

Recognizing student activism

Analyzing practices in recognizing informal learning in the EHEA

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1. Overview



Introduction



Informal learning policies in the EHEA



Learning from student activism



Chosen Methods



Feedback on national level



Feedback on HEI level



Conclusion and findings



Recommendations

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Introduction: Research questions

How is informal learning recognized in different EHEA countries?

How is student activism recognized as informal learning?

What can be learned from the experiences of student representatives for recognition of informal learning?

Introduction

- ▶ **Informal learning:** „resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner’s perspective” (Cedefop, 2008, p.93)
- ▶ **Recognizing informal learning:**
 - ▶ Learning seen as an ongoing, lifelong process in order to meet social and environmental challenges and to develop new competences in diverse learning settings
 - ▶ Recognition crucial to make learning outcomes, competences and skills acquired in informal learning processes visible, transparent and comparable
 - ▶ Recognition of prior learning can broaden the access to higher education and enhance the mobility with the vocational sector and the labour market

2. Informal learning policies in the EHEA

2001- Communication from the European Commission

- “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning”:
- “There is a clear need here for the formal sector to recognise and value non-formal and informal learning”

2009 - Leuven Communiqué

- „The European Higher Education Area in the new decade“:
- “basic principles and procedures for recognition of prior learning [...]” to be included in national policies.

2012 - European Council Recommendation

- “Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning”:
-
- “...to have in place, no later than 2018 [...] arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning”

2016 - Cedefop

- “European Inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning”:
-
- “Member States are gradually placing validation of non-formal and informal learning higher on their policy agendas”

2. Informal learning policies in the EHEA

Only 63% (27 out of 43) of the respondents reported having established procedures for recognition of prior learning or that such procedures are in a mature stage of development.

This means, that such procedures are effectively non-existent in almost 40% of the higher education systems [...]. It is even more worrisome that according to the perspective of student unions, the situation has not changed at all since 2015 [...].”

(ESU, 2018, p. 59)

3. Learning from student activism

„Student activism as totality of activities carried out by students' representatives formally elected or appointed on behalf of the student union.“

Committee work, lobbying and counselling

Campaigning, protest measures and internal organizational work

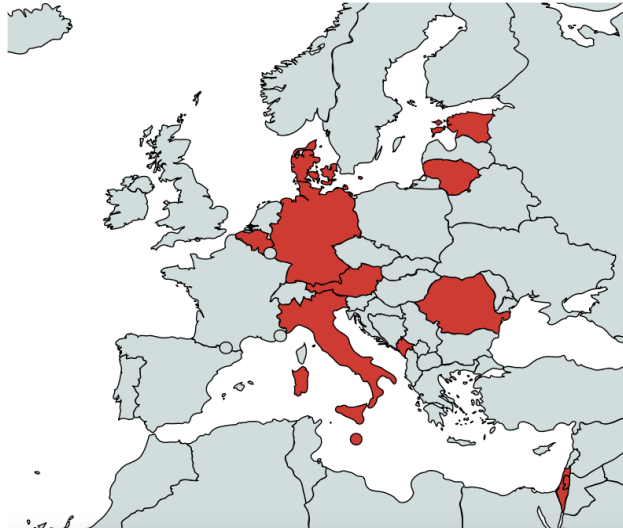
Learning by participation

Learning by doing

Civic engagement (paid & unpaid forms of political activism)

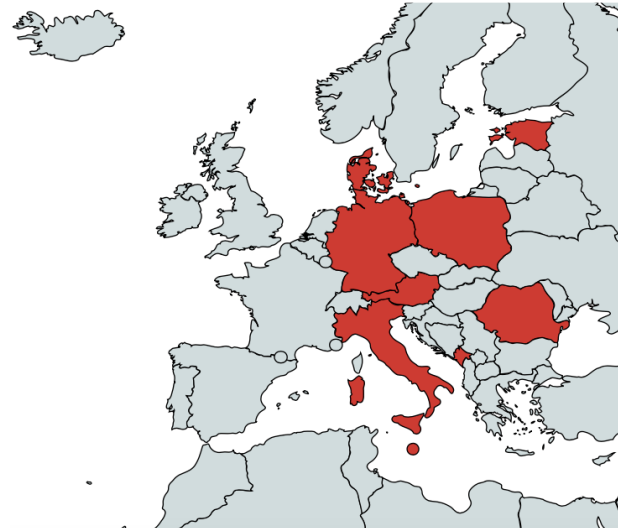
4. Chosen methods

- Qualitative study on two different levels, asking student representatives about their perspective, experiences and activities regarding recognition of informal learning in general with a specific focus on student activism.



