

BRIEF STATUS UPDATE

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1. Current EUROSTUDENT V project activities

Consortium meeting in Berlin

After an eventful 2012 the Consortium came together for a two day meeting to reflect on the first period and prepare steps for a successful EUROSTUDENT V in 2013. On the first day the general management of EUROSTUDENT V and financial situation was on the agenda. The Consortium agreed to new internal financial rules and noted that all expenses for 2012 are within budget. After the lunch break with a guided tour through the Dorotheenstädtischen cemetery the Consortium reviewed the preparatory seminars in Malta and Nijmegen. The main organisers from Praxis and ResearchNed confirmed that most of the national teams have now attended one of the seminars (see below for more information). On the second day the principles for developing the Data Delivery Module (DDM) were discussed. It was decided that the DDM will be used to provide a more differentiated analysis of data from different student groups ('focus groups'), such as part-time students ('low intensity students') and lifelong learners ('delayed transition students'). At the close of the day, the first Quality Check of the work so far was presented by Sarah Gerhard Ortega, representing the Swiss Federal Statistical Office. This document would be further discussed at the



[Consortium members (briefly) on the Berlinale red carpet]

Steering Board meeting in Berlin

The Steering Board came together in Berlin for its first meeting. The meeting took place in the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) on 13 March 2013 and was moderated by Sarah Gerhard Ortega from Swiss Federal Statistical Office. The countries participating in EUROSTUDENT V were represented by Jesper Risom and Carole Waldvogel. The third country representative Tomislav Vodička was not able to attend the meeting.

The European Commission was represented by Maria-Kristin Gylfadottir and the Bologna Follow UP Group by Věra Štastná from the Czech Republic. Kathleen Ordnung (BMBF) and Melissa Keizer (Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, MinOCW) represented the two national ministries providing additional financial contributions to EUROSTUDENT V. Florian Kaiser from European Students' Union took the seat for the students. For the EUROSTUDENT Consortium Martin Unger (IHS), Dominic Orr (HIS-HF) and Clemens Mrosek (HIS-HF) participated in the meeting.

The meeting began with a clarification of the Steering Board's mandate. In general, the Steering Board has the task of giving guidance to the EUROSTUDENT Consortium in the development of a reliable, contextually sensitive and policy relevant comparative study of the social dimension in European higher education. Further it was agreed that in the case of problems between the Consortium and the participating countries, the three country representatives Carole Waldvogel, Jesper Risom and Tomislav Vodička will mediate between the parties. Every country representative from the Steering Board can be contacted by the participating countries in any case of differences. Following this, Dominic Orr presented a first draft for the Annual Report. The revised document has since been approved by the Steering Board and is available via the project website (see below). Paper copies will be sent to all national ministries involved in the project in the coming weeks. After a lunch break Martin Unger and Dominic Orr presented a progress report and the next steps for EUROSTUDENT V. The previous points of the agenda were then discussed in the context of the first Quality Check from Statistics Switzerland, presented by Sarah Gerhard Ortega. One criticism was that much time was lost in EUROSTUDENT V in the recruitment of participating countries and organising contracts and funding arrangements. It was agreed that the Steering Board meeting at the start of 2014 will focus on preparations for EUROSTUDENT VI (provisional start date April 2015).



[Members of the Steering Board, German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Berlin]

EUROSTUDENT V Preparatory seminars held in Malta

In accordance with the workplan of EUROSTUDENT V project, the Consortium organized three preparatory seminars to support the participating countries on executing the EUROSTUDENT survey in national settings. Given that these preparatory seminars were the sole opportunity for participating countries to meet and discuss the implementation of their national surveys with the EUROSTUDENT V Consortium during the entire project period, the agenda of the seminar covered a wide spectrum of issues.



