



# Discrimination in the context of higher education

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Photos by Sascha Harold

## Context of discrimination

Discriminating others violates Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950). Research on discrimination at higher education institutions (HEIs) has become increasingly important during the last decades. Studies have shown a negative association of discrimination experiences with various aspects, for example, college/university satisfaction (e.g., Del Toro & Hughes, 2020), sense of belonging (e.g., Hussain & Jones, 2019), learning outcomes (e.g., Karuppan & Barari, 2011), as well as mental (e.g., Jochman et al., 2019), physical (e.g., Williams et al., 2019), and general health (e.g., Devakumar et al., 2022). As a result, more insights and field-tested practices to counteract and prevent discrimination within the educational context are needed. For example, the European Education Area's Working Group on Equality and Values in Education and Training recently published an Issue Paper regarding these topics (see Donlevy et al., 2023).

Discrimination can be defined as "... different treatments or outcomes that are unfavourable towards a group or an individual according to some aspect of their actual or perceived identity ..." (Devakumar et al., 2022, p. 2099). Consequently, discriminatory behaviour targets different aspects of physical, psychological, and sociological attributes, for example, gender, sexuality, mental health and disabilities, weight, origin/nationality, skin colour, educational and financial background, religion, and age (e.g., Billingsley & Hurd, 2019; Devakumar et al., 2022; Mason et al., 2021; Puhl et al., 2008; Thornicroft et al., 2022; Vargas et al., 2020). However, little is known about students' discrimination experiences from a country comparative perspective in the specific context of higher education.

Relatedly, students may feel more or less safe at their HEIs. It has been argued that students' perception of safety could have an effect on them regarding their study success or drop-out

intentions (see Maier & DePrince, 2020). Besides specific discrimination experiences that can make students feel uncomfortable and unsafe in higher education, the aspect of feeling safe on the premises of one's HEI (while walking alone in the dark) has also gained attention. For example, a recently published qualitative analysis shows that for many of the participating students from Canada, walking alone in the dark on their campus made them feel uncomfortable or afraid (Orchard, 2023). Comparable data from an EU-project report including female students from five countries (Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, UK) show considerable cross-national variations: between 34 % and 61 % indicated to not feel safe in the dark on the university premises (Feldes et al., 2012). Having comparable data from a larger set of countries – i.e., all EUROSTUDENT countries – regarding the safety-feeling, provides a more comprehensive picture of possible cross-national differences which can support improvement driven by policymakers and, thus, will be displayed in this report.

This report focuses on discrimination experiences of two specific student groups within European higher education: female students and students with disabilities that limit them in their studies. Female students may particularly face gender-based discrimination (sexism), while students with disabilities might encounter challenges due to ableism<sup>1</sup>. These experiences could significantly impact their sense of safety and inclusion in the educational environment. While the current report focuses on these groups, it is important to acknowledge that other students may also face discrimination based on different criteria such as ethnicity, class, and other factors. However, these aspects fall outside the scope of the current analysis.

1 "... discriminatory, oppressive, abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others." (Donlevy et al., 2023, p. 6)

Therefore, the questions we aim to answer with this report are:

- How prevalent are discrimination experiences among students and how do they vary across countries?
- On the basis of which criteria do students feel discriminated against, and what kind of situations involving hostile behaviour do they report?
- Who are students discriminated by?
- Are female students and students with disabilities especially affected by discrimination?
- How safe do students feel while walking alone in the dark?

## Results

In the following sections, descriptive data regarding discrimination experiences, specific hostile ad hominem behaviour, and students' safety-feeling will be presented. *Discrimination experiences* refer to discrimination based on specific criteria (e.g., gender, skin colour, disability), whereas *specific hostile ad hominem behaviour* is used as an umbrella term for specific hostile situations students experienced because of who they are (e.g., hearing one's identity being used as an insult, being treated as less smart than others). All presented data are based on self-report measures. Consequently, elevated rates of discrimination

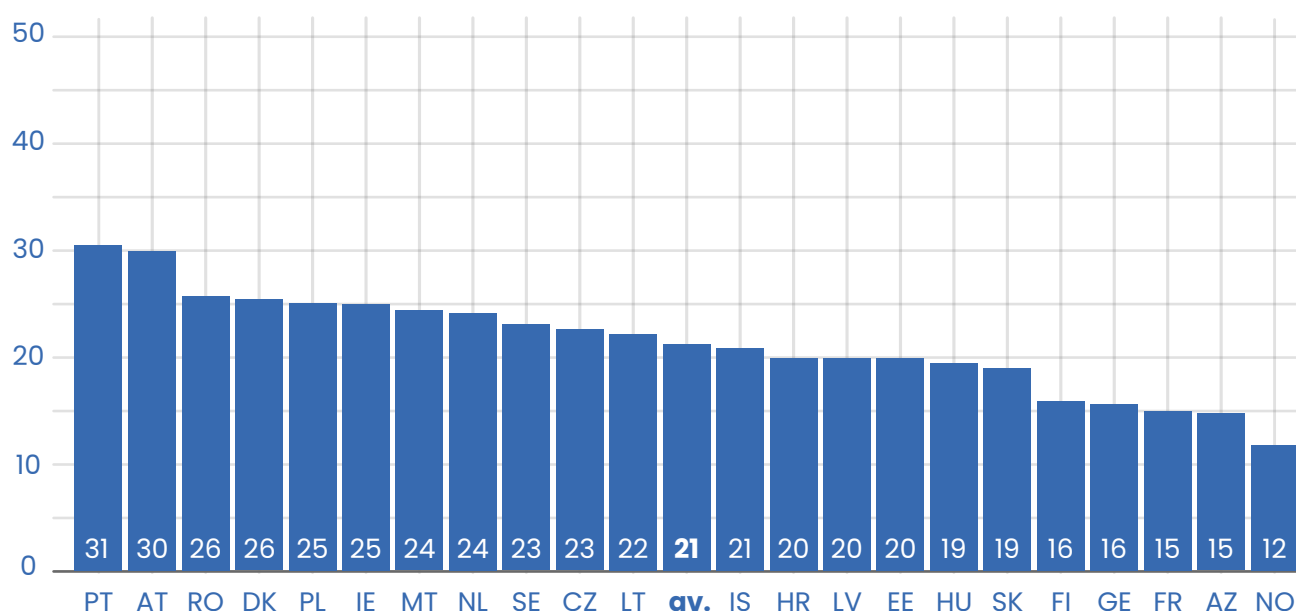
may reflect students' increased awareness and sensitivity. These figures illustrate students' perceptions of their individual situation in the context of their respective country's societal norms. For detailed information, please see the methodological section at the end of the report. Within this report, percentage rates of students will be displayed, and it has to be kept in mind that – in some countries – sample sizes might be small which can impair the generalisability of findings. Throughout this report, the focus will be on both female students and students with disabilities limiting them in their studies.

## Frequency of discrimination

A significant proportion of students from the EUROSTUDENT countries reports having experienced some kind(s) of discrimination within the context of their studies. Irrespective of the type of discrimination and the discriminating person, on average across EUROSTUDENT countries, around **every fifth student (21 %) indicates at least one discrimination experience**. The three countries with the highest rates of self-reported discrimination experiences among students are Portugal (31 %), Austria (30 %), and Romania (26 %). The countries with the lowest rates of discrimination experiences among students are Norway (12 %) with not even half of the share of students reporting discrimination compared to the three countries with the highest rates, as well as Azerbaijan, and France (15 % each).

**On average, 21 % of students from all EURO-STUDENT countries indicate to have experienced discrimination due to at least one personal characteristic within the context of their studies. With being indicated by eight percent of students, gender is the most often named criterion students feel discriminated for.**

Figure 1. **Share of students having experienced any form of discrimination in the context of their studies (%)**

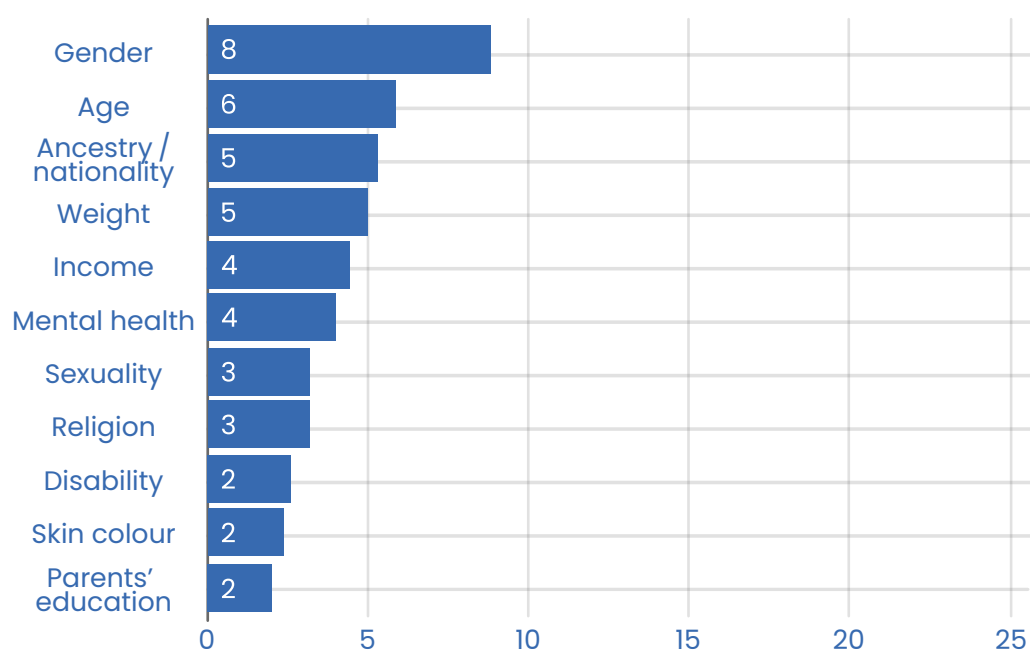


## Criteria for discrimination

Most common across EUROSTUDENT countries are students' experiences of **discrimination due to gender (8 %) and age (6 %)**. Discrimination due to disability (which is per default limited

due to the prevalence of disabilities), skin colour, and parents' education (2 % each) is least often named.

