EURYDICE

Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe:

Funding and the Social Dimension

2011

European Commission

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FOREWORD

The decade that we have now embarked upon presents enormous challenges for Europe. The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth rightly recognises the key role education and higher education must play if our ambitions for Europe in a fast-changing global reality are to be realised. However, as the Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, I am far from complacent about the scale of reform and transformation required across our education and higher education systems in the coming years.

This Eurydice study provides evidence for my convictions and adds weight to the key messages of our modernisation agenda for higher education in Europe. We currently fail to make the most of the talent available to us in Europe and unless we change path, we will fall behind in our competitive and interconnected world. The social dimension of higher education therefore demands our urgent attention. This implies widening access to higher education to as many European citizens as possible, and it is vital that this policy objective is at the heart of our education systems. It is also vital that measures are implemented now to transform our reality, and that we are able to monitor effectively the impact of our actions. Indeed, this is what we understand by evidence-based policy-making.

Our labour markets increasingly require more graduates with the knowledge and competences provided by higher education and we will have to invest substantially in our higher education systems to ensure that this demand is met. However, as we all know, while demands are increasing, public funding is diminishing, and indeed the data in this report shows that these trends were underway even before the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. Now, however, governments have important choices to make on how to best use limited resources. While these choices will never be easy, it is my firm belief, and also the conviction of the European Commission, that investment, whether public and/or private, in education and higher education must increase.

I am very pleased that this study takes a broad perspective on social dimension issues. It considers the varied perceptions of the scale and nature of these issues in different countries. It distinguishes between countries that identify and focus action in particular on under-represented societal groups, and those that act primarily through universal policy measures. It also explores the impact of fees and financial support mechanisms not only in a European overview chapter but also through clear national information sheets that provide a picture of how fees and support interlink in each system.

Like other Eurydice publications, this report draws on authoritative information from each country, and provides a clear, comparative view of national policies and action. I am convinced that in Europe we will continue to advance by learning from each other, and the first step on this journey is to understand each other. I believe this report will help many of us – both policy-makers and the public – to take that vital step, and through better understanding we can make the right choices to build a better future.

Androulla Vassiliou
Commissioner responsible for
Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth

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INTRODUCTION: THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Understanding the social dimension

In a social and economic environment where skills and competences acquired and refined through higher education are becoming more and more important (European Commission, 2010), it is a societal imperative to expand opportunities to higher education to as large a proportion of the population as possible. The process to achieve this goal is commonly referred to as the social dimension of higher education. The development of most European higher education systems towards so called mass and even universal higher education systems illustrates the fast-changing nature of higher education. Policies, accordingly, change as well.

In recent years, the concept of the social dimension has been at the centre of many important policy documents at international level. They all assert that the social dimension of higher education is primarily concerned with providing opportunities for all members of a society to participate in higher education.

Despite widespread usage of the concept, until 2007 there was no precise and commonly accepted definition of the social dimension in higher education. In the Bologna process, arguably the most important vehicle for change in higher education in Europe, the social dimension had been mentioned in all ministerial communiqués since 2001 (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, p. 14). Yet it was only in London 2007 that the concept was comprehensively defined, as the goal that:

> "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" [and emphasises the] "importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background" (London Communiqué 2007, p. 5).

Since 2007, within the Bologna process, the "social dimension" is understood as the process towards achieving this overarching goal (BFUG 2007, p. 11) – and thus as a large sphere of activities where governments can enact policies.

In the European Union, the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 define the social dimension as:

> "equal opportunities for access to quality education, as well as equity in treatment, including adapting provisions to individuals' needs", whereby "equitable education and training systems … are aimed at providing opportunities, access, treatment and outcomes that are independent of socio-economic background and other factors which may lead to educational disadvantage" ([1]).

Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined equitable tertiary education systems as:

> "… those that ensure that access to, participation in and outcomes of tertiary education are based only on individuals' innate ability and study effort. They ensure that the achievement of education potential at tertiary level is not the result of personal and social circumstances, including of factors such as socio-economic status, gender, ethnic origin, immigrant status, place of residence, age, or disability" (OECD 2008, p. 14).

([1]) Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training, OJ C 135, 26.05.2010, p. 2.

The social dimension and the modernisation of higher education

The reform of higher education in Europe has been on the agenda of European cooperation for a long time. The challenge of "modernising higher education" was presented forcefully by the European Commission in 2006. It emphasised that:

> "universities are key players in Europe's future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society. However, this crucial sector of the economy and of society needs in-depth restructuring and modernisation if Europe is not to lose out in the global competition in education, research and innovation" (European Commission 2006, p. 11).

This approach links the modernisation of higher education to the achievement of economic and social goals in a knowledge-based economy. A major element in the Communication was the call to reduce the funding gap between what was required and what was actually provided, and to examine the current mix of student fees and support schemes in the light of their actual efficiency and equity. The Commission called on member states to focus funding on "relevant outputs rather than inputs", using clearly defined targets and indicators together with international benchmarking. This should help to "strike the right balance between core, competitive and outcome-based funding" (Ibid., pp. 7-8). The Commission is currently preparing a new communication on the modernisation agenda in 2011 and the present study aims to present a focused contribution to this ongoing work.

In the political debate on the future of higher education, the social dimension has become increasingly important. The 2007 Council Resolution on modernising universities for Europe's competitiveness states that "increased lifelong learning opportunities, widening access to higher education for all, including non-traditional learners, and improving employability are key objectives of higher education policy both at the European and national level" (Council 2007, p. 3). The Council asked member states to establish incentives so that higher education institutions accept more non-traditional learners and improve the learning environment.

Reaffirming this position, the 2009 Council Conclusions on a strategic framework in education and training (ET 2020) identified four strategic objectives. The third objective is "Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship" to:

> "enable all citizens, irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances, to acquire, update and develop over a lifetime both job-specific skills and the key competences needed for their employability and to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue" ([2]).

Concretely, the Council adopted the benchmark for tertiary level attainment according to which "by 2020, the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40 %" ([3]). The Council further identified the main challenges of the modernisation agenda, in particular sustainability of higher education funding and diversification of higher education provision. The Council also invited member states to "promote widened access, […] develop policies aimed at increasing completion rates, [... and to] promote specific programmes for adult student and other non-traditional learners" ([4]).

More recently, the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training called for an "analysis of the design and impact of different funding systems" to support the

([2]) Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020") OJ C 119/02, p. 4.

([3]) Ibid., p. 9.

([4]) Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on the social dimension of education and training, OJ C 135/02, p. 6.

social dimension in higher education (among other areas) ([5]). The Council specifies that "student support schemes such as grants, loans and additional non-pecuniary benefits can play an important role in facilitating equal access" to higher education.

Social dimension objectives of the Bologna process

In Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve, the Bologna ministers made a commitment to "set measureable targets to widen participation and widening participation of under-represented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade" (Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve Communiqué, 2009).

Last year, Eurydice examined the social dimension in the European Higher Education Area (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, pp. 27 ff) and concluded that significant changes in higher education systems have taken place since 1999, but that challenges remain. In particular:

- the social dimension of higher education […] is understood differently from one country to another;
- very few countries have linked their policy on the social dimension to the Bologna commitment of raising the participation of under-represented groups to the point where the higher education population mirrors the overall societal distribution;
- very few countries have set specific targets to improve the participation of under-represented groups in higher education, and only about half of the Bologna countries systematically monitor their participation.

The analysis showed that, at European level, significant attention is devoted to making European higher education more equitable and inclusive. However, questions remain about the effects of these political declarations. In particular, what has been done at national level to make higher education systems more inclusive? Are funding systems structured in a way that supports the achievement of the stated social goals? This is particularly relevant in an area where the European Commission has no direct legal competence, but rather influences national developments through supportive action.

Empirical analyses of the social dimension of higher education

These questions regarding the nature of the social dimension in higher education have also been explored in the scientific and policy-oriented literature. In recent studies not only academics, but also key stakeholders, such as the European University Association, the European Student Union, and international bodies without direct policy-making competence, such as the OECD, have published analyses on the social dimension of higher education.

Empirical studies of access to and participation in higher education illustrate that higher education systems in most countries are still far from having reached the stated goal of European policy declarations. Clancy (2010) emphasises the continuing differences in access, participation and completion in most European countries. Brennan, Naidoo and Patel (2009, pp. 148-149) also conclude that "overall very large inequalities remain, in spite of the considerable expansions in enrolments". Koucký et al. (2010, p. 25) assess the impact of the occupational and educational background of both parents as ascriptive indicators for higher education achievement and show on the basis of data from the European Social Survey that students from the upper income quartiles are still much more likely to graduate from higher education than those from the lowest income quartile.

([5]) Ibid., p. 4.

At the same time, these authors highlight that participation rates of different social strata have changed. Clancy argues that an expansion of higher education participation increases the likelihood for participation of all social groups even when differences between social strata persist. According to Brennan, Naidoo and Patel (2009, p. 148) inequalities are reducing in some countries. This ties in with the fact that educational attainment in Europe has increased considerably over the last decades. However, this development is neither common to all member states nor are trends always moving in the same direction. In some countries, inequality in access to higher education even seems to be increasing after a period of significant reduction in inequality between 1950 and 1980. In addition, research shows widely varying impacts of the educational and occupational factors on access and graduation in different countries (Koucký et al. 2010, pp. 26-27). The Eurostudent/Eurostat report on the social dimension (2009, pp. 66-69) also finds that in most EU member states the likelihood of graduating from higher education has increased in recent years, but this varies significantly between different EU member states.

What can policy do to address this empirical reality?

Against a setting of diverse trends and developments in European countries, crucial questions arise as to what kind of policies countries should enact in order to foster greater equality in higher education. Two different conceptions of equality/equity underlie higher education policy in Europe. The first conception is of formal equality, focusing on equality of conditions. Here all are treated equally, irrespective of their personal background. In this context, the main goal is to build the system so that nobody is/can be discriminated against. The underlying assumption is that removing obstacles and discriminatory practices is the best way to increase access, participation and completion (Stamm and Viehhauser 2009, p. 421). This fundamentally meritocratic approach, however, may thus ignore imbalances in participation that result from societal and educational inequity prior to higher education.

The second conception focuses on equality of outcomes, rather than being concerned by equal conditions. Proponents of this approach argue for positive discrimination or affirmative action to redress societal inequity and suggest that public funding and policy measures should favour disadvantaged members of society (Fried et al. 2007, p. 631). They point out that relying primarily on perceived merit for entrance to higher education is in fact a form of indirect discrimination in favour of those whose previous life experience provides social and cultural advantage (Stamm and Viehhauser 2009, p. 422).

These two conceptions and approaches are likely to translate into radically different higher education equity policies. Nevertheless De Boer, Enders and Jongbloed (2009, p. 67) emphasise that, irrespective of the conception of the higher education system, achieving wider social goals, such as equity and access, are valid reasons for governmental intervention. Similarly, Teixeira (2009, pp. 57-58) argues that "the more governments strengthen the role of markets in higher education, the more they need to give attention to […] the level of equity".

The OECD's review of equity policies in higher education identified three areas where policy can help to foster the goal of a socially inclusive and equitable higher education system (OECD, 2008).

First, a more flexible organisation of the higher education system allows for greater access and equity (Guri-Rosenbilt 2010, p. 32). This means creating more diverse pathways into higher education (OECD 2008, p. 61), using such measures as recognition of prior formal and informal learning or the recognition of professional experience as valid criteria for entry. Diversification of higher education – though varied in the way it is understood (Reichert 2009, p. 122) – is another possibility to provide a larger share of the population with access opportunities to higher education (cf. Jongbloed, 2004).

Greater diversification and flexibility are not only tools to facilitate access, but can also open up opportunities within higher education institutions. Here one main goal could be to encourage more flexibility in moving from one higher education institution to another (OECD 2008, p. 49).

Second, the nature of admission and selection procedures to higher education have an impact on the equity of the system (Harman 1994, p. 314). Admissions systems may perpetuate socio-economic exclusion patterns by focusing exclusively on either secondary school performance or performance in admission tests (Astin and Oseguera, 2004). Furthermore overly selective systems will limit the chances for many, and may negatively impact on general motivation to apply for higher education. Alternative approaches include targeted recruiting (often with an element of affirmative action), providing incentives to higher education institutions to recruit students from under-represented or minority groups, or using specific criteria in admissions systems that aim to alleviate some of the inequalities resulting from socio-economic background (Council 2007, p. 5; OECD 2008, pp. 53-56).

The third area for policy action identified by the OECD is completion rates, i.e. the outcomes of higher education. Students from under-represented or disadvantaged groups often face more challenges in succeeding in their studies than their counterparts. Possible measures to address this problem can be more and better-focused academic and career guidance, dedicated support and counselling, the provision of a gender-sensitive environment and the provision of adequate support infrastructure (OECD 2008, pp. 57-66).

While these three areas are indispensable aspects for achieving the goals of social dimension policy – the lever for actually having an effect on the social dimension – these measures must be underpinned with adequate funding. This point is underlined by the OECD report on equity, and it deserves some more attention.

Funding of higher education and the link to the social dimension

Public funding of higher education institutions is the main source of income for large parts of the higher education landscape in all EU member states. More than 70 % of higher education institutions' funding comes from the public purse (Eurydice 2008, p. 47) and for the states, funding is a major steering mechanism for higher education (Lepori et al. 2007, p. 85). Countries use their steering powers inter alia to introduce more diversity into higher education (Jongbloed, 2004), to increase performance management (Frølich et al., 2010), or to adapt the provision of higher education to the demands of the so-called knowledge economy (Johnstone, 2009).

The funding of higher education in general and of higher education institutions in particular has been the subject of numerous studies (e.g. EACEA/Eurydice, 2008). Salmi and Hauptmann (2006, p. 2) found an increasing use of "innovative allocation mechanisms", in particular the use of performance-based measures and the use of funding formulas. Looking at historical developments they find three successful funding approaches to widen participation:

- increasing public funding of tertiary education while charging relatively little fees;
- charging higher fees with greatly enhanced levels of scholarships and loans
- expanding the private higher education sector to reduce pressure on public funding (Ibid., p. 33).

However, they also emphasise that the equality effects of public funding of higher education institutions depend on the choice of funding mechanisms, while direct public funding to students through grants, vouchers or loans is more likely to have a positive impact (Ibid., p. 65). This finding is re-emphasised by Teixeira (2009, pp. 57-58) who identified the tension between market mechanisms

in higher education and the need for governmental steering to achieve societal goals. Shifting the burden of funding to individuals and their families primarily for reasons of efficiency rather than social equity – as advocated by e.g. Salmi and Hauptman (2006) and Barr (2004) – is a politically contentious approach, as the ongoing debates in several European countries illustrate (see already Eurydice 1999, p. 185). In other countries, however, the move towards a more market-oriented system is progressing. Drawing on recent funding reforms in Denmark, Norway and Portugal, Frølich et al. (2010) find a movement towards outcome and market-oriented funding approaches, including the introduction of student fees. They show that stated incentives for funding reform are primarily efficiency, quality and accountability, whereas the social dimension or widening access feature much less prominently (Ibid., p. 17).

To ensure that the decrease in public funding does not lead to underfunding of higher education, the financial burden is increasingly being shifted to students (e.g. Browne, 2010; Carr, 2004). Subsequent social challenges (cf. Marcucci/Johnstone, 2007) need to be offset. Barr (2004) proposed to address this through a combination of deferred payments for all and direct support for under-privileged groups who may lack the information to make informed choices about investing in higher education.

Student contributions and the social dimension

In recent years, a significant body of researchers and institutions have advocated increased cost sharing between the public authorities and private individuals (Salmi and Hofmann, 2006; Joengbloed, 2004; Barr, 2004; OECD 2008a, p. 173; Johnston, 2009). These economic challenges for higher education institutions were also the subject of the 2010 annual conference of the OECD's programme for institutional management. In the debates at this conference, the perceived need to increase private contributions was virtually undisputed. The economic downturn has led to a decrease in public funding, while demand for higher education continues to increase, and it is now an orthodox view that this funding gap will increasingly be covered through private contributions. The question then arises how the introduction of private student contributions (e.g. tuition fees) impacts on the social dimension, as it is reasonable to expect that changes in the financing system will affect students' willingness and/or opportunity to enrol.

Usher and Cervenan (2005) conducted research in 16 countries and found that the links between private contributions and the social dimension are far from simple. Indeed little is known empirically worldwide about the impact of cost sharing (and tuition fees) on higher education accessibility and enrolment behaviour (Marucci and Johstone 2007, p. 38). This is confirmed by Asplund et al. (2008, p. 265) who say that "the main equity arguments put in favour of tuition fees seem to receive rather inconclusive empirical support. Even the existing empirical evidence on the effect of tuition fees on enrolment is limited and also rather ambiguous (Ibid., p. 270).

One argument used in favour of private contributions in fostering equity is that public subsidies for higher education are tax-based and thus in effect constitute a distribution of funds from low to high earners due to higher participation patterns among more affluent societal groups. On the other hand, the mere shifting of the financial burden to students without supportive measures is likely to have a negative effect on the propensity of groups of lower socio-economic status to participate in higher education (Asplund et al. 2008, p. 270). Contrasting United Kingdom data against the diverse Australian, Dutch, New Zealand and United States experiences suggests that the degree of debt aversion of students from more disadvantaged backgrounds is a crucial determinant of the equity implications of student loan systems (Ibid.).

There is broad consensus that student contributions to higher education thus need to be accompanied by support measures to ensure social equity. Tessler et al. (2010) argue that dedicated support systems can improve academic performance for under-represented groups. There is a strong body of opinion that the best way to foster the participation of lower socio-economic groups is the combination of tuition fees with deferred payment. This means that students do not have to pay for their studies at the time of studying, but only after they have finished and earn a generally higher than average income (Barr 2004, p. 269). This has been supported by formal analyses of the problem of optimally financing a risky (for the individual) university education (Asplund et al. 2008, p. 266). This research also demonstrates that it is not possible to assess the social dimension effects of student contributions in isolation. Systemic information about student financial support – particularly grants and loans – also needs to be taken into account.

European countries differ in the way they combine the various student support instruments: grants, loans, subsidised services, family allowances and tax breaks. Grants are still the most widespread student support device in a majority of countries (Asplund et al. 2008, p. 267). Parental income strongly determines the distribution of grants (Ibid., pp. 268-269). Thus grants seem to help address one of the underlying inequity issues in higher education (cf. Koucky et al., 2010). Broadly speaking, in Mediterranean and French-speaking Europe, grants are targeted at a small proportion of students while they are awarded to most students in the Netherlands and the Nordic countries (Asplund et al. 2008, p. 267). This indicates a significant variation of approaches across Europe.

The importance of the national context

Learning from other countries is, according to Clancy (2010), a core requirement, when higher education is no longer reserved for the elite, but increasingly a mass phenomenon with developments towards universal participation. Clancy (2010) shows that relatively simple indicators such as enrolment rates in the typical age group of 17-24 years are rather meaningless in a comparative perspective. Idiosyncrasies of countries need to be clearly presented and drawn upon when making comparative statements. Similarly, Guri-Rosenbilt (2010, p. 32) elaborates that "a unique historical background [of countries] … greatly affects the dominant culture of their higher education system". This in turn is likely to reflect on patterns of funding of higher education institutions as well as measures taken to support students in accessing, participating in and completing higher education. The effect of countries' cultural and historical roots on student support systems are clearly laid out in Eurydice (1999, pp. 152-239), highlighting the obstacles and opportunities these structures present.

The structure of and rationale for this study

This study provides a reliable empirical basis for the further comparative analysis of data on the social dimension of higher education. In 2007, the Council of the European Union asked member states to "contribute to the monitoring of the social dimension in higher education, so that internationally comparable data will become available on this topic" (2007, p. 5). The Commission (2006, p. 7), Clancy (2010), Koucký et al. (2010), Eurostudent and Eurostat (2009) and Eggins (2009), all highlight the need to have more comparative research on the social dimension of higher education based on recent data to be used by policy makers. The present study takes account of these demands and provides comparative administrative data on the social dimension and funding of higher education for the Eurydice member states.

Based on the preceding discussion, an analysis of the social dimension should thus focus on:

- the perception of the scale and nature of the problem [in different countries];
- the groups that are focused on (class, ethnic, gender, regional etc.);

- admission policies and practices;
- the extent and nature of the differentiation of the higher education system;
- whether the main focus is on admission, retention or outcomes;
- the quality of the student experience and the role of fees and financial support mechanisms (cf. Brennan, Naidoo and Pate 2009, p. 145).

The following chapters of this study take up all of these aspects, focusing primarily on the public higher education system rather than on private higher education institutions. The next chapter outlines national approaches to the social dimension of higher education. It addresses the question of how policies to improve equity and widen access are designed, and what groups (if any) are identified as deserving special attention. This is examined through a look at admission and selection policies and practice. This is followed by a chapter on developments in higher education over the past decade, and in particular examining participation and funding trends. Chapter 3 then focuses on the combination of student fees and support as one of the major policy determinants of the social dimension that can be influenced at governmental level. The key issues section presents the main concerns and conclusions of the report.

National information sheets are then provided for all participating countries, outlining the main characteristics of fee and support systems. These national descriptions integrate the public funding of higher education, the system of student contributions and the approach to student support. This allows a contextualised description of the different ways in which countries approach the social dimension to emerge. These national descriptions bring together key aspects of national approaches to the social dimension and help to embed data from other sources in a qualitative systemic context.

Methodology

The study builds on administrative data collected through the Eurydice Network between May and September 2010. The Eurydice European Unit developed the questionnaire based on the literature reviewed above and previous studies on higher education policy (EACEA/Eurydice, 2010; EACEA/Eurydice, 2009; Eurydice, 2008; Eurydice, 2007). Furthermore, to ensure consistency across policy fora, the discussions in the Bologna Follow-Up Group were also taken into account. A draft version of the questionnaire was provided for comments to the Eurydice Network.

Qualitative information for the reference year 2009/10 was collected through the Eurydice Network, and the study covers 31 countries (all EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey). However, information for Luxembourg and Portugal is partial due to data not being submitted during the collection phase. Eurostat data was extracted in late 2010 and early 2011 mainly on financial aspects of higher education. This data is presented to complement the analysis of national administrative data. Given the necessary methodological timelag that Eurostat has to go through before in publishing these data, the study can only present data from before the economic crisis of 2008 took full effect. However, where it is available, more recent data have been taken into account.

As the study relies on information collected at the level of central administration, it does not have the ambition of presenting reality as experienced by students at particular institutions. Also, the study provides no new or innovative measurements for participation or equity. Rather, it combines Eurostat data available on access, participation and graduation from higher education with a contextual analysis of national higher education policies focusing on the improvement of equity in public higher education systems, and thus aims to shed some light on what is a highly complex policy area.

CHAPTER 1: SOCIAL DIMENSION POLICIES

Although the "social dimension of higher education" has become a major topic of European higher education debate, the broad and wide-ranging nature of the concept means that policies to address social dimension objectives have been difficult to identify and compare at European level. This chapter will highlight the difficulty in finding clear evidence that social dimension policy objectives are being pursued through national funding systems, while Chapter 3 will look at the role and impact of the variety of European student fee and support systems.

The focus of this chapter is the general policy approach of countries to the social dimension. Countries have been invited to provide policy information specifically linked to the most recent Declaration of the Bologna Ministers (Budapest-Vienna Declaration 2010, p. 2) which stressed the need to increase efforts to strengthen the social dimension, paying particular attention to under-represented groups.

1.1. Under-represented groups

Almost all countries claim to be working towards a policy goal of increasing and widening participation in higher education. Only five countries (Latvia, Slovakia, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Turkey) currently do not explicitly reflect this goal in higher education policy. Two main approaches can be distinguished. The first approach involves adopting certain measures targeted at the participation of under-represented groups, while the second strives for increasing and widening overall participation, thus hopefully also increasing the number of higher education participants from socially disadvantaged groups.

A few countries – including the Nordic countries and Belgium (Flemish Community) – stress that their systems are designed in such a way as to be accessible to the widest range of citizen participation without recourse to special measures. This is thus the reason for the lack of measures targeted at specific groups.

However, many countries mix different aspects of the two approaches. The majority highlight a general policy approach to increase and widen participation and to overcome obstacles to access higher education. A number of these countries do not define the under-represented groups but rather specify general legal provisions of equal treatment regardless of gender, ethnic origin, religion or other beliefs, disability, sexual orientation and age. This is in line with overarching anti-discrimination legislation at European level, and also corresponds to the conception of "formal equality" that guides many (higher) education systems and is outlined in the Introduction. Here the focus is on equality of conditions, whereby all are treated equally, irrespective of their personal background. The underlying assumption is that removing obstacles and discriminatory practices is the best way to increase access, participation and completion.

Yet in their official documents, the majority of countries also define or describe specific groups that may merit particular attention. Socio-economic status, gender, disability and ethnicity are the most commonly used terms to identify such groups. Some countries, for example Greece, Cyprus or Romania reserve a number of places for certain members of their designated under-represented groups or, in the case of Bulgaria, simplify admission procedures to higher education for certain socially excluded and disadvantaged groups. Hungary offers extra points to non-traditional students – defined as those above 25 years – and other under-represented social groups in the admission process. In Ireland, the Higher Education Access route and the Disability Access to Higher Education

scheme provide places to students on the basis of socio-economic and disability criteria respectively. The United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) explicitly links religious affiliation to under-representation, identifying "young Protestant working class males" as an under-represented group.

1.1.1. Socio-economic status

There is no common definition of socio-economic status at European level, and therefore a number of different aspects are considered across countries. Usually, the term "socio-economic status" with regard to access to higher education encompasses disadvantaged groups of students such as those from low-income families and/or families where parents do not have a tertiary or even secondary education. Furthermore, students with children (Denmark, Hungary and the United Kingdom) or orphans (Estonia and Lithuania) may be frequently classified as a specific socio-economic group entitled to assistance. A few countries also mention young people living in sparsely populated (Hungary) and rural areas (Estonia and Romania). In Belgium (French Community), a part of the financial subsidies to non-university higher education institutions *(hautes écoles)* has to be devoted to personnel and activities to help first-generation students (i.e. those that have neither parent with a higher education qualification). The Czech Republic promotes integration of students at risk of social exclusion through student partnerships across years and study programmes. The aim is to build up a sense of cohesion, solidarity and belonging to an institution.

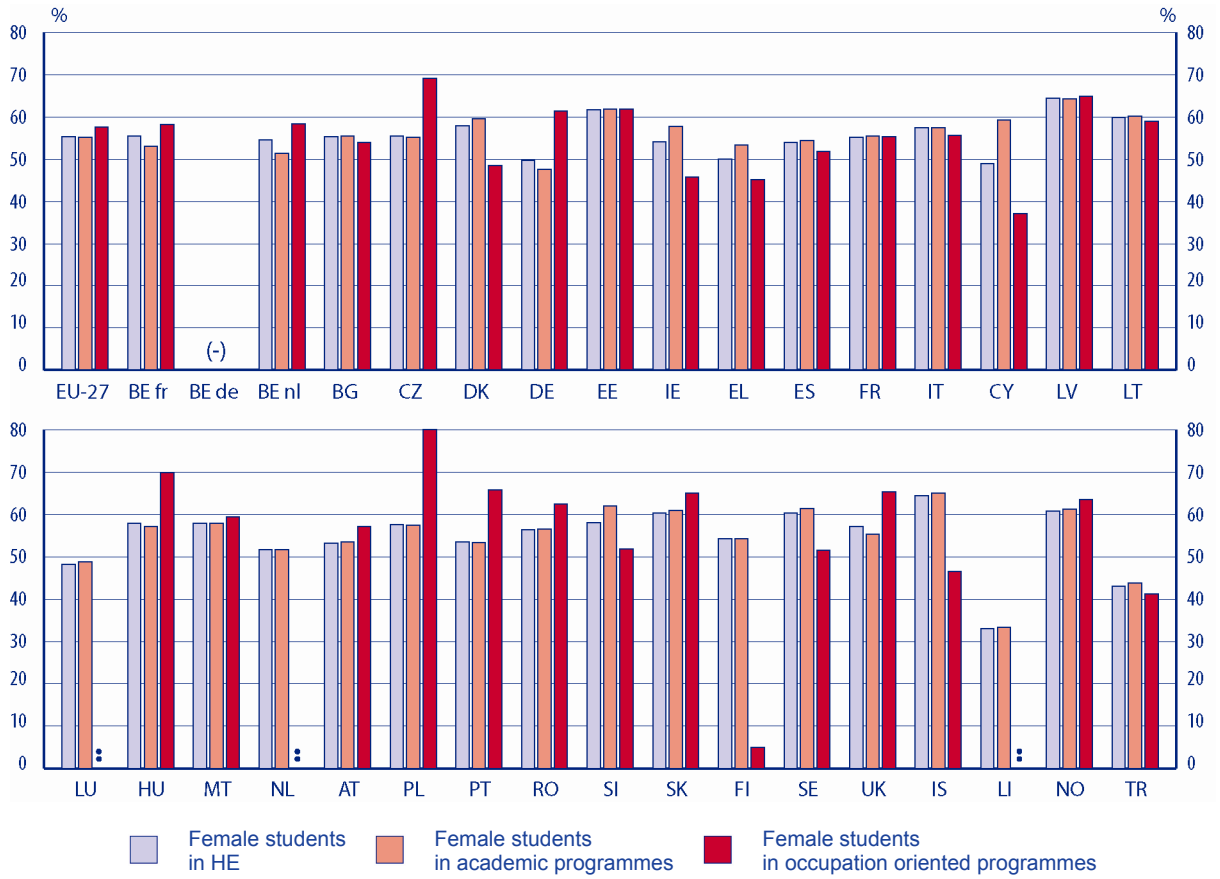
For all countries, the impact of socio-economic status can be greatly affected by student fee and support systems. Chapter 3 explores how European countries approach this issue.

1.1.2. Gender

Several countries stress gender as a factor of under (and over) representation, with many pointing out that the gender balance in higher education has been shifting significantly in recent times. Overall, women outnumber men in student populations, but still lag behind in academic staff. Several countries mentioned the historical shift towards female participation with this trend set to continue in tertiary education in the coming years. Indeed, as Figure 1.1 illustrates, only five countries have less than 50 % female students in higher education (Germany, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein and Turkey). Moreover, in the first three countries, the range is from 48.26 to 49.72 % – and hence very close to 50 %. Another fact worth mentioning is that the majority of students of small countries such as Cyprus, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg study abroad and are thus not included in national statistics.

These shifts are more generally attributed to societal changes rather than to specific government policy measures. Nevertheless, a number of countries focus their attention on gender stereotyping and traditional gender divisions with regard to choice of study programmes. According to 2008 Eurostat data, female students reached 55.31 % of all tertiary education students (ISCED 5-6) in the EU-27 (see Figure 1.1), and the trend of growth in female participation has been constant for many years. On the other hand, the share of female students of a total number of students in Mathematics, Science and Technology subjects (MST) reaches only 30.15 %. This under-representation of women in MST subjects is counterbalanced by an under-representation of men in other disciplines. "The largely female-dominated fields are education and training, health and welfare and humanities and arts" (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, p. 97).

Figure 1.1: Percentage of female students enrolled in tertiary education, ISCED 5-6, 2008



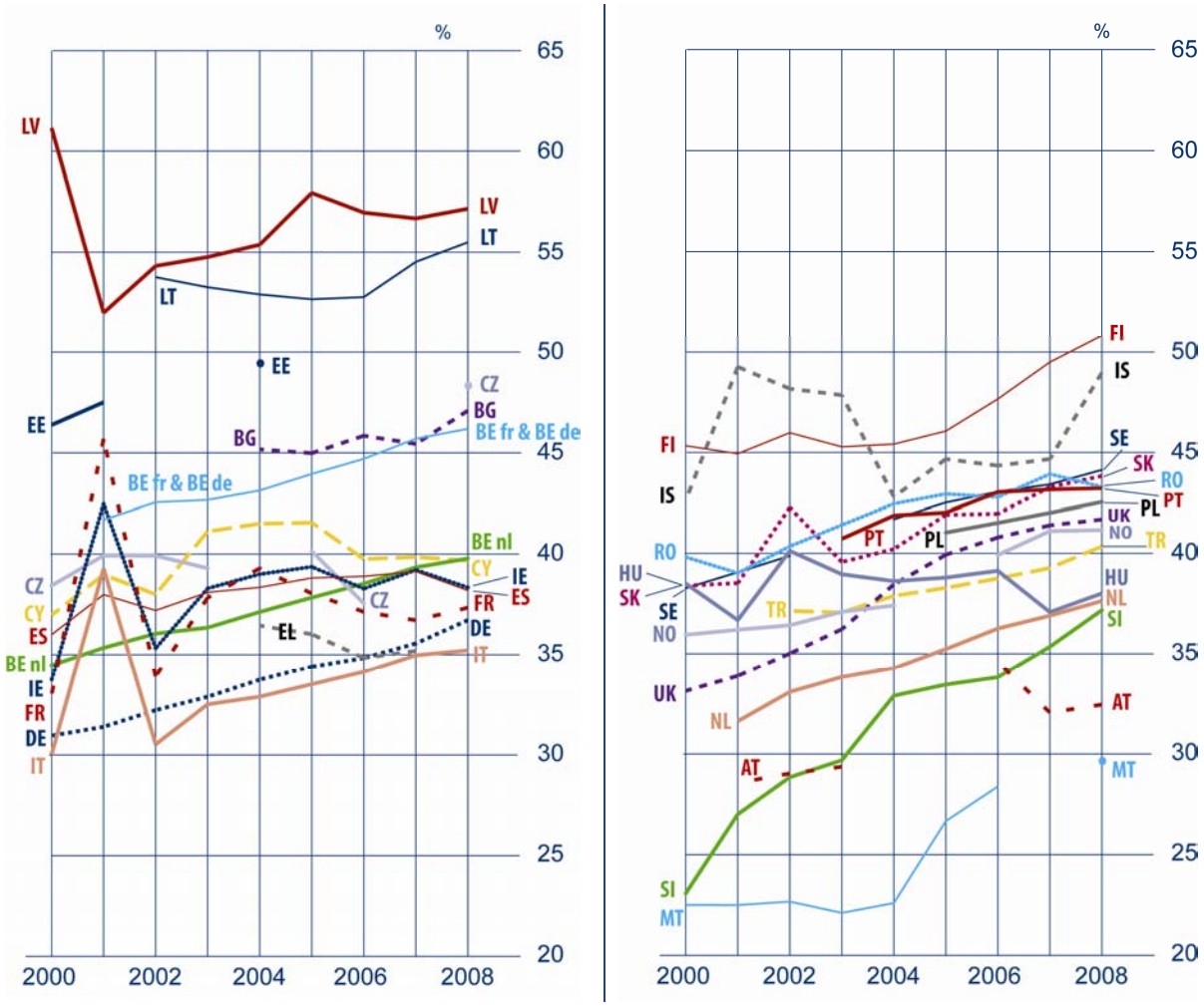
	EU-27	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT
	55.3	55.5	(-)	54.7	55.3	55.5	58.0	49.7	61.7	54.2	50.1	54.0	55.2	57.4	49.0	64.4	59.9
	55.2	53.1	(-)	51.4	55.6	55.3	59.7	47.7	61.9	57.8	53.4	54.5	55.6	57.5	59.3	64.4	60.3
	57.6	58.3	(-)	58.4	54.1	69.1	48.6	61.4	61.9	45.8	45.3	51.9	55.3	55.7	37.2	65.0	59.1
	LU	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**	**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
	48.3	58.0	57.9	51.7	53.3	57.6	53.5	56.3	58.1	60.3	54.2	60.3	57.2	64.4	33.0	60.8	43.1
	48.8	57.2	57.9	51.8	53.5	57.4	53.4	56.6	62.1	60.9	54.4	61.5	55.3	65.0	33.3	61.2	43.9
	:	69.9	59.4	:	57.2	80.1	65.8	62.4	51.9	65.1	5.0	51.5	65.3	46.6	:	63.6	41.2

Source: Eurostat.