[First preparatory seminar in Malta, 10-13 December 2012]

These included information on the project and survey cycle, the EUROSTUDENT V questionnaire and handbook as well as information on how to contact students and motivate them to participate in the national survey. Another part of the seminar focused on the execution of online surveys, the EUROSTUDENT V model online survey as well as technical support and handbook. It was followed by a discussion on online survey design, programming, software, and privacy issues. Further aspects tackled during the seminar included a discussion on sampling, translation of the EUROSTUDENT V core questionnaire into the national language, filtering applied in the questionnaire, the pretesting and field phase of national surveys. This was followed by information on data cleaning, checking, weighting, missing values, and plausibility checks, information on the data delivery by national research teams to the Consortium, including information on indicators, calculations, the data delivery module and quality checks by the project consortium. Apart from these aspects on the implementation of national surveys and the data delivery to EUROSTUDENT, the seminar also provided room for a discussion on the expectations, questions and problems from the participants as well as a discussion on data dissemination and future cooperation in the EUROSTUDENT Network. Each preparatory seminar was attended by around one third of the participating countries. The first two seminars took place in Malta. While the first one was held from 10-13 December 2012 and was attended by representatives from France, Switzerland, Slovakia, Norway, Lithuania, Slovenia and Malta; the second one took place from 13-16 January 2013 and was attended by Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Malta and Poland. In both cases the Consortium was represented by National Commission for Further and Higher Education (Malta), ResearchNed (the Netherlands), Praxis (Estonia), HIS-HF (Germany) and IHS (Austria). Despite the heavy programme, the seminar also included some social programme to allow the national teams to get to know each other better, to relax after a hard days work and to see a bit of Malta. Guided tours to the old capital city Mdina and to the city of Birgu provided just that as well as some insight into Maltese traditional cuisine.



[Second preparatory seminar in Malta, 13-16 January 2013]

Preparatory seminar in Nijmegen

Instead of warm and sunny Malta, the third preparatory seminar was organised in a cold and snowy Nijmegen, the Netherlands. Participants from Ireland, Hungary, Armenia, Italy, Rumania, Czech Republic, Portugal and Estonia were informed about the status of the project by Dominic Orr (HIS). Bas Kurver and Froukje Wartenbergh (ResearchNed) gave a presentation on performing and designing online surveys and after his heroic multiple-day trip throughout a snowy Europe, Jakob Hartl (IHS) told us everything about data cleaning and analyses. Hanna-Stella Haaristo (Praxis) chaired the seminar. During the seminar all countries shared their experiences and plans for Eurostudent in their country. The main theme of sharing was also noticeable during dinner as we were indulged by fresh food served in several courses on the table (instead of one plate per person). One evening we visited the only bicycle museum of Europe (which happens to be in Nijmegen) where we got a tour from an old English-with-typical-Dutch-accent speaking guide and learned that sharing knowledge throughout Europe has led to fantastic bikes and gives promise to even more possibilities in the future. In Eurostudent we will continue on this road: by sharing, exchanging, standardizing and learning from previous mistakes we are bringing our data closer to perfection in every round of the project.



[Third preparatory seminar at bicycle museum in Nijmegen, 21-23 January 2013]

EUROSTUDENT countries commence field phases

With this year's spring coming along, the majority of the EUROSTUDENT V countries have commenced their field phases. 20 out of the 27 member countries are collecting their data at the same time period. While most countries rely on online tools to carry out the survey, the paper and pencil method too is in use. Sampling methods vary from "all" to "stratified". Thus the aim of collecting comparable data is being increased and ensured. For full details on country time schedules and plans for their national surveys follow this link.

Extra support

Following on from the Preparatory Seminars, the organisers (ResearchNed, Praxis) will be offering post-seminar support via email and telephone until July 2013.

Please contact the following email addresses for assistance:

- ResearchNed – Ms. Froukje Wartenbergh-Cras
(f.wartenbergh@researchned.nl)
- Praxis, Estonia – Ms. Hanna-Stella Haaristo
(hannastella.haaristo@praxis.ee)

Additionally, ResearchNed will be offering specialist support for implementing online surveys, including access to a fully programmed online model survey.