Figure 2. **Share of students having experienced discrimination because of personal characteristics (%)**

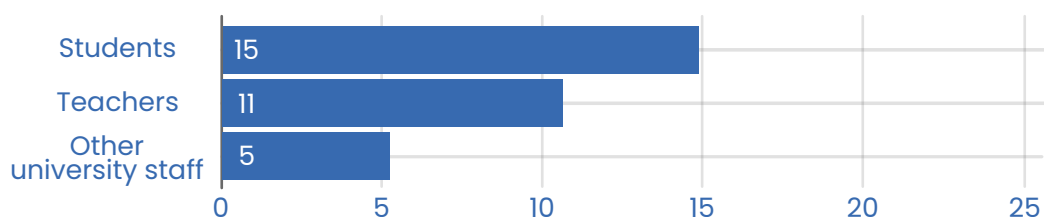


## Sources of discrimination

Regarding all EUROSTUDENT countries together, there is a clear ranking of whom students feel discriminated by: On average, students indicate **most often** being discriminated in the context of

their studies **by other students** (15 %), followed by teachers (11 %), and lastly by other university staff (5 %). This ranking holds true for every single EUROSTUDENT country.

Figure 3. **Share of students having experienced discrimination by students/teachers/other university staff (%)**



## Discrimination in different study fields

**The share of students who have experienced discrimination in the context of their studies varies greatly depending on the field of study.**

However, there is no uniform picture between the countries in which fields of study particularly many/few students have experienced discrimination. Nevertheless, some patterns do emerge: In five countries each, the shares are highest in Architecture and Medicine, and in three countries in Arts. Thus, in 13 out of 22 countries, students in the three fields of Architecture, Medicine, and Arts were the most likely to experience discrimination. On the other hand, in four countries each, the shares are lowest in Education Science or Teacher Training, but interestingly, in two countries, this also applies to Pharmacy, which has the highest share in two other countries.

The differences in the shares per field of study vary the least in Romania (the share in Arts is 1.7 times higher than in Social Sciences). However, this

spread is particularly high in Georgia (4.4 times higher in Health than in Agriculture) and in the Czech Republic (3.5 times higher in Medicine than in Welfare).

At first glance, experiences of discrimination occur more frequently in fields of study with a balanced gender ratio and less frequently in fields in which one gender often dominates (Education Science, Teacher Training, Engineering, ICT). However, in contrast to this, Business and Social Sciences are also more gender-balanced fields and the shares in these fields are lowest in Ireland, Latvia, and Romania and highest in no country. More in-depth analyses per country are therefore required to determine which groups feel particularly frequently discriminated against in which fields. But the fact that the fields of study play a major role here is shown by the large deviation from the mean value for each country (see Figure 1).

**Table 1. Share of students having experienced discrimination in the context of their studies by field of study with the highest/lowest percentage**

	Highest share	Lowest share	Ratio high vs. low
<b>AT</b>	43 % Architecture	22 % Health	2.0
<b>AZ</b>	23 % Humanities	7 % Agriculture	3.3
<b>CZ</b>	39 % Medicine	11 % Welfare	3.5
<b>DK</b>	39 % Law	17 % Education Science	2.3
<b>EE</b>	38 % Architecture	15 % Services	2.5
<b>FI</b>	28 % Humanities	11 % ICT	2.5
<b>FR</b>	20 % Architecture	10 % Health	2.0
<b>GE</b>	31 % Health	7 % Agriculture	4.4
<b>HR</b>	36 % Education Science	14 % Services	2.6
<b>HU</b>	28 % Medicine	14 % Humanities	2.0
<b>IE</b>	38 % Law	19 % Business	2.0
<b>IS</b>	36 % Arts	15 % Teacher Training	2.4
<b>LT</b>	46 % Medicine	15 % Business	3.1
<b>LV</b>	32 % Pharmacy	12 % Teacher Training	2.7
<b>MT</b>	41 % Engineering	20 % Education Science	2.1
<b>NL</b>	34 % Arts	19 % Pharmacy	1.8
<b>NO</b>	24 % Architecture	8 % Education Science	3.0
<b>PL</b>	45 % Medicine	17 % Teacher Training	2.6
<b>PT</b>	42 % Architecture	24 % Pharmacy	1.8
<b>RO</b>	37 % Arts	22 % Social Sciences	1.7
<b>SE</b>	40 % Medicine	16 % Education Science	2.5
<b>SK</b>	39 % Pharmacy	14 % Teacher Training	2.8

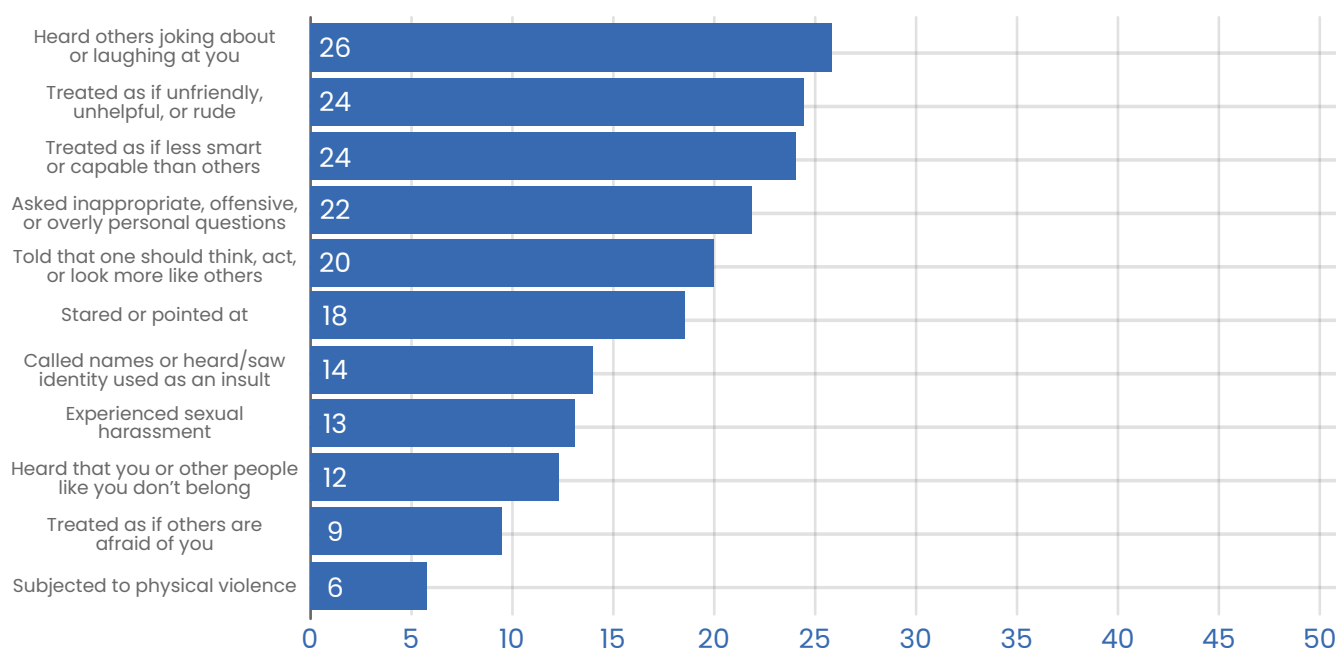
**Note:** Adapted from ISCED-F to reflect content similarity. Study fields in alphabetical order are: Arts; Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Veterinary; Architecture and Town Planning; Business and Administration; Education Science; Engineering, Manufacturing, Construction; Health; Humanities; ICT; Languages; Law; Medicine, Dental Studies; Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics; Pharmacy; Psychology; Services; Social Sciences, Journalism and Information; Teacher Training; Welfare.

