

## **EUROSTUDENT IV – Studying the social dimension of European higher education**

November 2008 until October 2011



## **EUROSTUDENT Project Guidelines**

Approach, provisions and responsibilities

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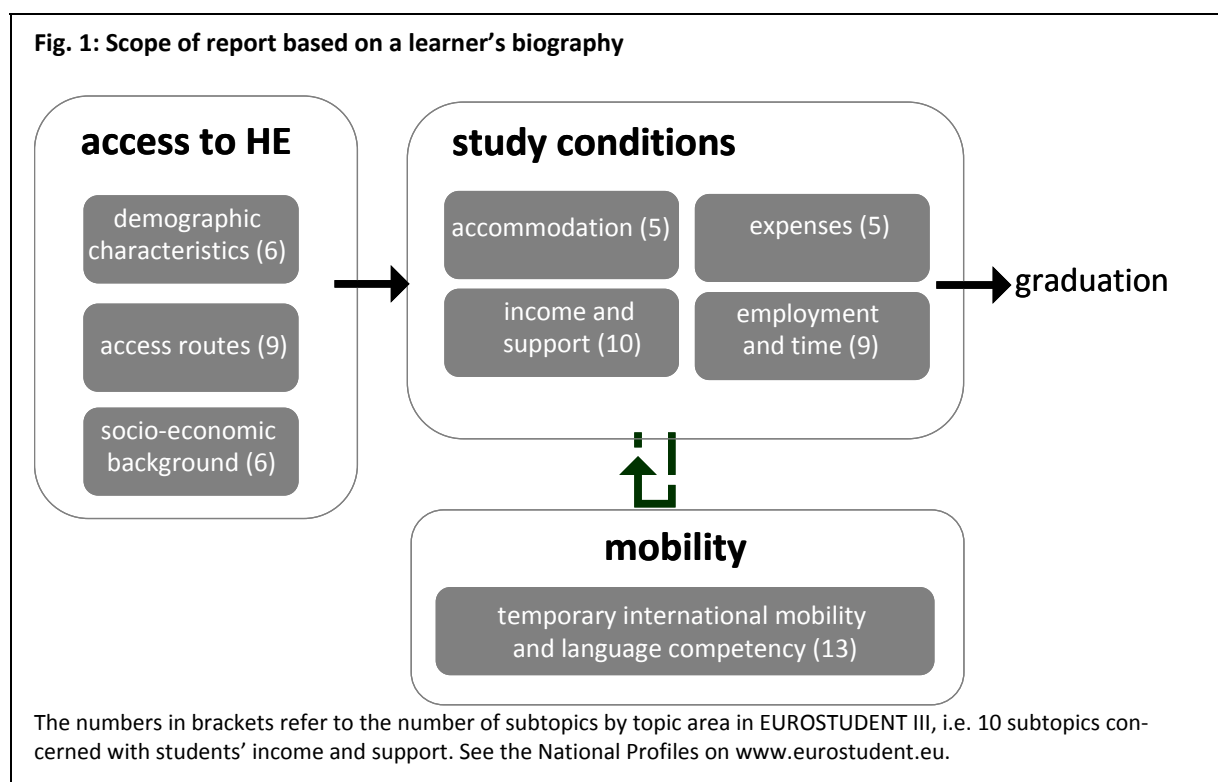
## Project aims and objectives

### Main aims and scope

The EUROSTUDENT project focuses on what is called the **social dimension** of higher education from a student perspective. Its aim is to provide comparative indicators on the social and economic conditions of studying in European higher education systems as a backbone for policy-makers at national and European level and for in-depth comparative and country analyses into specific topics.

In policy debates on national and international levels (e.g. Bologna Process, Lisbon Agenda), students are seen as the building blocks of a knowledge-based society, the pivotal point of strategies for making higher education more effective and more responsive and, increasingly, as a supplementary source of funding (cost-sharing). In all of these cases, it is essential to know more about students' lives in order to evaluate current higher education policies (e.g. how high should student support be; how many places at student halls of residence are necessary; and do the framework conditions enable students to act as informed consumers or do certain framework conditions constrain their actions). This knowledge is becoming even more important because demographic and policy changes (incl. initiatives for lifelong learning) are resulting in a much **less homogeneous student body**.