Country specific notes

Belgium: Independent private institutions are not included.
Germany: ISCED level 6 is not included.
Cyprus, Luxembourg and **Liechtenstein**: Most students study abroad and are not included.
Luxembourg: Data are underestimated as they do not cover all ISCED 5A and ISCED 5B programmes.

Figure 1.2: Percentage of female teachers in tertiary education, ISCED 5-6, 2000-2008



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
BE (1)	:	41.7	42.6	42.7	43.1	44.0	44.7	45.7	46.2
BE nl	34.5	35.3	36.1	36.4	37.1	37.8	38.5	39.3	39.8
BG	:	:	:	:	45.2	45.0	45.8	45.4	47.1
CZ	38.4	39.9	39.9	39.3	:	40.1	37.6	:	48
DK	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
DE	31.0	31.4	32.2	32.9	33.7	34.4	34.8	35.6	36.7
EE	46.4	47.5	:	:	48.8	:	:	:	:
IE	33.7	42.5	35.3	38.3	39.0	39.4	38.3	39.2	38.3
EL	:	:	:	:	36.5	36.0	34.8	35.2	:
ES	36.0	38.0	37.2	38.1	38.4	38.8	38.9	39.1	38.2
FR	33.0	45.7	33.9	37.8	39.3	38.0	37.1	36.7	37.3
IT	30.0	39.3	30.5	32.5	32.9	33.5	34.1	35.0	35.2
CY	37.0	39.0	38.0	41.1	41.5	41.6	39.8	39.9	39.7
LV	61.2	52.0	54.3	54.8	55.4	57.9	57.0	56.7	57.2
LT	:	:	53.8	53.3	52.9	52.7	52.8	54.5	55.5
LU	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
HU	38.5	36.7	40.1	39.0	38.6	38.8	39.1	37.1	38.0
MT	22.5	22.5	22.7	22.1	22.6	26.7	28.4	:	29.9
NL	:	31.6	33.1	33.8	34.3	35.2	36.3	36.9	37.6
AT	:	28.6	29.0	29.4	:	:	34.6	32.1	32.5
PL	:	:	:	:	:	41.0	41.5	42.0	42.5
PT	:	:	:	40.7	41.9	42.0	43.0	43.2	43.2
RO	39.8	39.0	40.4	41.4	42.5	42.9	42.8	43.9	43.3
SI	23.1	27.0	28.8	29.7	32.9	33.5	33.8	35.4	37.2
SK	38.4	38.5	42.3	39.6	40.2	41.9	42.0	43.3	43.8
FI	45.3	44.9	46.0	45.3	45.4	46.1	47.7	49.5	50.8
SE	38.3	39.1	39.9	:	41.7	42.5	43.1	43.4	44.1
UK	33.1	33.9	35.0	36.2	38.5	39.9	40.8	41.4	41.7
IS	42.6	49.3	48.2	47.9	42.8	44.7	44.3	44.7	49.0
LI	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
NO	35.9	36.2	36.4	37.1	37.4	:	39.9	41.1	41.2
TR	:	:	37.1	37.1	37.9	38.3	38.8	39.3	40.3

Source: Eurostat.

BE (1) = BE fr and BE de

Several countries have taken specific measures to increase the participation of women in maths and sciences. In 2008, Germany launched a programme to increase the number of female students and professorial staff in mathematics, computer science, engineering and natural sciences. Austria also aims to increase the number of female professors and researchers in science, and set a benchmark of 40 % for all positions. Poland has also initiated mass media information campaigns to address the issue of under-representation of women in MST subjects. There are several other projects and initiatives across Europe targeting horizontal and vertical segregation in higher education (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, pp. 97-107).

Gender stereotyping and a lack of educational and societal role models are reported as issues by the United Kingdom (Scotland). Here, targeted financial support, mentoring schemes and community projects are among the main measures put in place to redress such gender imbalances.

Although the teaching population in higher education is still predominantly male, there has also been a significant increase in female academic staff in the majority of countries, with levels reaching more than 50 % in Lithuania, Latvia and Finland (see Figure 1.2). However, the percentage of female academic staff should be treated with care, as such statistical information often tends to merge different staff levels (more junior and more senior) and hence to hide significant differences in gender distribution (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, p. 104).

In conclusion, although many countries report gender imbalance, this is often treated as the outcome of societal trends that are not easily addressed by specific measures. Nevertheless, countries undertake considerable effort to address these outcomes through special programmes. Moreover, where action to address gender imbalance does exist, it appears to target female under-representation in certain study fields far more frequently than male under-representation – despite the empirical reality that males are more often the under-represented gender in the student population.

1.1.3. Disability

Countries have systematically reported the category of people with disabilities as an under-represented group. However, the national concept of disability may differ among the countries as there is no EU-wide definition of disability (European Commission 2010a, p. 4), and hence, it is often difficult to know how far this target group is really comparable, or how far different national policies are equivalent.

A few countries emphasize the necessity to accommodate the special needs of students with disabilities by, for example, ensuring barrier-free access to institutions. The focus is very often primarily on ensuring physical access and adapting learning infrastructure and equipment. Indeed, taking action to address a lack of special learning equipment was mentioned by Hungary and Slovenia as a priority. In the United Kingdom, higher education institutions are under a statutory duty to make "reasonable adjustments" for the specific requirements of disabled students. There is also an anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments for students, and thus plans must be made ahead to address potential barriers impeding disabled students.

However, Estonia expressed a concern that the needs of students with disabilities are often not well understood, reporting that teachers and students generally have a low awareness of needs of people with disabilities, and as a result appropriate measures may not be taken.

Denmark and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) apply an interesting concept whereby students with physical and psychological disabilities can access significant support through the student support system, but only if they take the initiative to identify their individual obstacles and

outline their needs. In the case of Denmark, rather than taking general measures for a category of students with disabilities, the student support system aims to be responsive to specific requests for targeted, individual support. The aim is to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to progress and complete their studies on equal terms. In the United Kingdom, meanwhile, in addition to the duty upon institutions to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students, specific financial support is provided in the form of a disabled students allowance.

Targeted guidance and counselling was also mentioned by a few countries. Many Austrian and German universities have a Disabled Students Officer who gives advice to students with disabilities, supports them in case of discrimination and informs them about additional financial measures. Similarly in Slovenia, the majority of higher education institutions employ a member of staff dedicated to working with students with special needs. In addition, tutoring by both students and teachers aims at strengthening the students' potential. Furthermore, targeted measures are also in place in Greece, where students with health problems are entitled to be transferred to the nearest university to their residence. In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), the institutional funding mechanism includes a widening access premium which assists universities in improving provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities (see also Chapter 2).

1.1.4. Ethnic origin

The concept of ethnicity is differently understood among, and even within, countries, and categories related to the notion of ethnic origin can be problematic. Indeed categories of "ethnic groups" are culturally and historically contingent, and are not fixed in the same way as, for example, gender categories. However, despite many differences in cultural understanding, the concept of ethnic origin is most commonly used to refer to immigrant or second generation immigrant students.

Action to encourage participation of specific ethnic groups is more pronounced in Northern Europe, with some countries able to demonstrate very successful outcomes. In Norway, for example, although 16 % of all immigrants entered higher education in 2010, the corresponding figure for second generation immigrants in the age group of 19-24 was 38%. This compares with a figure of 30 % participation for the population as a whole, thus demonstrating that second generation immigrants are currently performing better in higher education than the native population. Second generation immigrants also tend to opt more for "prestigious" studies like medicine, dentistry, business administration, law and technology and less for social studies and teacher education. The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research has also carried out campaigns to recruit more immigrant and second generation immigrant students to teacher training. Due to increased levels of immigration, it is considered particularly important to recruit immigrant students so that the teacher population in the future mirrors that of the students.

Finland has set a target for the share of immigrant students in higher education to correspond to the share of immigrants within the entire population. It aims to pay adequate attention to cultural teaching and improving language skills. Language is also the focus of action in Estonia, where funding is in place to support the learning of the national language in order to improve the score in the state language examination. The United Kingdom (Scotland) adopted the Race Equality Toolkit which "encourages the institutions to develop the corporate strategies necessary to support individual lecturers and departments in mainstreaming race equality issues" ([1]).

([1]) See: http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/raceequalitytoolkit/

Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania identify Roma as an under-represented group. Bulgaria offers special courses for admission at universities for the Roma population.

1.1.5. Age

Some countries also highlighted age as a specific issue linked to under-representation and have adopted policy measures to encourage the participation of "mature students". When national comparisons are made, this throws light on significant differences in the "typical" higher education student population. For example, in Ireland and Malta, a mature student is defined as a student entering college over the age of 23 – and this is linked to the reality that the typical age profile for students is 18-22. In contrast, in Norway, only 54 % of all registered students in 2010 were equal to or under the age of 25, while 11.6 % were in the age cohort of 41 and above.

A distinction can be made between action that targets the working-age population, and measures aimed at the increasing numbers of older, retired people in society.

With regard to the first category, the Czech Republic, in its Plan on Higher Education Institutions 2006-2010, stressed the need to increase the openness of higher education towards older employed or economically inactive people in the population. In Slovenia, action is also being taken. Short non-degree studies for adults are provided by higher education institutions, and a Master Plan for Adult Education was published in 2010 with the aim of tackling demographic projections in ageing societies. Furthermore, the Netherlands has introduced short cycle higher education, the Associate Degree programmes, targeted specifically at adult learners, while in Germany the leaving certificate of evening classes for working people gives access to higher education. Spain recognises three categories of mature students – older than 25, 40 and 45 years – with different possibilities of taking into account professional experience for access. In Belgium, in both the French and Flemish Communities, there are programmes within the higher education system targeted at adults to improve their educational levels.

Several countries recognise the need to open or broaden access to higher education to the older population, and some are acting accordingly within the context of lifelong learning strategies. So-called "senior programmes" have been established in Spain, and "Third Age Universities" in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The target group is retired persons whose study programme leads to a certificate upon completion rather than a degree.

1.1.6. Monitoring

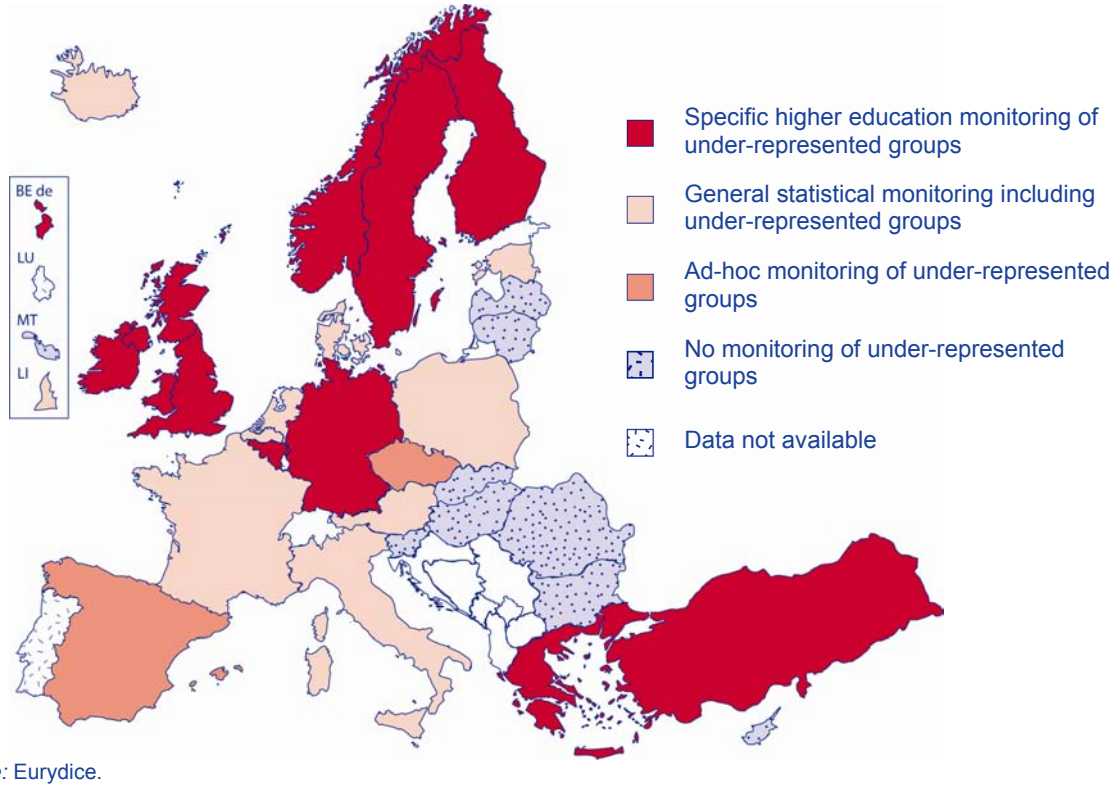
Although all countries report that they monitor the composition of the student body, they usually focus only on a limited number of groups within the student population. Furthermore, systematic feedback on the relationship between monitoring and the actual impact of this monitoring is not always visible.

The majority of countries have systems in place to monitor different aspects of the composition of the student body. They usually carry out this activity as a part of the regular national statistical monitoring, and many collect data on certain under-represented groups. The data collection typically focuses on their socio-economic background, gender, age, ethnicity and disability. Spain, Malta and Norway also mentioned that information is collected on the educational and professional background of parents, and that this can be seen in relation to the level and study programme chosen by students.

The data is, however, commonly collected by higher education institutions upon the student's registration. It is used to assess trends in student numbers and their impact on e.g. national equality

and diversity policy development and implementation. The monitoring is equally important for research activities, allocation of funding and, in some countries, to monitor the uptake of places in higher education institutions reserved for special categories of under-represented students, such as people with disabilities. In Greece and Cyprus, percentage of places for certain religious groups is set by law. A few countries established specific national authorities or created databases collecting information on higher education, for instance the Observatory for Higher Education in Belgium (French Community) or the Higher Education Statistics Agency in the United Kingdom.

Figure 1.3: Monitoring of the student body composition, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

1.2. Drop-out/non-completion of studies

More than half of the countries have policies aiming to increase the level of completion of studies and even slightly more countries require higher education institutions to report on student completion rates. The reporting is usually provided for the ministry in charge of higher education. However, only Denmark, Austria, Finland, the United Kingdom and Norway make this data publicly available online. There are also two countries (Bulgaria and Ireland) with specific policies to increase the level of completion rates, but no requirement of higher education institutions to report on it. In these cases, understanding of the effectiveness of policies may therefore be limited.

Most of the countries with particular policies to improve completion rates also have incentives in place for higher education institutions. In the United Kingdom, for example, the funds for widening access of under-represented groups (see Chapter 2), are intended to meet the additional costs of providing additional support to improve retention. However, there are also countries where policy may be implied rather than stated. Iceland is an example of a country that claims not to have any particular

policy, but nonetheless the number of graduated students is included in the future funding formula for higher education institutions. Another approach focuses on the number or students taking exams, thus looking not so much at the output, but at progress of students. However in Hungary higher education institutions receive funding based on a set of indicators that include the number of students enrolled in institutions, but not the number of graduates. This could be perceived as a negative incentive for higher education institutions – encouraging them to keep students enrolled as long as possible.

Overall, fifteen educational systems specifically stated that the completion rate has an impact on funding of higher education institutions as the rate is an indicator in the funding formula, or institutions receive a bonus based on the number of graduated students. Spain has adopted an even stricter policy whereby drop-outs and a longer-than-required duration of the studies are considered as key elements for not accrediting programmes. In addition, the cost of fees in many French and Spanish regions considerably increases if a student enrols in the same course for the second or third time. Similar practice of levying fees from students that repeat a year in programmes that are normally free of charge can be found in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Latvia, Poland and Slovakia.

Many countries also claim to have launched or strengthened student academic counselling services and guidance in their efforts to improve completion rates. Norway introduced the Individual Education Plan, a document all students have to fill in when they register. The student indicates whether s/he plans to study full or part time, the courses s/he intends to attend and the number of planned ECTS credits per semester and year. Many higher education institutions organise individual reviews with students lagging far behind the goals stated in the plan.

The reorganisation of degree cycles and the creation of bachelor and master programmes also contribute to the completion of studies. This was specifically pointed out by the Czech Republic and Italy, but is no doubt a feature of a number of other systems.

1.3. Flexibility of higher education studies

As highlighted by the European Commission, "universities are key players in Europe's future and for the successful transition to a knowledge-based economy and society" (European Commission 2006, p. 11). More generally, higher education institutions need to open up to flexible learning and to introduce more access routes that would enable broader participation of disadvantaged groups, and increase the overall number of students. The modernisation of higher education in general, and the widening of alternative access routes in particular, is still challenging for many countries (see Figure 1.4), however, and greater flexibility of higher education studies is required both by the labour market and the wider society. Hence the Member States are called upon to take the necessary measures with respect to access to higher education and adapt higher education systems to new competence requirements (Ibid., p. 12).

The ultimate goal of these efforts is to make the European higher education area attractive and open. This can help to build a knowledge-based society able to cope with challenges of a greatly changing economy. The more open and accessible higher education systems become, and the more they allow citizens to (re)enter higher education throughout life, the more highly-skilled persons can contribute to these goals.

Higher education policy in almost all countries contains regulations or other measures to promote flexible higher education. Among the most common provisions belong the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired knowledge and experience (recognition of prior learning) and part-time studies (see separate sections below).

Flexibility in higher education has also been enhanced by the ongoing development of new technologies. Distance learning, e-learning and the recent development of open universities in a number of countries, including Greece, Spain, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Norway, illustrate how the traditional higher education institutional landscape is changing. Meanwhile, established higher education institutions are also launching a range of distance and e-learning programmes, providing a broader range of study opportunities for the mainly, though not exclusively, working adult population.

Several countries also mention the two-cycle higher education system as a significant contribution to the flexibility of studies, enabling students to gain a Bachelor degree and then either enter the labour market or continue to study at Master level. This could reduce the number of drop-outs from previous Master programmes which have not provided access to the labour market at Bachelor level and have thus required a longer period of studies to obtain a degree. Countries also specify that providing greater flexibility to students to organise their course load according to their needs is of particular help, especially to disadvantaged groups.

1.3.1. Access routes to higher education

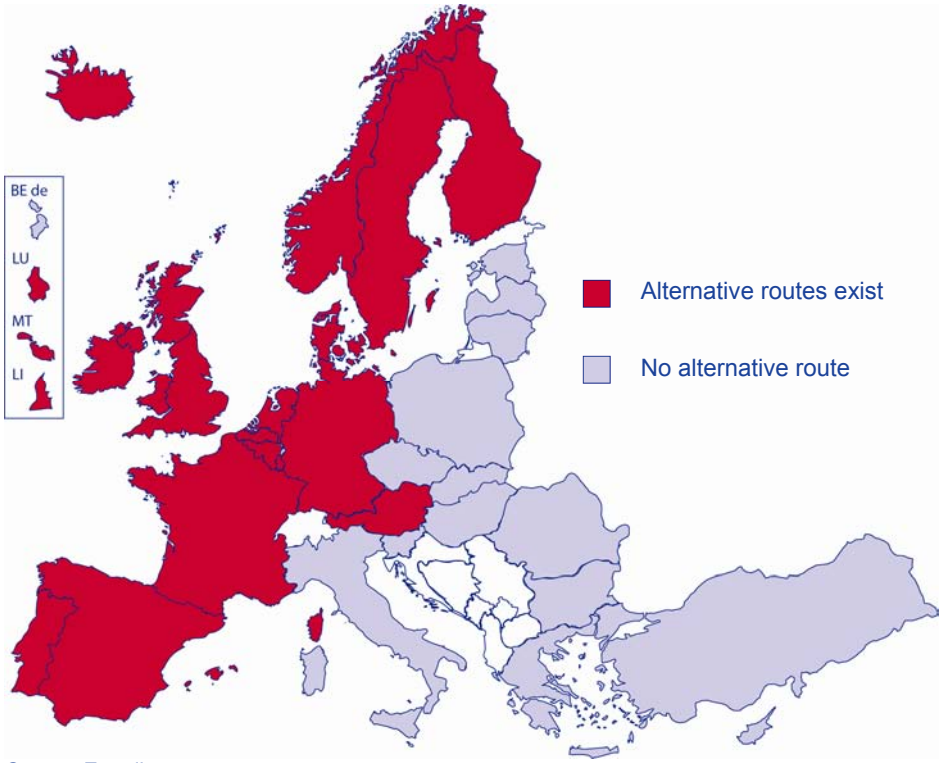
The degree of flexibility in higher education systems can also be assessed by examining the routes into higher education. Europe can firstly be divided into countries which offer a guaranteed right to higher education, and those that do not. Indeed half of the countries that provided relevant data reported that individuals meeting higher education entry standards have no guaranteed right to higher education. The issue of a guaranteed right is primarily a matter of educational philosophy, and many systems prefer to maintain some notion of institutional selection. In practical terms, the most common constraints are limits to the number of funded places in some or all fields of study. This is usually regulated by the public authorities. Alternatively, higher education institutions often have their own admission procedures in all or some study fields. National quotas (numerus clausus) accompanied by selection procedures typically operate in the health professions such as medicine and dentistry. Selection procedures are also commonly found in fine arts subjects (visual and performing arts).

In order to enlarge access to higher education institutions, a number of different entrance routes are considered by many countries. The most typical one remains the school-leaving certificate after completing upper secondary education. Similarly, the upper secondary vocational qualification provides access to higher education in a number of countries. For instance, in Estonia, 10.9 % of graduates in vocational education and training schools continued their studies at higher education level in 2009/10.

Figure 1.4 presents countries where at least one alternative (non-traditional) route to enter higher education exists. However, in the case of arts education, admission, examination and assessment may often be considered on an individual basis, allowing applicants to demonstrate outstanding talent. The figure therefore does not include countries with such alternative routes only in this field.

Several countries mentioned recognition of prior learning (see Section 1.3.2) and individual assessment by university as a possible route to higher education. Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands and Norway enable access to adults over a certain age without a formal school-leaving certificate subject to requirements such as a specified duration of work experience or successful completion of a mandatory course. In some countries, members of under-represented groups of students receive additional points or benefit from special arrangements during the admission process to higher education (see Section 1.1)

◆ ◆ ◆ **Figure 1.4: Alternative routes to higher education for non-traditional candidates, 2009/10**



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

Alternative routes exist: At least one alternative access route to higher education exists in a field other than arts education. The upper secondary general or vocational school leaving certificate is therefore not a necessary condition to enter into higher education.

No alternative route: The upper secondary general or vocational school leaving certificate is a necessary condition to enter into higher education.

◆ ◆ ◆

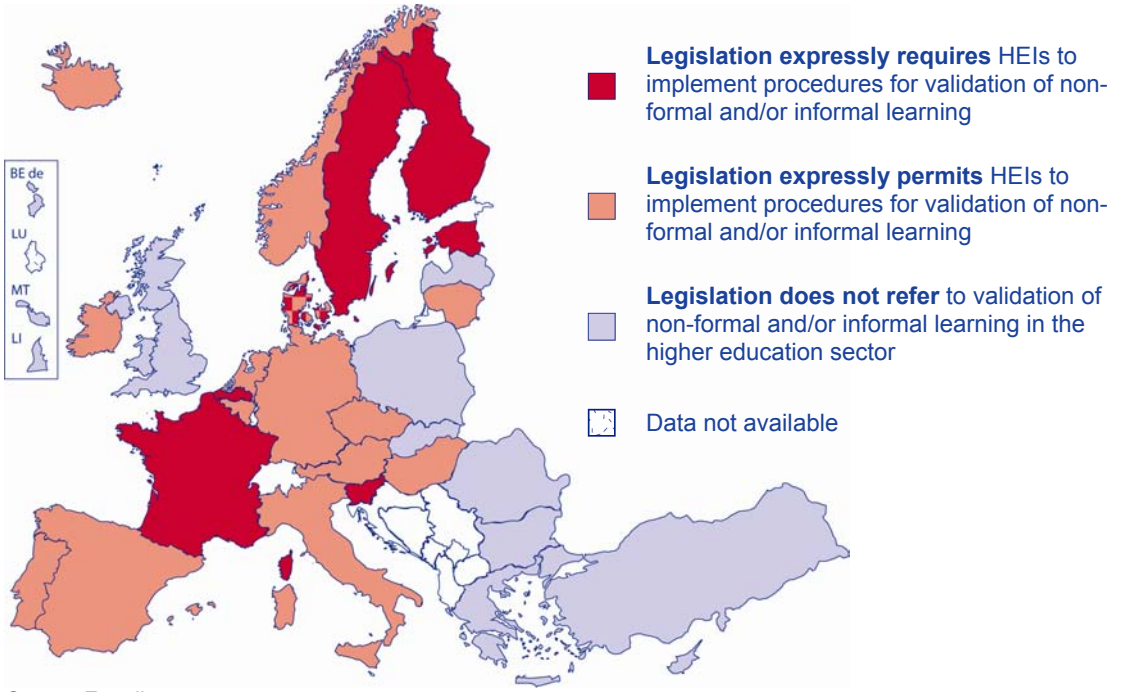
1.3.2. Recognition of prior learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is increasingly considered as a mechanism to facilitate progress and better adaptation of higher education provision to a variety of learner needs. RPL is also a tool to facilitate access to higher education or even an access route in its own right. The number of countries with such legal provisions has been increasing over the past decade, and legislation is under discussion in other countries, such as Greece or Romania. Malta is also currently carrying out pilot projects regarding the validation of non-formal and informal learning. However, as RPL may "qualify a learner to enter higher education, to progress further in (…) studies or be awarded a full higher education degree, it is not surprising that opinions are often quite divided on this matter" (EACEA/Eurydice 2011, p. 45).

A comparison of Figures 1.4 and 1.5 shows that six countries with no alternative routes into higher education have legislation in place that expressly permits higher education institutions to recognise prior learning. Estonia and Slovenia, which are among these countries with no alternative routes into higher education, nevertheless require institutions to recognise RPL. The situation in the nine remaining countries with no alternative route into higher education and no legislation on the issue relies on the practices of higher education institutions and thus does not provide a clear frame of reference for students.

Looking directly at the situation concerning the recognition of prior learning, the majority of countries have legislation or guidelines setting a general framework of RPL while the higher education institutions are autonomous to define the exact procedure and criteria. RPL is usually defined as having acquired knowledge, skills and competences through non-formal learning, informal learning and work experience. However, Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Slovenia and Norway also include formal learning as a part of their definition of RPL, thus illustrating again that a single concept can be understood in many different ways across Europe.

Figure 1.5: Legislative frameworks for the validation of prior non-formal and informal learning in the higher education sector, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

Country specific note

Denmark: Responsibility for higher education is divided between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Ministry of Culture. For the programmes under the Ministry of Education, the legislation requires higher education institutions to recognise prior non-formal and informal learning in the admissions process. For the programmes under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Ministry of Culture, institutions are allowed (but not obliged) to implement such procedures as part of the admissions process.

It is also important to distinguish between the possibility to gain admission to a study programme through RPL, and the possibility to be credited with learning within a study programme on the basis of RPL. The situation across Europe differs and not all countries allow both possibilities. Overall, higher education legislation in most of the countries gives higher education institutions autonomy to implement procedures for recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning. In Estonia, France, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden and partially Belgium and Denmark, legislation obliges institutions to implement RPL procedures. On the other hand, in one third of countries, legislation expressly permits higher education institutions to implement procedures for validation of non-formal and informal learning. In eleven countries and the German-speaking Community of Belgium, legislation does not refer to this validation in higher education sector. There are also countries (such as Poland and the United Kingdom) where recognition and validation of prior non-formal and informal learning is a common practice (EACEA/Eurydice 2011, p. 47) although not introduced through legislation.

In some cases, RPL can be used in order to validate the whole study programme. For instance in Belgium (Flemish Community), a student can even obtain a Bachelor or Master degree if the institution deems, based on the previously acquired qualifications and validation of prior learning, that the person in question has obtained the necessary competences. Similarly in France, validation of prior learning *(validation des acquis de l'expérience)* aims at the partial or complete award of qualifications, including higher education degrees. It is open to all candidates who justify at least three years of relevant experience. The latter can consist of paid or unpaid work as well as voluntary activities.

As to access to higher education, a few countries include provisions where RPL is linked, inter alia, to age. Spain recognises three categories of mature students – older than 25, 40 and 45 years. Candidates aged over 25 who comply with traditional entry requirements can be admitted to higher education upon successful completion of a special university entrance examination. People over 40 who do not possess a qualification opening access to higher education can validate their prior professional experience if the latter is linked to the studies they will undertake. Those who are over 45 and do not hold a qualification opening access to higher education can be admitted upon successful completion of a special test. The Netherlands stipulates in its legislation that persons above the age of 21 can be admitted to higher education on the basis of an examination, and also specifically empowers examination committees to take account of RPL. In Norway, applicants aged 23 and above with five years of work experience or a combination of education and work experience who successfully completed prescribed level in six subjects (Norwegian, English, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and History), fulfil the general (minimum) requirements for admission to higher education. In addition, an access based on RPL is open to applicants aged 25 and above upon validation of non-formal and informal learning.

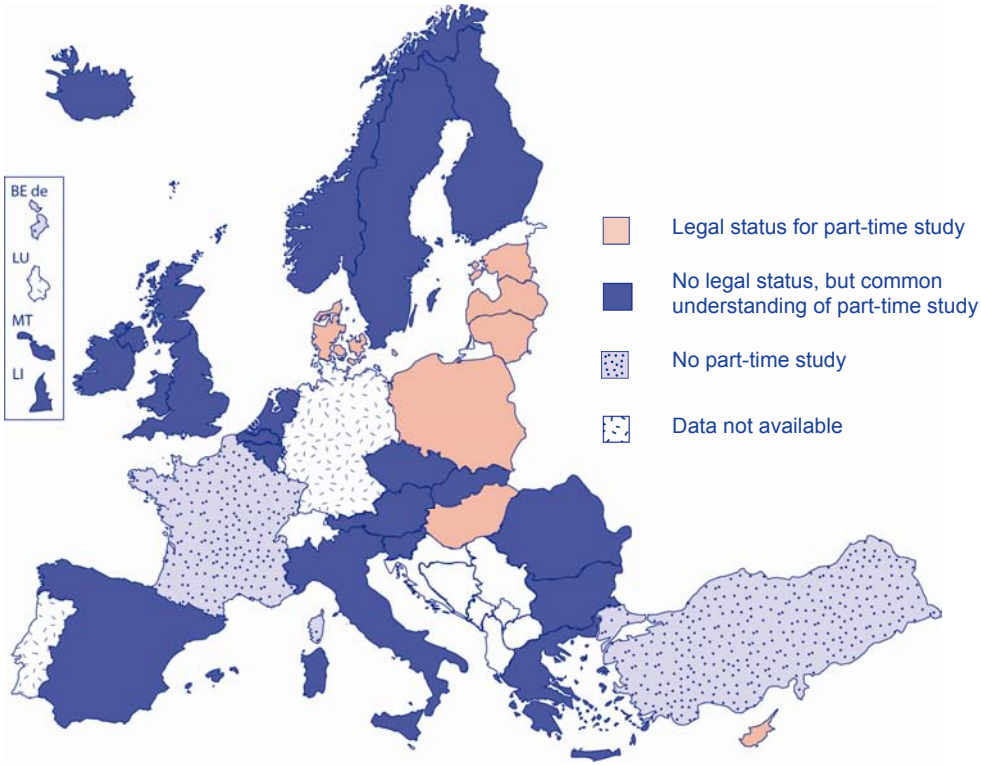
Some countries put certain limitations regarding the extent of RPL linked to duration of a programme or number of credits in place. In Belgium (French Community), students in *hautes écoles* who have proved three years of relevant professional experience can benefit from exemptions based on RPL, but these cannot exceed 20 % of the total programme. In Germany, RPL can reach up to 50 % of a higher education study programme. The higher education institutions in Italy are not allowed to recognise more than 60 credits at Bachelor and 40 credits at Master level. The higher education institutions in the Czech Republic may recognise credits acquired in non-formal courses up to 60 % of the amount of credits required for the completion of degree studies, however RPL is rarely used in practise.

Apart from access to and full or partial fulfilment of study programmes, RPL can be used as one of the criteria in selection procedure to higher education institutions. In Estonia, the person has to possess a formal qualification in order to access the higher education institutions, but the competences such as awards in science competitions or exhibitions can be favourable for a candidate in the matriculation decision. Similarly in Slovenia, prior learning can be set as an additional criterion in selection procedure in case of study programmes with numerus clausus.