## Specific hostile ad hominem situations

Taking data from all EUROSTUDENT countries together, the shares of students who have experienced each specific hostile ad hominem behaviour differ for the eleven situations students were asked about. **Most often named by more than one quarter of students (26 %) was having heard others joking about or laughing at them.** Least often named by six in one hundred students was having been subjected to physical violence. Five out of eleven specific situations have been experienced by at least every fifth student across all EUROSTUDENT countries.

**On average, 51 % of students from all EUROSTUDENT countries indicate having encountered specific hostile ad hominem situations within the context of higher education. Having heard others joking or laughing at oneself is named most often with 26 %.**

Figure 4. Share of students indicating specific hostile ad hominem situations in the context of their studies (%)



**Nearly every second student** indicates having encountered situations with at least one of the eleven different hostile ad hominem behaviours during the course of their studies (51 %). There are fourteen countries in which more than half of the students indicates hostile ad hominem behaviour and seven countries in which half or

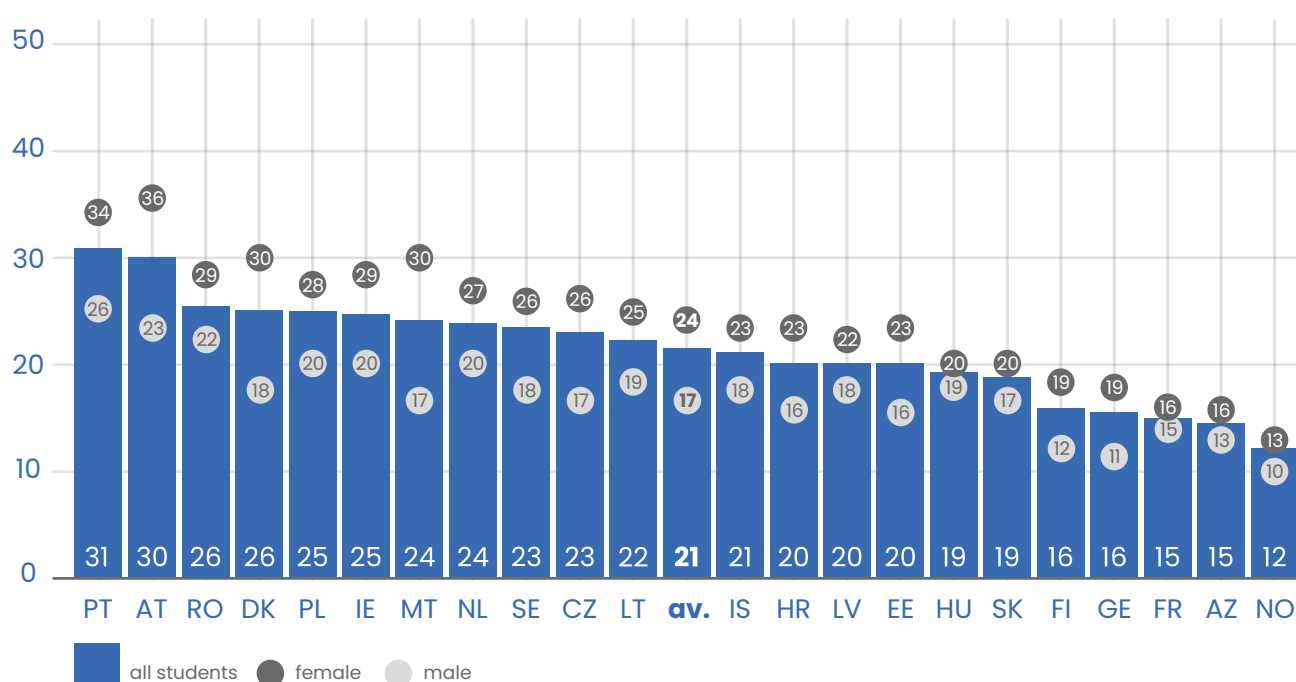
less than half of the students indicates encountering such situations. The countries with the highest rates are Finland (62 %), the Czech Republic, and Romania (57 % each), the countries with the lowest rates are Croatia (38 %), Iceland, and Norway (40 % each) (see Figure 6).

## Gender differences in experiencing discrimination

Female students report discrimination experiences to a (much) higher degree than their male counterparts in all EUROSTUDENT countries. On average, **17 % of all male students** report experiences with discrimination, whereas for **female students it is 24 %**. Looking at all EUROSTUDENT countries, there is no country where the share

of male students experiencing discrimination exceeds or equals the share of female students with discrimination experiences. The difference between male and female students is highest in Austria, Malta (13 %pt. each), and Denmark (12 %pt.) and lowest in Hungary, France (1 %pt.), Norway, Azerbaijan, and Slovakia (3 %pt. each).

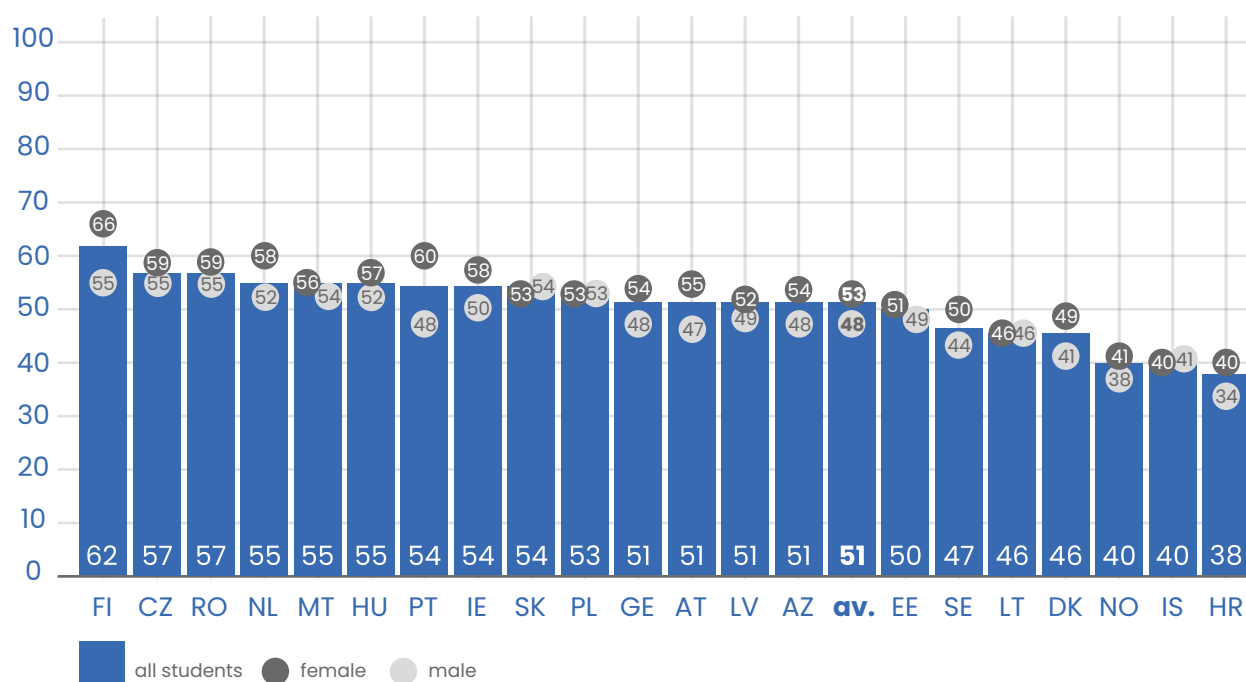
Figure 5. **Share of (female/male) students having experienced any form of discrimination in the context of their studies (%)**



In contrast to overall experiences of discrimination, **only small differences between female and male students emerge when looking at the incidence of the eleven specific situations of hostile ad hominem behaviour**. Slightly less than half of male students (48 %), on average, indicate having encountered situations with such hostile behaviour(s), for female students, this applies

to slightly more than half (53 %). Contrary to the discrimination experiences due to various criteria, regarding hostile ad hominem behaviour there are two countries in which male students report more often having experienced them than female students: Slovakia and Iceland. Nevertheless, the differences are very small with only 1 %pt in both countries.