Participating countries (11)

Survey 1: national level

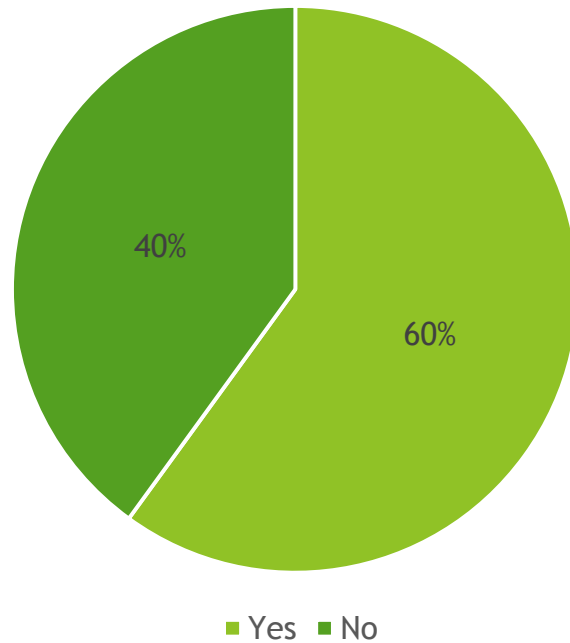


Participating countries (9)

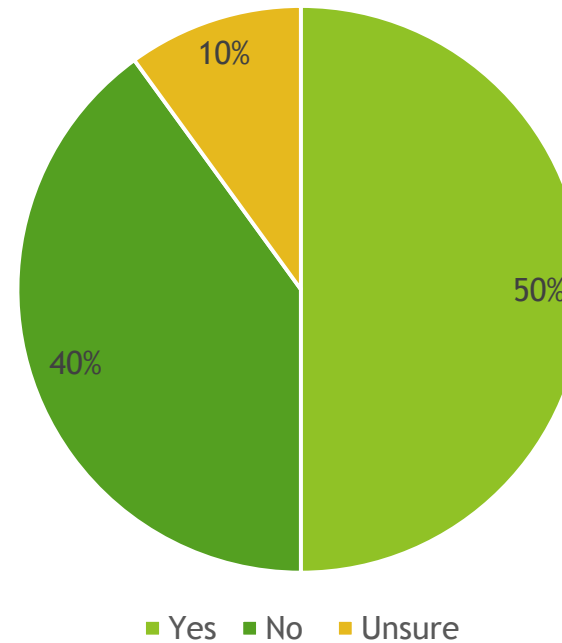
Survey 2: HEI level

5. Feedback on the national level: Legal regulations & policies

Are there any legal regulations on recognition of informal learning in higher education at the national level?

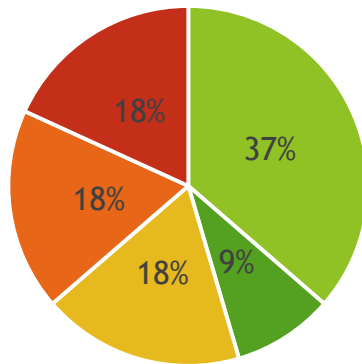


Are there any policies on recognition of informal learning in higher education at national level?



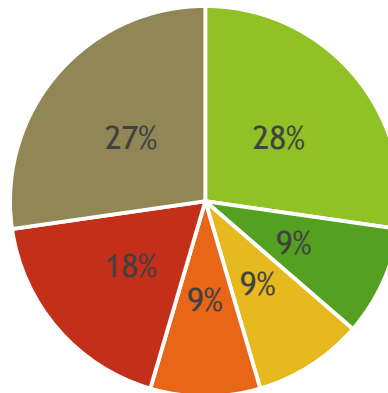
5. Feedback on the national level: Recognition of student activism

Is student activism recognized?



