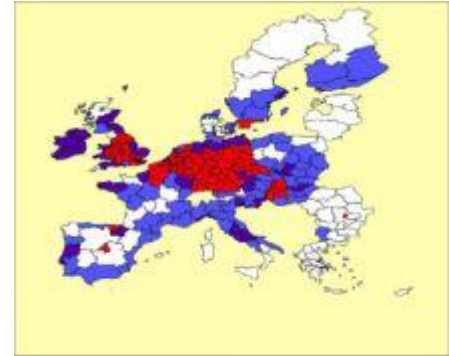
## 4. International and comparative statistics

### Mind the Gap - Education Inequality Across EU Regions

How is participation in higher education affected by the location of higher education institutions? The figure shows the spatial distribution of the "geographical accessibility" to higher education. In particular, it depicts the spatial distribution of regional populations living at more than 60 minutes travel distance (by car or train) from the nearest university as a proportion of the total population in the region. It is noteworthy that there are a total of 97 regions where virtually all population is within 60 minutes from the nearest University. Most of these regions are in Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In contrast, most of the regions with the lowest "accessibility" scores (14.25% or more of total population living in localities more than 60 minutes from the nearest university) are in south-east Europe, northern Sweden and Finland, the Baltic states, Spain, Denmark and France. This means that many regions are well-placed to offer higher education provisions within the vicinity of students' place of living. Within this context, the issue of student commuting time and expenses is particularly relevant. Please see the latest EUROSTUDENT Intelligence Brief on this topic

[http://www.eurostudent.eu/download\\_files/documents/IB\\_commuting\\_081012.pdf](http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/IB_commuting_081012.pdf)

Click on the figure to get to the report "Mind the Gap - Education Inequality Across EU Regions".



Picture source:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/nesse/report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/doc/nesse/report_en.pdf)