Figure 6. **Share of (female/male) students having experienced hostile ad hominem behaviour in the context of their studies (%)**



## Discrimination due to gender

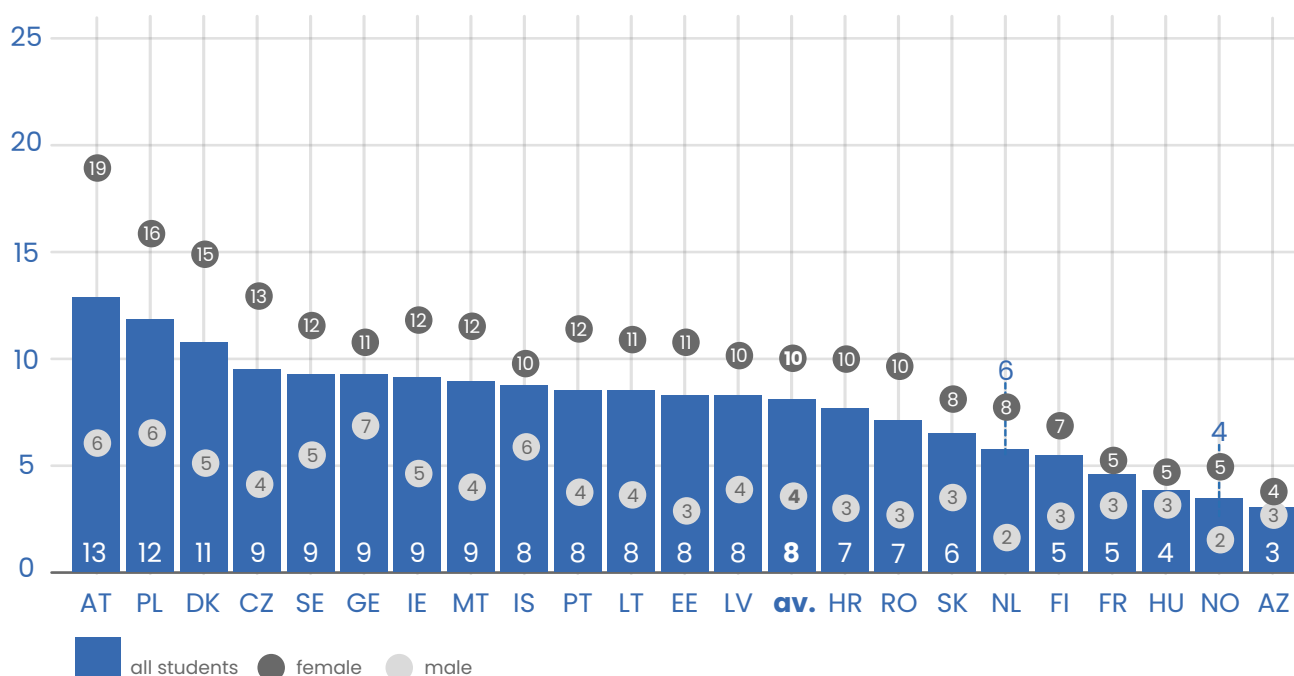
On average, eight percent of the students report discrimination experiences due to gender. The highest rates can be found in Austria (13 %), Poland (12 %), and Denmark (11 %) whereas the lowest rates can be found in Azerbaijan (3 %), Norway, and Hungary (4 % each).

**Female students report more often to have experienced discrimination (due to gender) than male students do.**

However, when comparing female and male students, again there are some gender differences. On average, **four percent of male students in the EUROSTUDENT countries experience discrimination due to gender, whereas it is ten percent among female students.** Male students report discrimination due to gender most often in Georgia (7 %). However, when compared to the discrimination female

students experience in other countries, this share is rather small. Sixteen out of 22 countries show a rate of 10 % or higher among female students whereas this is not the case for even one country regarding male students. Besides Georgia, Austria, Poland, and Iceland are among the countries with the highest shares for male students (6 % each), Norway and the Netherlands are the ones with the lowest shares (2 % each). For female students, Azerbaijan (4 %), Norway, Hungary, and France (5 % each) show the lowest rates of discrimination due to gender, whereas the highest rates can be found in Austria (19 %), Poland (16 %), and Denmark (15 %).

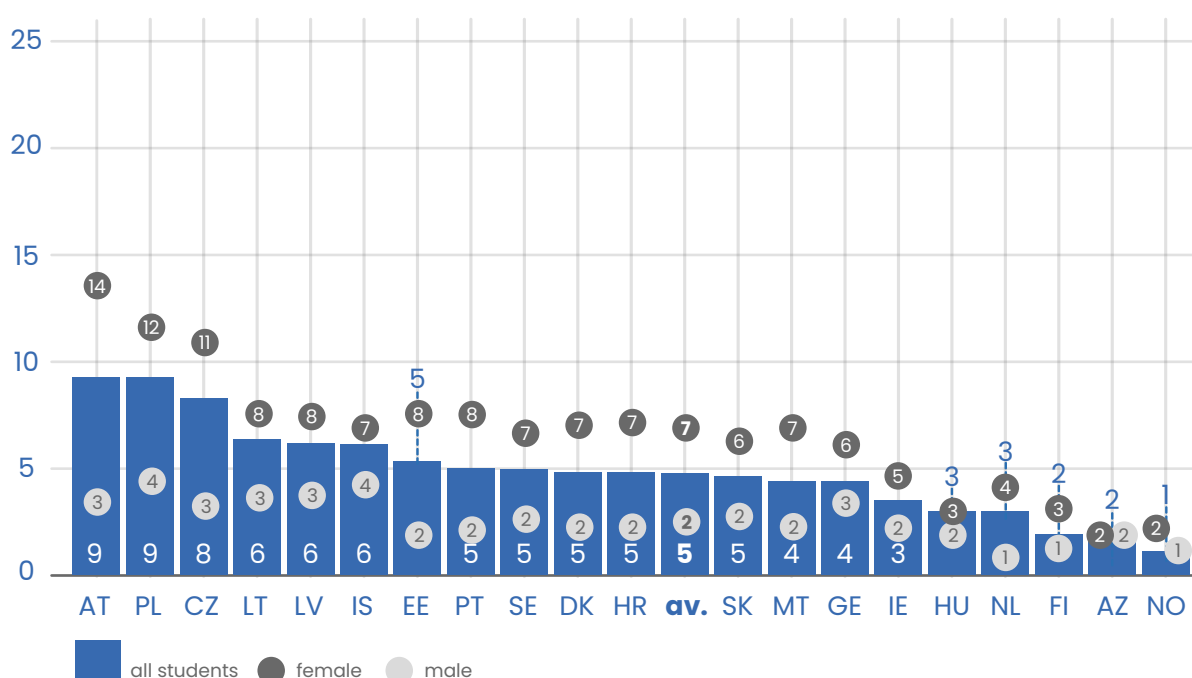
Figure 7. Share of (female/male) students having experienced discrimination due to gender (%)



Within the context of higher education, perceived discrimination by teachers due to, for example, gender might pose a serious threat to affected students (data regarding discrimination by students or other university staff not presented in this report). Overall, on average, **one in 20 students reports a discrimination experience due to gender by teaching staff**. In Austria, Poland, and the Czech Republic – the countries with the highest rates – it is nearly one in ten students who do so while in Norway, Azerbaijan, and Finland – the countries with the lowest rates – it is only one or two in 100 students. The share of students who indicate to have been discriminated by teaching staff irrespective of the criterion they have been discriminated for varies between countries: In Austria, Poland, and Portugal it is highest with about fifteen percent, whereas it is lowest in Norway, Finland, and Azerbaijan with about five percent.

Having a look at the EUROSTUDENT countries' data for female and male students separately, **more female students report discrimination experiences due to gender by teaching staff**. For male students, on average, only two percent indicate having experienced discrimination due to gender by teaching staff, whereas for **female students it is more than three times higher with seven percent**. The lowest rates of gender-based discrimination by teaching staff for male students are reported in Norway, Finland, and the Netherlands (1 % each), for female students in Norway, Azerbaijan, and the Netherlands (2 % each). The highest rates for discrimination of male students can be found in Poland and Iceland (4 % each), for female students in Austria (14 %), Poland (12 %), and the Czech Republic (11 %).

Figure 8. **Share of (female/male) students having experienced discrimination due to gender by teaching staff (%)**

