

## **Social dimension/ Equity**

**Underrepresented groups in European Higher Education**, *Martin Unger, Petra Wejwar (Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna, Austria)*

**A comprehensive approach to investigating the social dimension in European higher education systems – The PL4SD Country Reviews**, *Dr. Dominic Orr (Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung, Hannover, Germany), Martin Unger (Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna, Austria)*

**No Future for the Social Dimension?**, *Florian Kaiser, Elisabeth Gehrke, Liva Vikmane*

**Enrolment and Inequality in the new English Market for Higher Education**, *Koen Geven (European University Institute, Florence, Italy)*

**Struggling with social polarization. Financial student support in Romania in the framework of the Bologna Process**, *Bogdan Murgescu (National Council for Higher Education Funding, Romania), Cezar Hâj (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, Romania), Daniela Alexe (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, Romania)*

**Enhancing the social dimension of Polish higher education through diversification of lifelong learning opportunities: A national and institutional perspective**, *Andrzej Krasniewski (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland)*

**Premises of inclusive access and success of Roma people in Higher Education in Romania**, *Diana Cismaru (National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania), Delia Gologan (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, Romania)*

**Underrepresented groups in European Higher Education, Martin Unger, Petra Wejwar**  
*(Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna, Austria)*

The social dimension was already mentioned as a crucial element of successful Higher Education Systems within the Bologna Process in the Prague Communiqué back in 2001. And already the 2005-2007 social dimension working group recommended that each country sets-up a national strategy to improve the social situation of its students. As a first step for such a national strategy, underrepresented groups among the student population should be identified. The working group assumed a lack of data in many of the Bologna member countries and therefore recommended also improvements regarding the collection of data about the student population. However, only very few countries followed these recommendations so far and hence, the extension of underrepresented groups is still widely unknown in the European Higher Education Area. The current social dimension working group picks up these older recommendations and will again propose similar approaches to improve the social dimension of the European Higher Education systems.

The EUROSTUDENT project is collecting international comparative data of the student body and student life in many European countries. EUROSTUDENT is therefore mentioned in several ministerial communiqués as one of the main data providers of the Bologna process. The ongoing fifth round of EUROSTUDENT compiles data from about 30 countries – based on national student surveys in these countries. For some of the participating countries, especially in Eastern Europe, these were the first nationwide student surveys ever. The international database will contain breaks of nearly all collected data by so called “focus groups”, i.e. groups by socio-demographic characteristics or by student behaviour. That means all data will be available for differentiated analysis of several groups of students. The final report and the database will be published end of February 2015.

The authors of the proposed paper are members of the EUROSTUDENT consortium and are involved in data analysis and reporting of results. While the main EUROSTUDENT report will mainly contain descriptive data on the social situation of student life, the proposed paper will have a more analytical approach towards underrepresented groups in Higher Education.

The first part of the paper will contain an overview of underrepresented groups in around 30 European Higher Education systems. However, underrepresentation is not only visible on an aggregated level of the whole system (like usually in cross-country comparisons), but shows very different characteristics when looking into sub-systems, like different types of higher education institutions, different fields of study or different degree levels. In a second part, the paper will analyse these different patterns for different sub-groups (like age groups, gender, educational attainment of parents, direct/delayed transition students) and try to identify differences and commonalities between the 30 national systems. Which main pictures emerge across Europe? Are there e.g. similarities by field of study, by type of higher education institution or by regional clusters? Where are certain groups less underrepresented and are there indications why they are less underrepresented? Might other countries be able to learn from these experiences?

In short: The paper will provide for the first time an comprehensive overview of underrepresented groups in European Higher Education, try to identify regional or institutional patterns of

underrepresentation and using these patterns to point to (sub)systems with more equal representations of student groups to enable learning from them.

**A comprehensive approach to investigating the social dimension in European higher education systems – The PL4SD Country Reviews, Dr. Dominic Orr (Deutsches Zentrum für Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsforschung, Hannover, Germany), Martin Unger (Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Vienna, Austria)**

Whilst the social dimension has been a main focus for the Bologna Process, at least since it was expressly defined as objective for the European Higher Education Area in 2007, it has been difficult to translate it into a manageable policy agenda. As recently stated in an analysis of this policy: “the social dimension is a policy item that found a way into the Bologna Process agenda, but could not grow into an implementable policy” (Yagci, 2014). Using findings from surveys of students from the EUROSTUDENT project and the analyses of policy interventions within higher education systems carried out as part of the project Peer Learning for the Social Dimension (PL4SD), the authors of this contribution have tried to seek solutions to this quandary of inaction by taking a different approach.

**No Future for the Social Dimension?, Florian Kaiser, Elisabeth Gehrke, Liva Vikmane**

The Social dimension is considered the neglected child of the European Higher Education Area, which faces an uncertain future. It lacks a concrete definition and activities relating to it often do not have measurable outcomes. However, the up-coming ministerial conference in Yerevan could be a turning point for the social dimension. This paper will address several issues: the need for a social dimension, the history of the social dimension, the successes and failures of its implementation and potential ways to develop it in the future. Arguments will be provided as a means of enabling the European Higher Education Area to successfully develop and re-define the social dimension within higher education. While the social dimension is politically managed at the European level, this study proposes to extend its governance to practitioners and institutions at the regional/national governments' level.