The project produces comparative data in eight topic areas on the basis of national surveys carried out or supervised by the national ministries responsible for higher education. Because students are asked directly, this information source provides more than an administrative or structural view of a higher education system – it shows **how the system works**. These topic areas are: demographic characteristics of students, access routes to higher education, socio-economic background, accommodation, income and student support, expenses, employment and time budget, and international mobility (see Figure 1).



The products of the project are: the establishment and cultivation of a European network of researchers and ministries, a **comparative dataset** on the social dimension, in-depth **national reports** for each of the participating countries and one comparative report. The **comparative report** provides input for the open method of coordination on European level, particularly within the Bologna Process, for which EUROSTUDENT has been recognised as an important data and analysis supplier.

## Objectives

The EUROSTUDENT project collates comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education with a focus on the socio-economic background and living conditions of students and temporary international mobility.

The overall long-term objectives of EUROSTUDENT are:

- To deliver comparable **key indicators** and basic information in order to describe and map out the socio-economic living conditions of students in Europe
- To provide a structured and standardised **monitoring** system with which the effects of structural measures and changes can be identified for specific student groups over time
- To describe the current situation and with the aid of international comparison to **identify obstacles** to an inclusive and effective European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

These long-term objectives can only be achieved if the following three short to middle term goals are met:

- A large number of (European) countries participate actively within the project
- The quality, reliability and relevance of the data is assured for comparison of the social dimension between diverse higher education systems
- There is a recognition of the relevance and utility of the collated and analysed data at national and international policy level

Within the time period 2008 and 2011, the coordination team wants to achieve the following:

- Further increase the number of countries providing comparable data to around 30
- Both make efforts to recruit more European countries (e.g. Croatia, Denmark, Hungary, Poland) and form partnerships with other bodies in an effort to conjoin some data with data from countries outside of Europe (e.g. North and Latin America, Australia)
- Improve the conformity of data collation, calculation and analysis between country partners
- Increasingly use multi-lingual output forms to increase the recognition of relevance at national levels
- Add a longitudinal aspect to the comparisons between countries to some indicators
- Work more intensively with the policy-makers on a national and international levels (OECD, European Commission, Bologna Process)

## Dissemination

EUROSTUDENT data is used widely on a national and international level. To facilitate the understanding and the use of EUROSTUDENT data, the project has three main components to its reporting structure:

- **Synopsis of Indicators:** The foundations of this report are the key indicators, which are highlighted in the National Profiles. These key indicators are then used to provide a comparison between the participating countries.
- **National Profiles:** National Profiles focus on the data from individual participating countries. They provide both an introduction to each of the national higher education systems and the context data behind the key indicators used in the comparative report, the Synopsis of Indicators. The National Profiles include comments on the data from a national perspective. These reports may be consulted and downloaded from the EUROSTUDENT Data Reporting Module (<http://iceland.his.de/eurostudent/report>).
- **EUROSTUDENT data sheets:** Summary data sheets including key data on all 63 subtopics and individual data sheets for each subtopic are available on the dedicated website.

See our website for a summary of the final report “Synopsis of indicators” and data from the third round of EUROSTUDENT - [www.eurostudent.eu/publications](http://www.eurostudent.eu/publications).

## Approach: Output harmonisation

The EUROSTUDENT project is organised on the basis of shared responsibility between all project partners. The EUROSTUDENT study is the product of a **decentralised network coordinated centrally**. The data comes from national surveys which are implemented by each participating country. However, participation in the EUROSTUDENT project is dependent on the adoption of the EUROSTUDENT core questions and central data conventions. The aim is therefore to obtain high quality results through a harmonised list of variables and indicators, together with their related definitions. These definitions of indicators require the use of the set of core questions to assure the “fit” of collected data (around 30 core questions). Methodological guidelines provide additional guidance on the target population, sampling frames, sampling design, survey instruments etc. that should be respected in the national survey methods. Common timelines must also be observed.

In this way, the project partners have adopted an **output harmonisation approach**. In the past, this approach has allowed the project to expand rapidly, whilst profiting from the experience of national experts on how to assure that the results can be achieved in very different countries with different traditions.

This network approach makes it important to provide an efficient communication structure between all members of the project in order to assure the quality of the outputs. The instruments used to assure quality are: intensive seminars, broad workshops, handbooks based on Wikimedia technology (i.e. led by user-input similar to Wikipedia) and a user-friendly Data Delivery Module based on java technology.