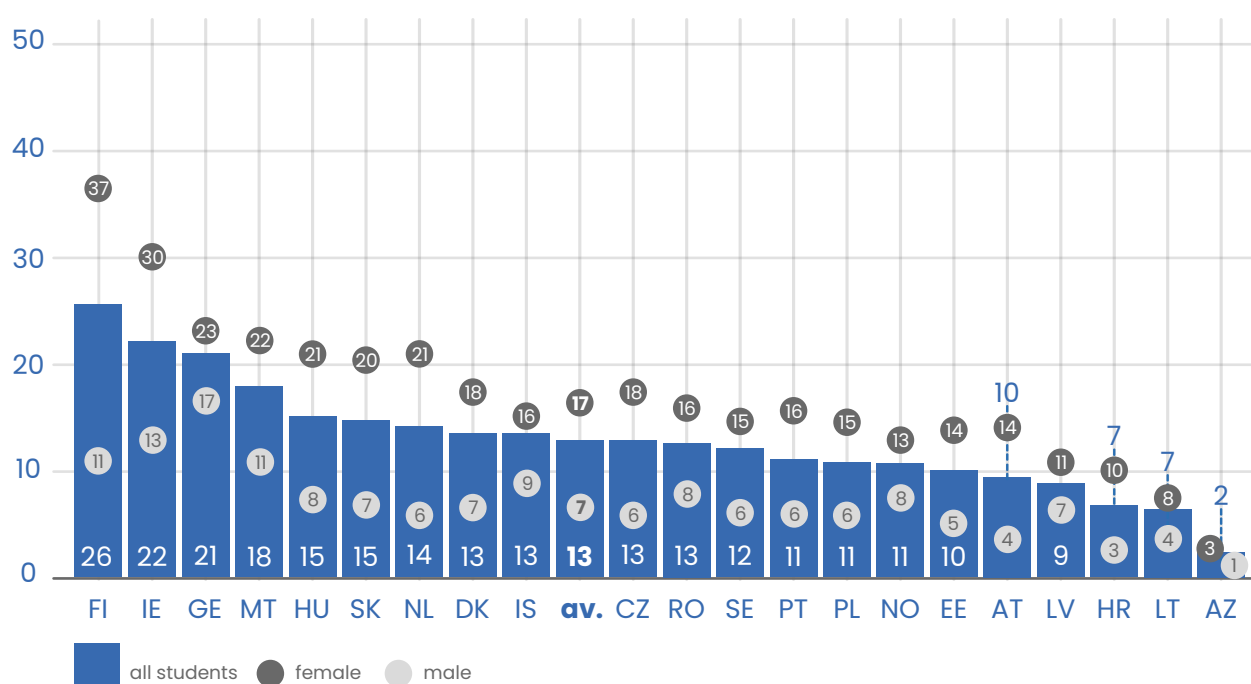


## Sexual harassment

Keeping the focus on gender differences, the specific hostile ad hominem behaviour of sexual harassment is particularly important. Regarding male students, seven percent from all EUROSTUDENT countries report having been confronted with sexual harassment at any point in the course of their studies. The countries with the highest rates for male students are Georgia (17 %), Ireland (13 %), Finland, and Malta (11 % each), the countries with the lowest rates are Azerbaijan

(1 %), Croatia (3 %), Lithuania, and Austria (4 % each). **Seventeen percent of female students indicate being confronted with sexual harassment** at any point within the course of their studies which is more than twice the rate of male students. The countries with the highest rates of female students reporting sexual harassment are Finland (37 %), Ireland (30 %), and Georgia (23 %), the countries with the lowest rates are Azerbaijan (3 %), Lithuania (8 %), and Croatia (10 %).

Figure 9. **Share of (female/male) students having experienced sexual harassment in the context of their studies (%)**

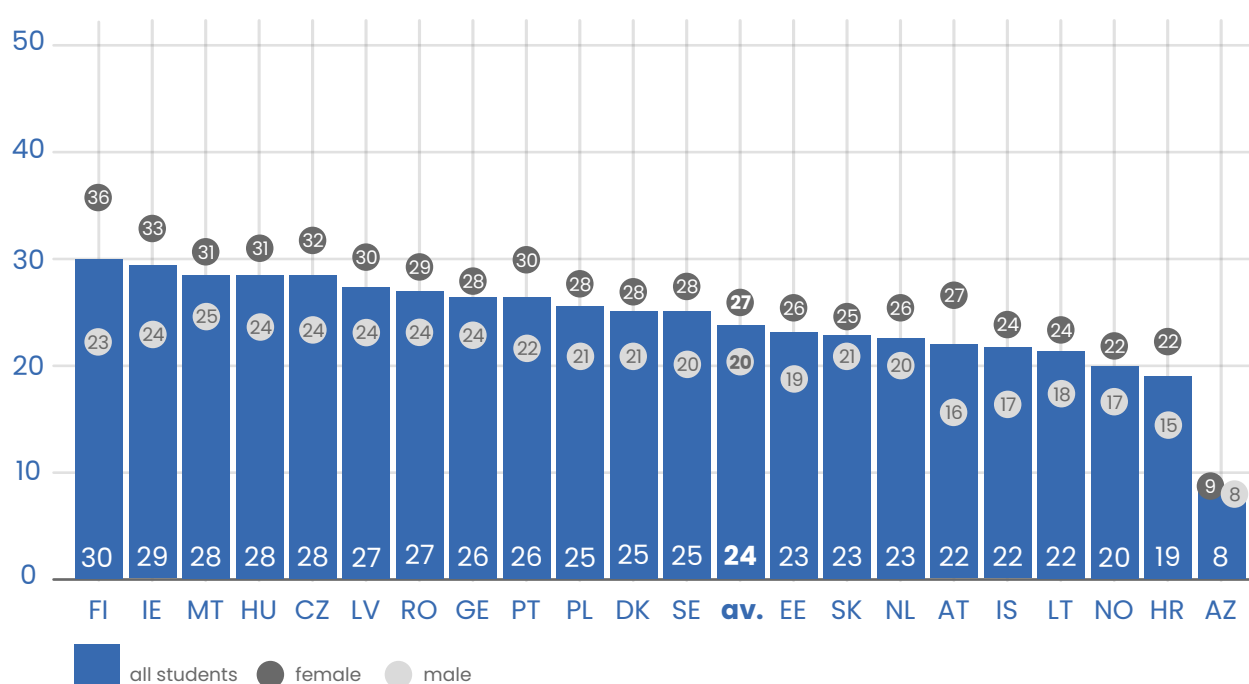


## Treated as less capable

Due to the persistent stereotype of men being perceived as smarter or more brilliant than women (e.g., Bian et al., 2018; Storage et al., 2020), the specific hostile ad hominem behaviour of being treated as less capable or smart is also of special interest. Among male students, the EUROSTUDENT countries with the highest rates of being treated as less capable or smart within the course of studies are Malta (25 %), directly followed by Ireland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania, and Georgia (24 % each). The countries with the lowest rates are Azerbaijan (8 %), Croatia (15 %), and Austria (16 %). On average, 20 % of

male students indicate having been treated as less capable or smart at some point in the course of their studies. Among female students, on average, 27 % report being treated as less capable or smart within the course of their studies. Finland (36 %), Ireland (33 %), and the Czech Republic (32 %) are the countries with the highest rates, whereas Azerbaijan (9 %), Croatia, and Norway (22 % each) are the countries with the lowest rates. Again, the range between the countries is quite wide with the highest rate of Finland being four times the lowest rate of Azerbaijan.

**Figure 10. Share of (female/male) students having been treated as less capable or smart in the context of their studies (%)**



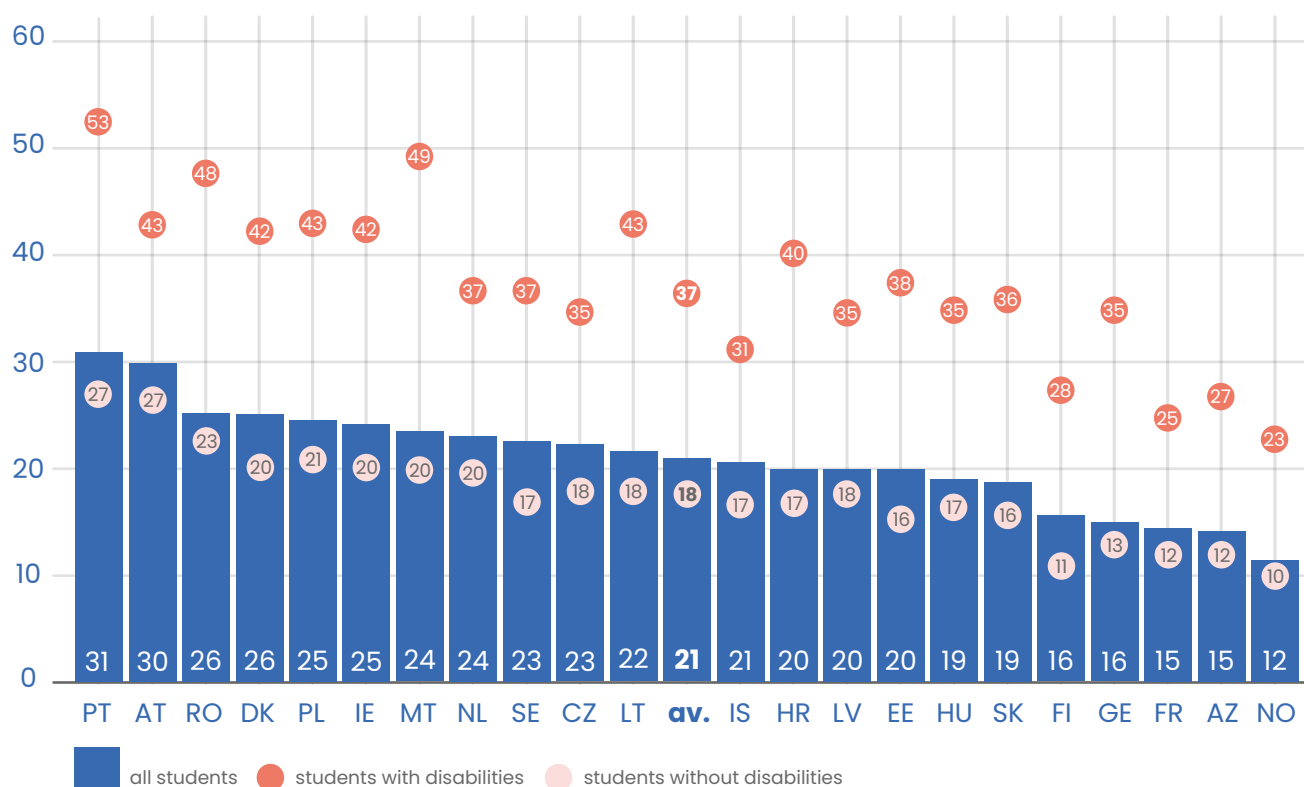
**Compared to the discrimination experiences and hostile behaviour situations reported above, gender differences within the EUROSTUDENT countries are less pronounced for the specific situation of being treated as less capable or smart.**