1.3.3. Part-time study

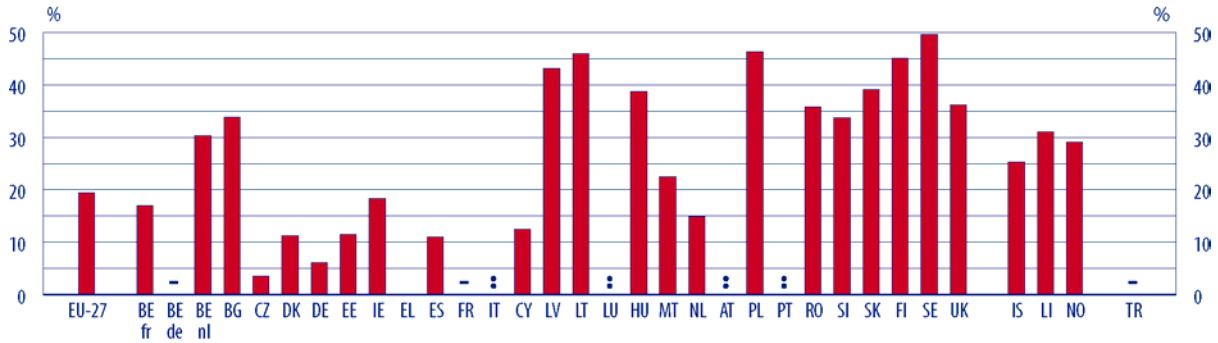
Less than half of the countries have a legal status for part-time studies (see Figure 1.6). Most of the remaining countries have a common understanding of part-time study and usually base their description on a reduced number of ECTS credits or the time of studies comparing to full-time study, typically in the range of 75-50 %. Some countries characterise their part-time studies not by the length of time devoted to the studies but through a different organisation of studies. The typical elements are evening or weekend classes and block studies (e.g. in Romania – one or two days per week or every other week). A few countries do not have a legal status for part-time study due to a broad flexibility of students to adapt the study workload to their individual needs. The countries where a legal status for part-time studies exists use similar definition elements as mentioned above.

Figure 1.6: Definition or concept of part-time studies in Europe, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

Figure 1.7: Participation rate of part-time students, ISCED 5-6, 2008



EU-27	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT
19.4	17.0	–	30.3	33.9	3.6	11.3	6.1	11.5	18.4	0.0	11.0	–	:	12.4	43.1	46.0
LU	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**	**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
:	38.7	22.5	14.9	:	46.3	:	35.9	33.8	39.2	45.1	49.6	36.2	25.3	31.0	29.1	–

Source: Eurostat.

Explanatory note

The definition of a full-time and part-time student depends on which measure is being used for study load. Ideally, the study load should be measured in terms of the academic value or progress, but it can also be measured in terms of the time/resource commitment or time in classroom. The availability of national data dictates which of these methods countries use to categorise students as full-time or part-time (UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat, 2010).

After closer look at the participation rates of part-time students across countries (see Figure 1.7), it can be observed that despite the EU-27 average of 19.44 %, eleven educational systems of the EU together with Liechtenstein noted more than 30 % rate including five countries that are even above 40 % mark (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland and Sweden). These countries however have a diverse legal framework regarding part-time studies, as some have a definition and some only a certain concept or common understanding of the studies based mainly on reduced number of credits over certain period of time. An interesting fact worth mentioning is that although Italy, Luxembourg and Austria indicate common understanding of part-time studies, no data on participation rate of part-time students are recorded by Eurostat. In contrast, other countries reporting common understanding of part-time studies do provide data and these can be found in Figure 1.7.

In nearly all countries, higher education institutions have autonomy to decide whether or not to offer opportunities of part-time study. In most of them, however, such possibilities for part-time studies are offered.

Belgium (Flemish Community) is the only country specifying that all higher education institutions are required to offer part-time studies, as all degree programmes must be provided in the form of flexible learning pathways. Thus, since the introduction of the Law on Flexible Learning Paths (2004), higher education institutions have been required to offer their programmes under three main types of learning agreement: the degree contract, the credit contract and the exam contract. Under the degree contract, a number of different learning paths are possible enabling students to choose the intensity of their study programme. Programmes may be 60 credits per academic year (full-time programme) or less than 54 credits per academic year (part-time programme) or alternatively a personalised study programme is also available. Under the credit contract, students enrol for a number of credits with a view to obtaining a credit certificate for one or several programme components. Under the exam contract, students only enrol for examinations, with a view to obtaining a degree or a credit certificate for one or more programme components.

Only a few countries report on financial instruments which specifically aim to help part-time students, who may not be eligible for the same support as full-time students. Targeted financial arrangements can be found in the United Kingdom in the form of income assessed grants (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), an incentive grant and fee-waiver scheme for part-time students (Scotland). In the Netherlands fiscal arrangements for employers and employees aim to make part-time study attractive.

Six countries (Estonia, Cyprus, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and Norway) have legal provisions related to the amount of paid work of full and part-time students. However, in Estonia, access to loans is linked to the status of a full-time student, so in practice, students tend to opt for full-time studies. Cyprus sets very clearly the maximum of 20 hours per week work during the semester and up to 38 hours per week during the break time; both subject to a work permit issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance ([2]). Finland, Sweden and Norway condition some aspects of student financial aid to the amount of remuneration from paid work during studies.

Hungary adopted rules concerning student work, though they primarily aim to protect students from being traded on and do not directly limit their working time.

As a reaction to the impact of the 2008 economic crisis, Ireland has introduced a range of flexible, part-time places to enable newly unemployed people to re-skill and up-skill.

([2]) For more information on student support, see Chapter 3.

1.3.4. Relationship between employers and higher education institutions in fostering flexible learning

Half of the countries do not indicate any measures regarding the relationship between employers and higher education institutions in fostering flexible learning. This indicates that there is still considerable amount of work to be done.

Nevertheless, some countries have fostered strong ties between higher education and employers and there are some interesting models of cooperation around Europe. The higher education institutions in Latvia and Sweden cooperate with local companies and other stakeholders in society, for instance, in the development of new courses and trainee programmes. Similarly, agreements between higher education institutions and employers in order to provide study and/or training courses in the framework of lifelong learning are concluded in some countries. In Spain, Latvia and Hungary, it is even compulsory to consult employers by designing and launching a new study programme. In Spain and the United Kingdom (Scotland) employers also have a significant presence in governing bodies of universities.

An interesting example worth mentioning as to the partnership between higher education institutions and employers can be found in the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) in the form of "foundation degrees". These two-year first cycle qualifications are designed jointly by higher education institutions and employers and provide general skills useful for any type of work as well as particular work-related skills. Traditional entry qualifications are not always required, making foundation degrees attractive for people of all ages who would not normally consider taking up higher education. The aims of introducing this qualification were to address the shortage of intermediate-level skills as well as to widen participation in higher education. The qualification gives learners the opportunity to either continue studies to bachelor's level or to enter the labour market. These qualifications are equivalent to the Higher National Diploma which continues to be studied widely in Scotland as a short cycle qualification in the first cycle.

Special legal provisions in the form of labour contracts facilitating work experience during study programmes are in place in France. There are two types of legal framework, namely an apprentice contract *(contrat d'apprentissage)* and a work experience contract *(contrat de professionnalisation).* Both have the objective of closely monitoring the work experience carried out during a study programme.

CHAPTER 2: DEVELOPMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter analyses general trends in the development of European higher education in the past ten years with a special focus on participation levels, public funding and impact of the economic crisis. Statistical data from Eurostat and Eurydice information on national policies are brought together with the aim of highlighting several factors that have a significant impact on policies on access and participation in higher education.

2.1. Trends in the participation in higher education

One of the most significant trends in European higher education in the past decade has been the noticeable expansion of the sector. Figure 2.1 presents Eurostat data on student numbers for the period 2000-2008. It shows that, compared to 2000, EU-27 student numbers have increased by 20 percent. However, variations between countries are extremely significant. The Czech Republic (55 %), Greece (51 %), Cyprus (147 %), Lithuania (68 %), Hungary (35 %), Malta (50 %), Poland (37 %), Romania (133 %), Slovenia (38 %) and Slovakia (69 %) within the EU, as well as Iceland (72 %) and Turkey (149 %) outside it, have all experienced extremely rapid expansion in student numbers. In comparison, the growth in student numbers in Belgium, Germany, Ireland, France, Italy and Austria is relatively low at around 10 per cent. Portugal showed static development and Spain is the only country where student numbers have decreased by 2.6 per cent.

This overall European trend of steady increase of participation is in line with a global move towards "massification" of higher education. It is important to be aware, however, that expansion trends in some other world regions are even more significant and rapid than those in Europe (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley 2009, p. 38).

It is also worth noting that while most countries register a progressive increase in student numbers throughout the whole period 2000-2008, others have experienced an uneven development. The evolution of student numbers in Bulgaria and Austria, for instance, has been characterised by initial decline in student numbers, followed by positive gains ([1]). The opposite trend of initial strong increase and subsequent lower gains can be observed in Germany and Ireland.

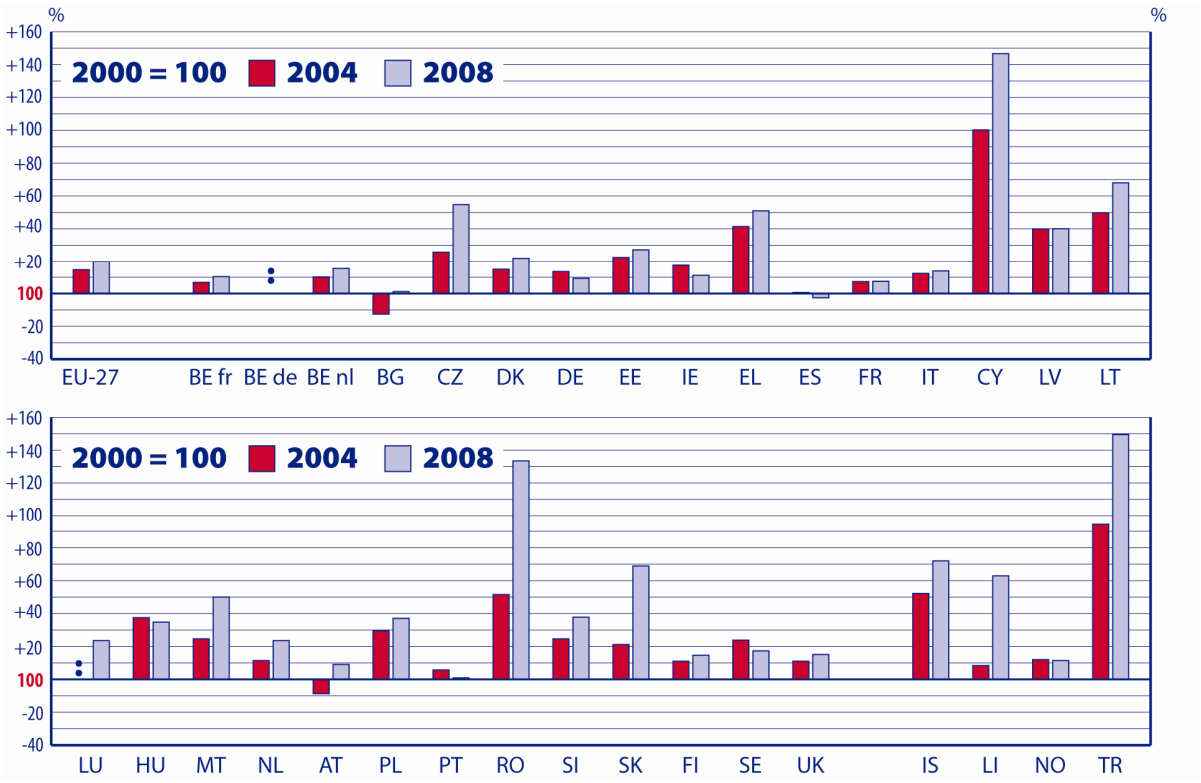
As the size of the student population in Europe has grown, so too has the number of higher education institutions. Throughout Europe, a large part of this increase has been in institutions providing vocational and professional higher education programmes. The higher education sector has also seen important growth in private, government-recognised higher education institutions. The majority of these newly founded private institutions are small and often located in countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

However, the increase in the number of higher education institutions is not universal. Several higher education systems have reported reductions in the number of institutions, usually as a result of another trend – the merging of higher education institutions to create greater critical mass.

For a more comprehensive picture on dynamics in participation, changes in the absolute numbers of students should be analysed in combination with information on the proportion of students in the most typical age group 18-34 years.

([1]) In Austria, the change in the number of students in tertiary education and in participation trends is related to the introduction of tuition fees in 2000 and the (partial) removal of these tuition fees in 2009.

Figure 2.1: Trends in the number of students in tertiary education compared to 2000, 2000-2008



Year 2000 = index 100

%	EU-27	BE fr	BE de	BE nl	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT
2004	+14.5	+6.8	:	+10.1	-12.6	+25.7	+14.8	+13.4	+22.5	+17.2	+41.4	+0.6	+7.2	+12.2	+100.2	+39.9	+49.8
2008	+19.6	+10.2	:	+15.3	+1.2	+54.7	+22	+9.3	+27.1	+11.1	+51	-2.6	+7.4	+13.8	+146.7	+40	+68
	LU	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**	**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
2004	:	+37.5	+24.6	+11.4	-8.7	+29.4	+5.7	+51.5	+24.6	+21.2	+11	+23.9	+11	+52.2	+8.4	+12	+94.3
2008	+23.6	+34.7	+50	+23.5	+9	+37.1	+0.8	+133.4	+37.7	+68.8	+14.6	+17.3	+15.1	+72	+62.9	+11.4	+149.4

Source: Eurostat.

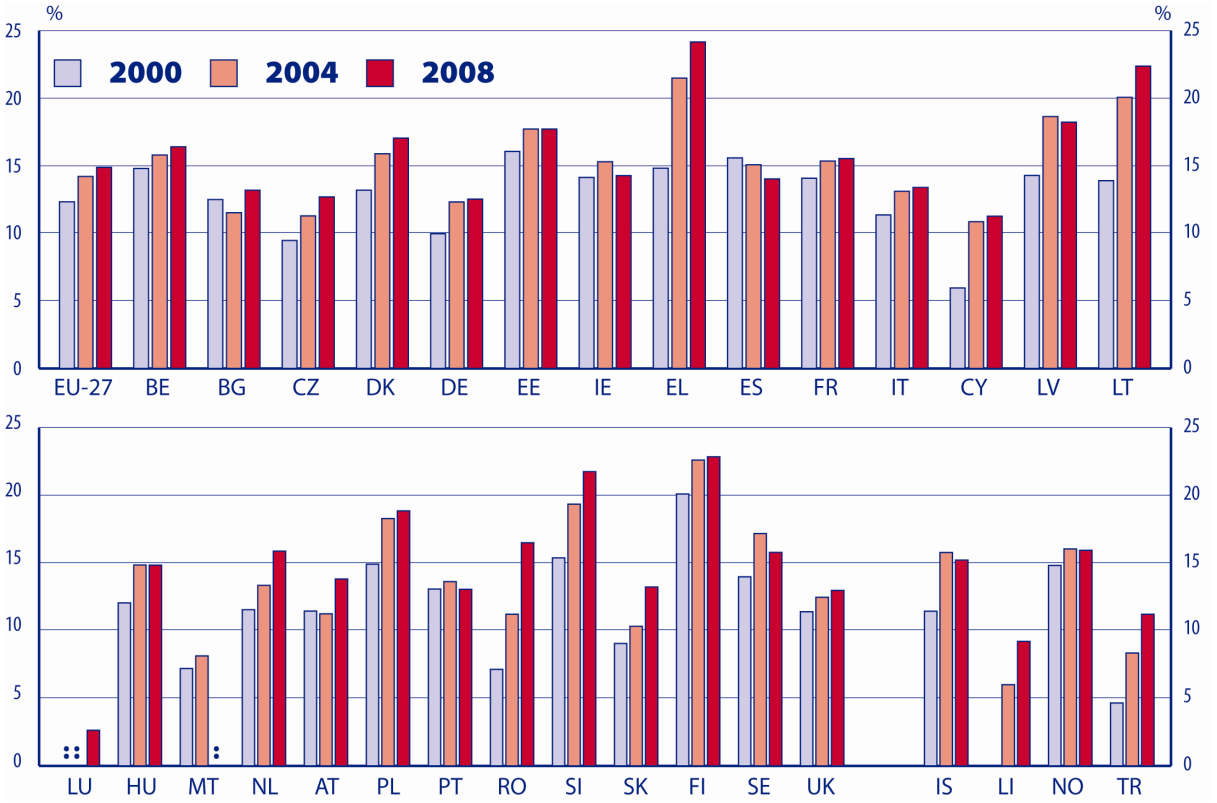
Country specific notes

Belgium: Independent private institutions are not included.
Czech Republic: Figures on tertiary education include the aggregated data of *vysoké školy* (ISCED 5A) and *vyšší odborné školy* (ISCED 5B).
Cyprus, Luxembourg and **Liechtenstein**: Most students study abroad and are not included.
Luxembourg: Data are underestimated as they do not cover all ISCED 5A and ISCED 5B programmes

Figure 2.2 presents the trends in participation rates of students as a percentage of the total population of the 18-34 age group. It, however, does not reflect actual attainment. Trends in participation generally confirm the trends that are observed concerning absolute numbers of students. In the period 2000-2008, participation rates in the European Union increased by 2.6 percentage points to reach almost 15 per cent in 2008, the most recent year for which data is available. In Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia and Finland, this figure is the highest – between 22 and 24 per cent of increase. Moreover, Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia and also Turkey have registered the sharpest increase in the range of 6 to 10 percentage points. In contrast, the share of young people in higher education has decreased in Spain and has remained unchanged in Portugal.

Participation rates in higher education are influenced by a variety of factors among which access policies, availability of financial support, demand for high skills at the labour market, or indeed demography and the general economic situation all play a role.

Figure 2.2: Trends in participation rates in tertiary education in the 18-34 age group, 2000-2008



	EU-27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2000	12.3	14.8	12.5	9.4	13.2	9.9	16.1	14.1	14.8	15.6	14.1	11.3	5.9	14.3	13.9	:
2004	14.2	15.8	11.5	11.2	15.9	12.3	17.7	15.3	21.5	15.1	15.4	13.1	10.8	18.6	20.1	:
2008	14.9	16.4	13.2	12.7	17.1	12.5	17.7	14.3	24.2	14.0	15.5	13.4	11.2	18.2	22.4	2.6
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**	**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
2000	12.0	7.1	11.5	11.4	14.9	13.1	7.1	15.4	9.0	20.1	14.0	11.3	11.3	:	14.8	4.6
2004	14.8	8.1	13.3	11.2	18.3	13.6	11.1	19.3	10.2	22.6	17.2	12.4	15.8	6.0	16.0	8.3
2008	14.8	:	15.9	13.8	18.8	13.0	16.5	21.7	13.2	22.8	15.8	13.0	15.2	9.1	15.9	11.1

Source: Eurostat.

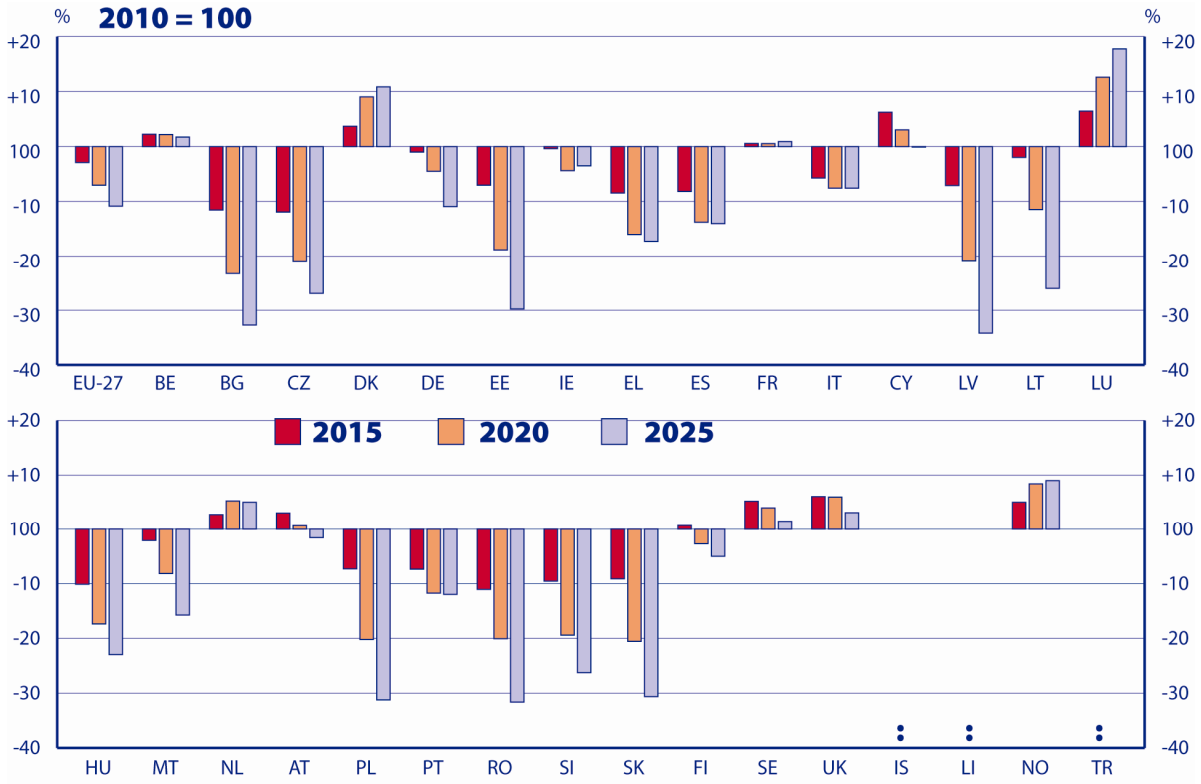
Country specific notes

Belgium: Independent private institutions are not included.
Czech Republic: See note Figure 3.1.
Germany, Italy and **Poland**: ISCED level 6 is not included.
Ireland: The 30-34 age group includes those aged 35 and over.
Greece: The high participation rate is partly attributable to the number/high proportion of Cypriot students in Greece.
Cyprus: Most tertiary students study abroad and are not included.
Luxembourg: The data is underestimated as coverage of ISCED 5A and ISCED 5B programmes is partial.
Malta: For 2008 data on the age of students is missing.
Austria: See note Figure 3.1.
Poland: ISCED 5: Enrolment data include those aged 17. Age 26 and 28 – ISCED 5B: Enrolment data missing. Age 30-34 – ISCED 5: Enrolment data include those aged 35 and above.
Liechtenstein: Most students study abroad and are not included.

In recent decades, population decline and ageing have raised concerns in various policy domains. As far as higher education is concerned, demographic change and especially the growth and contraction of young cohorts can significantly affect participation, expenditure and teaching staff.

Figure 2.3 shows the projected percentage change in the population of 18-34 year olds from 2010 to 2025. According to these projections, the demographic decline in the relevant age group will significantly affect countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. On average, it would reach approximately 20 per cent in the countries concerned. However, the young cohorts in Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia are forecasted to contract by more than 30 per cent by 2025. In contrast, a number of countries in other parts of Europe show positive projections in the number of young people. Growth will be most significant in Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Norway, while Belgium, France, Sweden and Cyprus also show positive projections.

Figure 2.3: Projected population changes for the 18-34 age group between 2010 and 2015, and between 2010 and 2020 and 2010 and 2025



2010 = 100 %	EU-27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2015	-2.9	2.2	-11.6	-11.9	3.7	-1.0	-7.0	-0.4	-8.5	-8.2	0.5	-5.7	6.3	-7.1	-2.0	6.4
2020	-7.0	2.2	-23.2	-20.9	9.0	-4.5	-18.8	-4.4	-16.0	-13.8	0.5	-7.6	3.0	-20.8	-11.5	12.6
2025	-10.9	1.7	-32.7	-26.9	10.9	-10.9	-29.8	-3.5	-17.3	-14.0	0.9	-7.6	-0.1	-34.2	-26.0	17.8
2010 = 100 %	**HU**	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**	**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
2015	-10.1	-2.1	2.8	3.1	-7.3	-7.3	-11.0	-9.5	-9.1	0.7	5.2	6.1	:	:	5.0	:
2020	-17.3	-8.1	5.3	0.7	-20.2	-11.7	-20.0	-19.4	-20.5	-2.7	4.0	6.0	:	:	8.4	:
2025	-22.9	-15.7	5.0	-1.6	-31.2	-12.0	-31.6	-26.3	-30.6	-5.0	1.5	3.1	:	:	9.0	:

Source:Eurostat.

Country specific note

Czech Republic: See note Figure 3.1

Most European countries report that demographic trends and projections are being taken into account in their mid- and long-term strategic planning regarding capacity development and funding. However, in Belgium, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Austria, the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), Slovakia and Iceland demographic projections are not directly integrated in strategy documents for the higher education sector. Among these countries Greece, Spain and Slovakia are projected to experience significant decreases in the typical higher education age cohort.

According to responses in some European countries, the impact of demographic change on policy development is expected to be twofold. Firstly, it will involve a renewed support for lifelong learning and increased attention to access and diversification of the student body. Secondly, these demographic trends will entail certain capacity and funding readjustments.

Countries that would probably have to address a situation characterised by both decline of people of working age and growing labour market demand for higher education graduates plan to increase provision for lifelong learning. Some countries also envisage further measures aimed at increasing the participation of under-represented groups like students with immigrant origin in Finland, and foreign nationals in Latvia and Poland.

Based on demographic projections, it could be assumed that the increase in participation levels in certain countries might be offset by the decline of the relevant age cohort. Nevertheless, in response to negative demographic trends, consolidation of higher education institutions and creation of additional joint programmes are also envisaged. In countries with a projected increase in the cohort of young people, such as Norway and Turkey, governments are planning to increase existing higher education capacity and provide additional financing.

2.2. Levels of public funding and allocation priorities

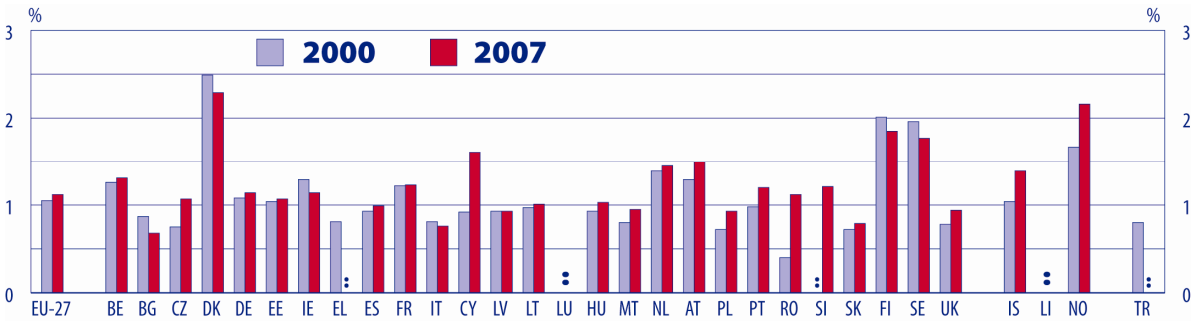
European higher education institutions are predominantly funded by public sources, although in some countries private funding can represent an important share of the overall funding for higher education.

On average, public funding accounts for more than 85 per cent of all funding of higher education (European Commission 2008, p. 6). Figure 2.4 presents trends in total public expenditure on tertiary education as a percentage of GDP in the period 2000-2007. Although across Europe rates differ greatly, most countries have experienced a stagnation in spending. Six countries even reported a decrease in spending over that time period. Important exceptions to this trend are Cyprus and Romania, where a steady increase in the share of public funding for higher education can partially be seen in relation to the significant expansion of the system that has taken place during the same period. Other countries, such as Italy, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, have seen stable but relatively low funding levels, while Bulgaria has seen a fall from 0.9 % in 2000 to 0.7 % in 2007.

In 2007, European countries spent on average 1.12 per cent of their GDP on higher education. Public spending in the Nordic countries was significantly higher than the average due to a great extent to well developed student support systems (see Chapter 3). Public expenditure on higher education in Belgium, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Austria was also higher than the EU average. By contrast, in Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, public spending on higher education was below 1 per cent of GDP.

The stagnating trend in public spending until 2008, combined with the impact of the current economic crisis signal that, unless a major policy commitment is made, prospects are not bright for a significant increase in the level of higher education funding. At the same time, it is clear that sustained public funding is vital for the support of the on-going expansion of the sector and for realising the commitments for widening access and participation.

Figure 2.4: Total public expenditure on tertiary education as % of GDP, 2000-2007



	EU 27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU
2000	1.05	1.26	0.87	0.75	2.49	1.08	1.04	1.29	0.81	0.93	1.22	0.81	0.92	0.93	0.97	:
2007	1.12	1.31	0.68	1.07	2.29	1.14	1.07	1.14	:	0.99	1.23	0.76	1.61	0.93	1.01	:
	HU	**MT**	**NL**	**AT**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**SI**	**SK**	**FI**	**SE**	**UK**	**IS**	**LI**	**NO**	**TR**
2000	0.93	0.80	1.39	1.29	0.72	0.98	0.40	:	0.72	2.01	1.96	0.78	1.04	:	1.67	0.80
2007	1.03	0.95	1.45	1.50	0.93	1.20	1.12	1.21	0.79	1.85	1.77	0.94	1.39	:	2.16	:

Source: Eurostat.

Country specific notes

EU-27: Estimated figures.
Belgium: Expenditure does not include independent private institutions and the German-speaking Community; for 2000: Imputed retirement expenditure is not available.
Czech Republic: See note Figure 3.1.
Denmark: For 2007: Expenditure of post secondary non-tertiary level of education is partially included in upper secondary and tertiary level of education and research/development expenditure is not included.
Ireland and **Spain**: for 2000: Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.
Greece: For 2000: Imputed retirement expenditure is not available.
Cyprus: Financial support to pupils and students abroad is included.
Lithuania: Public-sector transfers to "other private entities" are not included.
Portugal: For 2000: Expenditure for ancillary services and expenditure at local level is not available; imputed retirement expenditure is not available.
Slovakia: For 2000: Expenditure on ISCED 5B is not included.
United Kingdom: For 2000: Expenditure for ancillary services is not available; total public expenditure adjusted in line with the financial year which runs from 1 April to 31 March; expenditure on ancillary provision is not included.
Iceland: For 2000: Expenditure for ancillary services is not available; for 2007: Expenditure at post secondary non-tertiary level of education is partly included under tertiary level of education.
Turkey: For 2000: Expenditure at regional and local levels of government is not available.

A certain indication of current policy priorities in allocating public funding is provided by the data presented in Figure 2.5.

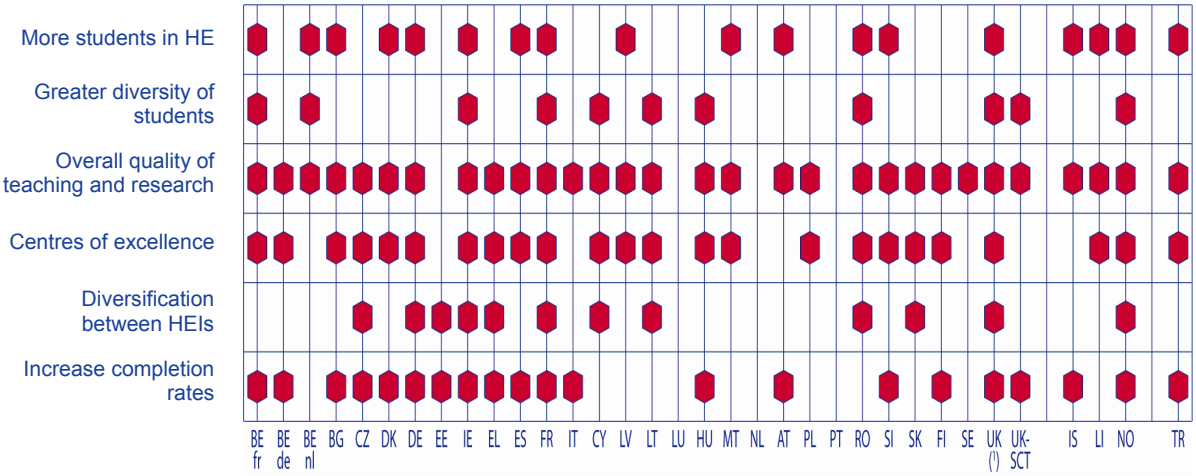
When asked to select from a predetermined list the most important policy goals behind public funding of higher education institutions, countries often choose four or more categories. Indeed, Ireland, France, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Norway recognise that each of the mentioned goals are important for public funding.

Across categories, countries most often mention the concern for improving the overall quality of teaching and research. It is worthy of comment that this concern for quality and research should be expressed at a time when public investment in higher education is under increasing constraint. Other often cited goals are the need to build and maintain centres of excellence in teaching and/or research and to increase the percentage of students completing higher education in time. These elements are also key to the quality of the system, and also suggest that a second major concern of higher education policy-making is efficiency.

In contrast, the goals that most directly relate to the social dimension, i.e. achieving greater diversity of students and greater diversification of higher education institutions are least often seen as a priority,

with student diversity identified as a priority in only 13 national systems (including the four of the United Kingdom), and diversification of higher education institutions pronounced in only 13 national systems. This can be seen as a sign that, despite European-level policy debate and commitments, improving the social dimension may not always be treated as the highest national priority.

Figure 2.5: Most important policy goals in the public funding of higher education, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

2.3. Public funding of higher education institutions – a tool not used for the social dimension?

As mentioned in the introduction, the way in which governments channel public funds into higher education offers one of their most significant potential steering mechanisms (Lepori et al. 2007, p. 85). Indeed Salmi and Hauptman (2006, p. 35) argue that the choice of allocation mechanism can also impact on access and equity, as incentive structures for higher education institutions are affected differently by different types of funding mechanism. So far, however, the data presented has not strongly supported the view that funding of higher education institutions has a strong social dimension component, and therefore this topic requires some further exploration.

In general, most countries use a mixture of different funding mechanisms. The following discussion focuses on the most important mechanisms, through which 70 % or more of the overall public funding is distributed. In most countries additional funding mechanisms are used.

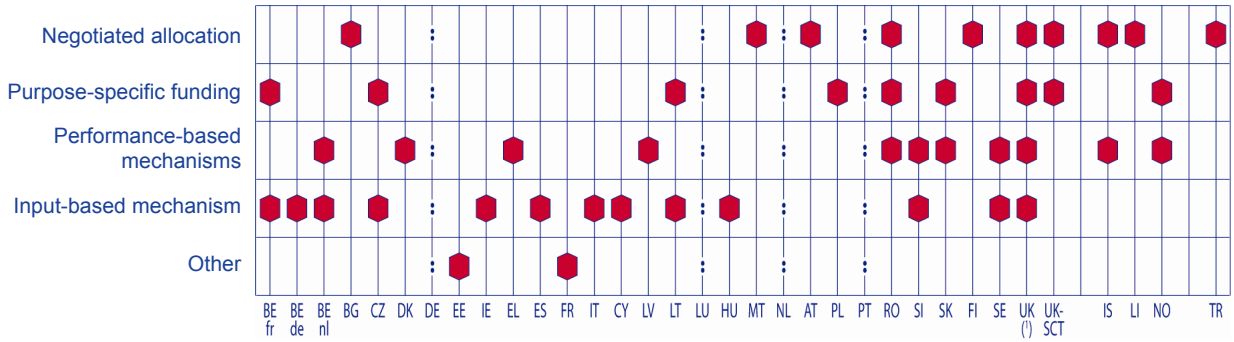
In the majority of countries, the majority of public funding to higher education institutions is determined by a single funding mechanism. Only seven countries report relying on a combination of two different mechanisms to provide at least 70 % of public funds. Among these countries, however, there is no "typical" combination.