- based on transparent regulations
- based on informal regulations
- based on individual cases
- not at all
- other

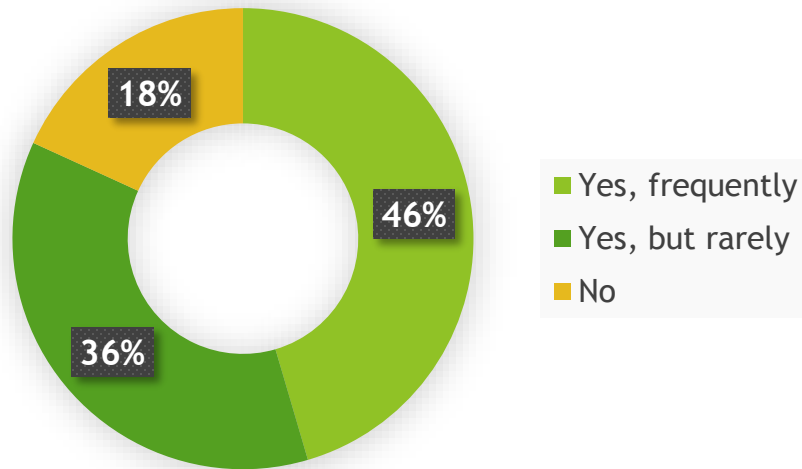
In what way is student activism recognized in the curriculum?



- ECTS linked to certain classes/modules
- ECTS linked to electives
- Replacement for work-based learning
- Varies, can be all of the above
- Not recognized
- Other

5. Feedback on the national level: The role of the student union

Is the recognition of student activism an issue, the student union is dealing with?



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Involved in national policies