## Organisation of project: Shared responsibilities

The coordinating team and the participant countries cooperate closely in the collection, processing and interpretation of internationally comparative data on the social dimension of higher education. In each case, the participant country and the coordinators have specific responsibilities.

### What does the central coordination team provide?

#### **General provisions**

In general, the coordination team has responsibility for the following tasks:

- Assure the overall coordination and management of the EUROSTUDENT project
- Responsible for the management of the central coordination budget
- Support countries by cooperating closely, discussing and cross-checking results and provide updated methodological guidelines
- Responsible for the maintenance of a central EUROSTUDENT website and the maintenance of a Wiki area (based on Wikimedia technology or similar) only open to EUROSTUDENT participants
- Develop an internet-based data delivery module (DDM)
- Organise and execute four major international workshops and coordinate further special meetings in order to assure adherence to central conventions, quality improvement and data dissemination and exploitation
- Has the overall responsibility for drawing up and realising all components in the EUROSTUDENT reporting strategy – National Profiles, downloadable data sheets and the comparative Synopsis of Indicators
- Develop an internet-based data reporting module (DRM), which provides detailed data for the National Profiles and downloadable data sheets

#### **Organisation of central tasks**

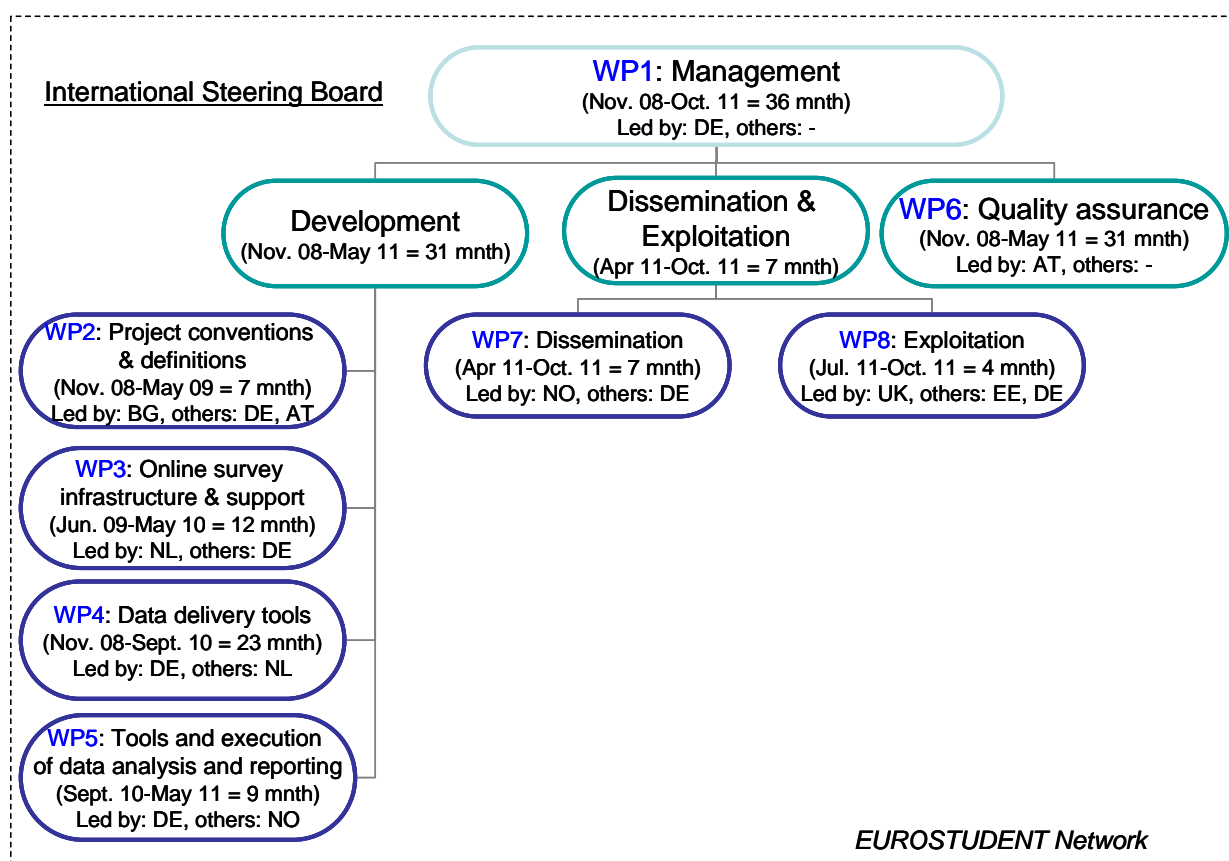
The central coordination team is made up of a consortium with seven member organisations; each of these partners is assigned specific tasks. The management of this consortium has been given to HIS in Germany and is led by Dominic Orr. The work programme has been divided up into eight so-called work packages, which are shown in Figure 2. The schematic representation gives the following information for each work package (WP):