Input-based mechanisms, which can be part of a formula and focus on inputs to institutions, such as the number of students enrolled, are the most widely used approach in ten higher education systems. Indeed, the German-speaking Community of Belgium, Ireland, Italy and Cyprus base their funding to one hundred percent on input-based mechanisms. In Hungary, 91 percent of public funding are based on inputs. Ireland, however, has decided to change its approach and will introduce performance-related metrics in the next years.

Negotiated allocations, i.e. non-automatic allocation mechanisms that are negotiated between governments and higher education institutions, and which are often based on previous years' allocations, are a traditional form of public funding for higher education institutions (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 4). They remain the second most often used among the important funding mechanisms for higher education institutions in Europe, and are often related to either absolute student numbers or the number of students taking exams in a particular year. While some policy research suggests they may have a negative impact on access and equity (Ibid., p. 92), in Austria, Romania and the United Kingdom there are other funding mechanisms that accompany the negotiated allocations and directly address questions of equity and widening participation.

Purpose specific funding is based on expenditure categories, where expenditure by higher education institutions is directly linked to certain functions, tasks and objectives (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 9; Lepori et al. 2007, p. 88). This type of funding is often distributed through competitive processes and may also be called targeted funding. It is not so often used as a major funding mechanism for higher education institutions. Poland stands out in this regard, reporting that 70 percent of its total public contributions to higher education institutions is provided for specific purposes, with input-based funding in second place.

Figure 2.6: Most important funding mechanisms for higher education institutions



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

Explanatory note

Most important funding mechanisms contribute an accumulated 70 percent or more to the public funding of higher education institutions.

Country specific notes

France: Block grant determined by the number of students present at exams.
Finland: Negotiated allocations for universities take into account performance and outcomes. The negotiated allocations for politechnics are more based on student numbers.

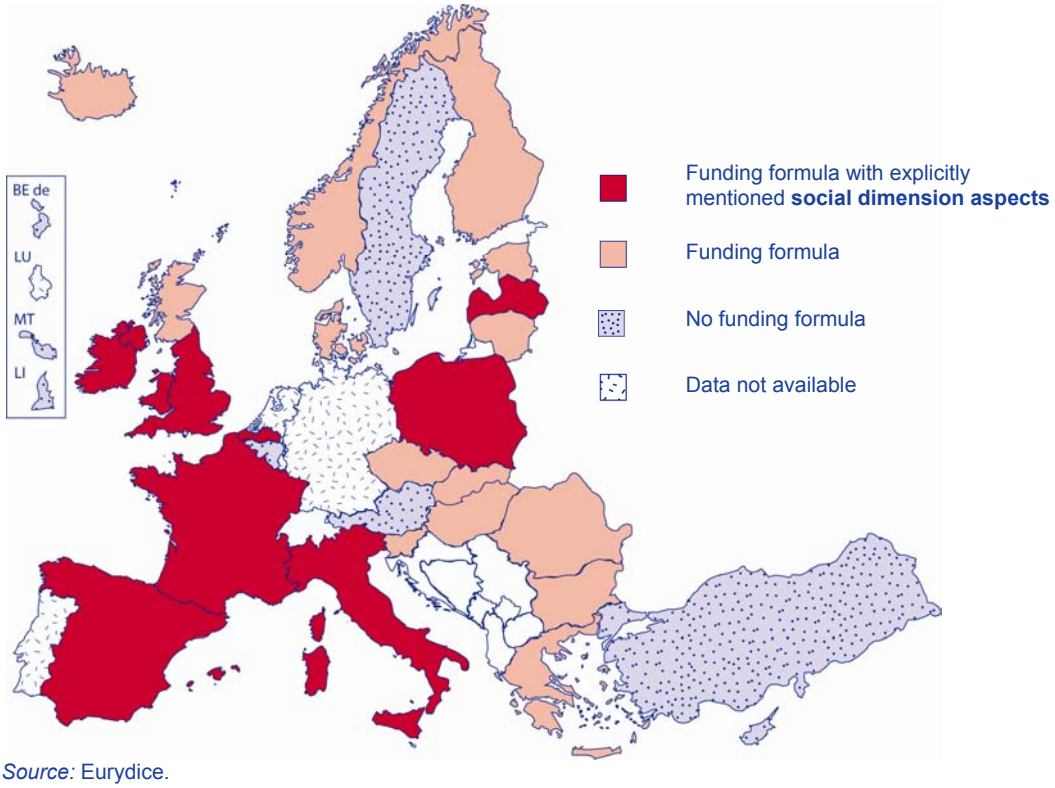
Performance-based mechanisms are related to actual or intended results by an institution over a certain period. They may be based on outputs, such as number of graduates, or inputs, such as number of students/staff with certain characteristics. They are generally quite wide spread as Figure 2.8 shows. But they are in most countries not responsible for the majority of public funding. Denmark, Greece and Latvia, however, provide more than 70 percent exclusively through this mechanism. In Latvia, a change to more performance-based funding is being discussed, however. In Estonia, the majority of funding is based on graduates, i.e. performance, but as higher education institutions are not being penalised, the system cannot really be called performance-based and is listed as "other". In France, allocations depend on the number of students taking exams, which is also listed as "other". Slovenia uses a mixture of performance and input-based funding embedded in a funding formula. Salmi and Hauptman (2006, p. 62) point out that performance-based approaches allow a direct link between public policy objectives and higher education funding. Consequently they are potentially a good tool to foster social dimension objectives provided, of course, that criteria for performance relate to the social dimension.

Different funding mechanisms have varying potential for fostering equity in higher education. The analysis of the most important mechanisms used in Europe shows that they are not those which are the most optimal for fostering social dimension objectives. Indeed, rather than finding social dimension objectives being pursued through primary funding mechanisms, it may be that other funding mechanisms – responsible for a smaller share of overall funding – are being used for such purposes. It is therefore necessary to examine in greater depth the composition of funding formulas and the focus of performance-based mechanisms.

2.4. Funding formulas and the social dimension

In the majority of countries and regions, the main funding mechanism is accompanied by a funding formula. In several countries, the formulas are used to determine the block grant allocated to higher education institutions. The majority of countries include prospective performance targets, past performance and – increasingly – measures of quality and employability in their formulas. Overall most European countries use funding formulas, but they rarely use them to foster social dimension objectives. In only eight countries funding formulas contain an explicit reference to aspects such as widening participation. In the Flemish Community of Belgium, Ireland, France, Italy and Poland, disadvantaged students are included with a premium, while the funding bodies in the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) allocate additional funds to institutions for widening participation. This is one (of several) approaches that have been found to have a potentially positive impact on equity. In Spain, the gender of staff and students is taken into account in at least some regional formulas, while Latvia includes the cost of scholarships in calculating the public allocation to higher education institutions. The amounts are often rather limited, though. For example in Italy, EUR 6 million are distributed to foster the participation of disabled students.

Figure 2.7: The use of funding formulas to foster social dimension objectives, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

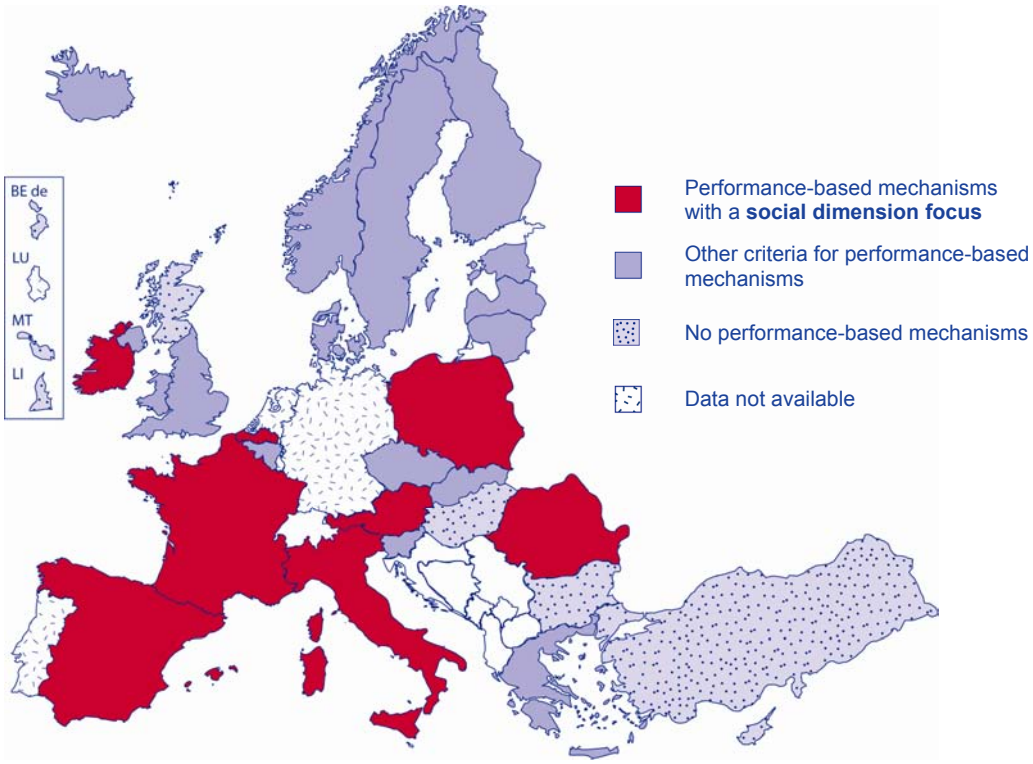
2.5. Using performance-based mechanisms to foster social dimension objectives

Performance-based mechanisms are good instruments to reward higher education institutions for achieving particular goals, as they are focussed on outcomes (Frohlich et al. 2010, p. 10). To foster the social dimension, then, performance-based measures could reward universities for including more students from under-represented groups in their enrolments or for ensuring that their student population mirrors the diversity of the general population, as the Bologna communiqués stipulate as the aspiration of social dimension policy.

In European countries, however, although 22 countries make use of performance-based mechanisms only eight countries report an element that can be considered part of the social dimension. These elements are socio-economic background, gender of students, disability, ethnicity and geographic origin of students, age and returning students. In five of the eight countries disability is a focus of performance-based mechanisms, while the socio-economic background of students and the gender of students and staff is referred to in three countries each. Thus when countries take into account the social dimension in their performance measurements, they tend to combine several elements. However, Italy and France restrict themselves to the single elements of disability, gender and socio-economic conditions respectively. Austria has established performance agreements providing special measures for disabled students, women and working students.

As performance-based mechanisms are acknowledged as a good instrument to foster the social dimension, their limited use for such objectives is perhaps a worrying sign for achieving the social dimension.

Figure 2.8: Performance-based mechanisms with a social dimension focus, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

2.6. The impact of the economic crisis

Across Europe, the economic crisis has had a significant impact on both participation and funding levels in higher education and will continue to influence developments in these areas (Eggins and West, 2010).

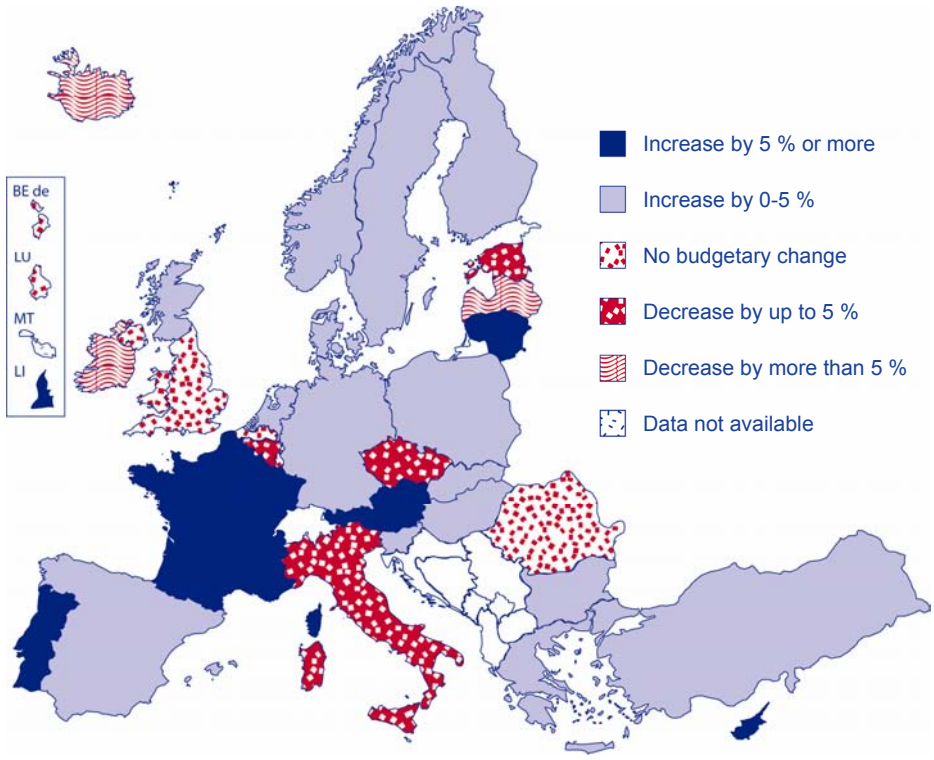
In the absence of comparable EU data, as for instance on public expenditure per student and as percentage of the GDP, for the period beyond 2007, and therefore for most of the crisis period, the following analysis is necessarily based on national data and definitions that have been gathered in a form that cannot be harmonised.

Eurydice has been collecting information on national responses to the crisis in higher education since 2009. Reactions of European governments have not been uniform and have ranged from the launch of stimulus packages to severe cuts in public expenditure. Responses to the economic crisis, which has now become a crisis of public finances, continue to vary considerably, depending on the national context, economic situation and political priorities.

Two important indicators of the scale of the problem at national level, as well as of the chosen national policy approach are the changes observed in higher education budgets and the adoption or not of a stimulus package for the sector.

Figure 2.9 presents budgetary data for 2009/10 for 46 European countries as analysed in the Eurydice publication *Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010* (EACEA/Eurydice 2010, p. 44). In 2009, the majority of European countries reported either increased or stable higher education budgets as compared to the academic year 2008/09. However, several countries had introduced budgetary cuts. Among Eurydice countries, these cuts were most severe in Ireland, Latvia and Iceland.

Figure 2.9: Changes in higher education budgets from 2008/09 to 2009/10



Source: Eurydice, *Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010*.

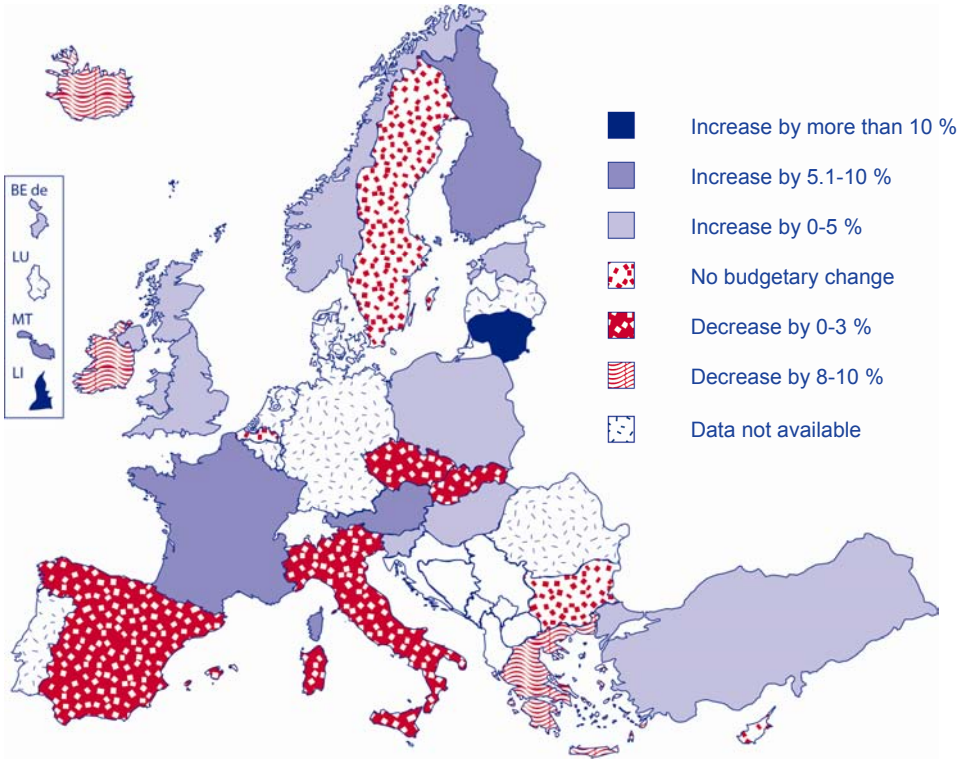
Country specific note

Czech Republic: Data refers to calendar years 2009 and 2010.

For the academic year 2010/11, the situation has evolved slightly, as shown in Figure 2.10.

The majority of European countries have in fact increased spending on higher education which is partially due to the adoption of stimulus packages. In only six countries national higher education budgets have decreased. Among these Ireland, Italy and Iceland register a second consecutive decrease in public funding. Indeed education authorities in Ireland and Iceland persist with particularly significant budgetary cuts in the range of 8-10 per cent per year. For 2010/11, Greece has also had to reduce spending on higher education by the same proportion of 8-10 per cent. It is worth noting that while the rest of the countries in this group have presumably started to implement cuts from a level around or above the EU average, Italy is decreasing funding based on a much lower initial level of public spending as share of GDP that is below the EU average (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.10: Changes in higher education budgets from 2009/10 to 2010/11



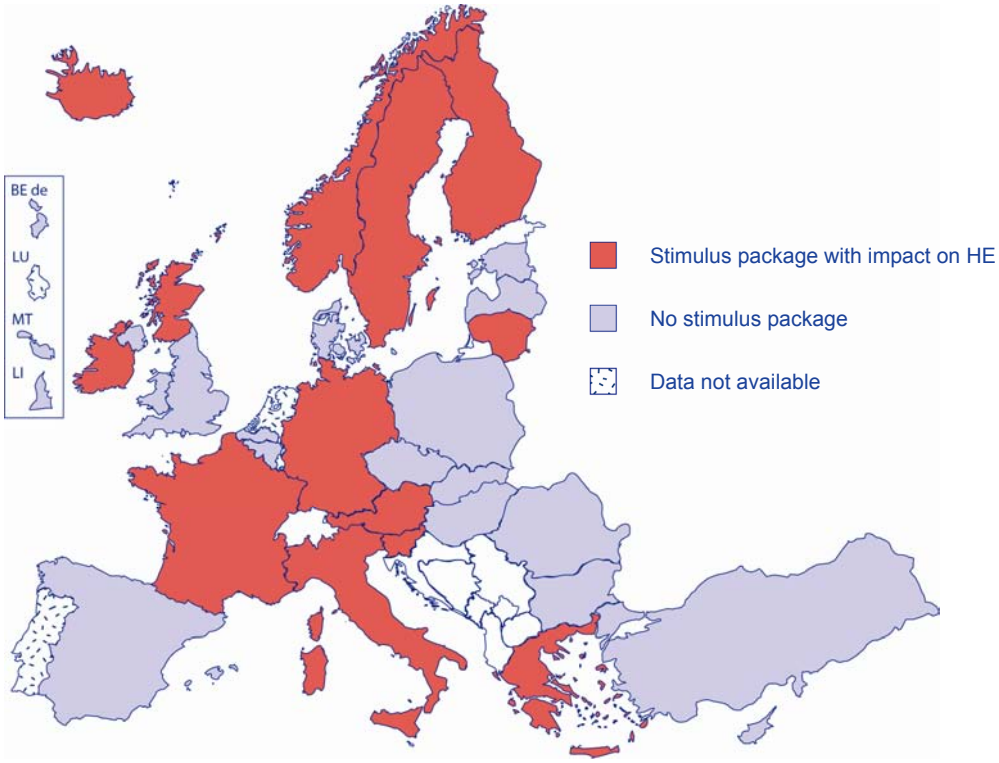
Source: Eurydice.

Country specific note

Czech Republic: Data refers to calendar years 2010 and 2011.

Another important development regarding the public funding of higher education is the adoption of stimulus packages for European higher education systems. As shown in Figure 2.11, such packages have been adopted in thirteen European countries. Some of these countries have been experiencing significant economic difficulties. Thus Ireland, Greece, Italy and Iceland have all allocated special funds to ring fence the sector from the most severe effects of the crisis. However, stimulus packages have also been adopted in Germany, France, Finland, Sweden and Norway which is an indication that, despite the crisis, the Nordic countries are committed to maintaining high levels of government spending on higher education, whereas Germany and France are equally determined to provide the necessary funding for on-going reforms in their national systems.

◆ ◆ ◆ **Figure 2.11: Adoption of a stimulus package in higher education, 2009/10**



Source: Eurydice.

◆ ◆ ◆

As part of these stimulus packages, targeted funding has most often been allocated for research and/or teaching. Student support is part of the package in only four countries (Italy, Lithuania, the United Kingdom (Scotland) and Iceland). This is an indication that social dimension objectives are not being given a high priority within measures to stimulate economic recovery.

Overall, despite sometimes significant budgetary constraints, European governments seem to have responded positively to the need to support the higher education sector. This is in line with a similar global trend to maintain spending on higher education (Varghese, 2010). The decision to protect the sector can be interpreted as recognition of its importance in the knowledge economy and of the potential it has as a driver for economic recovery and growth (European Commission, 2011). However, it remains to be seen whether current funding levels and priorities for allocation can deliver the ambitious goals that Europe has set itself with regard to the social dimension goals of increasing and widening participation in higher education.

CHAPTER 3: STUDENT FEES AND SUPPORT

Introduction

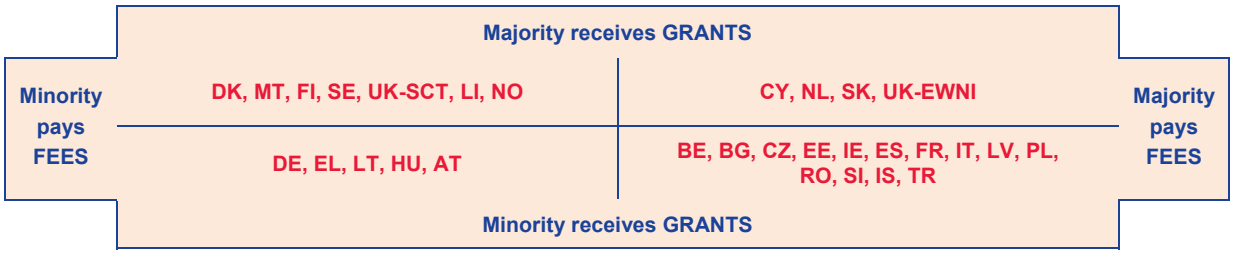
Issues of student fees and support are difficult to understand and compare accurately and clearly at European level. This is because there are many dimensions to be considered, and the interaction of different sets of data is vitally important if reality is to be better understood. For example, the statement, "students pay fees in country x" may be clear, but it lacks sufficient information to understand the funding reality from a student perspective. Does the term "students" refer to all or some students? If some, what are the criteria that determine which students pay fees? How much do students pay (the range of fees)? Are the fees paid "up front" upon enrolment or after graduation? Even if answers are provided to all of these questions, the information remains only partial. The rest of the picture needs to be filled in with information on the student support system. Are students or their families able to access public financial support in the form of grants, loans or tax relief? If so, under what conditions and criteria?

This chapter does not have the ambition of presenting a complete picture of different European fee and student financial support systems. However, it does aim to show main patterns and approaches in national higher education systems, relating the most important elements of national fee systems with student support. This can, however, only be an overview of such a complex topic, and more detailed information can be found in the national system information sheets.

3.1. Main approaches to student fees and support

Figure 3.1a combines information from two key characteristics of national systems. The first characteristic is whether or not the majority of students pay fees. The second characteristic is whether or not a majority of students receive grants. With regard to fees, all charges to students are considered here, with the exception of contributions to student associations or unions. Thus the stated reason for fees (e.g. tuition or registration etc) is not taken into account and neither are the level of fees charged. This information can be found in the national system information sheets.

Figure 3.1a: Proportion of first and second cycle students paying fees and receiving grants, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

Explanatory note

This figure provides a simplified overview and should be read alongside the other information in this chapter. It focuses on:

- the proportion of students paying fees, but not on the amounts of fees paid;
- grants and not other forms of student financial support.

Country specific note

United Kingdom: Information applies to full-time first cycle students only.

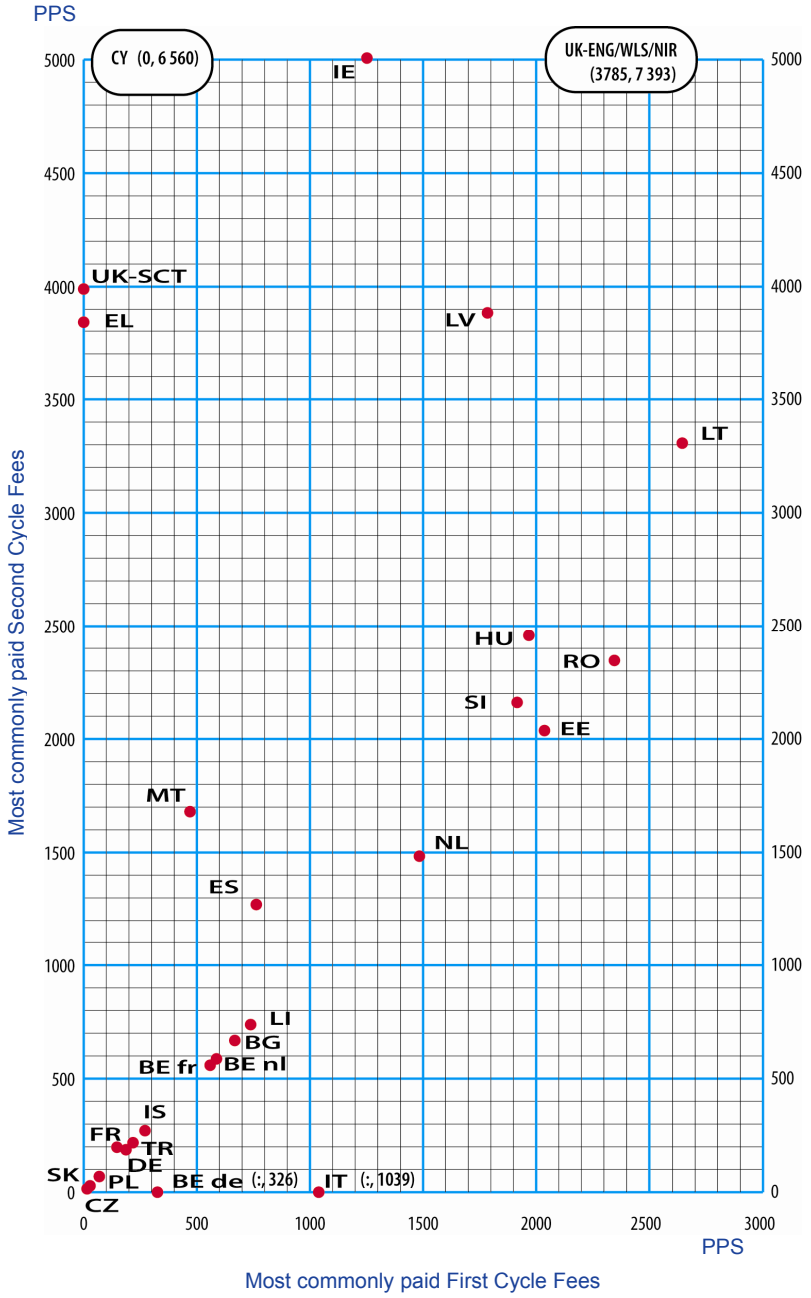
The focus on grants as a primary indicator of student support is also an over-simplification that ignores the other significant forms of student financial assistance. However, grants are nevertheless a telling indicator for the majority of countries. Indeed nearly all national systems have some form of grant system in place, even if grants are sometimes combined with loans, tax benefits to parents or other forms of indirect support to students.

By examining these two characteristics of national systems together, four main categories of countries can be seen to emerge in the European landscape. Firstly, there are countries where the majority of students pay fees and also receive grants. There are four national systems concerned by this category (Cyprus, Netherlands, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Wales and Northern Ireland)). At first sight, the model appears to be curious as the State both provides financial assistance to a majority of students, while public higher education institutions charge fees to a majority of students. However, a full understanding of these national systems needs to consider many other aspects of the payment and support system. Part of the explanation for what may at first sight appear a paradoxical system lies in the fact that fees are universally charged to students in these countries. Meanwhile the grant system is generally targeted at specific groups of students, thus aiming to alleviate the impact of fees on these particular groups of students. Cyprus is placed in this category on the basis of second cycle fees only, as Cypriot and EU students do not pay fees in the first cycle. The group also includes the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) where an important aspect of the system is that fees are paid only after graduation and when a graduate is earning income above a particular threshold of earnings. Thus, in effect, the fees are actually paid back as a kind of graduate tax that lasts until the loan is fully repaid. Part of the money generated by fees in this system is then channelled back into the system as targeted student support.

Secondly, there is a category of countries that is far more numerous – more than half of the national systems under consideration – where a majority of students pay fees, while a minority receive grants. While such a system does not sound very student-friendly, it is important to bear in mind that the general picture does not show the level of fees and their impact on different student profiles and budgets. It is therefore important to recognise that this category clearly includes countries where fees are deliberately set at a low and affordable level for the majority of students, sometimes concerning only minor registration fees, and where student support is consciously targeted. Overall this category of countries can be considered as operating a "financial redistribution model" that shares many characteristics with the countries in the first category. In both cases, the systems generate income that may be used for targeting resources for those with the greatest perceived need. However, in none of the systems is there a requirement that all fee income be used for student support, and thus the finance generated may also be used for other purposes – including core funding for higher education.

The third model would no doubt be the popular choice among most students. Here a minority pay fees, and a majority receive grants. This model is applied only in seven countries – Denmark, Malta, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom (Scotland), Liechtenstein and Norway. Given the geographical distribution of these countries, it is also clear that this could, to a large extent, be considered as a Northern European or even Nordic model, and the key condition for it to be implemented is that there is a strong societal consensus regarding the importance and value of higher education, and hence a willingness to provide very significant investment in student support.

Figure 3.1b: Most commonly paid first and second cycle fees, 2009/10



	1st cycle	2nd cycle
BE fr	559	559
BE de	326	:
BE nl	587	587
BG	668	668
CZ	28	28
DK	no fees	no fees
DE	187	187
EE	2037	2037
IE	1252	5007
EL	no fees	3844
ES	763	1271
FR	147	198
IT	1039	:
CY	no fees	6560
LV	1785	3885
LT	2646	3307
LU	:	:
HU	1968	2457
MT	470	1680
NL	1484	1484
AT	no fees	no fees
PL	69	69
PT	:	:
RO	2346	2346
SI	1916	2161
SK	15	15
FI	no fees	no fees
SE	no fees	no fees
UK (1)	3785	7393
UK-SCT	no fees	3990
IS	271	271
LI	738	738
NO	no fees	no fees
TR	218	218

Source: Eurydice.

UK (1)= UK-ENG/ WLS/ NIR

The last model comprises countries where only a minority of students pay fees, and where only a minority receive grants. This group of five countries (Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Hungary and Austria) is the mirror image of the first group, and the state can be considered to play a rather passive role, neither providing grants nor charging students. Germany is a special case among these countries, however, as the payment of fees there is a matter of geography, while grants are only one aspect of a developed student support system. Since it became possible for fees to be charged – following a Constitutional Court ruling in 2005 – seven out of 16 *Länder* (regions), all in the Western part of Germany, now charge fees. In these *Länder,* all students pay fees, while in the others no

students pay fees. Hence a correct picture for Germany would really need to reflect these major distinctions between the different *Länder*. Of the four models, this is the one where there would appear to be the least attempt to define and implement a clear policy for the social dimension through the student support system. Again, however, this general statement would need to be qualified by a closer assessment of other issues.

It is also interesting to consider the wide range in the levels of fees that are charged to students across the continent. Figure 3.1b is based on the most commonly paid fees in the first and second cycles, and two main features can be highlighted.

Firstly, the differences from a student perspective are very significant indeed, ranging from a group of countries where fees are not charged in either cycle (Denmark, Austria, Finland, Sweden and Norway), to those charged at relatively low levels, and to several countries with very high typical fees.

Secondly, it is striking that while national fee levels are generally similar between the two cycles, there is a tendency for second cycle study students to be charged higher fees than their counterparts in the first cycle. This trend is particularly visible for countries where higher levels of fees are charged. Thus the higher the level of fees in the first cycle, the more likely it is that an even higher fee will be charged in the second cycle. In some countries, this information may be an indication that the public responsibility for higher education is considered more applicable to the first cycle than to the second cycle.

3.2. Who pays fees?

Figure 3.2 focuses on student fees and illustrates the main criteria used to determine which students pay fees. The range of national approaches is very broad, often combining different elements, and in this map five main categories of criteria are distinguished. The situation considered is with regard to national and EU students. Differences in fee arrangements may exist for non EU students, and where this is the case information can be found in the national information sheets.

There are only three national systems Finland, Sweden and Norway where no students pay fees. However, the United Kingdom (Scotland) presents a particular case as, although Scottish and EU students are not charged fees, students from other parts of the United Kingdom are charged fees. Denmark is sometimes also considered as a country without fees, which is true for full-time, but not for part-time students. Similarly, although in general EU students do not pay fees in Austria, they are charged to those students who exceed the minimum study period plus two semesters.

At the other extreme, in Belgium (German-speaking Community), the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), Iceland, Liechtenstein and Turkey, all students pay fees and, therefore, no criteria are required to distinguish between those who pay and those who do not. In Turkey, however, although all students pay fees, there are criteria based on the field of study to decide how much they pay. In Austria, all who pay fees pay the same amount. However, in all the other countries, fees are paid but criteria are used to decide which students pay, and/or how much they pay.