## Discrimination experiences of students with disabilities

Another group of specific interest comprises students who report having disabilities limiting them in their studies<sup>2</sup>. On average, **more than twice as many students with disabilities report discrimination experiences compared to their counterparts without disabilities (37 % vs. 18 %)**. This pattern also mostly holds true at the country level. Out of all EUROSTUDENT countries, there are only six countries where the percentage of students who experienced any kind of discrimination is not

at least twice as high for students with disabilities compared to those without disabilities: Portugal, Austria, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Iceland, and Latvia. The highest levels of discrimination are reported by students with disabilities in Portugal (53 %), Malta (49 %), and Romania (48 %), whereas Norway (23 %), France (25 %), and Azerbaijan (27 %) show the lowest rates.

Figure 11. **Share of students (with/without disabilities) having experienced discrimination in the context of their studies (%)**

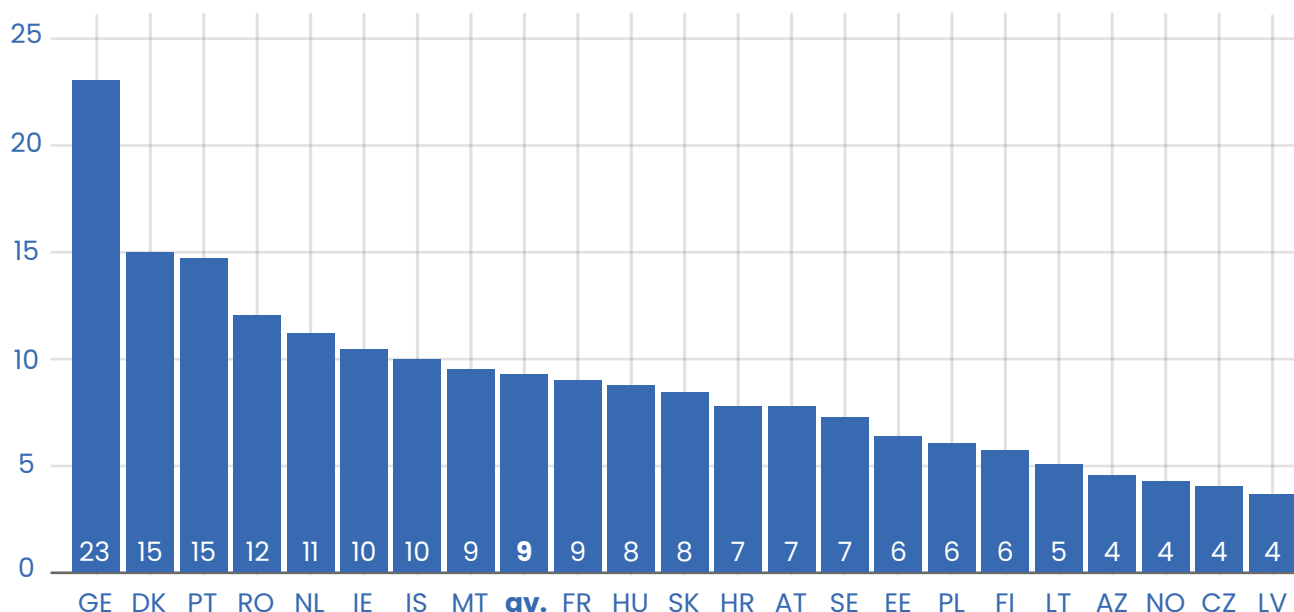


**Among students with disabilities, it is nearly every tenth student (9 %) who reports having experienced discrimination because of it.** The highest rates can be found in Georgia (23 %), and

to a lesser extent, in Denmark and Portugal (15 % each). The lowest rates can be found in Latvia, the Czech Republic, Norway, and Azerbaijan (4 % each).

2 In the following, this group is referred to as "students with disabilities".

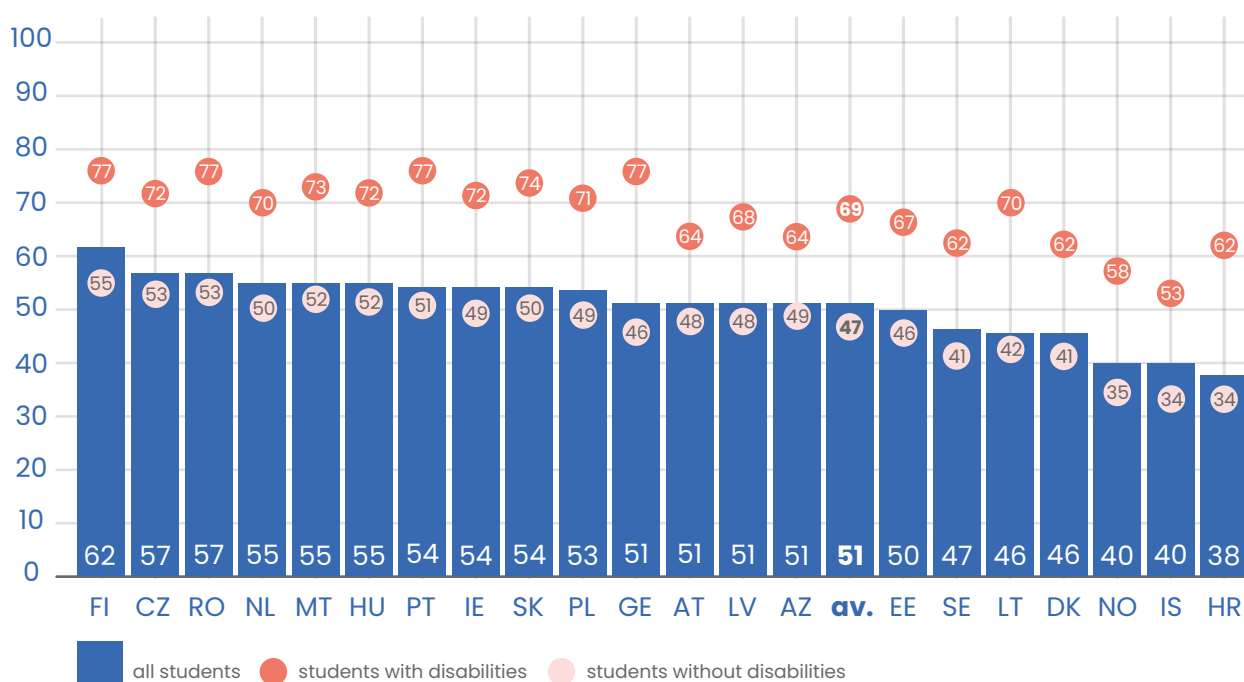
Figure 12. Share of students with disabilities having experienced discrimination due to their disability (%)



**More than two thirds of students with disabilities (69 %) indicate having encountered any kind of hostile ad hominem behaviour in the course of their studies.** Among students without disabilities, this is only the case for slightly less than half (47 %). Students with disabilities report the highest rates of encountering

specific hostile ad hominem behaviour in Finland, Romania, Portugal, and Georgia (77 % each). In Iceland (53 %) and Norway (58 %), the lowest shares of students with disabilities having been subject to hostile ad hominem behaviour within the context of their studies can be found.