European Council for Student Affairs takes action on EUROSTUDENT V

Meeting in Vienna in February 2013 for its general assembly, the European Council for Student Affairs (ECStA) has confirmed active participation in the EUROSTUDENT V project. Being responsible for the social infrastructure of higher education (such as student housing, dining, counseling and other services) in their respective countries, ECStA-members have agreed to provide background information on such services in countries that also participate in EUROSTUDENT V. According to the EV work programme, ECStA members will contribute to the Intelligence Briefs that are to be included in the EUROSTUDENT reporting structure. A preliminary list of countries has been agreed on, to which the ECStA will gather information on student services and their relevance to help understand EUROSTUDENT data. The ECStA's participation in EUROSTUDENT V will be coordinated by Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW).

2. Activities related to the EUROSTUDENT V network

The Dublin BFUG meeting

On 14-15 March 2013 the Bologna Follow-Up Group meeting brought together more than 85 BFUG members representing 40 countries, the European Commission, 8 consultative member organisations and Bologna partners in Dublin, Ireland. Such good representation marked the continuous interest and commitment of the EHEA countries and organisations in promoting the priorities set in the Bucharest Communiqué.

The BFUG adopted the Terms of Reference for the majority of the 2012-2015 work plan structures and took stock of the progress of their activities. Moreover, the BFUG endorsed the paper on the EHEA peer learning and review initiative and asked the upcoming BFUG Co-Chairs and the Secretariat to prepare a plan of work for the latter and encouraged the working groups to contribute to the initiative through identifying and setting priorities for peer learning and peer review activities concerning their respective policy areas. (source: <http://www.ehea.info/news-details.aspx?ArticleId=298>)

Věra Štastná as representative of the BFUG in the EUROSTUDENT Steering Board reported briefly on the first Steering Board meeting. At this meeting, Dominic Orr presented the project Peer Learning for the Social Dimension, which flanks the EUROSTUDENT project by collating and analysing measures taken by governments and higher education institutions to support the social dimension in higher education. The project is coordinated by Martin Unger at IHS.

3. New reports

EUROSTUDENT V Annual Report



The 2012 EUROSTUDENT V Annual Report just been released and is now available through our website

Eurydice report on financial crisis and education



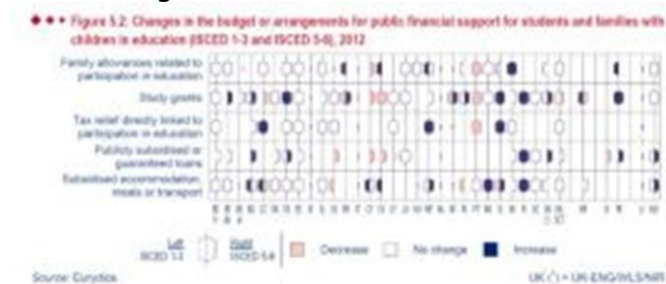
New Eurydice report on the impact of the financial crisis on education in Europe.

4. International and comparative statistics

Funding of Education in Europe - The Impact of the Economic Crisis

The new Eurydice Report helps to understand the impact of the economic crises on the funding of education in Europe.

Eurydice has reported a stable increase of financial support for students since 2000 with a cool down during the financial crises.



The Figure (in report Fig. 5.2, p.74) provides a simplified overview of changes in financial support for students throughout Europe in 2012. A stable or even increasing financial support can be shown for students in countries (Germany, Finland, Norway, Malta) which are not affected by the crisis. Countries (like Portugal and Spain) with an economic downturn are not able to keep up previous financial support for their students and have decreased students' subsidy. Tertiary education is displayed on the right side of every country's column. The Figure focuses on "Family allowances related to participation in education", "Study grants", "Tax relief directly linked to participation in education", "Publicly subsidized or guaranteed loans", and "Subsidised accommodation, meals or transport". Very limited change is seen for the first block "family allowances related to participation in education" where only 2 out of 15 countries decrease and 1 out of 15 countries increases financial support in this block. The most interesting and by far the most used financial support are study grants. 29 countries use it whereof 10 increase and 6 decrease the support for study grants.