The categories of criteria for determining which students pay fees are not mutually exclusive, and many countries combine criteria in different ways. The most commonly used criteria for distinguishing which students pay fees are linked not to characteristics of the student population (socio-economic status, academic performance, etc.), but rather to the mode of study, type of study programme or field of study chosen. These criteria are relevant in Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia. Within this group of countries, however, there is a wide range of situations. In

Greece, for example, fees may be charged for second cycle programmes, but not for the first cycle. In several other countries, including Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary, students of arts and humanities pay the minimum amount of fees, while those in health sciences (medicine and veterinary science) pay the maximum amount. In Denmark, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, part-time study is the reason for a different fee regime, with part-time students more systematically charged fees.

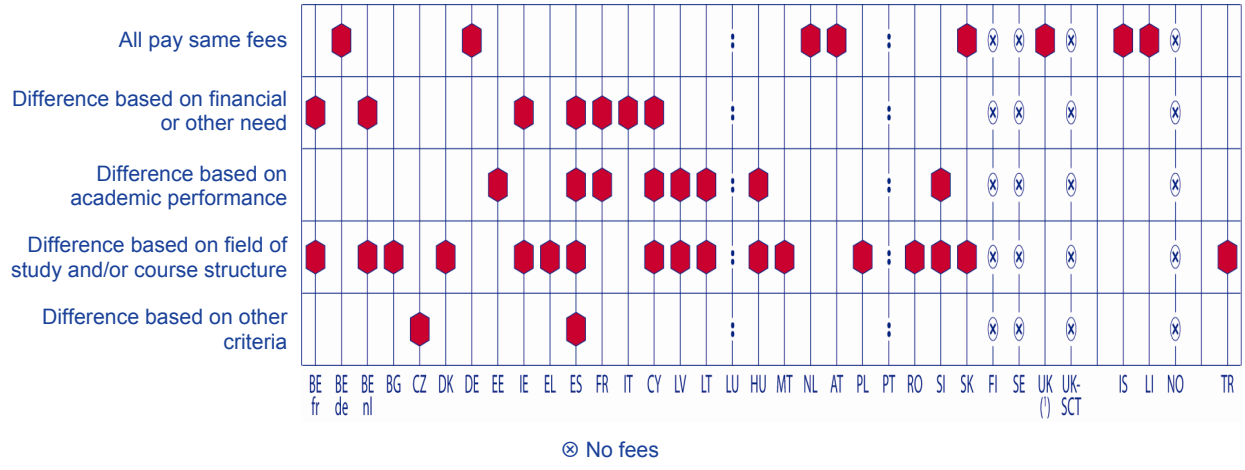
Financial considerations (the economic condition of students) are used as criteria for charging fees in six systems: Belgium (French and Flemish Communities), Spain, France, Italy and Cyprus.

Nine countries (Estonia, Spain, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey) use academic performance criteria as a means of distinguishing who pays fees and/or the level of fees paid. For France, therefore, it is the combination of financial and performance criteria that is interesting. The initial decision to award students grants and exempt them from fees is based on financial criteria. However, in order to continue receiving grants throughout higher education, there are requirements for successful academic performance.

It is also revealing to consider the countries where a combination of criteria is employed. Four countries (Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia) combine criteria based on academic performance with those based on the type of study programme. Belgium, both French and Flemish Communities, is the only country to combine financial criteria related to the economic conditions of students with criteria linked to the field of study. Meanwhile, France combines financial criteria with academic performance. Cyprus and Spain have the most comprehensive use of criteria, combining financial criteria both with academic performance and the type of study programme. In the case of Spain, however, the decision of whether or not a student pays fees is determined only by financial criteria related to the family. Other criteria are then used in relation to the amount of fees paid.

The Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia present particular cases, as higher education institutions are free to set their own fees for programmes taught in a foreign language. However in all other cases, fees are limited to admission charges and to charges to students who extend the expected length of studies beyond more than an academic year. In Latvia, although fees are charged to a majority of students, fees per credit for programmes taught in a foreign language are generally higher than those for programmes taught in the national language.

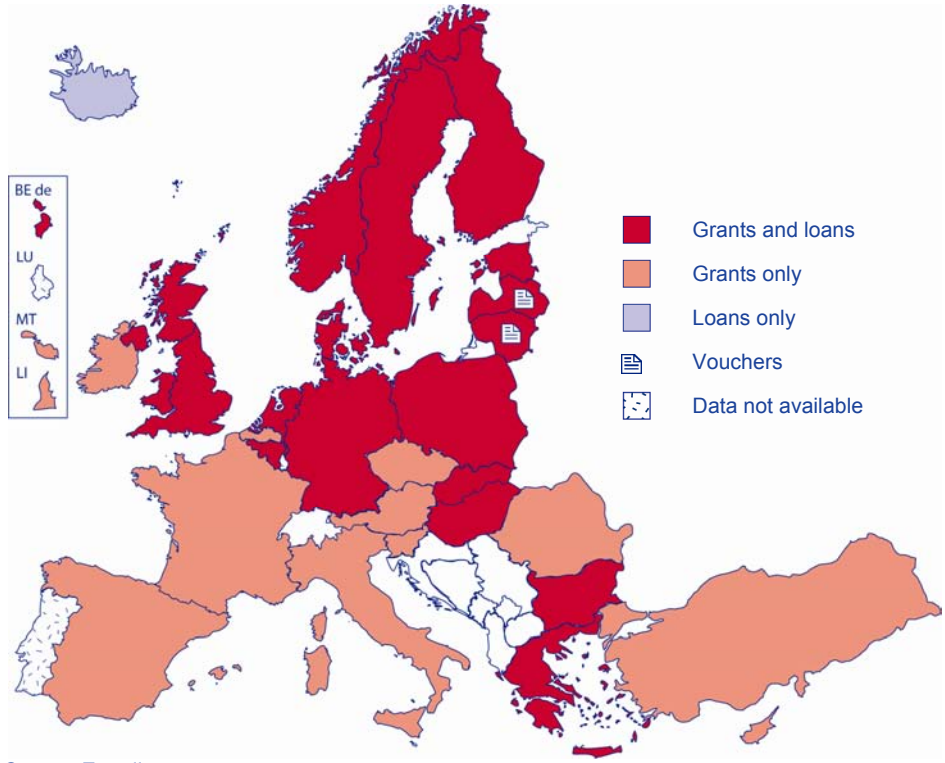
Figure 3.2: Criteria used to determine fee status of first- and second-cycle students, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

UK (1) = UK-ENG/WLS/NIR

◆ ◆ ◆ **Figure 3.3: Main forms of student financial support in the first and second cycles, 2009/10**



Source: Eurydice.

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3.3. Student financial support

Having examined the situation regarding fees charged to students, it is important to compare this reality with the main forms of student financial support available. Figure 3.3 aims to show the most important aspects of national student financial support systems. It considers financial support in the first and second cycles of higher education, except in the case of the United Kingdom, where the figure reflects the reality of first cycle higher education students only.

The first thing that is striking is the number of countries that combine grants and loans. Indeed, this is the case for the vast majority of European countries. However, while some form of grants is practically universal in both cycles, and while the possibility to take out publically supported student loans is provided in approximately two-thirds of the countries under consideration, the actual take-up of loans varies strongly. Demand for loans in some cases also appears to be related to fee levels. Thus in France, for example, where fees are relatively low, the number of students taking out a loan is very few indeed (0.1 %). The United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) presents the opposite scenario, with relatively high fees compared to other European countries and very significant take-up of loans. Iceland is the only European country where the student support system is exclusively based on loans.

The relative importance of grants and loans in mixed systems also varies significantly between countries. While in Sweden, for example, 70 % of students receive a public grant, in Estonia that number stands at 15 %. As the national information sheets show, the potential value of grants also varies significantly between countries. In Ireland, for example, grants range from EUR 330 to EUR 6 355 per academic year, depending on means, family size and distance from institutions, but in addition students who qualify for grants are also exempt from fees.

The balance of support to students between grants and loans also varies. In Germany, the *BaföG* automatically consists of a loan and grant that are provided in equal proportions during the regular duration of the study course. After the expiry of the regular support it may be followed by a bank loan as assistance to pass examinations within one year. In the Netherlands, however, grants are performance-related. When students graduate within 10 years of the first payment, their support is indeed a grant. However, if they do not graduate within this time period, the grant is transformed into an interest-bearing loan. In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), the student loan needs to be paid back only after graduation and when a certain income threshold is achieved. If this is never the case, the loan is never paid back, and loans are written off – meaning that they are in effect financed by public funding – after 25 years.

Some countries support students differently in different study cycles. Across the United Kingdom, public grants and loans are only available for first-cycle students, while Research Councils provide some funding to second-cycle students on a competitive basis, and funding is also available for training in teaching, social work and some health professions.

Latvia and Lithuania also use vouchers to offset tuition costs. This approach to funding higher education is very rarely used in Europe (cf. Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 28). Even in these two countries their use is limited. Latvia only uses them for unemployed persons who can obtain a degree within three years. Lithuania distributes vouchers to students based on merit and uses them to meet demand for particular, specialised discipline areas.

There are also relationships between the type of student support mechanism, and whether the orientation is performance or need-based. Thus while financial need is almost always a criterion that is taken into consideration for the allocation of student grants (Estonia is the only exception here), it is a criterion that is hardly ever used in allocation of loans (the exceptions being Belgium (French Community) and Poland).

3.4. Who receives student financial support?

Figure 3.4 illustrates the main criteria used for students that receive publically-funded grants or scholarships. The philosophical question that underlies the choices made by countries is the nature of a fair system of student financial support. Clearly there are a number of aspects to be considered. Firstly, should available resources be spread as widely as possible, but with the general consequence of reducing the impact of such support? Or should a minority group – however the criteria for membership are constituted – receive the lion's share of the resources? If it is decided that resources should be targeted to increase their impact, which students should qualify for support? In terms of the social dimension is it fairer and more effective to target support on the basis of financial need? Or to what extent should those who perform well in their studies be rewarded by financial support? Does such funding reinforce social inequity by rewarding students who are already socially advantaged at the expense of those who may have equal potential, but are unable to develop it through social and financial disadvantage? Whether as the result of implicit or explicit debate, national systems of student support all take position in relation to these questions.

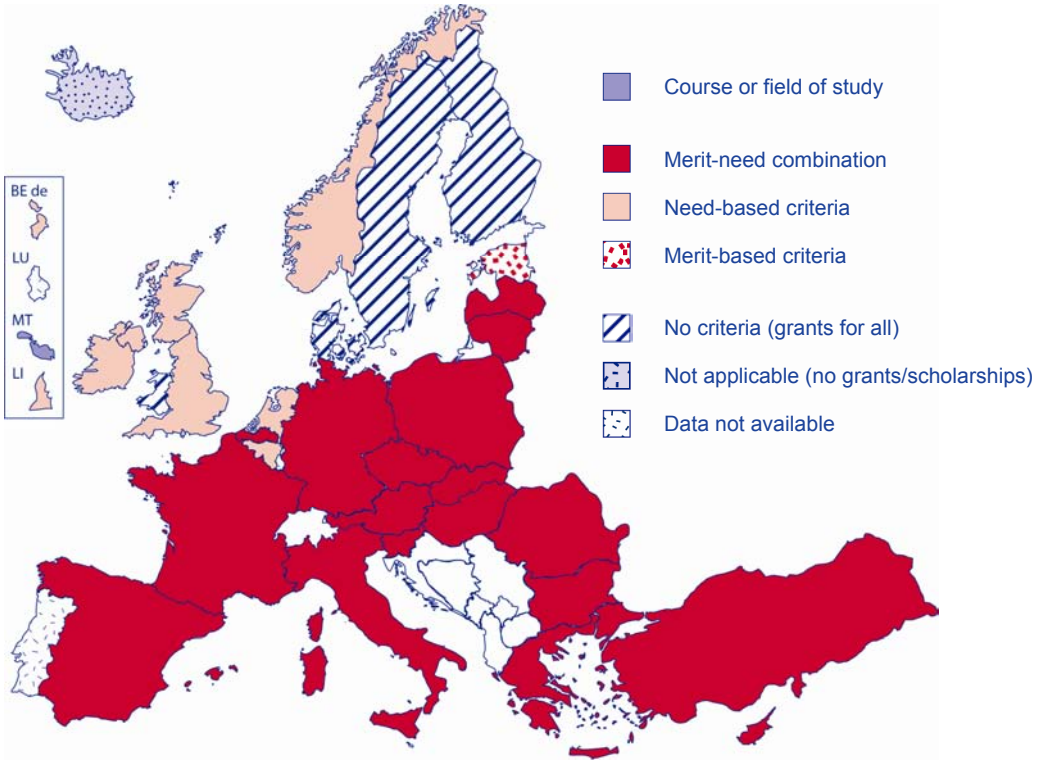
3.5. Criteria for awarding grants

Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (Wales) have a system of universal grants for full-time students provided that certain basic requirements of study performance are met. Therefore in these countries no criteria are required. For all other countries the main question is whether grants are provided on the basis of financial need or academic performance, or a combination of these two main criteria.

The largest share of countries combine the two criteria, providing some grants on the basis of financial need and others on the basis of academic performance. Estonia combines criteria based on the course or field of study with merit. Greece also bases its grants system predominantly on criteria of academic merit with students receiving grants for outstanding performance at examinations regardless of their financial background, but the level of grants also takes account of students' financial situation.

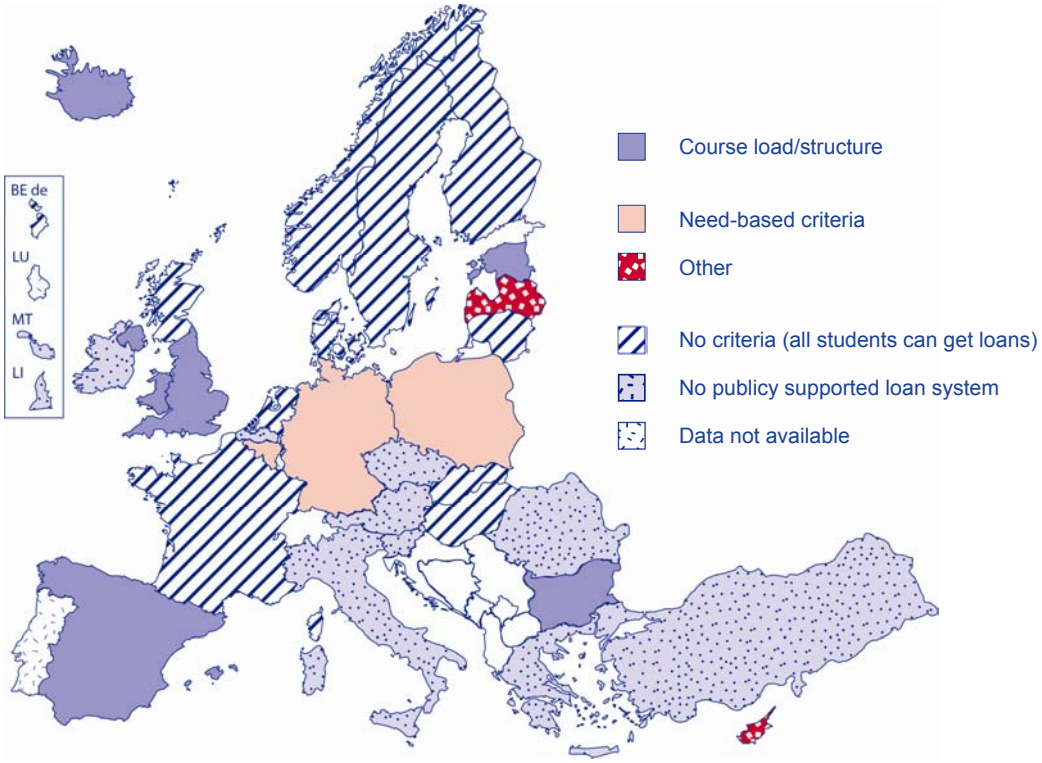
A small group of countries, consisting of Belgium (French Community), Ireland, Netherlands, Finland, the United Kingdom and Liechtenstein, provide grants on the basis of financial need only, although in some of these cases either the amount of the grant or its prolongation throughout the study programme may depend on successful academic performance.

Figure 3.4: Criteria for awarding grants/scholarships in the first and second cycles, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

◆ ◆ ◆ **Figure 3.5: Criteria for allocating loans in the first and second cycles, 2009/10**



Source: Eurydice.

◆ ◆ ◆

3.6. Criteria for awarding loans

With regard to student loans, this study takes into consideration only publically supported loan systems, and not private loans that individuals may negotiate with banks. Such publically supported student loan systems exist in approximately two-thirds of European countries – 23 of the national systems under consideration – while in eleven national systems financial aid is based exclusively on grants.

It is noticeable that whereas universal grants are available only in Denmark and Sweden, loans are available to all students in ten national systems (Belgium (German-speaking Community), Denmark, France, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, and Norway), although in Hungary students over 40 are not eligible. In the case of France, very few students actually take out a student loan.

Germany has a complex system of loans. The most important is the State Loan that is part of the regular "BAföG". This is need-based, and restricted to full-time students. A BAföG bank loan ("BAföG-Bankdarlehen") is also offered under additional conditions after the expiry of the regular BAföG support. In addition, there is an "Education Loan" ("Bildungskredit") that is not means-tested, and eligible to full-time students on advanced level of studies. Finally there is a KfW Student Loan ("Studienkredit") that is also not means-tested, and for which only full-time students are eligible. All of these loans are age restricted.

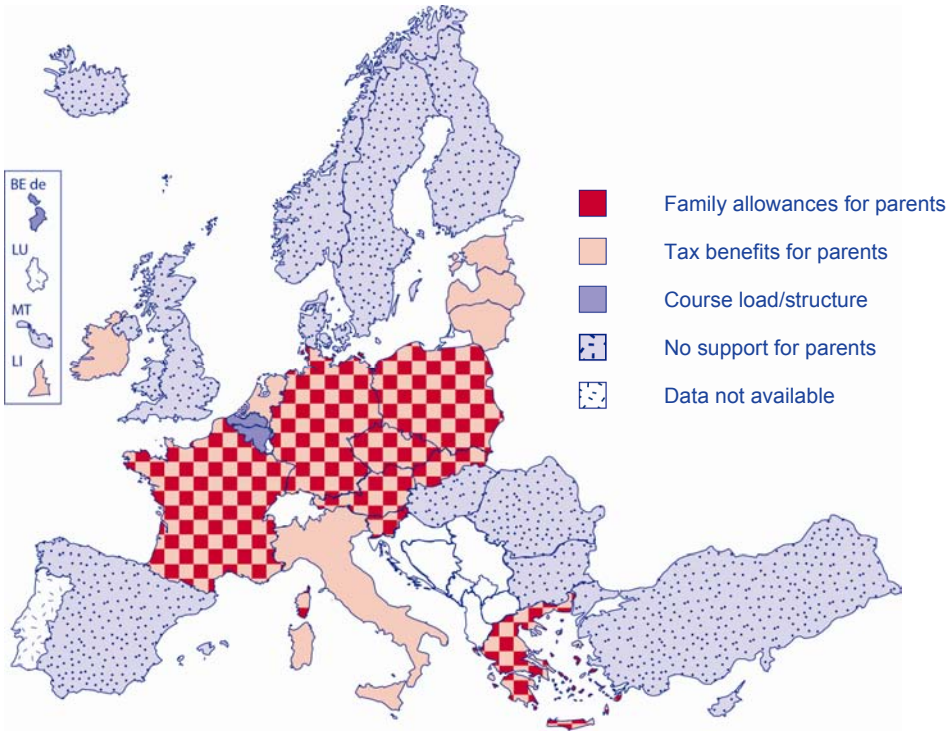
One significant difference between grants and loans is reflected in the finding that need-based criteria are relevant in all but two national systems for grant allocation, but only considered in two national

loan systems (Belgium (French Community) and Poland). Thus when finance is offered in the form of loans, and is to be paid back by students, it is generally more widely available to the student population.

Meanwhile in Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, the United Kingdom and Iceland eligibility for loans depends on criteria related to the particular type of study programme. In Spain, loans are limited to new second cycle master programmes, while in the United Kingdom the student loan system is designed for students in the first cycle. In Estonia and Slovakia, only full-time students are able to benefit from student loans.

Latvia is a particular case, as here only 20 % of loans provided in the student loan system are state-supported, and these are attributed on merit-based criteria. For all loans, a warrantor must be named who must be under 65 years old for the cases where students do not have the means to pay back the loan.

Figure 3.6: Tax benefits and other support for parents, 2009/10



Source: Eurydice.

3.7. Tax benefits and other support

While most people immediately think of grants and loans in relation to student support, tax benefits and other financial allocations to parents of students can also play a significant role in a number of European countries. Such information does not, however, concern those students who are themselves parents. Figure 3.6 illustrates that Europe can practically be split in half between those countries where parents receive support while their children are in higher education, and those where they do not.

Nine countries (Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Austria, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia) provide both tax benefits for parents, and other financial allocations to parents. In a

further seven countries (Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Liechtenstein) parents of students in higher education also receive tax benefits, but are not able to claim additional financial allocations. Thus in all these countries support to families rather than to individual students is a significant aspect of the system.

This contrasts with the picture in the remaining 16 systems where there are neither tax benefits nor other financial entitlements for parents. In the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden Iceland and Norway) this reality is clearly central to the cultural understanding of higher education as a provision for independent adult students. This can also be correlated with the typical age of entry to higher education which is several years higher in the Nordic countries than elsewhere in Europe.

However, the Nordic countries are by no means the only countries where there is no tax or financial benefits for parents. This is also the reality in two of the larger members of the EU (Spain and all parts of the United Kingdom) in a number of central and eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania) as well as in Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

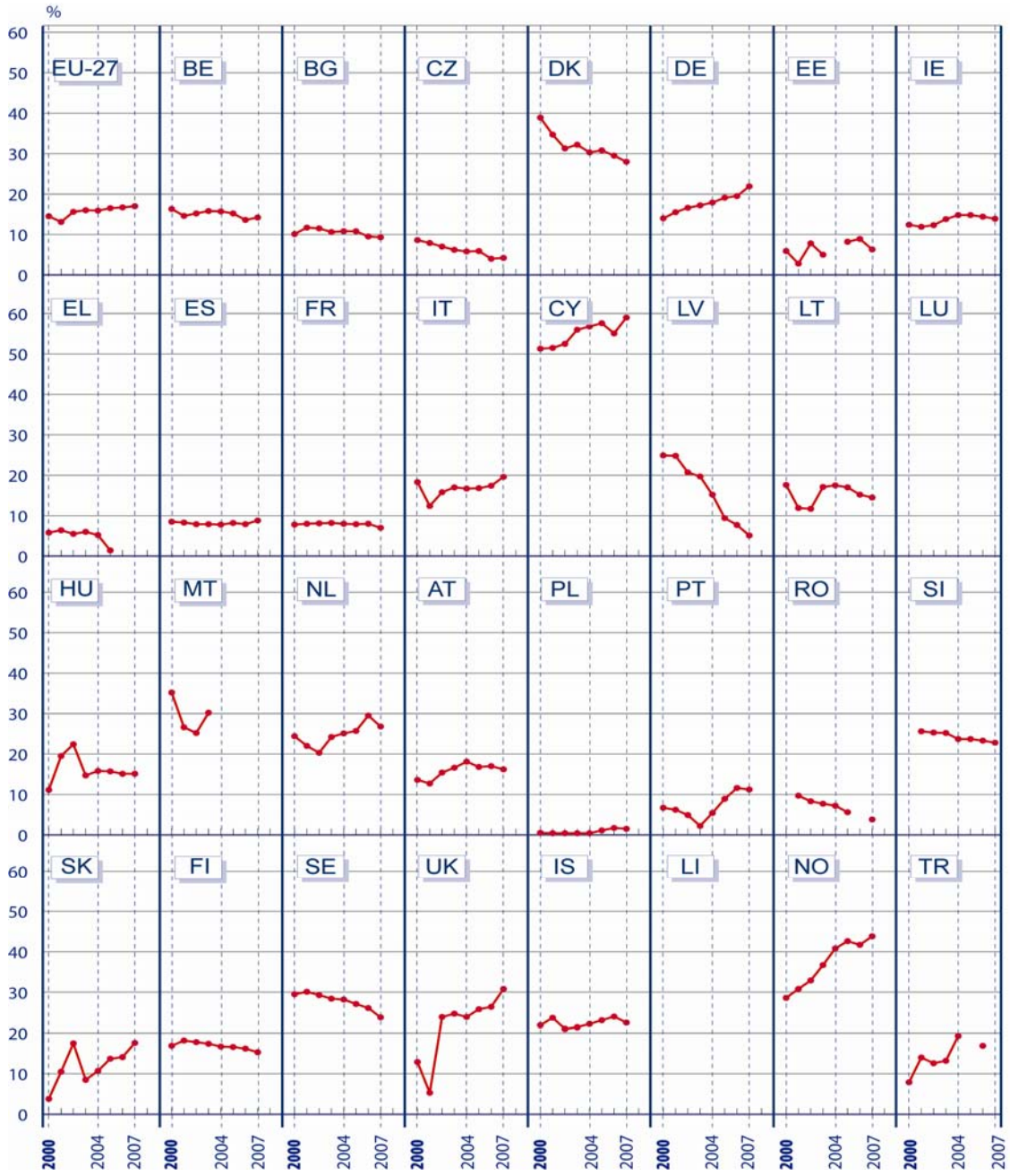
3.8. Funding the student financial support system

The quality and strength of the student support system is directly related to the amount of money made available through the public budget. Figure 3.7 presents the evolution in the European Union and the member states between 2000 and 2007 of the amount of money countries provide as public financial aid to students as a percentage of the overall higher education budget.

While the average funding for student financial aid across the EU 27 has increased slightly – from 14.5 to 17 percent – there are very divergent underlying patterns and realities within European countries. Overall, three relatively balanced groups of countries can be identified. There are those where a significant increase in the share of money allocated to the student financial system has taken place. This is the reality for Germany, Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Norway and Turkey. The second group of countries is where the share of investment in financial aid has changed little between 2000 and 2007. This is the case for Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Finland and Iceland. There are also countries where a downward trend can be observed, such as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden.

Irrespective of these three national trends, however, very significant differences can be perceived in the percentage of the higher education budget devoted to student financial support. The percentage ranges from as high as 59 % for Cyprus (explained to a large extent by the very significant number of students receiving support to study outside the country) to as low as 1.5 % for Poland. Considering 2007 as the year with the most recently available information, and remembering that the financial crisis was yet to arrive, the countries that invest most as a percentage of the higher education budget on the student support system are Cyprus (59 %), Norway (43.8 %), the United Kingdom (30.8 %), Denmark (28 %) and the Netherlands (26.8 %). The countries that invest least as a percentage of the higher education budget are Poland (1.5 %), Romania (3.8 %), the Czech Republic (4.2 %), Latvia (5.1 %) and Estonia (6.3 %). While these figures also need to be considered in relation to the size of the higher education budget, it is clear that they signify major differences in student support across Europe.

Figure 3.7: Percentage share of financial aid to students (grants and/or loans) in total public expenditure at tertiary level of education, 2000-2007



Source: Eurostat.

Explanatory note

Student loans are generally not included in the graph. For the period 2000-2007, student loans from public sources are not available in a number of countries.

Country specific notes

Belgium: Expenditure excludes independent private institutions and the German-speaking Community.
Denmark and **Iceland**: Expenditure at post-secondary non-tertiary level of education is partially included in tertiary level.
Ireland, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom and **Iceland**: Expenditure for ancillary services is not available.
Cyprus: Financial aid to students studying abroad is included.
Portugal: Expenditure at regional and local levels of government is not available.
Slovakia: Expenditure at ISCED level 5B is included under upper secondary level.

Another aspect to be noted is the countries where changes have been most dramatic during the time period. The United Kingdom stands out as the country with the most significant increase, moving from 12.9 % in 2000 to 30.8 % by 2007. Norway, already starting at a high percentage of investment in 2000 (29 %) also moved upwards by 15 % to reach 44 %. Denmark shows the opposite image of Norway, starting at 39 % in 2000 and ending at 28 % in 2007. However, the most dramatic fall in financing is in Latvia from 24.9 % in 2000 to 5.1 % in 2007. As Latvia was later to suffer the most severe higher education budget cuts as a consequence of the financial and economic crisis (see Chapter 2) this fall in student aid funding earlier in the decade is therefore highly significant. The Czech Republic, although cutting "only" 4.4 % during the first seven years of the decade did so from a low starting point of 8.6 % in 2000. Thus, in reality, this fall is also highly significant, and likely to have made a major impact.

The information presented in this chapter on the forms of financial support available to students therefore needs to be considered in relation to these levels of funding, and in relation to the question of how effectively efforts are made to target funding.

An over-riding question emerges from this information: at what level of funding can a system be considered robust, and when can a financial support system be considered to be critically under-funded? This is not a question to which this study can provide an answer. However the picture presented in this chapter does suggest that the diversity of financial support systems across Europe is perhaps not sufficiently recognised, and that these different national realities are likely to be having a very significant impact – sometimes positive and sometimes negative – on the performance of higher education systems.

KEY ISSUES

Context

This report has taken a close look at the social dimension of higher education. Although for many this is a rather elusive concept, it is one that has been gaining attention in policy debates at the European and national levels in recent years as rapid transformation of higher education has been gathering pace. Essentially, the social dimension concerns the process of widening access to higher education to as large a proportion of the population as possible.

One of the most significant trends in European higher education in the past decade has been the continuing process of expansion in the sector, with student numbers increasing by an average of 25 %. This process of massification is a global phenomenon related to a shift towards knowledge-based societies, and it creates new challenges for Europe. These challenges are recognised within the European Union's modernisation agenda. The European Commission emphasises the need to reform Europe's higher education systems to contribute more effectively to the training and retraining of citizens in a fast-changing knowledge-based society and economy. It also places the social dimension and funding as one of the main pillars for future action. This parallels the attention to the social dimension that has been developed through the Bologna Process, where a wide sphere of policy activity is envisaged in response to an inter-governmental commitment to widen participation.

Democratisation

In response to societal trends, higher education ministers have emphasised that "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations" (London Communiqué 2007, p. 5). They also stress that "students [should be] able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background" (London Communiqué 2007, p. 5). This report assumes this understanding of the social dimension and looks at action undertaken by European countries to make this vision a reality.

Almost all countries proclaim that increasing and widening participation in higher education is a major policy objective. Nevertheless, it is not the highest priority for European countries, as improving quality in higher education is consistently ranked by countries as their most important policy concern.

While these two issues – widening participation and improving quality – should be viewed as two aspects of the same overall challenges to be faced by national higher education systems, there is little evidence of countries linking debates on quality to the social dimension. This split in conceptual thinking is a matter of potential concern that could lead to incoherent policy approaches in the future.

Macro-level funding trends

Even before the financial and economic crisis and subsequent pressures on public budgets, investment in higher education failed to keep pace with participation trends. Indeed, while participation increased rapidly before 2008, funding remained stagnant as a percentage of GDP expenditure, and indeed several countries cut their national higher education budgets during the years prior to 2008.

Since 2008, however, funding trends have been diverging. While very significant cuts have been (or will be) made to some systems, several European countries, including countries that have experienced significant economic difficulties, have adopted stimulus packages containing support

measures for their higher education systems. Given the continuing need for more highly educated people in the labour market this latter strategy could prove more successful in alleviating the long term effects of the economic crisis.

Funding of higher education institutions

The majority of countries concentrate funding for higher education on one or two main funding mechanisms, such as input-based funding (e.g. based on the number of staff/students), negotiated allocations, purpose-specific funding or performance-based mechanisms. Significantly, these major funding mechanisms are rarely used explicitly to foster social dimension objectives. Instead, more marginal funding schemes exist in many countries that take into account particular aspects of the social dimension.

Overall, despite the prominence of the social dimension in policy statements, other goals – particularly quality of teaching/research and efficiency of systems – feature not only more prominently in general policy documents, but also in the mechanisms of public funding of higher education institutions. It is thus difficult to find clear evidence that national higher education institutional funding systems are being oriented to support and stimulate the social dimension policy objective of widening participation.

Demographic trends

Demography in Europe is set to affect countries profoundly, but the impact will be felt differently in different parts of the continent.

Demographic decline in the population of 18-34 year olds from 2010 to 2025 will significantly affect countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe. In contrast, a minority of countries in Northern Europe show positive projections for the number of young people.

The impact of demographic change on policy development can be expected to be twofold. Firstly, if significant decline in the supply of qualified graduates is to be avoided, the higher education offer needs to be expanded to new potential students through renewing support for lifelong learning and increasing attention to the diversification of the student body. In this respect, this report shows that many of the countries where widening access to under-represented groups and adult learners will be most urgently needed are those where such measures to open up higher education systems to non-traditional learners are currently the least developed. Secondly, these demographic trends mean that capacity and funding readjustments are needed.

It is a positive point that most European countries report that demographic trends and projections are taken into account in their mid- and long-term strategic planning regarding capacity development and funding. Yet it remains to be seen whether systems will be able to adapt sufficiently to take account of these fast-approaching realities.

Measures to strengthen the social dimension

While rarely being a central element of higher education policy, special measures exist in many countries to assist specific groups on the basis of factors such as socio-economic status, gender, disability and ethnicity. Typical meassures include the provision of reserved places for members of a group, information programmes directed to specific groups, and the provision of targeted guidance and support services. While some countries focus on measures to increase participation of under-represented groups in higher education, other countries take a general approach to increase and

widen overall participation. This second group of countries hope that a general approach will also see an increase in participation from socially disadvantaged groups.

Just over half of the Eurydice member countries have established alternative routes to higher education, while fifteen national systems do not permit alternative routes into higher education. Moreover, a significant number of these systems without alternatives routes into higher education also lack regulations on the recognition and validation of non-formal or informal learning. Meanwhile, in countries where recognition of prior learning is a system feature, it is most commonly left to the autonomy of higher education institutions to define procedures and criteria for recognition.

Target setting and monitoring

Although some countries set public benchmarks or targets in relation to participation of under-represented groups, this practice is not greatly developed.

The impact of measures taken to increase and widen participation is difficult to gauge at European level, as countries not only combine different measures but also monitor different aspects of the composition of the student body. Slightly more than half of the countries require higher education institutions to report on student completion rates. However, only five countries make that data publicly available.

Overall, monitoring systems for the social dimension are yet to be developed to any significant degree.

Fees and support

This report provides a broad, comparative overview of the structures of student support and fee systems. More detailed information on student fee and support systems can be found in the national information sheets.