• Romania, Israel, Malta, Denmark

Involved in negotiations on HEI level

• Denmark, Montenegro

Education & support for local unions

• Estonia, Austria

Legal counselling

• Austria

Activism & campaigning

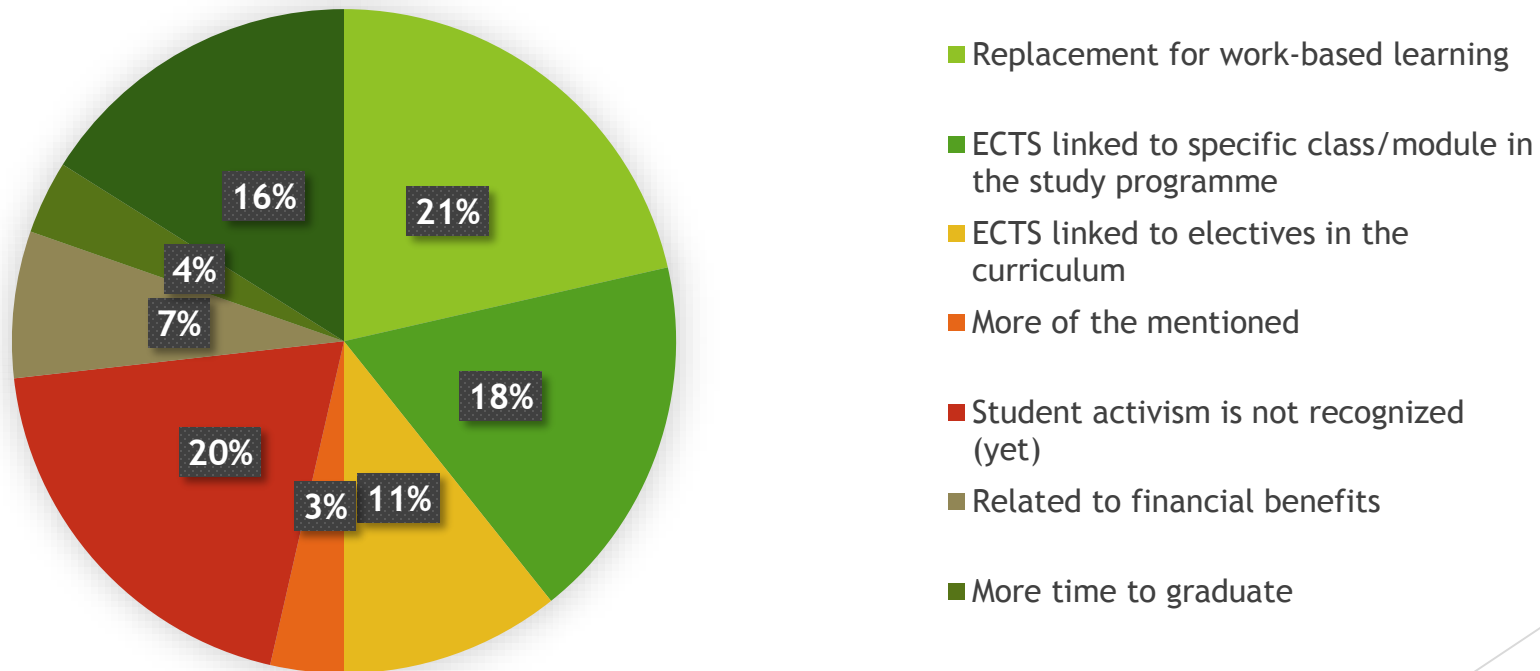
• Belgium

None

• Germany, Lithuania, Italy

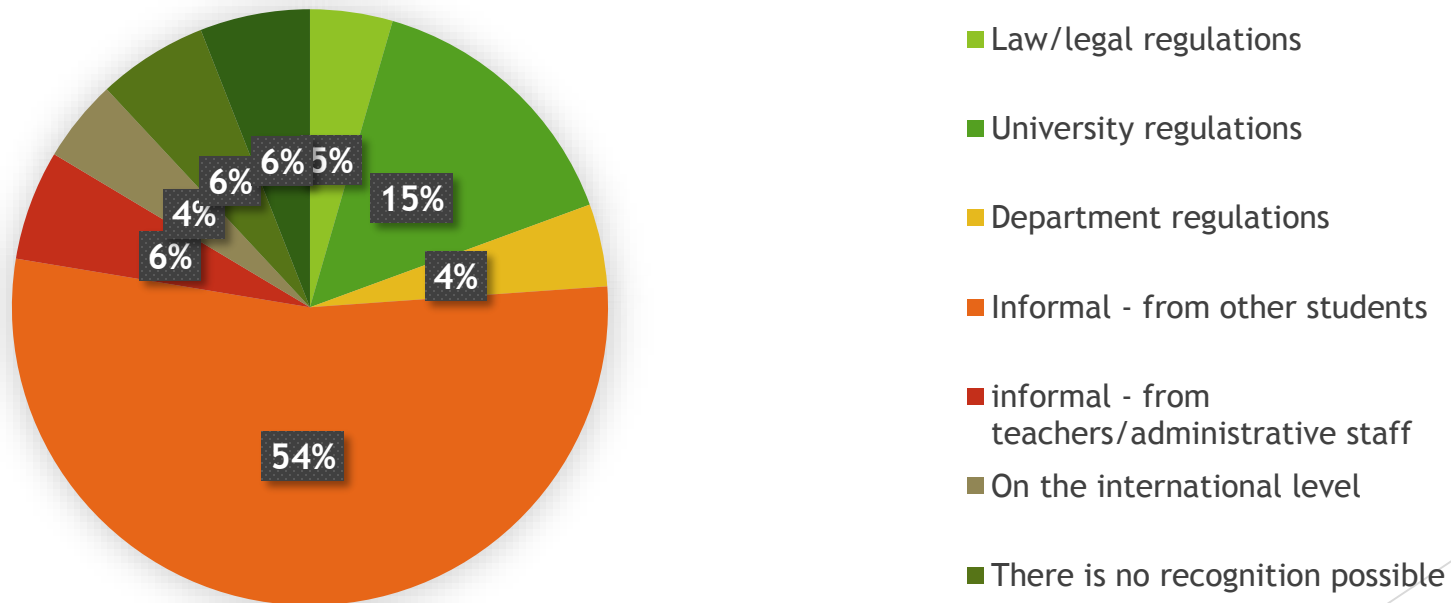
6. Feedback on HEI level: Recognition of student activism

What is/was your activism recognized for?