Figure 13. Share of students (with/without disabilities) having experienced hostile ad hominem behaviour in the context of their studies (%)



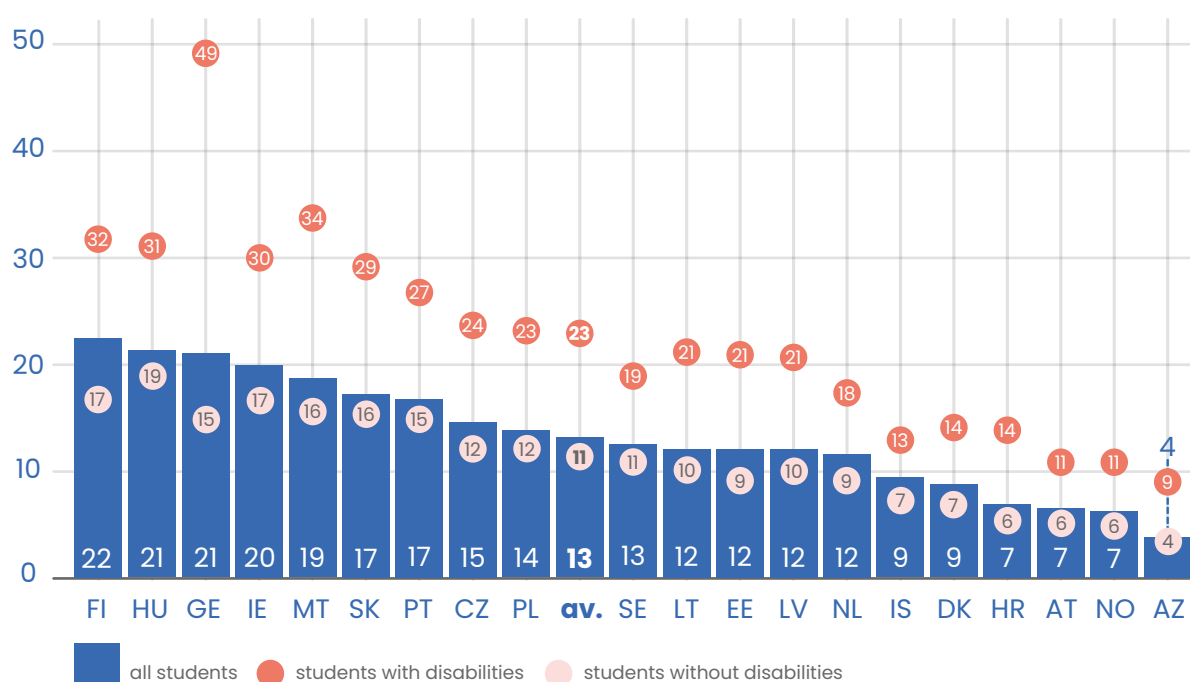
## Being called names

**Being called names or seeing/hearing someone using one's personal identity as an insult is much more commonly reported by students with disabilities than by their counterparts.**

Overall, 11 % of students without disabilities indicate having experienced the abovementioned hostile ad hominem behaviour during the course of their studies; the highest shares can be found in Hungary (19 %), Finland, and Ireland (17 % each),

the lowest shares are reported in Azerbaijan (4 %), Norway, Austria, and Croatia (6 % each). Among students with disabilities, on average, 23 % report having experienced the hostile behaviour in question; the highest shares are found in Georgia (49 %) – being up to three times as high as among students without disabilities –, Malta (34 %), and Finland (32 %). The lowest shares are found in Azerbaijan (9 %), Norway, and Austria (11 % each).

Figure 14. Share of students (with/without disabilities) having been called names or seen/heard someone using one's personal identity as an insult in the context of their studies (%)



## Being asked inappropriate, offensive, or overly personal questions

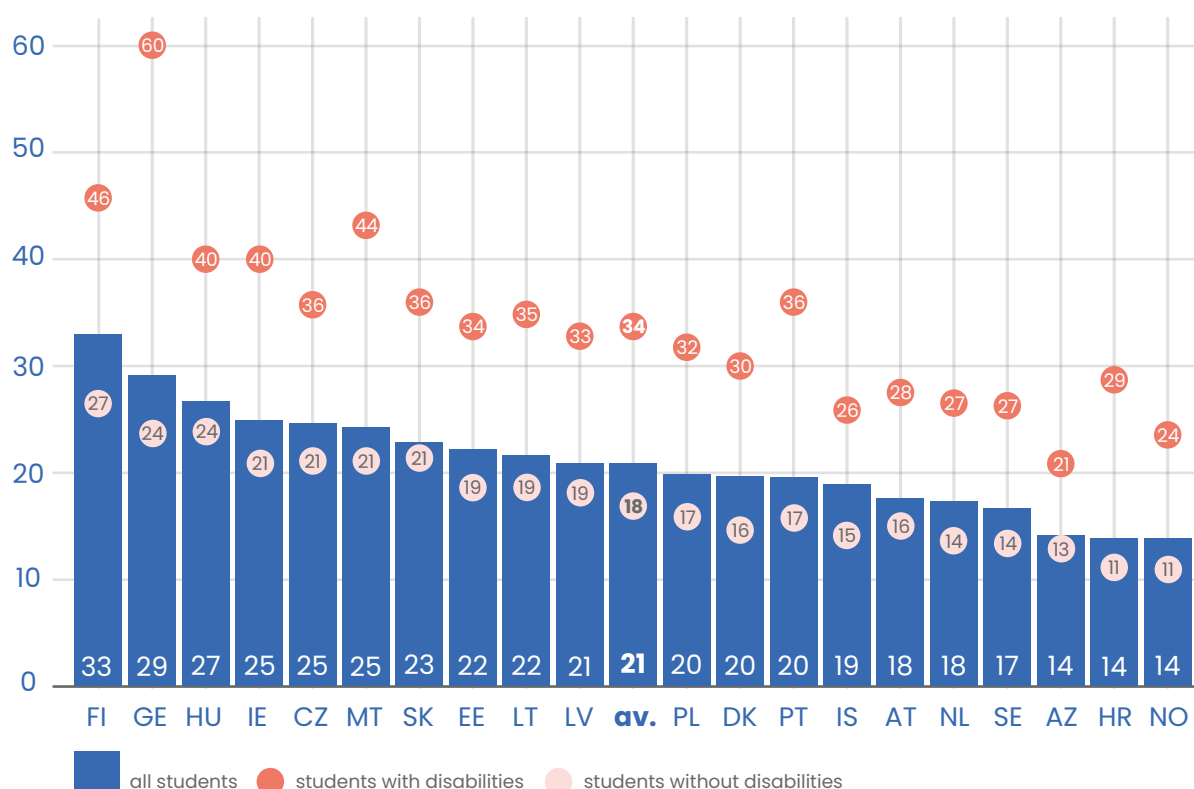
Another specific hostile ad hominem behaviour is of special interest for this group: To be asked inappropriate, offensive, or overly personal questions because of who someone is. **Within the course of their studies, overall, 34 % of students with disabilities report having been asked inappropriate, offensive, or**

**Students with disabilities limiting them in their studies report more often to have experienced discrimination and hostile ad hominem behaviour than students without disabilities limiting them in their studies.**

**overly personal questions, which is nearly twice as high compared to their counterparts without disabilities (18 %).** Among students with

disabilities, the lowest rates can be found in Azerbaijan (21 %) and Norway (24 %). The highest rates are found in Georgia (60 %), Finland (46 %), and Malta (44 %).

Figure 15. Share of students (with/without disabilities) having been asked inappropriate, offensive, or overly personal questions in the context of their studies (%)



## Feeling unsafe while walking alone in the dark

Another aspect of feeling secure and welcome as a student is the feeling of safety while walking home in the dark, both on the premises of the institution as well as in students' neighbourhoods. EUROSTUDENT 8 data show that women

(as compared to men) and students with disabilities (as compared to students without disabilities) report a lower safety-feeling. In the following section, only data regarding female students and students with disabilities will be displayed.

### Female students feeling unsafe

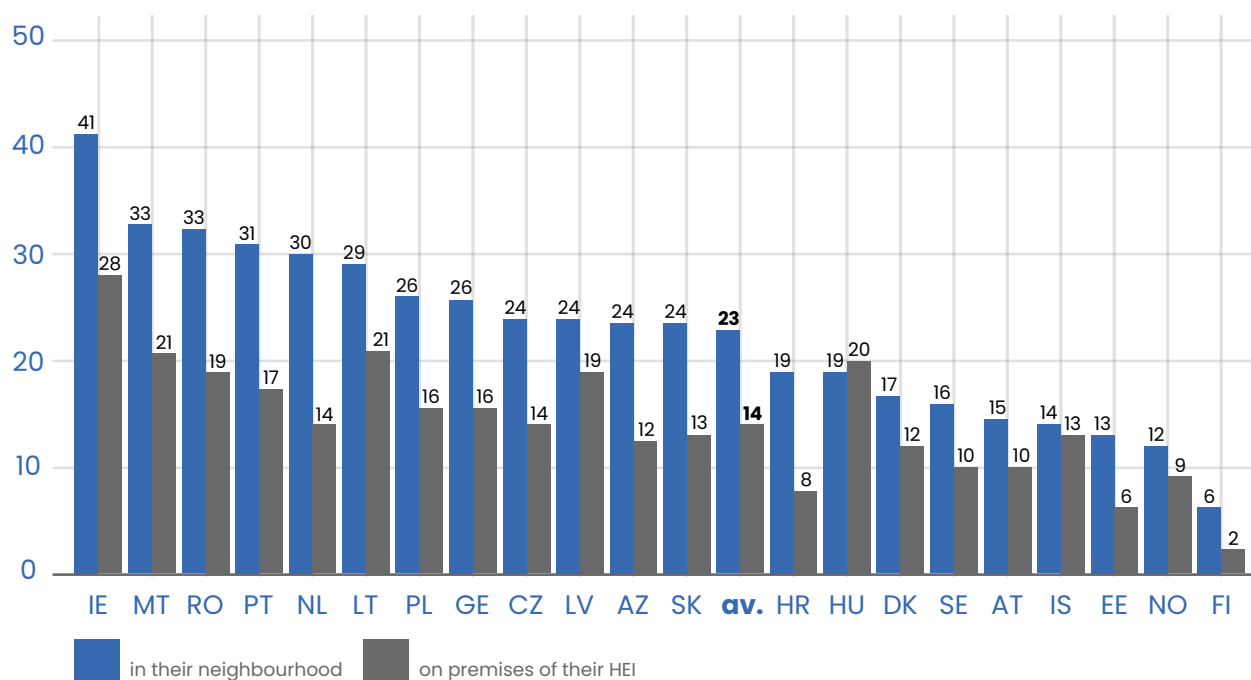
More female students feel unsafe in their neighbourhood than at their HEI in nearly all EUROSTUDENT countries. Hungary is the only country showing the opposite pattern, however, the difference is very small (only 1 %pt.). **On average, nearly every fourth female student (23 %) in all EUROSTUDENT countries feels (very) unsafe walking alone in the dark in their neighbourhood.** The highest shares of women reporting feeling (very) unsafe in the neighbourhood can be found in