Fees and support have a very significant impact on the social dimension in many ways. In particular the provision of student support and the obligation of students to pay fees can have a strong impact on the propensity of members of under-represented groups to enter higher education. While the existence of fees may deter low-income and socially disadvantaged groups more significantly than those who are more wealthy and advantaged, support mechanisms can act as an effective counterbalance. Thus the balance between fees and support, and the question of how to target resources most effectively are critical to higher education policy-making. However, actual decisions of individuals to participate in higher education will depend on many factors – including earlier educational opportunity and social conditioning – that cannot be grasped through the information in this report.

The diversity of financial support systems across Europe is perhaps not sufficiently recognised. These different national realities are likely to be having a very significant impact – whether positive or negative – on providing, or not providing, higher education opportunities for many citizens with the potential to benefit from such experience. As a consequence the fee and support system also has a major impact on the performance of higher education systems.

National reality in Europe varies from situations where no students pay fees to situations where all students pay fees, and from countries where all students receive support to those where few receive support. Moreover, the levels of fees and support can also be extremely diverse. Indeed, it is the diversity of fee and support systems that is the most striking characteristic of European higher education.

In the majority of countries, students have to pay fees in principle, but various criteria are used to decide which students pay, and/or how much they pay. Such criteria are most often based on the mode of study, type of study programme or field of study chosen, but can also be based on characteristics of the student population, or the combination of both approaches.

Many European countries combine grants and loans, yet the relative importance of grants and loans in mixed systems also varies significantly. Grants are rarely universal, and are provided on the basis of financial need or academic performance, or a combination of these two main criteria. Publicly supported student loan systems exist in approximately two-thirds of European countries. Iceland is the only country where public support to students is offered exclusively through loans.

The picture with regard to indirect support is even more diverse and closely linked to the general social policy approach of countries. Nine countries provide tax benefits for parents and family allowances. In a further seven countries tax benefits for parents is the sole mechanism for indirect student support. In sixteen systems, there are neither tax benefits nor other financial entitlements for parents.

Overall conclusions

Overall, the report suggests that countries have struggled to keep pace with the scale of change experienced over recent years in their higher education systems. The social dimension has not generally become a significant driver for higher education policy, but numerous special measures are in place in most countries to address the under-representation of particular groups.

Political declarations do not always seem to be met with coherent measures, funds to realise them or monitoring mechanisms to evaluate their impact. In an age where lifelong learning is becoming a necessity to enable the workforce to be competitive in a global market, maintaining traditional approaches to admission, recognition and completion appears to be a high risk strategy.

While to some extent the relative prosperity prior to 2008 can be seen as a time of missed opportunity to invest in a higher education sector that will be key to future social and economic development, failure now to invest sufficiently and effectively in higher education could prove to be a major hindrance to societal recovery and success.

There is an urgent need to address social dimension issues more forcefully and coherently both at EU and national level.

Guide to the National System Information Sheets

General Information

The national system information sheets aim to give an overview of the **public** fee and support system. The diagram aims to show the **main characteristics** of the system, while the text aims to provide complementary **key points** to enable the reader to have a good overall understanding. Information refers to public or government-dependent private higher education institutions but **not to private higher education institutions**. Information covers students in the first and second cycles only, while fee and support arrangements for doctoral students are not covered here. Information on subsidised accommodation, transportation and canteens is also not included.

Diagram

- The range of fees covers **both part-time and full-time students** and is **shown** by year in **Purchasing Power Standard (PPS)** ([1]). This enables diagrams for different countries to be comparable in terms of expenditure. However, please note that within the **text** all references to costs are expressed in the **national currency**. Fees include all costs charged to students – including for registration, admission and certification – but do not include payments to students unions.
- Fees for international students (i.e. those outside EU/EFTA/EEA – depending on national definitions) are **not** included in the diagram.
- The diagram differentiates fees by first and second cycle.
- Support in the form of grants is differentiated by the concepts of need-based and merit-based. This reflects reality in the majority of countries.
- The diagram includes three possible elements of student support systems that only appear when they are a **main characteristic**. These are:
  - i) **Loans**: this element appears if there is a national student loan system, ***and*** more than 5 % of students take out a student loan.
  - ii) **Tax benefits for parents**: this element appears if there are tax benefits for parents of students in higher education.
  - iii) **Family allowances**: this element appears if parents of student in higher education receive family allowances.
- The diagrams on both fees and support aim to provide a minimum, most common and maximum value of fees and grants in PPS.

([1]) For a conversion between national currencies and PPS, please refer to the table at the end of the document with the national diagrams.

Text

Fees

This section contains key features of the fee system in the country expressed in the national currency.

Support

This section provides an overview of the support system operating in the country. It covers **grants, loans, tax benefits for parents** and **family allowances**.

The intention is to explain the interplay of these elements in the national system and help to interpret the diagram. The text guides the reader to an understanding of the main mechanisms of the system. This may mean that some special support measures are not included in the description.

Grants are provided in the national currency and differentiated between merit-based and need-based grants. This category includes any public financial support that does not need to be paid back (i.e. scholarships and grants). However grants for study abroad (i.e. mobility grants) are not included.

Loans are mentioned in this section – with information on the existence of a student loan system and the percentage of students that take out a loan.

Tax benefit for parents is any tax relief that is granted to parents whose child is a higher education student. The information aims to cover the amount of the tax relief, how it can be claimed and who is eligible to apply.

Family allowances aim to provide information on their amount and their relevance in the overall student support system of the country.

Planned Reforms

This section contains brief information on any planned reforms that will alter significantly the public fee and support system. **The reforms** to the regulatory framework are restricted to concrete measures that are **already in the decision-making process**.

Calculating Purchasing power Standards, 2009

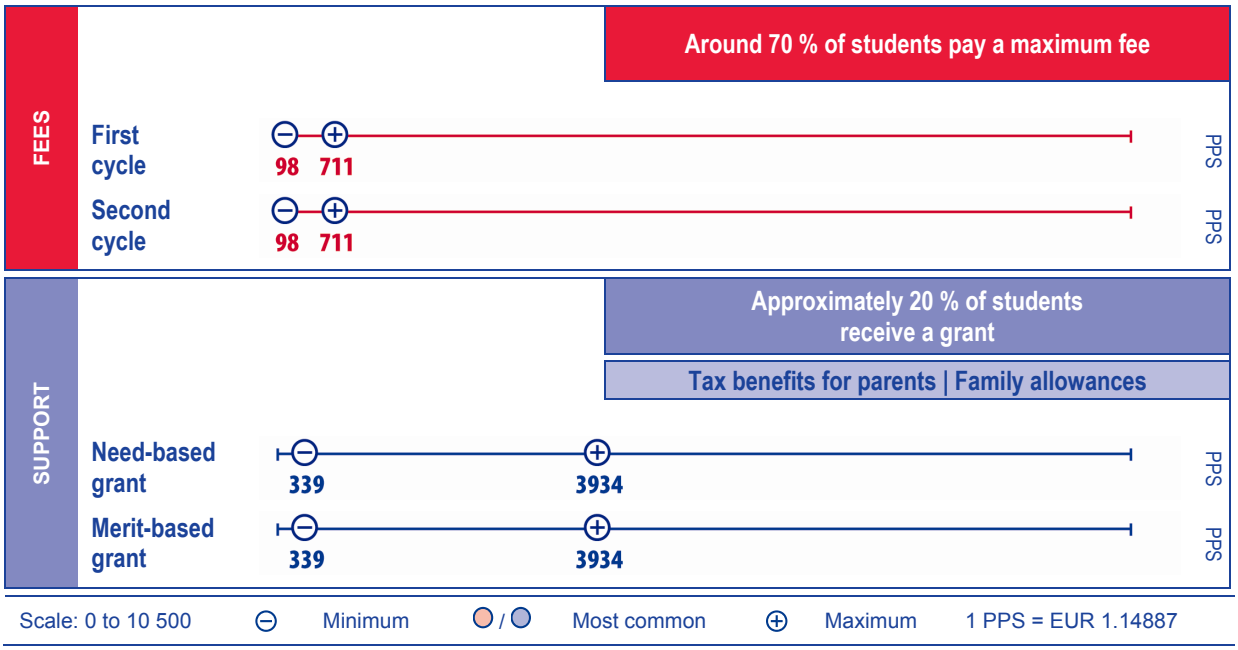
EU-27	1	**EL**	0.94311	**HU**	170.111	**SK**	0.675267
BE	1.14887	**ES**	0.944109	**MT**	0.744156	**FI**	1.20762
BG	0.868238	**FR**	1.16454	**NL**	1.12533	**SE**	11.8628
CZ	17.9382	**IT**	1.03345	**AT**	1.12125	**UK**	0.852114
DK	10.5604	**CY**	0.914611	**PL**	2.46905	**IS**	169.575
DE	1.06916	**LV**	0.476175	**PT**	0.839641	**LI (CH) ***	2.03173
EE	10.8005	**LT**	2.13163	**RO**	2.13458	**NO**	11.741
IE	1.19827	**LU**	1.19716	**SI**	0.835268	**TR**	1.23631

* Swiss conversion rate has been used for Liechtenstein.

Table of Countries

BELGIUM – FRENCH COMMUNITY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- Fee limits are set by the government of the French Community of Belgium. Fee levels depend on the student's financial situation. The maximum fee is EUR 817, the intermediate fee is EUR 487 (for students not receiving a grant but considered as of "modest conditions") and the minimum fee is EUR 113 (for those receiving a grant).

Support

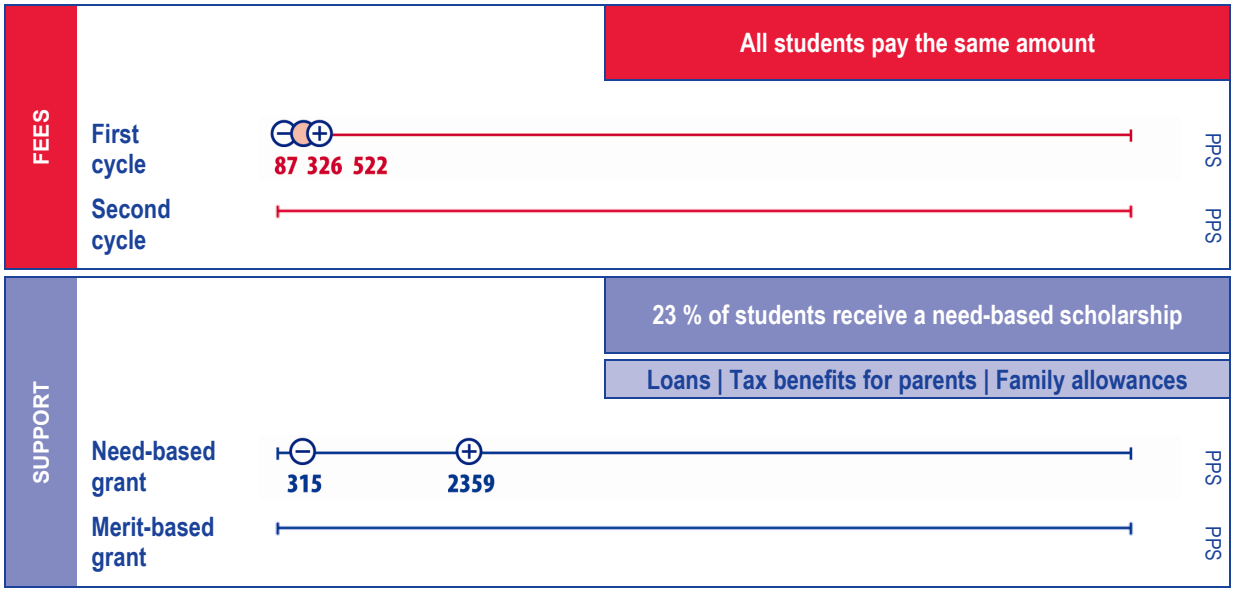
- **Public grants** are available for low income students under 35. Students must apply for this financial benefit each year. The amount granted is determined by household income and ranges from EUR 390 to 4 520 per year.
- **Loans** are available for families with at least three dependent children. Very few (0.02 %) take out a loan.
- Students' parents receive **tax benefits** which depend on the number of dependent children (including students enrolled at higher education institutions having no income). The tax-free minimum earnings threshold is increased by EUR 1 370 for one, 3 520 for two, 7 880 for three, 12 750 for four and +4 870 for each subsequent child.
- **Family allowances** from EUR 86.77/month depend on the number of children. They are received by students' parents while the student is in education or training, until the age of 25 as long as the student's income is below EUR 5 190 per fiscal year.

Planned reforms

- Following the adoption of the Act on Democratisation and Free Access to Higher Education in July 2010, students holding a grant are exempted from paying a fee. Students of modest conditions not eligible to receive a grant will pay reduced fees of up to 50 %.
- Until 2017 non-university higher education institutions can charge complementary fees in addition to registration fees, but the total amount cannot exceed EUR 817. Complementary fees range from EUR 0 (for grant holders) and EUR 417 depending on the economic situation of students. Complementary fees will continuously decrease till 2017. From 2017, non-university higher education institutions will no longer be authorised to charge fees.

BELGIUM – GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

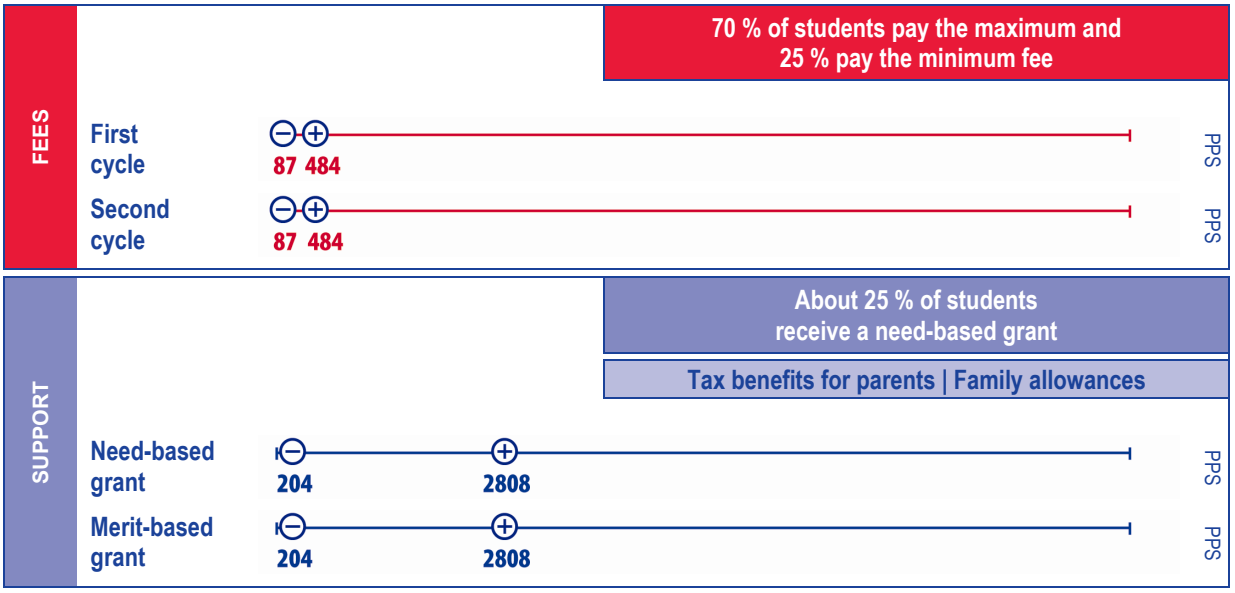
- Higher education provision exists only at ISCED 5B level. All students have to pay fees at registration. Amounts range in theory from EUR 100 to 600. In practice nearly all students pay the same amount of EUR 375.
- The amount of fees varies with the income of the student. If a student is eligible for a grant, the maximum payable amount is EUR 100.

Support

- **Student grants** are need-based. Parental income determines eligibility. They are provided through the national social security system for students who return to higher education. Annual grant amounts are between EUR 362 and 2 710.
- The possibility exists to take out **loans** of EUR 750 for the first cycle and EUR 1 250 for the second cycle. Interest is between 0 and 3 %, depending on the income of the student, and the loan needs to be repaid at the latest three years after graduation.
- Students' parents receive **tax benefits** which depend on the number of dependent children (including students enrolled at higher education institutions having no income). The tax-free minimum earnings threshold is increased by EUR 1 370 for one, 3 520 for two, 7 880 for three, 12 750 for four and +4 870 for each subsequent child.
- **Family allowances** from EUR 86.77/month depend on the number of children. They are received by students' parents while the student is in education or training, until the age of 25 as long as the student's income is below EUR 5 190 per fiscal year.

BELGIUM – FLEMISH COMMUNITY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

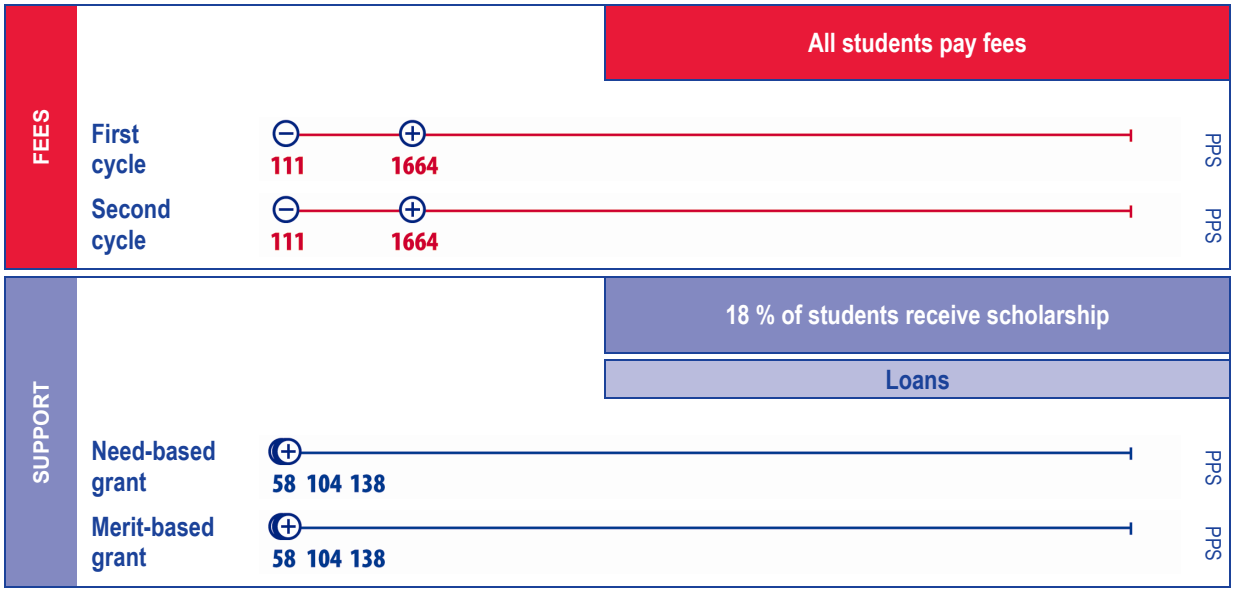
- A fixed registration fee of EUR 61 is paid by enrolment. In addition, students pay the flexible tuition fee according to a number of ECTS credits followed. Each credit point carries a fee of EUR 7.5.
- The amount of fees varies with the income of the student and the type of study programme. If a student is eligible for a grant, the maximum payable fee amount is EUR 100.

Support

- **Student grants** can be **need-** or **merit-based**. Eligibility is determined by the income of parents and/or the student or academic achievement in the past academic year. Amounts vary between EUR 234 and 3 226.
- No loans.
- Students' parents receive **tax benefits** which depend on the number of dependent children (including students enrolled at higher education institutions having no income). The tax-free minimum earnings threshold is increased by EUR 1 370 for one, 3 520 for two, 7 880 for three, 12 750 for four and +4 870 for each subsequent child.
- **Family allowances** from EUR 86.77/month depend on the number of children. They are received by students' parents while the student is in education or training, until the age of 25 as long as the student's income is below EUR 5 190 per fiscal year.

BULGARIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

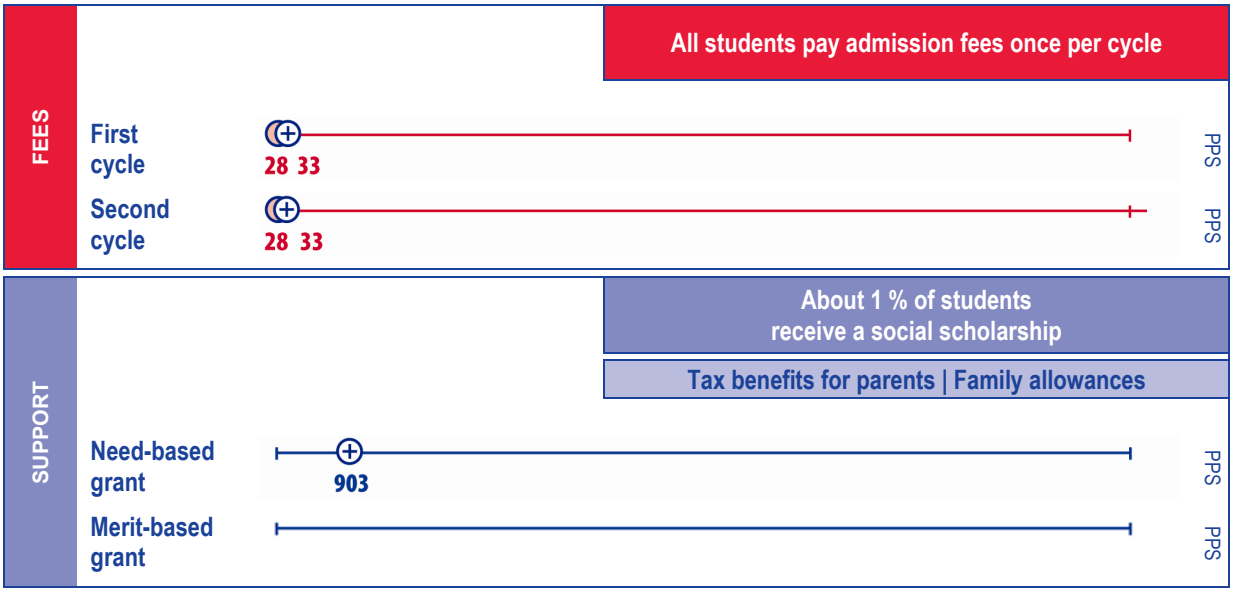
- Public higher education institutions define their own fees and the maximum amounts are set by the government.
- Student fees depend on the programme and field of study. The fees range from BGN 96 for part-time studies in both cycles to BGN 1 445 for second cycle full-time studies.
- Certain categories of students are exempted from paying fees. They include orphans, persons with disabilities, war invalids and senior cadets in military schools.

Support

- **Grants/scholarships** are available to students. They are distributed by higher education institutions, taking into account need-based and merit-based criteria. Grant amounts range from BGN 50 to 120.
- Full-time students who are less than 35 years old can apply for state guaranteed **loans**.
- There are no tax benefits for parents or family allowances.

CZECH REPUBLIC

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

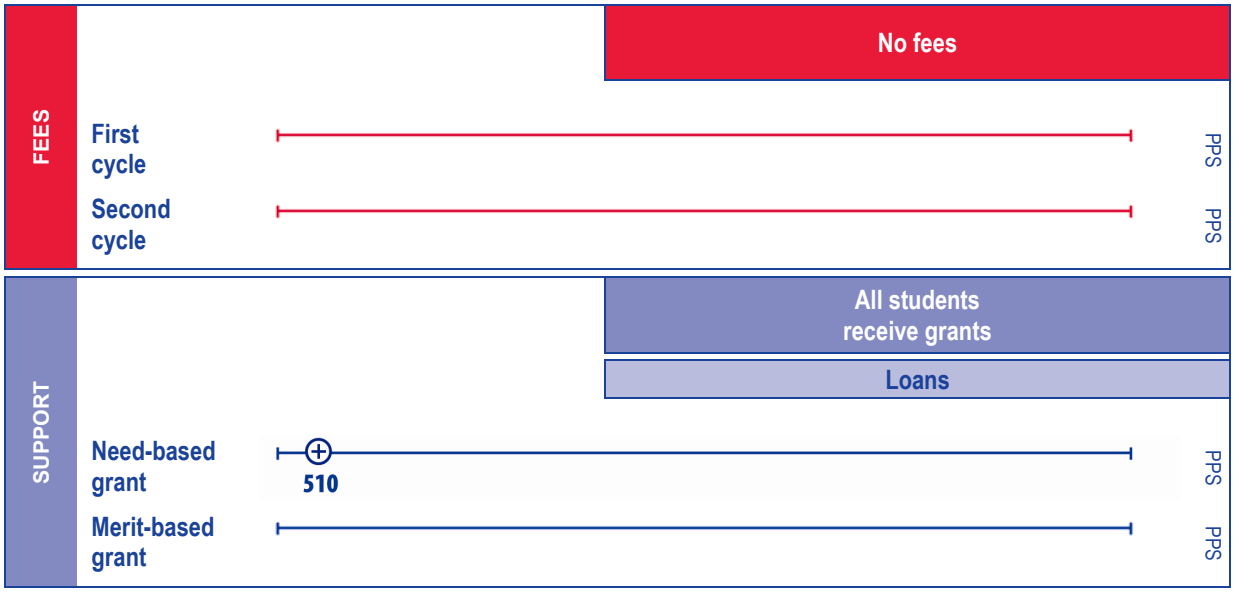
- Fees are only related to admission procedures and need to be paid once per cycle. No tuition fees are paid by "typical" higher education students.
- Students who exceed a regular length of study by at least one year, have to pay fees. The fee amounts to at least CZK 8 823, based on the average cost of a student for the public budget. No maximum is set by law.
- Students who study in second or further degree programme have to pay fees (maximum CZK 2 941).
- Students of study programmes in a foreign language also have to pay tuition fees and no maximum limit is set by law.

Support

- **Scholarships** can be granted on the basis of excellence in studies, for research, artistic or other activities.
- Scholarships are granted to students from regions other than the seat of the higher education institution as an accommodation scholarship (CZK 6 250/year).
- Social scholarships are available for students in difficult economic situation (CZK 16 200/year).
- No publicly subsidised **loans** are provided.
- **Family allowances** are provided. Eligibility depends on family economic conditions and allowances are provided until the student is 26 years of age. A child allowance of CZK 700 per month is paid if the family's income is below 2.4 times the subsistence level.
- **Tax benefits for parents** are also provided in the form of tax relief. Tax relief for each dependent child (student up to 26 years of age) is CZK 11 604; if the child is disabled the amount is multiplied by two (CZK 23 208).

DENMARK

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

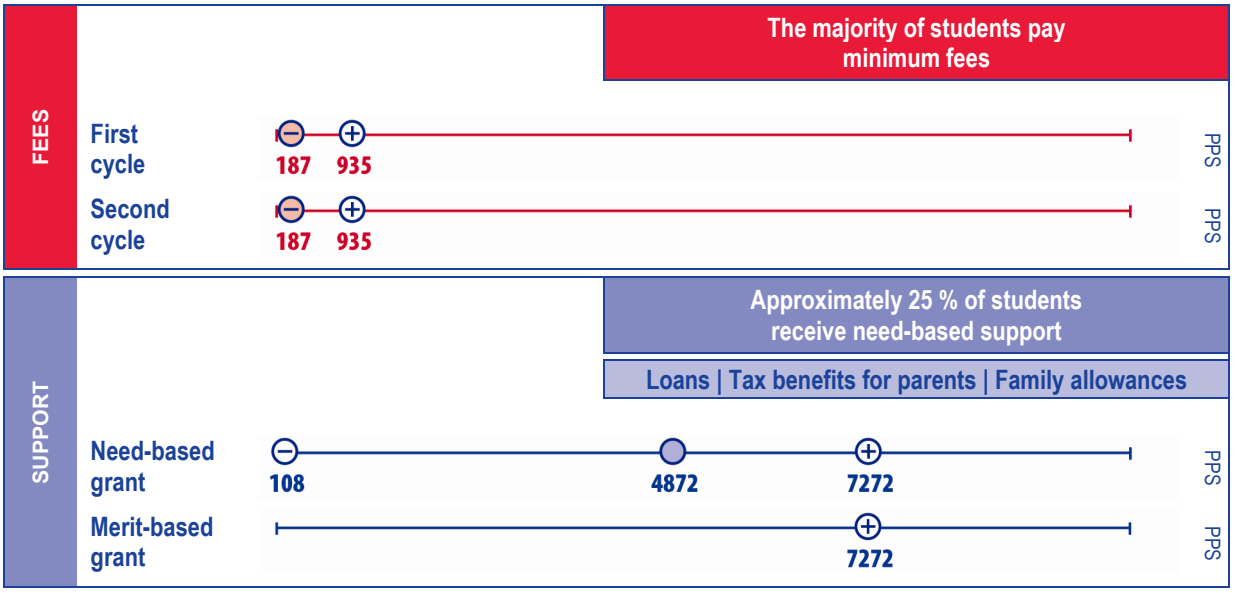
- No fees for national and EU full-time students.
- All students studying in part-time courses pay fees set by higher education institutions.
- International students pay fees set by higher education institutions.

Support

- **State grants** are available to all students. The maximum amount is DDK 5 384 per month for 12 months each year for students living independently. Extra grants are available for students who become parents and for single parents. Additional grants of DDK 7 656 are available for students with a disability.
- **State loans** of DDK 2 755 per month are available to all students. During the period of study, a 4 % annual interest rate applies. Students must start paying back no later than one year after the end of the year in which they graduate. The loan must be repaid within 15 years. About half of all students make use of state loans.
- There are no tax benefits for students' parents or family allowances.

GERMANY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

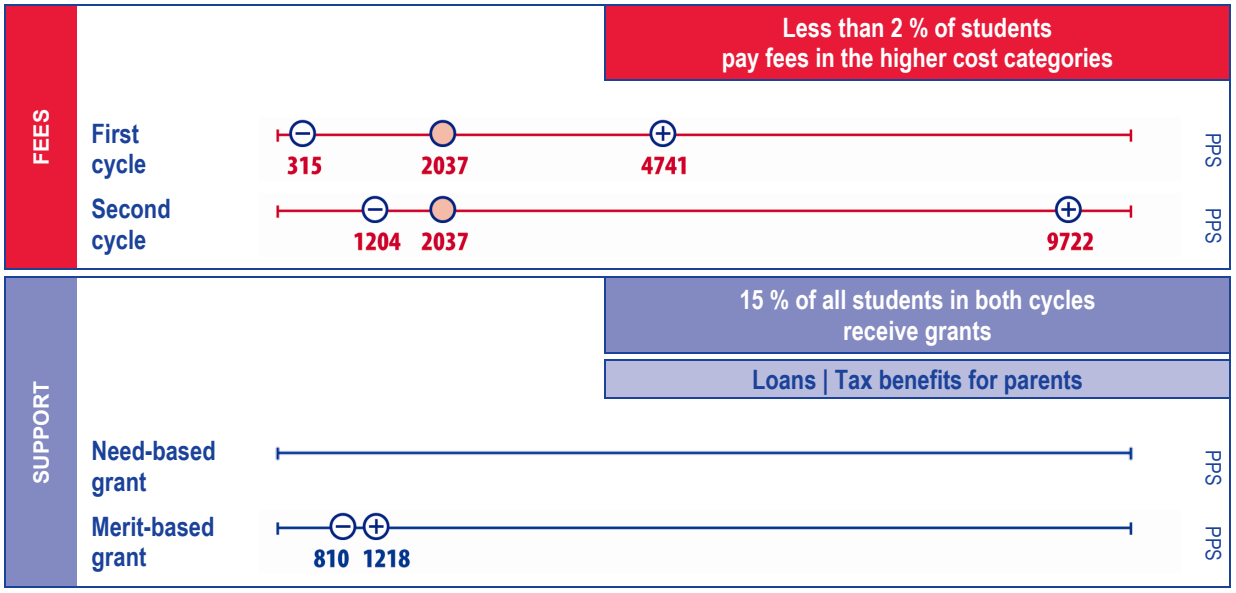
- In the majority of the *Länder* studying is free of charge. Only in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hamburg, Lower-Saxony and Northrhine-Westphalia students have to pay fees of maximum EUR 1 000 per academic year, which is defined by law. Only administrative charges are paid by all students.
- When exceeding the regular study period, students may be liable to pay fees even in those *Länder* that do not charge fees.
- Students can be exempt based on need- or merit-based criteria.
- Different fees may be charged to students from outside the EU and EEA countries.

Support

- General public **student support** (BAföG) is awarded as a grant for one half of the individual amount and as an interest free loan for the other half. Total amounts range from EUR 10 to EUR 648/month (EUR 670 from 2010) for 12 months/year. Eligibility and amount are determined by need of the student based on income, family situation, housing situation and disability. A maximum of EUR 10 000 needs to be paid back.
- Students need to be under the age of 30 (35 from 2010) to be eligible for public student support.
- **Merit-based support** is awarded entirely as a grant. The amount awarded is also determined through an evaluation of student need.
- Study **loans** are available to cover the tuition fees (in those *Länder* that charge tuition fees and limited to the amount charged) and living costs. The latter are available as a *Bildungskredit* of up to EUR 7 200 and a *Studienkredit* of up to EUR 54 600. Both loans are paid out in monthly instalments.
- Students' parents receive a monthly **family allowance** of EUR 184 for the first two children, EUR 190 for the third and EUR 215 for the fourth and more, and a lump sum **tax relief** (EUR 3 504 per annum, per child, per parent), until students are 25 years old. The tax office checks in favour of the taxpayer whether the child benefit or the deduction of the above mentioned allowances is more favourable.

ESTONIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = EEK 10.8005

KEY POINTS

Fees

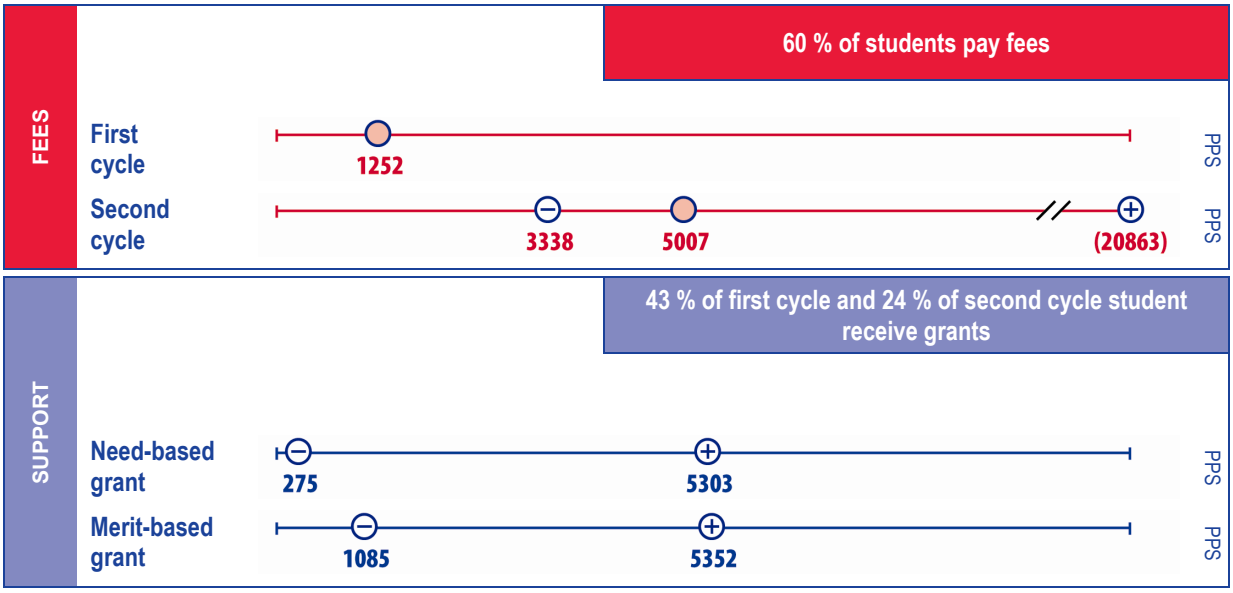
- Students with a state funded place do not pay fees. These places exist in all study fields and are attributed to students according to their results in secondary school leaving examinations.
- Students who do not have a state funded place pay fees. Higher education institutions define their own fees. The amount depends on the cost of study and demand for study places. The level of fees cannot increase by more than 10 % between two academic years.

Support

- **Grants** are available to approximately 15 % of all full-time students in the 1st and 2nd cycle together. The basic grant is EEK 875/month and the additional grant EEK 440/month. These grants are currently primarily based on merit.
- Full-time students can apply for state guaranteed **loans**.
- **Tax benefits for parents** depend both on students' status and on the civil status of students (age, marital status, etc.). No **family allowances**.

IRELAND

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS= EUR 1.19827

KEY POINTS

Fees

- For the first cycle, full-time EU students are exempt from full tuition fees, but pay a "student charge" of EUR 1 500/year.
- For the second cycle, the majority of students pay tuition fees.
- Part-time fees are generally half of those for full-time programmes.
- International student fees are unregulated and set by the higher education institution.

Support

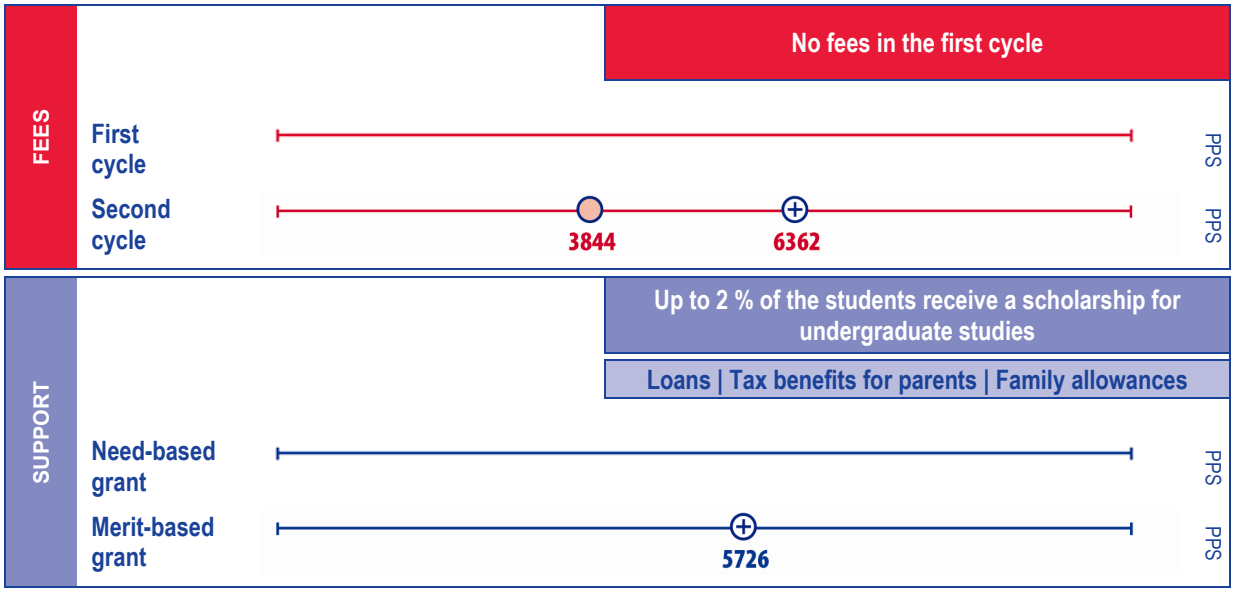
- **Need-based grants** are provided by the Department of Education & Skills. Their amounts range from EUR 330 to 6 355 per academic year, depending on means, family size and distance from institutions. Students who qualify for grants also have the student charge and any tuition fees paid on their behalf.
- The same department provides five types of **merit-based scholarships** with values of EUR 1 300 to 6 413 per academic year. Some of these grants also require qualification under needs-based criteria.
- Students need to satisfy specific conditions of residence, means, nationality and previous academic attainment to be eligible for grants. Students have to be enrolled full-time.
- **Tax relief** is available for the expenses paid for tuition fees at a recognised higher education institution.
- No **loans** or **family allowances**, except where a parent is in receipt of a social welfare payment is supporting a dependent aged up to 22 who is in full-time education.

Planned reforms

From the 2011/12 academic year the student charge is being increased to EUR 2 000 per annum and renamed "student contribution". The sum will encompass expenses for student registration, examinations and student services as well as a contribution to tuition costs. A single scheme of student grants will also be introduced in 2011/12, and from 2012 all grant applications will be handled by a single agency.

GREECE

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = EUR 0.94311

KEY POINTS

Fees

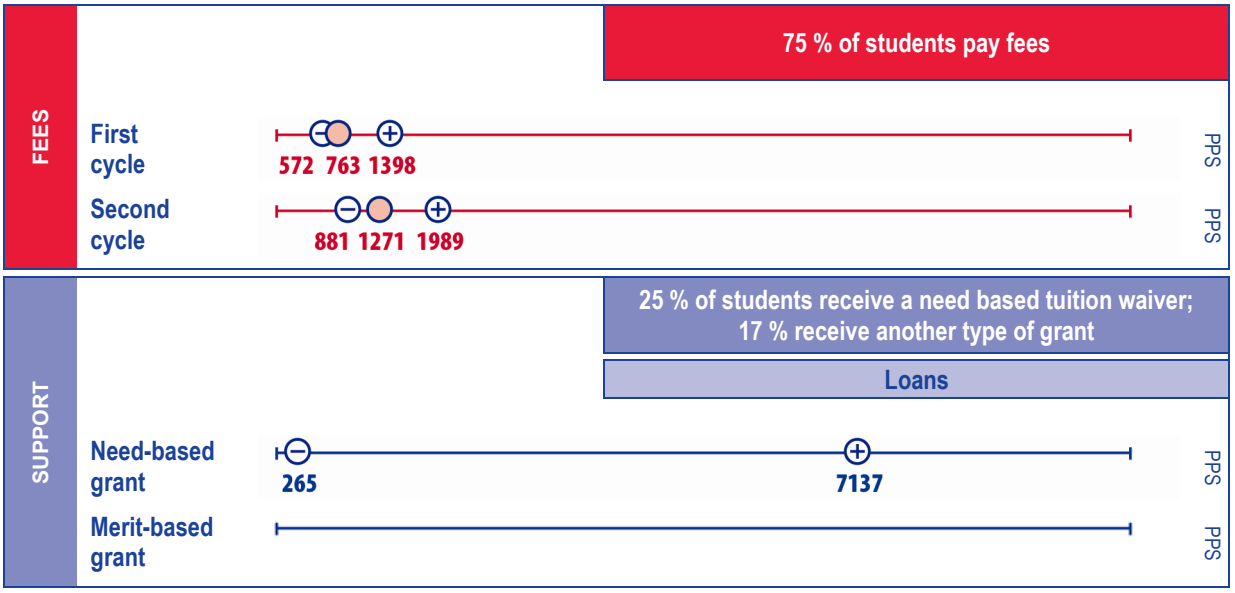
- No fees for full-time students in the first cycle. Only students of the Hellenic Open University pay fees for 1st cycle studies that range from EUR 700 to EUR 2100/year.
- 2nd cycle students may pay fees. Amounts are specified in master's degree regulations of higher education institutions. There are also 2nd cycle programmes where students do not pay fees.
- Some categories of students are exempt from paying fees. These include scholars of the State Scholarships Foundation.

Support

- **Grants/scholarships** are available through the National Scholarship Foundation, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and legacies.
- National Scholarship Foundation provides EUR 450/month for students who are successful in a national examination.
- 2nd cycle students can apply for state guaranteed **loans**.
- Students' parents are eligible for **tax benefits.** They can also claim **family allowances** of EUR 1 000 per year per child that is under age 25 and is not living at home.

SPAIN

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

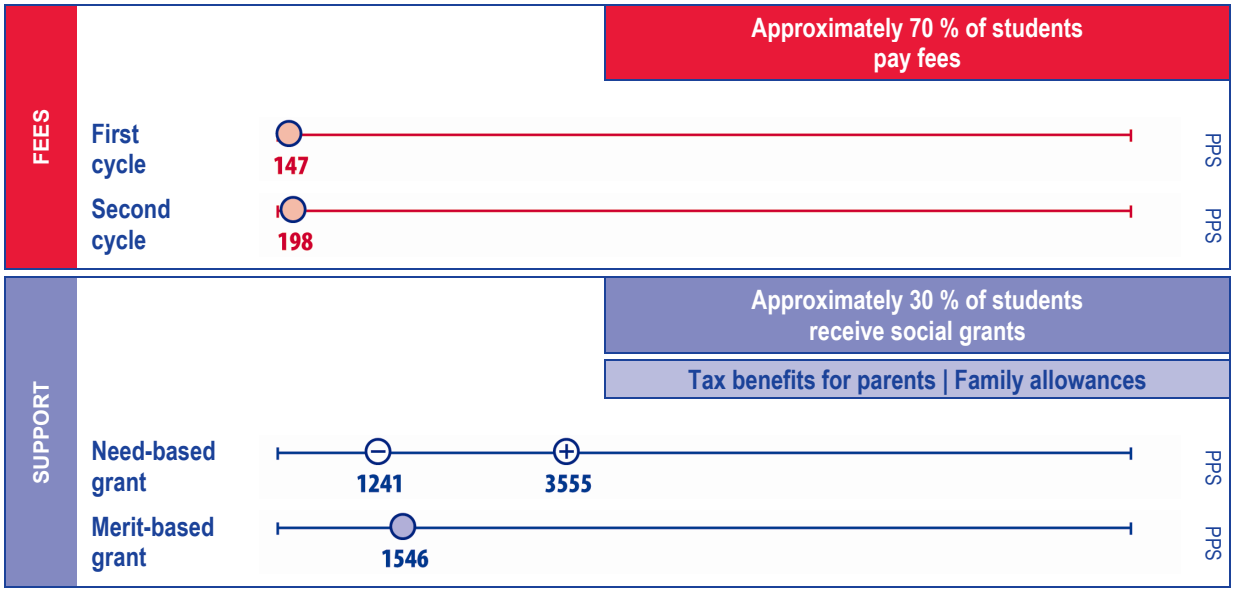
- The amount of fees is determined by the number of ECTS taken. In addition, amounts differ between subjects and each region has a different range. Overall more than 100 fee amounts exist. The fees range from EUR 540 to 1 320 for the first cycle and from EUR 832 to 1 878 for the second cycle.
- Some "new master" programmes carry an additional fee of 30 % of the real cost of the programme. This fee can reach EUR 6 000.
- Exemptions from fees are possible on the combination of need- and merit-based criteria. Family income is the most significant criterion but a minimal level of academic performance is also taken into account. In very few cases outstanding academic performance is considered as the sole criterion for a fee exemption.

Support

- **Student grants** exist on the national and regional level. They depend on whether a student moves between Spanish regions, has to pay tuition and on the student's economic situation. Mobility grants to study in another Spanish region amount range from EUR 1 592 to 6 738/year. Grants to study in the same region vary from EUR 250 to 5 756 per year.
- Eligibility is determined by student's income and family situation.
- **Loans** are available for second cycle students in Spain, the EHEA, USA and Canada. The maximum amount is EUR 12 000 (EUR 6 000 for masters programs in Spain) plus EUR 800 per month for 21 months. Repayment starts three years after graduation. The number of students that take out loans is very low.
- No tax relief for parents and no family allowances.

FRANCE

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

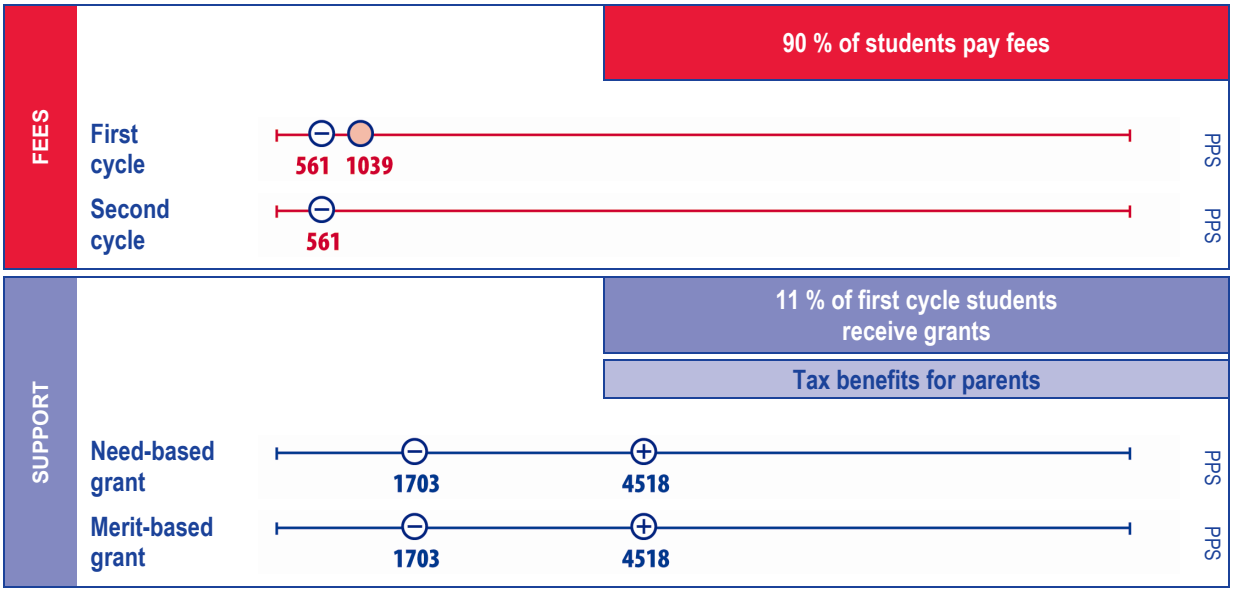
- The amount of fees per year during the first cycle (L1, L2, L3) is EUR 171, and in the second cycle (M1, M2) EUR 231. Fees in the *grandes écoles* and Engineering Schools vary but the most common amount is EUR 538 per year.
- Students who receive a **grant** (approximately 30 % of the student population) are exempt from fees.

Support

- **Grants** are awarded on the basis of financial need to students that are less than 28 years of age.
- The amount awarded depends on the assessment of financial need, and varies between EUR 1 445 and 4 140 per year.
- **Loans** are also available, with a maximum amount of EUR 15 000, but less than 0.1 % of university students take out such a loan.
- Parents are eligible for **tax relief** if students are financially dependent on them and are less than 25 years old. The amount of the tax relief is proportional to the amount of taxable income of the household.
- **Family allowances** are paid for two or more dependent children that are under 20 years old. The minimum amount is EUR 125 per month and increases with the number of eligible children. An additional amount of EUR 63 per month is paid for every child that is aged 16-20 years.

ITALY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = EUR 1.03345

KEY POINTS

Fees

- Full-time first cycle students pay average fees of EUR 1074/year. Data on average fees paid by second cycle students are not available. The effective amount depends on merit and on economic conditions of the student.
- Part-time and distance students pay a reduced amount. A further reduction is possible for disabled students.

Support

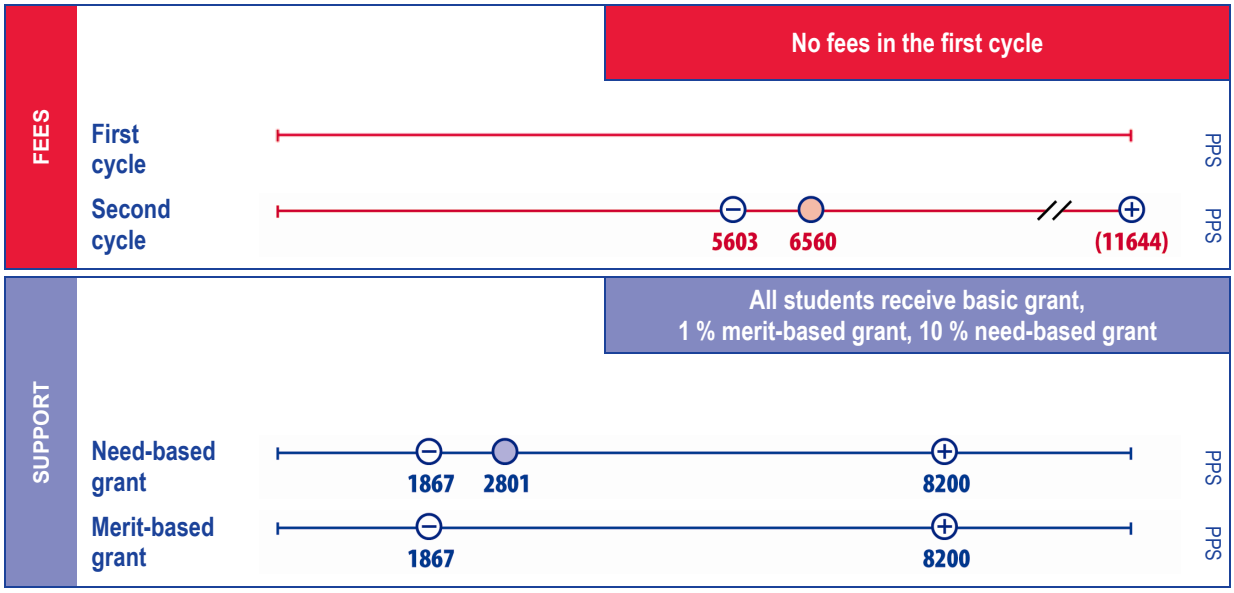
- **Public grants** are either allocated on the basis of economic need or academic merit. The amount depends on whether the student lives with her/his parents and can range from EUR 1 760 to 4 669/year.
- Parents can receives **tax benefits** based on real educational expenditure, if the child has a proven student status.
- No loans or family allowances.

Planned reforms

- In 2011, a reduction of the State budget for the public scholarship scheme of about 75 %, as compared to 2010, is foreseen.

CYPRUS

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = EUR 0.914611

KEY POINTS

Fees

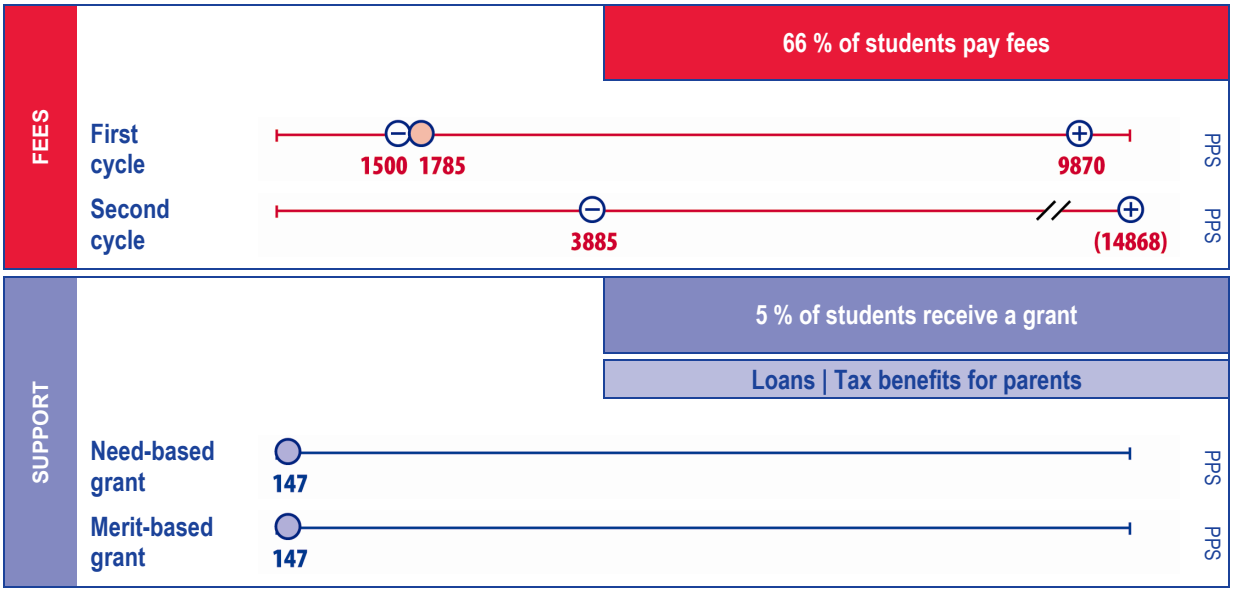
- Higher education institutions can define their own fees within limits set by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
- 1st cycle Cypriot and EU students studying at public universities do not pay fees.

Support

- All Cypriot students receive an annual **grant** paid by the Ministry of Finance (EUR 1 700). There is an extra grant of EUR 850 for students who pay fees. In addition, there is an extra amount of EUR 850 which is given to students who are members of large families (three children or more).
- About 1 % of students receive **scholarships**. The criteria for scholarships are academic excellence and socioeconomic status. Students may receive up to EUR 3 400 for an undergraduate programme (1st cycle), EUR 5 000 for a master's programme (2nd cycle).
- 10 % of Cypriot students receive **targeted grants** to cover living, books, rental and computer expenses based on their socioeconomic status.
- Study **loans** are available only for owners of property in the Turkish occupied area.
- There are no tax benefits for parents or family allowances.

LATVIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

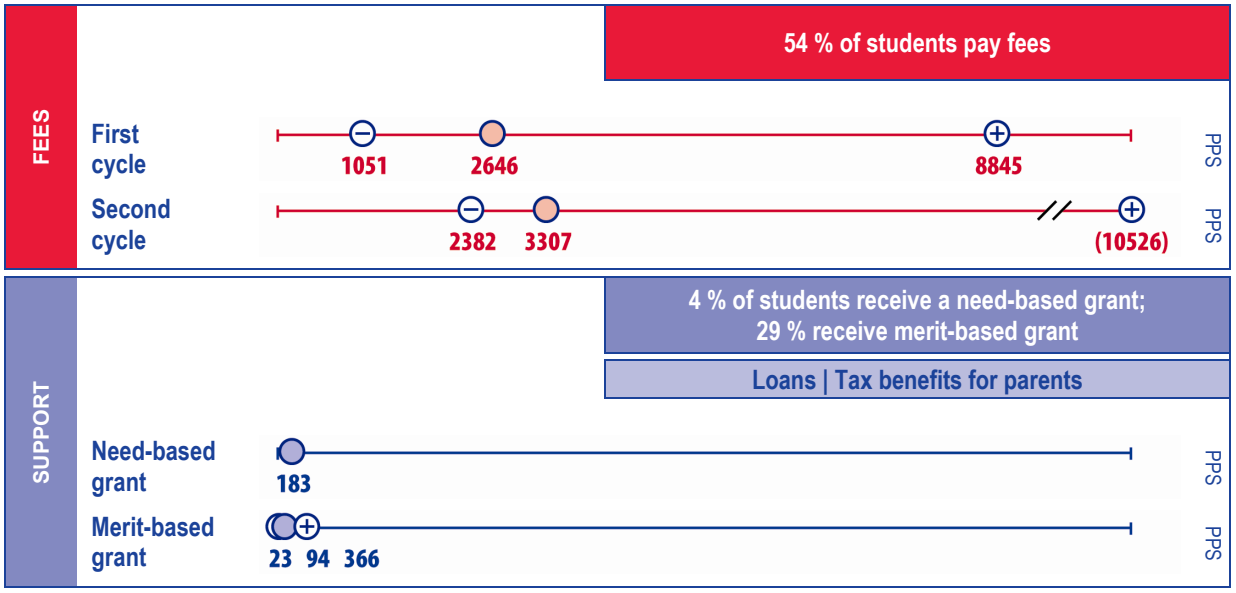
- Students studying in state subsidised places do not pay fees.
- The majority of students, including those enrolled in evening courses, distance courses or courses offered jointly with other universities pay fees.
- Fee amounts vary by field and course load. Each higher education institution can set its own fees. The fees range from LVL 500 to 850 per year in the 1st cycle and from LVL 1 850 to 7 080 in the 2nd cycle.

Support

- **Public grants** in the form of free tuition are allocated on the basis of academic merit. These places are primarily available in priority areas; currently natural sciences, computer sciences, engineering.
- Other **public grants** are traditionally available based on academic merit. Recently, more need-based criteria are taken into account. Disabled or orphaned students with families, from large families or in economic need are treated favourably. The minimum grants are LVL 70 for first and second cycle. Higher grants are available through the European Social Fund.
- Two types of **loans** exist. The first is to cover tuition costs and the second to cover living costs with a cap of LVL 120/month. Loans need to be paid back 12 months after the end of the degree programme. 18 per cent of students take out loans.
- **Tax benefits for parents** of LVL 150 per year for health care and educational expenses.
- No family allowances.

LITHUANIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- Students studying in state subsidised places do not pay fees.
- Approximately half of the students pay fees that depend on the field and type (full-time or part-time) of studies.
- In the first cycle, fees range between LTL 2 241 and 18 854 per year, with a most common amount of LTL 5 640 per year.
- In the second cycle, fees range between LTL 5 077 and 22 438 per year, with a most common amount of LTL 7 050 per year.
- Higher education institutions can determine higher tuition fees for citizens of non-EU and non-EEA countries.

Support

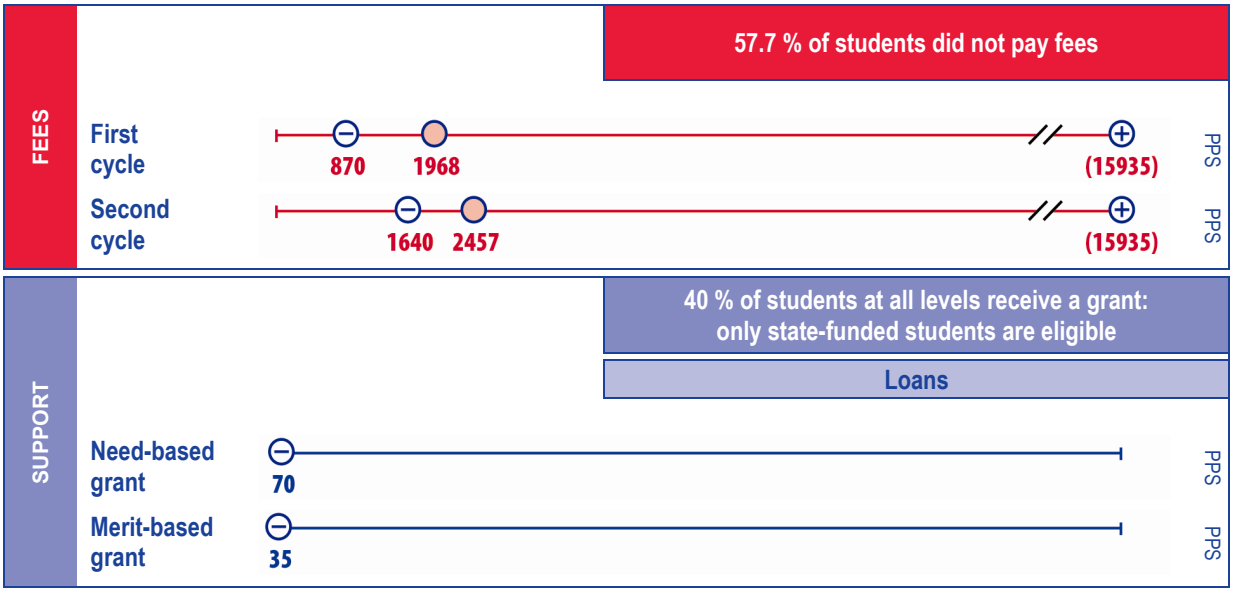
- There are two main types of **scholarships (grants)**: for academic achievements and social scholarship.
- The amount of the scholarships for academic achievement is regulated by each higher education institution. It ranges from LTL 50 to 780 per month. The most common scholarship is LTL 200 per month. In 2009/10, 29.1 % of the students received such scholarships.
- Social scholarships are available for students with low socio-economical background, disabled students and orphans. Their amount is regulated by the Government and is LTL 390 per month. In 2009/10, 4.1 % of students received social scholarships.
- Since 2009, students can receive state-supported **loans** that are granted for one academic year. The state-supported loan for tuition fees can't be higher than the tuition fee for one academic year. The state-supported loan for living expenses can't be higher than LTL 6 500 per year. In 2009, 5.6 % of students took a loan.
- **Tax benefits for parents** of students under 26 years of age allow the recovery of a part of the tuition fee paid.
- No family allowances exist.

Planned reforms

- From 1st August 2011, the Government will pay the interest for all current students who have been granted state-supported loans for tuition fees since 2009.

HUNGARY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = HUF 170.111

KEY POINTS

Fees

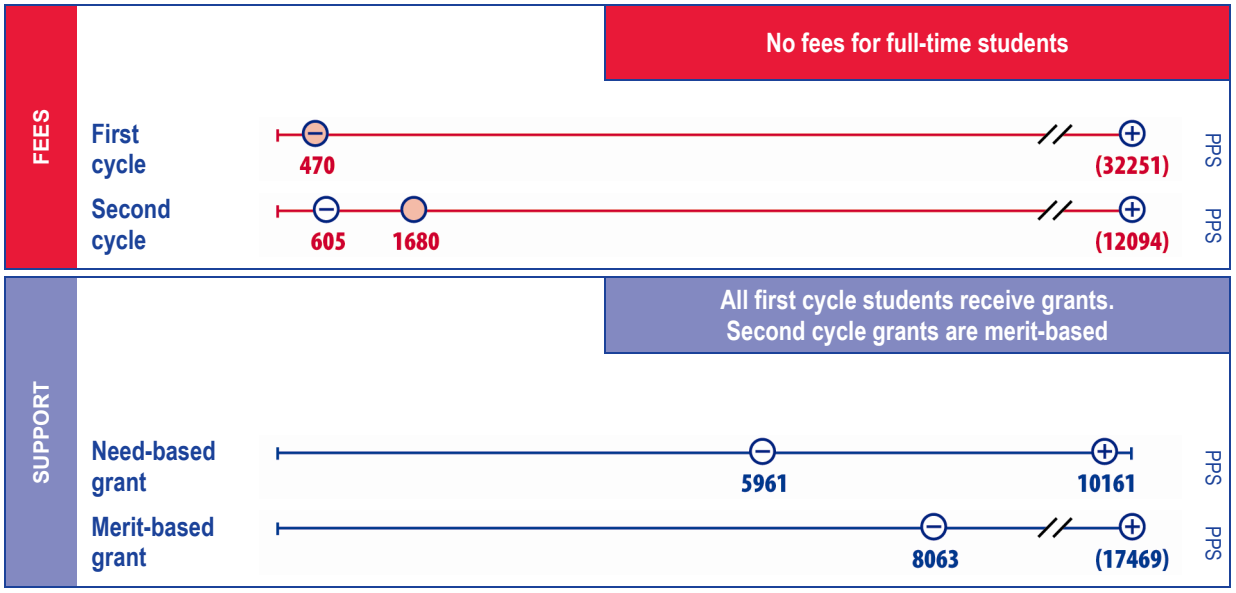
- Fees are charged to those without a state-funded place and those who exceed the prescribed period of study. Max. 10 % of best-performing students with non state-funded status (NSFS) can obtain the state-funded status (SFS) in course of studies.
- Fees are defined by the HEIs and should reach at least 50 % of the total educational cost per student. Amounts range from HUF 148 000 to 2 710 800 (most common HUF 334 800) for the 1st cycle and 279 000 to 2 710 800 (most common HUF 418 000) for the 2nd cycle.

Support

- Only state-funded students with state-funded status can receive scholarships.
- Different amount of government-subsidised **loans** for students with state-funded status (max. HUF 40 000/month) and not (max. HUF 50 000/month). Orphans and those with unemployed parents can receive HUF 10 000/month more. The maximum duration is 5 years (7 for longer diploma courses such as medicine).
- No tax benefits for parents and family allowances.