6. Feedback on HEI level: Available information

How did you learn about the opportunities for recognition?



6. Feedback on HEI level: Procedures of recognition of student activism

Request for recognition

- Request stated by student or local student union
- Documents required (confirmations, activity reports, certificates, proof of accomplished projects)

Decision about recognition

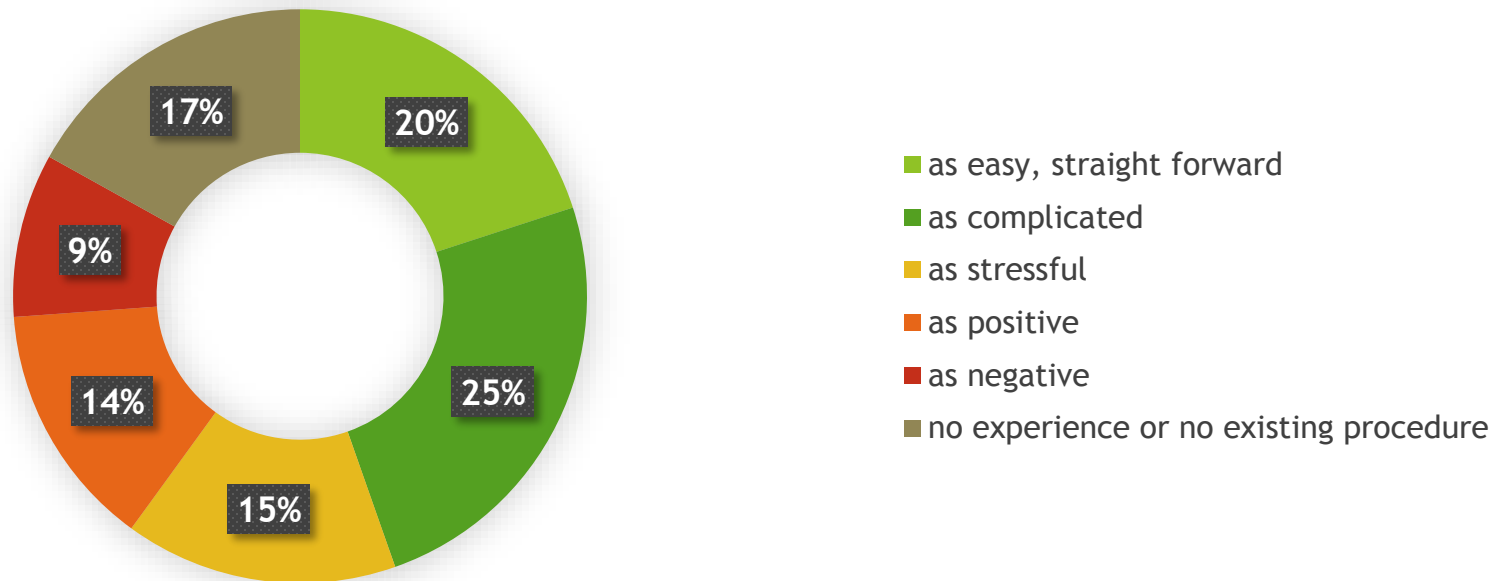
- Documents to be checked by responsible unit at the institution
- Decision to be taken