**On average, 14 % of female students and 14 % of students with disabilities from all EUROSTUDENT countries feel (very) unsafe walking alone in the dark on the premises of their HEIs.**

Ireland (41 %), Malta, and Romania (33 % each), whereas the lowest shares are reported in Finland (6 %), Norway (12 %), and Estonia (13 %).

**Taking all EUROSTUDENT countries together, 14 % of female students report to feel (very) unsafe walking alone in the dark on the premises of their HEIs.** In Ireland (28 %), Malta, and Lithuania (21 % each), the shares are highest and more than three times as high as the lowest shares found in Finland (2 %), Estonia (6 %), and Croatia (8 %).

Figure 16. Share of female students feeling (very) unsafe (%)

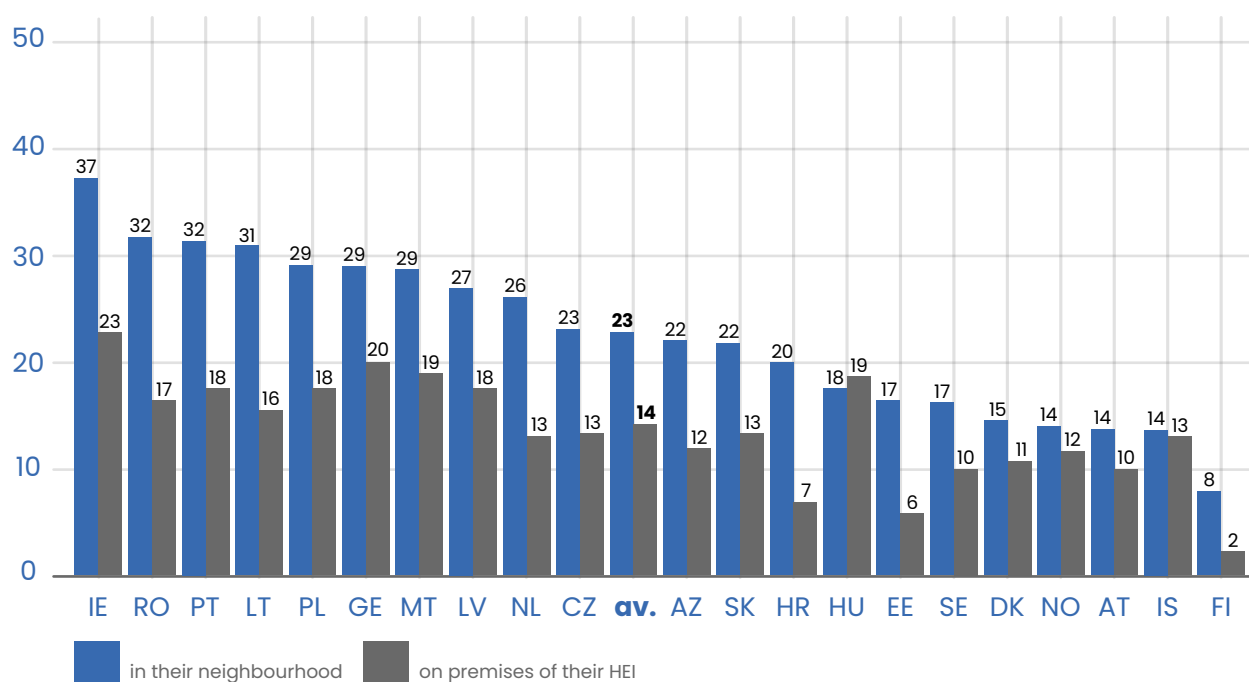


## Students with disabilities feeling unsafe

The pattern of higher shares of feeling unsafe in the neighbourhood than on the premises of one's HEI is also found for students with disabilities. Again, Hungary presents an exception with a minimal difference (1 %pt.) in the opposite direction between both surroundings. **On average, 23 % of students with disabilities feel (very) unsafe walking alone in the dark in their neighbourhoods.** Ireland (37 %), Romania, and Portugal (32 % each) show the highest shares of students with disabilities feeling (very) unsafe,

whereas the lowest shares are reported in Finland (8 %), Iceland, Austria, and Norway (14 % each). **Regarding feeling (very) unsafe on the premises of one's HEI while walking alone in the dark, the average share of all EUROSTUDENT countries among students with disabilities is 14 %.** Again, the highest shares can be found in Ireland (23 %), followed by Georgia (20 %), Malta, and Hungary (19 % each). The lowest shares are reported in Finland (2 %), Estonia (6 %), and Croatia (7 %).

Figure 17. Share of students with disabilities feeling (very) unsafe (%)



It appears, HEIs are successful in providing a relatively safer environment compared to students' neighbourhoods which may constitute a bright spot for students who do not feel safe in their neighbourhoods. However, a significant proportion of students still reports feeling unsafe on the

premises of their HEIs, and this should be a priority for institutions to address. In addition, every third student feels (very) unsafe in their neighbourhood in some countries. Supporting students so that they can live in safe environments should be a goal to improve students' lives.

## Take-away messages

In EUROSTUDENT countries, discrimination in higher education is a significant issue with every fifth student indicating personal discrimination experiences. Students primarily feel discriminated by their fellow students, potentially affecting feelings and sense of belonging the most. Discrimination by teachers can additionally influence academic success directly. Alarming, female students as well as students with disabilities descriptively report more often to be discriminated and feel unsafe while walking alone in the dark: sometimes and in some countries even more than two or three times higher than their counterparts.

As discrimination in the context of higher education is a complex issue (e.g., multiple reasons to feel discriminated for; multiple sources of discrimination in the context of studies), further research is much needed to shed light on other marginalised groups not covered in this report. Higher education institutions with their claim to be open to everyone and open-minded must play a leading role in eliminating discrimination. For example, offering anti-discrimination services or customised training courses for their teaching staff could be a first step. The numbers from this report should be seen as an important indicator and a starting point for HEIs and policymakers to address and enhance the conditions for afflicted students.

# Methodological and conceptual notes

In the eighth round of the EUROSTUDENT project, data were collected in spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023). Overall, 22 of the EUROSTUDENT 8 countries reported data for this topical module and are therefore included in this report<sup>3</sup>.

## Measurement of Discrimination

- Adapted and expanded from the European Social Survey (2018) specifically for the academic context.
- Criteria for discrimination includes 11 factors: skin colour, ancestry/nationality, religion, gender, sexuality, age, weight, disability, mental health, income, parents' education.
- Sources of discrimination: Students were asked if they had experienced discrimination from fellow students, teaching staff, or other university staff (multiple answers possible) for each of the abovementioned criterion.

## Measurement of Specific Hostile ad Hominem Behaviour

- Derived from the Intersectional day-to-day Discrimination Index (InDI-D; Scheim & Bauer, 2019).
- Types of experiences include 11 specific situations like being mocked or treated as less capable because of who someone is.
- Frequency measured using four categories: "yes, many times in the past year", "yes, once or twice in the past year", "yes, but not in the past year", "never".
- Aggregation of responses: For this report, the three yes-categories were aggregated to build the group of students who indicate having encountered situations with hostile ad hominem behaviour at any point in the course of their studies.

## Measurement of Safety-Feeling

- Adapted from the European Social Survey (2018).
- Students' sense of safety while walking alone in the dark in their neighbourhood and on university premises.
- Measured on a five-point scale, ranging from "1 – very safe" to "5 – very unsafe".
- Aggregation of responses: categories four and five were aggregated and displayed as feeling "(very) unsafe".

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the fact that there were some deviations in the questionnaire of France, their data are excluded from the analyses belonging to the figures: 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

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The EUROSTUDENT project collates comparable student survey data on the social dimension of European higher education, collecting data on a wide range of topics, e.g., the socio-economic background, living conditions, and temporary international mobility of students. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. The data presented here stem from the eighth round of the EUROSTUDENT project (2021–2024).

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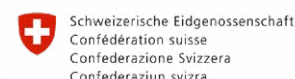
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