- Title of work package
- Start and end dates for commencement and completion of tasks
- Which country leads the package and which countries are involved in the fulfilment of tasks

This structure is the basis of the funding, which the project receives from the European Union, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the seven consortium member organisations.

- Germany, Hochschul-Informations-System, HIS (Higher Education Information System)
- Austria, Institut für Höhere Studien, IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies)
- Bulgaria, Centur za Control i Ocenka na Kachestvoto na Obrazovaniето, ЦКОКО (Center for Control and Assessment of the Quality in Education)
- Estonia, Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit, EÜL (Federation of Estonian Student Unions)
- the Netherlands, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, MinOCW (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)
- Norway, NIFU STEP Studier av innovasjon, forskning og utdanning (Studies in Innovation, Research and Education)
- United Kingdom, Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University, CHERI

Figure 2: The organisation of EUROSTUDENT IV within the international consortium



## What is expected of partners?

Each participating country should make efforts to fulfil the following responsibilities and keep the central coordinators constantly informed on any problems or issues.

### National team

Each participating country should:

- Establish a national coordination team

- Assure the investment of sufficient resources in order to carry out the national survey to a high standard of quality
- Provide sufficient resources in order that key persons involved in the project can participate in EUROSTUDENT network meetings or special tasks
- Cooperate with all relevant national bodies in order to assure the quality of data collection and calculation and to assure that these data present a fair representation of the national study body in their country

### ***Conventions and definitions***

Each participating country should:

- Assure the adherence to the overall EUROSTUDENT IV time plan for field phase, data delivery and analysis and cooperate with the coordinates on matters of quality control
- Implement the national survey on the basis of the EUROSTUDENT core questions and data conventions and reference populations. The use of the core questions and response categories are obligatory, but additional questions and categories may be supplemented
- Execute the national survey using the state of the art for sample recruitment, survey execution and data calculation
- Refer to any EUROSTUDENT guidelines on quality standards and specifically the EUROSTUDENT wiki area in order (i) to assure its adherence to central standards and (ii) to assist the review and improvement of such standards within the whole project

### ***Data delivery for central analysis and report***

Each participating country should:

- Use the EUROSTUDENT online data delivery module (DDM) to deliver national data to the coordinator (No other form of data delivery will be accepted!)
- Interpret the national data delivered via the EUROSTUDENT DDM from a national perspective according to the EUROSTUDENT guidelines and add appropriate text comments to the DDM for each subtopic
- Provide information on national education systems for the “National Profile” report according to the structure prescribed by EUROSTUDENT and based on Eurydice data

### ***Use and dissemination of data from or related to EUROSTUDENT***

Countries are explicitly encouraged to use and disseminate information about the EUROSTUDENT project and its results. Please always adhere to two conventions. Each participating country should:

- Use the official EUROSTUDENT logo for round four (see header in this document)
- Always write the name of the project in capital letters (i.e. EUROSTUDENT, not Eurostudent)



## Overall time schedule

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	

## Next steps to participation in EUROSTUDENT IV

1. We would be pleased to discuss further the possibilities of any country participating in EUROSTUDENT IV.
2. Decisions can be finalised at the EUROSTUDENT IV Kick-Off Workshop in The Hague on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009. For more information and registration please visit our website under <http://www.eurostudent.eu/events/den Haag>
3. Participation is confirmed through an official letter by a respective country's ministry responsible for higher education.
4. Each participant country should provide the coordinators with a detailed time schedule for the execution of their national survey.

## Contact details

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