**Enrolment and Inequality in the new English Market for Higher Education, Koen Geven (European University Institute, Florence, Italy)**

This paper presents a first analysis of the effects of the marketisation of English higher education in 2012 on student enrolments. I use a semi-experimental research design to estimate the effect of marketisation, based on student population data drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). I find that enrolment declined by 18% in the treated groups (English and EU students), compared to the control groups (all other students in the UK). The decline in enrolments is particularly pronounced for students in older age groups and students from the service class and the middle class. No effect is visible for students from the working class, indicating that the reforms did not lead to a much-feared increase in class bias in higher education enrolment. These results are consistent with earlier research in the United States and the United Kingdom, although they expand our understanding of student price responsiveness in other important ways. The paper argues that younger and older students face different costs and benefits. Older students may be less certain about their benefits, and therefore be

more sensitive towards price increases. The strong decrease in mature learners may require a policy response. There are two explanations why students from lower social classes have been less responsive to marketisation. First, there are generally fewer students from lower social classes, thus the latter may be more selected with regards to motivation. Secondly, students from low-income families have been compensated through various loan and grants programmes. Increasing participation from lower socio-economic groups should pay more attention to the diverse needs of potential students.

**Struggling with social polarization. Financial student support in Romania in the framework of the Bologna Process,** *Bogdan Murgescu (National Council for Higher Education Funding, Romania), Cezar Hâj (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, Romania), Daniela Alexe (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding, Romania)*

Student support schemes are one of the main policy instruments that can be found in the European Higher Education Area and that aim to enhance equity and help those with an unprivileged background to acquire an university degree. Access to higher education is significant because at individual level it leads to higher income and a better social status, while its absence is a pathway to social polarization. As education inequities lead to social inequities, the lack or inefficient implementation of national policies for reducing the social gaps creates the context for higher education to contribute to the entrenchment of inequalities between different social groups. In Romania, the total income of a household where the head of the family has a university degree is almost three times higher than the total income of a household where the head of the family has only primary education. Starting from the Bologna Process policy objectives regarding equity, the article analyses what is the impact of the current financial student support system in Romania on the participation to higher education of youth coming from low-income families. In this context, the article looks, on the one hand, at the scholarship system from a national, legislative and implementation perspective and, on the other hand, to the cost of education with an emphasis on the student body characteristics.

**Enhancing the social dimension of Polish higher education through diversification of lifelong learning opportunities: A national and institutional perspective,** *Andrzej Krasniewski (Warsaw University of Technology, Poland)*

Following the political upheaval of 1989, the higher education system in Poland expanded significantly. Little progress, however, has been made in implementing the concept of lifelong learning (LLL) – the participation of adults in higher education is still very low. This is in a striking contrast with successful implementation of other priorities (action lines) defined for the Bologna Process. In recent years, higher education institutions (HEIs) can observe several incentives to get involved in the LLL developments, including unfavorable demographic trend, significant increase in life expectancy, and growing demand resulting from qualifications and skills mismatch on the labour market. To support the efforts of HEIs, the project “Higher education institutions as LLL integrators” is currently carried out by the Educational Research Institute within the broader context of the development of the Polish Qualifications Framework for LLL. Five institutions of different profiles have been selected to develop and implement solutions that will subsequently be promoted at the national level as examples of good practice and to formulate recommendations for the system-level solutions. In the paper, the initial outcomes of the

project are reported and the case of one of the participating institutions, namely the Warsaw University of Technology, is discussed in some detail.

**Premises of inclusive access and success of Roma people in Higher Education in Romania,**  
*Diana Cismaru (National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania),  
Delia Gologan (Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation  
Funding, Romania)*

As far as the higher education system is concerned to become inclusive in terms of access, success and excellence, important changes are introduced at the level of teaching and learning environment, management and decisional factors as well as at the level of curricula, procedures and mechanisms. The paper builds an overview of the context of implementing equity public policies targeting the Roma youth in Romania, with a focus on the special designated study grants (*reserved places*<sup>1</sup>) for this category of potential students. In order to determine the impact of present policies and the needs of adjustment, the paper revises the previous studies on this issue and analyzes the existing Romanian regulations in comparison with other countries. Further, the paper identifies the problems these young Roma persons face in higher education and the factors that supplementary concur to their early drop-out. As anticipated, a comprehensive and coherent, long term approach of the issue is needed. Young Roma people are discouraged to enter in higher education by their cultural background characterised by: poor background, lack of support from their families, traditional role models, but also the difficult integration in the educational community. Moreover, their situations are differentiated regionally and, in many cases, participation to education proves to be more a cultural challenge than an ability one. In this challenging context, we present the framework for implementation of some of the equity policies addressing to Roma people that were elaborated in the field of higher education.

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<sup>1</sup> It refers to study grants offered specially for the roma young people. They pass the same type of competition for admission at the study program only that they only compete with the other roma potential students accessing these "reserved places", thus making the probability for them to be admitted higher. After admission, they never pay for tuition as it is covered through these study grants from the public budget. Whenever in this paper we will refer to them, we will use the syntax "reserved places".