Official recognition

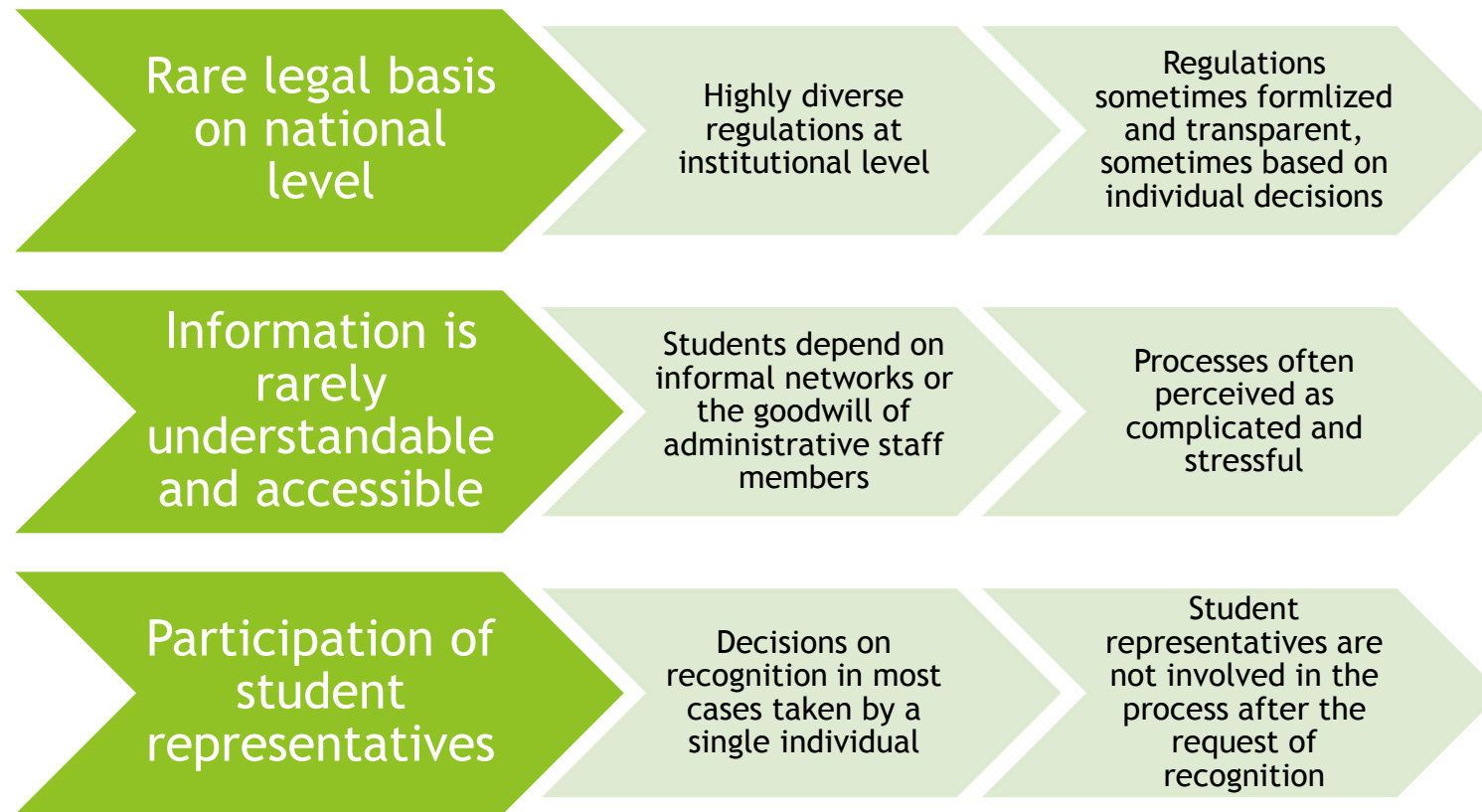
- Positive decision leads to official recognition (certification or confirmation of engagement, position or activities; validation in form of ECTS points.
- Decision is mostly taken by individual staff member (exception Romania)

6. Feedback on HEI level: Perception of recognition procedures at HEIs

Would you describe the procedure of recognition...



7. Conclusions & findings



8. Recommendations

- ▶ **Legal regulations** should be implemented (as committed by the responsible ministers). Non-existing regulations result in legal uncertainty and incomprehensible procedures for student representatives.
- ▶ Highly diverse and intransparent procedures at institutional levels needs to be changed towards **transparent and reliable procedures for the recognition of informal learning** in general. **National Qualification Frameworks** should be taken into account in this process.
- ▶ **Student representatives** need to be involved in procedures of recognition and processes of change.
- ▶ **Training of staff and academics** involved in the process, exchange of best practices and collaboration among HEIs and departments of the same field at regional and national level.

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Thank you
for your
attention.