MALTA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

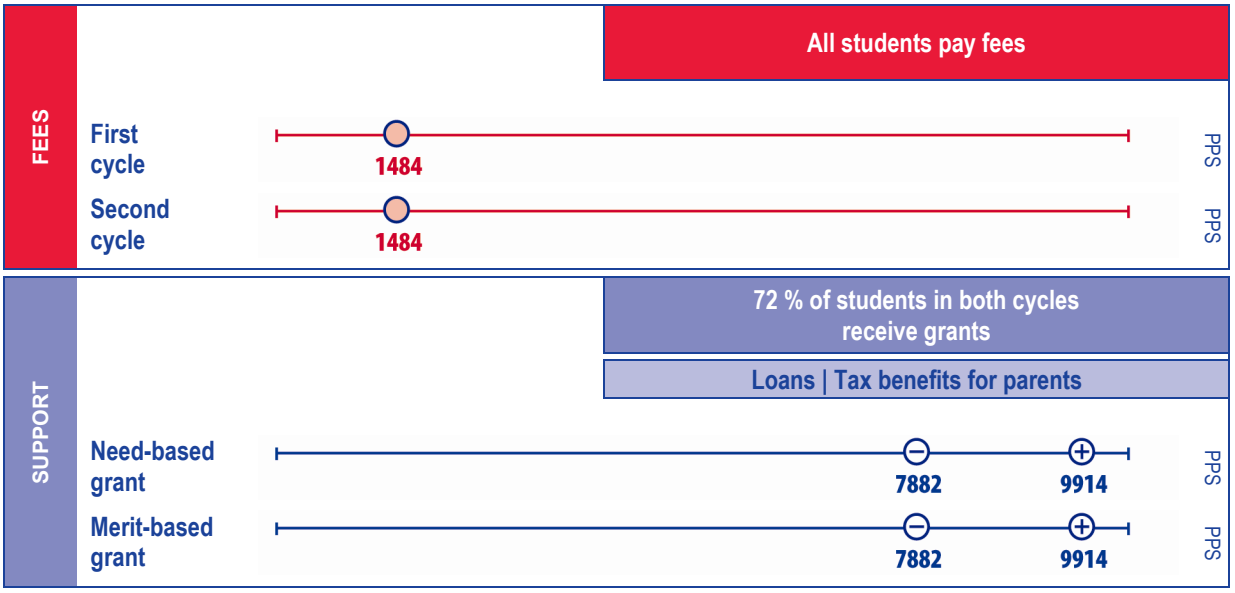
- Full-time, day-time students do not pay fees. Only students enrolled in evening courses, distance courses or courses offered jointly with other universities pay fees.
- Fees vary by discipline. Lower fees of around EUR 350 to 450 are paid by part-time undergraduate students. High fees of EUR 9 000 to 24 000 are paid by full-time medicine students.

Support

- **Public grants** are available for all students. They receive EUR 86 per week from October to June, plus an additional EUR 460 in the first year and another EUR 460 for each academic year. If studying for a science or IT degree, the amounts are EUR 146 per week, plus EUR 698.
- Eligibility is determined for some grants by academic merit.
- No loans, tax benefits for parents or family allowances.

THE NETHERLANDS

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = EUR 1.12533

KEY POINTS

Fees

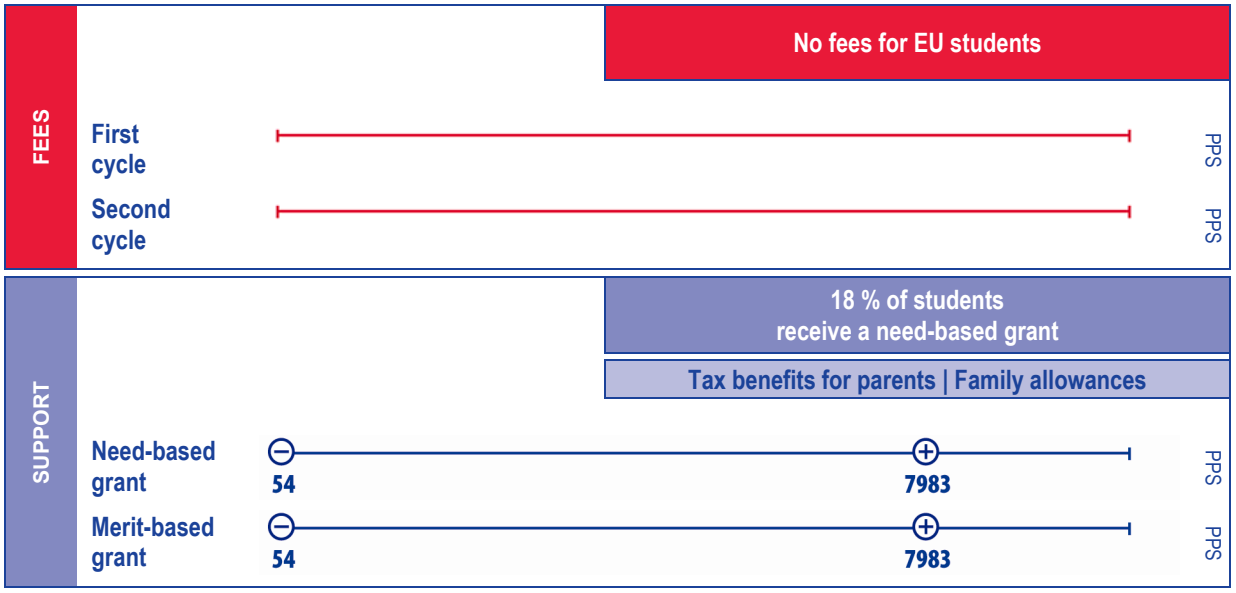
- Fees are determined centrally (currently EUR 1 670/year) and have to be paid by all students.
- Students enrolled for a second degree at the same level may be liable to different fees, which are set by the higher education institution.

Support

- General student **grants** are provided by the state. All full-time students at recognised higher education institutions are eligible. The monthly amounts range from EUR 95.61 to 266.23. The grants are available for the standard duration of a degree programme. Depending on the student's parents' income and whether or not the student lives at home, a supplementary grant ranging from EUR 219.16 to 239.08 may be paid.
- Students can take out **loans** to cover living costs (EUR 289.38/month) and to pay tuition fees (EUR 135/month). The interest rate is equal to the one paid by the government.
- Parents of students who do not receive student finance may be eligible for a tax benefit for the child's maintenance. For training tax credit this is a tax benefit up to a maximum of EUR 15 000, and for child tax credit this is a tax benefit up to a maximum of EUR 4 000. The child tax credit may be abolished.
- No family allowances.

AUSTRIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

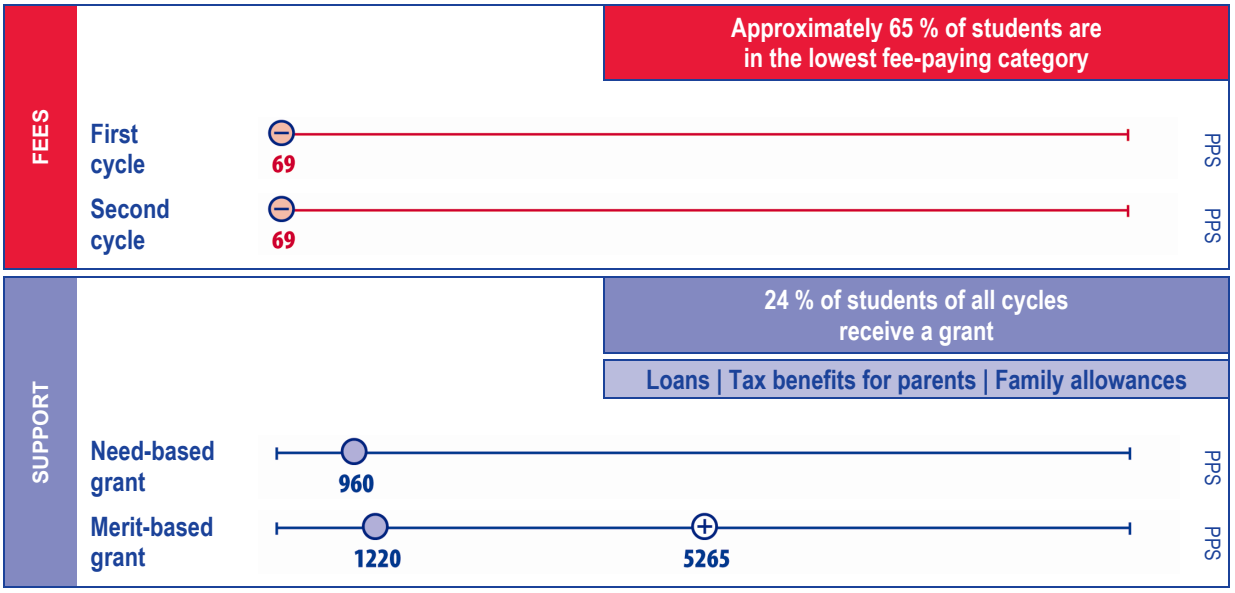
- EU students and those who are accorded the same rights do not have to pay tuition fees. Only when they exceed the minimum study period plus two semesters they have to pay EUR 363.36 per semester.
- Students can be exempt from that fee when e.g. working part-time, suffering from an illness or disability, responsible for the care and upbringing of a child up to the age of seven or studying abroad.
- All other students have to pay fees, with the exception of students from the least developed countries. Students from developing countries may be exempt from these fees depending on a decision of the university. If students have to pay fees, they also amount to EUR 363.36 per semester.

Support

- The federal student **grants** can systematically be divided into two sections: direct study financing received in cash, and indirect study financing which the student may receive by a transfer payment to the students' parents, or through non-cash benefits.
- Direct student support is paid out in monthly instalments up to EUR 8 952 per year. The amount is assessed on the basis of income and number of family members of the student, his/her parents and his/her spouse.
- The grants need not be paid back except when proof of academic achievement is missing after the first two semesters.
- Students' parents can receive **family allowances** (EUR 152.70) and **tax relief** (EUR 58.40 per child) if the student is under 27 and is studying.
- No student loans.

POLAND

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- Students pay administrative (entrance and certification) fees with amounts updated annually by the minister of higher education.
- Tuition fees, set by public higher education institutions, are generally paid by part-time students only with exemptions and reductions possible on the basis of low economic status, health problems or excellent results.
- Full-time students in public HEIs pay fees only if they repeat a study course or examinations.

Support

- **Need-based grants** are available for students with a low personal/family income or disability, and **merit-based grants** for academic or sport achievements. In most cases, HEIs are responsible for the number of grants awarded within limits specified in legislation (Law on Higher Education 2005).
- **Loans** of PLN 4 000 to 6 000/year may be taken out in any cycle for those with a personal income below PLN 2 500/month (in 2009). In the academic year 2009/10, 13 % of students enrolled in public higher education institutions took out loans.
- **Tax benefits for parents/guardians** of students in the form of tax relief of PLN 1 112.04 per child per year in 2009, if families receive a care allowance or other social benefits and/or the student did not earn a taxable income (including capital gains) exceeding PLN 3 089.
- **Family allowance** based on low income of parents or disability of a student.

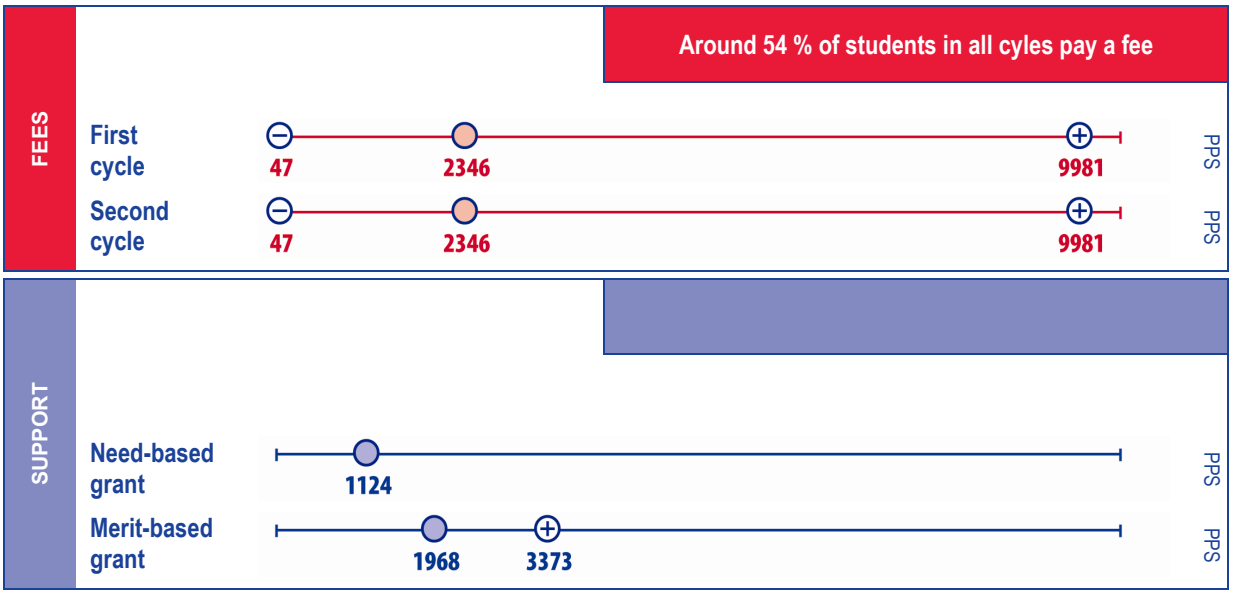
Planned reforms

- The Law of 18 March 2011 amended the Law on Higher Education and will be effective from 1 October 2011.
- Full-time students in public HEIs will pay tuition fees for the second/another full-time study programme. Exemption will be possible on the basis of academic, artistic or sport achievements, evaluated after the first year of the second/another programme. Students will also pay for courses that exceed the ECTS limits set centrally for particular programme types: first-cycle studies – 180 ECTS, uniform master studies – 300 ECTS. Additionally, they will be allowed to enrol for free in courses of up to 30 ECTS.
- A catalogue of free-of-charge administrative services will be introduced. According to the catalogue, a HEI will not be allowed to charge for, among other things, repeating examinations.

- The income threshold to be eligible for need-based grants for students with low family income will be increased to PLN 410.8 - 739.7 per person (up from PLN 316-569). The exact threshold is set by individual higher education institutions.
- Loans taken by students will be guaranteed by the state: 100 % guarantee when the family income equals up to PLN 600 per person and for students deprived of parental care; 70 % guarantee when family income equals PLN 601 - 1 000 per person (as of 2010/11).

ROMANIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = RON 2.13458

KEY POINTS

Fees

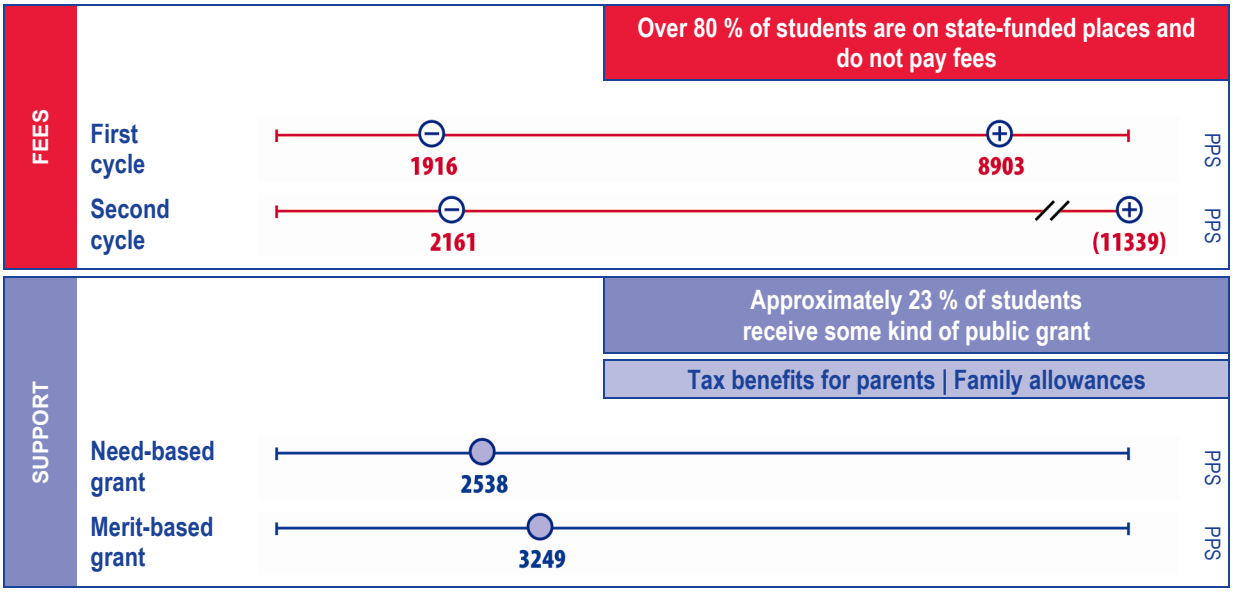
- Each university senate decides on the level of **fees** for all programmes. The senate also decides on exemptions based on need or merit. All students pay administrative, registration fees.
- The overall and maximum fee amounts per student are established by the National Council for Higher Education Funding and are indicated in the institutional contract of every higher education institution. Fees range from RON 2 840.59 for 11.2 % of students to RON 5 007.54 for technical fields to a maximum of RON 21 304.34 for 0.10 % of students. The average amount is RON 7 481.

Support

- Merit-based **grants** take different forms: study bursaries (most commonly RON 250/month) and merit-based scholarships (most commonly RON 350/month). High achievement scholarships (of which one exists per faculty) can reach up to RON 600/month.
- Need-based **grants,** most commonly amounting to RON 200/month, are based on the financial situation of the student.
- The **grant** amounts are determined by each higher education institution. They aim to cover the costs of living in student accommodation and of meals. The university establishes the number of grants out of the total fund for higher education expenses. The funds are annually provided by the ministry.
- No student loans, family allowances or tax benefits for parents exist.

SLOVENIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- Full-time students of public higher education institutions on state-funded places do not pay tuition fees. They pay only registration charges and costs of examinations that are repeated.
- Full-time students at public higher education institutions without a state-funded study place, part-time students and international students from outside EU pay the same fees. Amounts range from EUR 1 600 to 7 436 for the first cycle and from EUR 1 805 to 9 471 for the second cycle.
- Average tuition fees are set by dividing the costs of the study programme by the number of students enrolled.

Support

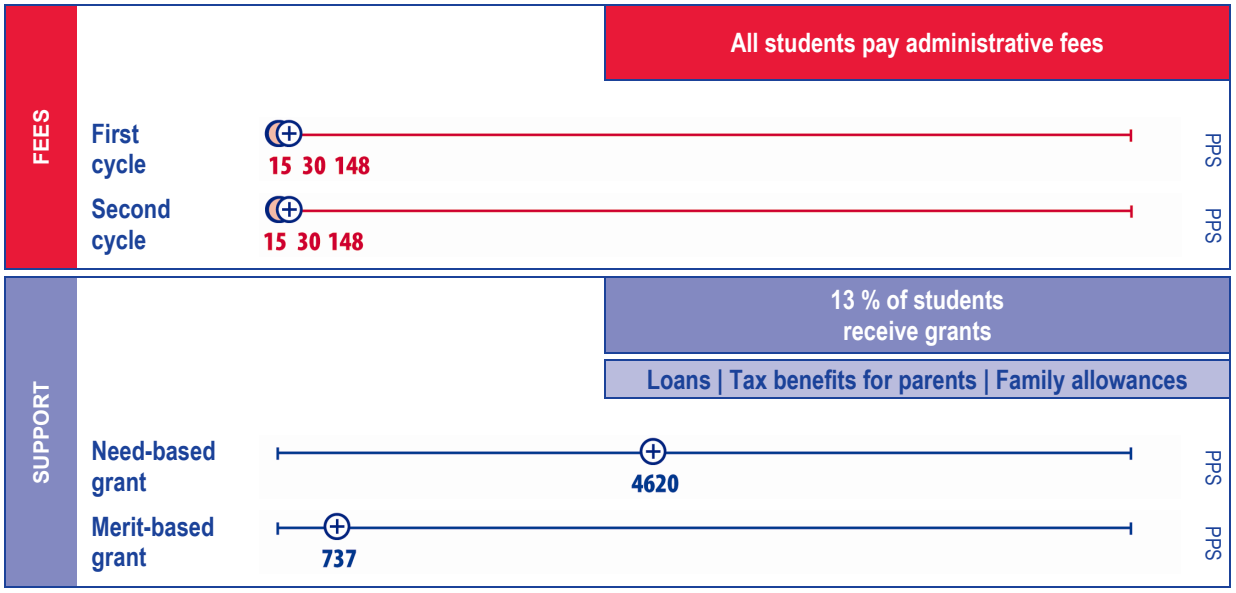
- "National" scholarships are available for economically and socially disadvantaged students. Merit-based scholarships also exist. Students must be under 26 years old when enrolling for their first degree to be eligible.
- **No loans** are provided.
- **Family allowance** is based on income per family member as a percentage of the average wage in Slovenia, on the student's age, and on the number of supported children (EUR 19.64 to 135.55 per student per month in 2009).
- The **tax benefit for parents** depends on the number of supported children (EUR 2 251.46 to 7 351.57 per year in 2009). Eligible are all parents of higher education students under 26 years old when enrolling.

Planned reforms

- The Exercise of Rights to Public Funds Act, which was adopted in 2010, ranks scholarships among other social allowances. The draft "Scholarship Act" is in the legislative procedure in the Slovenian Parliament. Its purpose is to increase possibilities for students to gain a scholarship.

SLOVAKIA

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- All students pay registration fees of EUR 10 to 100. Full-time students of public higher education institutions not exceeding the "regular" length of study for the study programme concerned do not pay tuition fees.
- Students who exceed a "regular" length of study, or who study two or more programmes concurrently in one academic year have to pay tuition fees. These range from EUR 400 to 1 000/year for the first cycle and from EUR 500 to 1 500/year for the second cycle. Students admitted to an external/part-time study programme have to pay fees of up to EUR 2 100 in the first cycle and EUR 3 150 in the second cycle.
- Tuition and other fees at public HE institutions cannot exceed 50 % of the average costs of full-time education.
- Non-EU students pay higher tuition fees of EUR 3 000 to 8 000/year.

Support

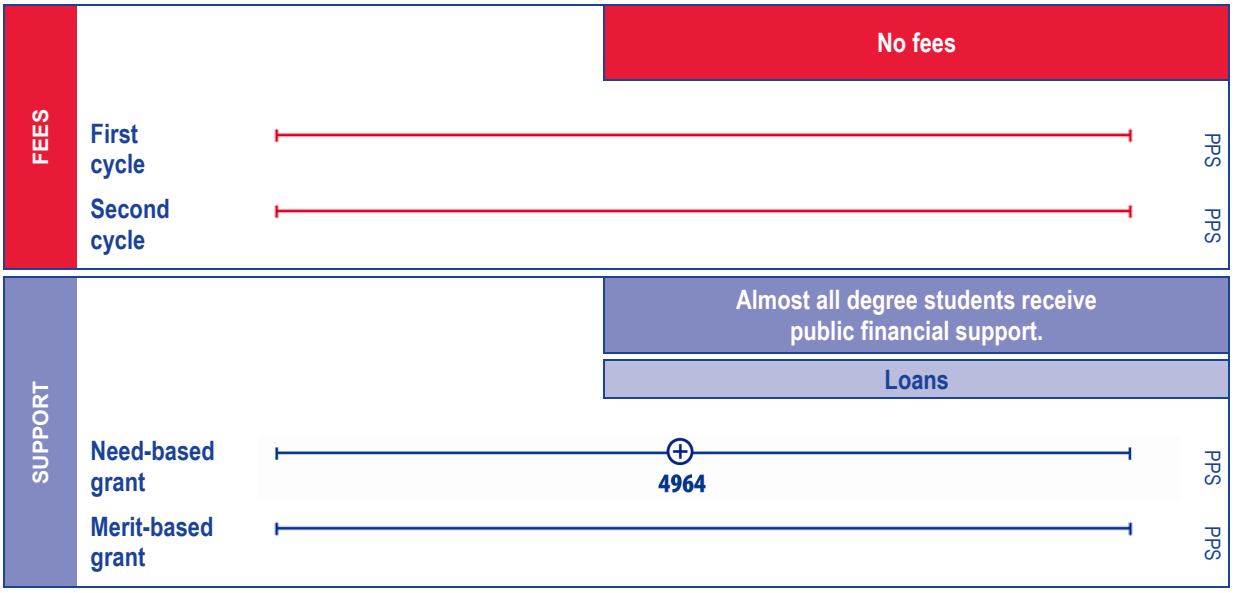
- There is a legal right for a social scholarship subject to specified conditions. Motivation scholarships are granted by HEIs for excellent results in studies, research and development, artistic or sporting activity.
- Publicly subsidised **loans** of EUR 1 327.76/year are available through the Student Loan Fund for full- and part-time students during the regular length of study. An additional loan to cover tuition fees of EUR 2655.52 is available since the academic year 2010/11.
- **Family allowance** for parents of students up to 25 years of age (EUR 21.25).
- **Tax benefits for parents** exist in the form of a lump sum tax deduction of EUR 20/month.

Planned reforms

The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports has proposed an amendment of the Higher Education Act, which should come into force on 1 January 2012. The government approved the proposal in January 2011 and the public consultation was closed on 13 May 2011. Proposed changes include a maximum limit of tuition fees for external studies, not just for one academic year. Higher education institutions could also levy tuition fees from all students, including full-time students and EU citizens, to provide study programmes in foreign language. These fees would be limited to the maximum fees determined by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

FINLAND

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- No student fees

Support

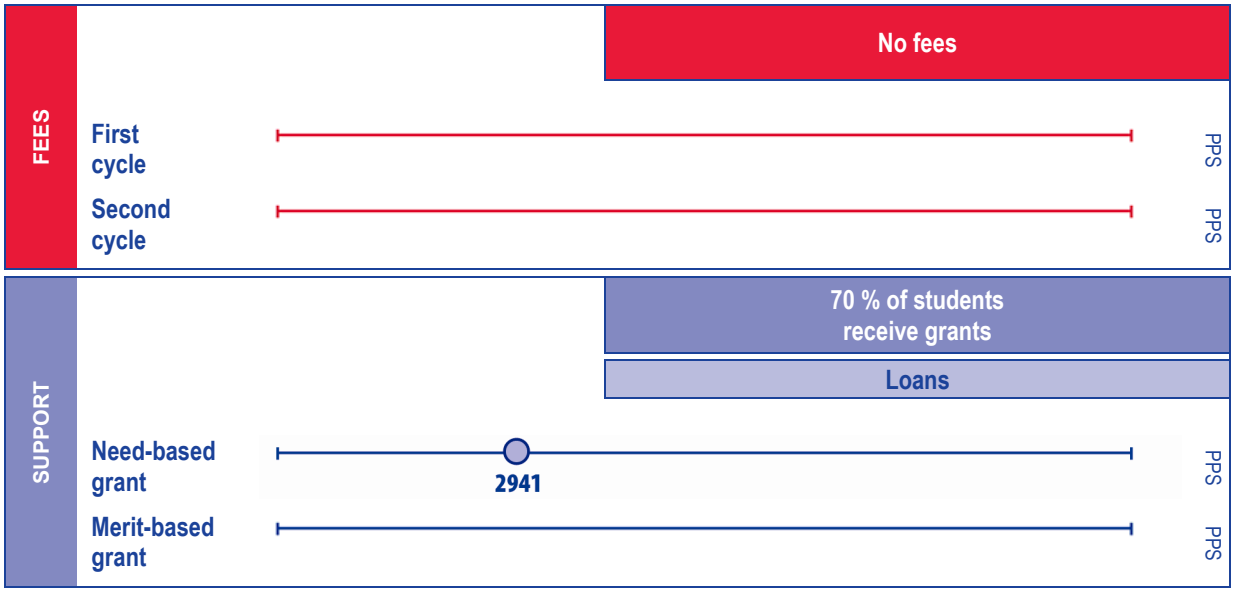
- A study **grant** (SG) is available for the regular length of study and depends on age and whether the student lives with parent(s). Amounts range from EUR 55 to 298/month.
- A housing supplement (HS) covers 80 % of the rent for students living independently. The maximum amount is EUR 201.60/month.
- SG and HS are available only if student's income is below EUR 11 850/year.
- Those who are eligible for SG and those who are aged 18-19 and do not live with their parents (subject to parental income test) may receive a student **loan**.
- No tax benefits for parents and family allowances.

Planned reforms

- From 1 August 2011 regulations on student financial aid will intensify the follow-up of how students proceed in their studies. The new legislation will raise the minimum number of credit points/academic year necessary to be eligible for financial aid. Starting from autumn 2011 financial aid for new students will be granted on the basis of the two cycle system even when the student has been admitted to a 2nd cycle degree only. The maximum number of months when the aid can be received will be 37 months for a 1st cycle degree and 28 months for a 2nd cycle degree. The total maximum of 55 eligible months is the same as currently for a Master's degree.

SWEDEN

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = SEK 11.8628

KEY POINTS

Fees

- No fees for Swedish/EU students.

Support

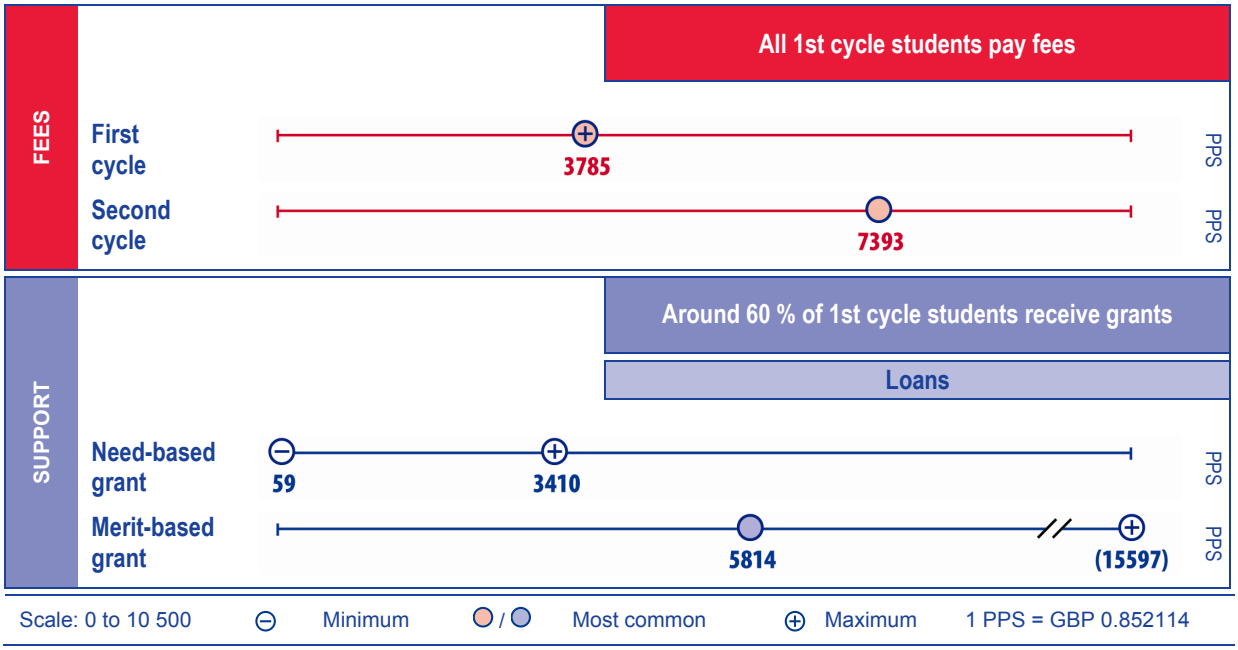
- **Grants** of SEK 671/week for nine months per year are universally available.
- **Loans** of SEK 1 284/month nine months per year are universally available.
- Students with 1 to 4 children or those paying fees when studying abroad can receive an extra grant of SEK 128 to 293 per week.
- In parallel to the introduction of tuition fees for international students, two new scholarship programmes targeted at fee paying students have been introduced.
- No tax benefits for parents and family allowances.

Planned reforms

- In June 2010, the *Riksdag* voted in favour of the proposals and assessments made by the Government in its Bill "Competing on the basis of quality - tuition fees for foreign students" (Govt. Bill 2009/10:65). This means that higher education will remain free of charge for Swedish citizens and citizens of an EU/EEA state or Switzerland. Citizens of other countries ("third country students"), in contrast, will pay a fee for their higher education as of the autumn term 2011 (http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/12798).
- HEIs themselves will determine the size of fees, based on the principle of full cost coverage.

UNITED KINGDOM – ENGLAND, WALES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

- Fees for full-time 1st cycle students are set by higher education institutions within the limits set by government (GBP 3 225/year = 3 785 PPS) with almost all charging the maximum fee for bachelor degrees.
- Fees for full-time 1st cycle students do not need to pay "up front"; all students are eligible for a tuition fee loan which is repaid when they have completed their course and their income is above a specified threshold (GBP 15 000/year). Payments are made at the rate of nine per cent of income above the GBP 15 000 threshold, collected through the tax system.
- Fees for 2nd cycle students and all part-time and international students are set by higher education institutions and are uncapped by government. There are wide variations, particularly for part-time and international students. The figure shows the average level of fees for students on full-time taught programmes only: GBP 4 955 = 5 814 PPS. For students on research programmes, fees are typically GBP 3 390/year = 3 978 PPS.

Support

- For full-time 1st cycle students, there is a universal and centrally-provided system of **loans** for the full value of **tuition fees** and a combination of **loans and grants for living costs**. In addition, some of the funding from tuition fees is used by institutions to provide bursaries to low income students. These vary and are not shown in the figure.
- For full-time 1st cycle students, the amount of loan for living costs depends on family income, whether students live at home or away, whether they study in or outside London, and whether or not they receive a grant. The amount of grant awarded for living costs depends on family income, with around 60 % of students receiving a grant of up to GBP 2 906/year = 3 410 PPS in England and Wales (as shown in the figure) and up to GBP 3 406 in Northern Ireland (not shown in the figure).
- In Wales, during the reference year, all full-time 1st cycle students also received a grant that covered around half the cost of tuition fees. This has now been discontinued (from 2010/11).
- There are separate arrangements for part-time 1st cycle students; these include need-based grants but do not include loans for tuition fees.
- There is no universal system of need-based grants or loans for 2nd cycle students. With the exception of a few specific disciplines, such as teaching, social work and some health professions, the majority of students following taught programmes are self-financing. The merit-based grant shown in the figure represents the stipend for research students studying outside London as set by the Research Councils (GBP 13 290/year = 15 597 PPS); this tends to be used as the benchmark amount for all funders. Stipends and/or fee-waivers are awarded to research students on a competitive basis.
- **Tax benefits for parents** and **family allowances** do not play a role in the student support system.

Planned reforms

In **England**, following a parliamentary vote on tuition fee regulations in December 2010, there will be changes to the tuition fee and financial support package from September 2012. The key elements of the new system are:

- Institutions will be able to charge a new basic tuition fee of GBP 6 000, but will be able to charge over this amount up to a maximum of GBP 9 000 if they have an approved "access agreement" setting out the measures (such as outreach and financial support) they will put in place to improve access and student retention.
- The Government also plans to change loan repayment terms by increasing the repayment threshold to GBP 21 000, charging a real rate of interest on loans for those making repayment and extending the maximum duration of loans from 25 to 30 years.
- Fee loans will be extended to part-time 1st cycle students, but there will be an end to means-tested grants which currently help some part-time students meet their fee and maintenance costs.

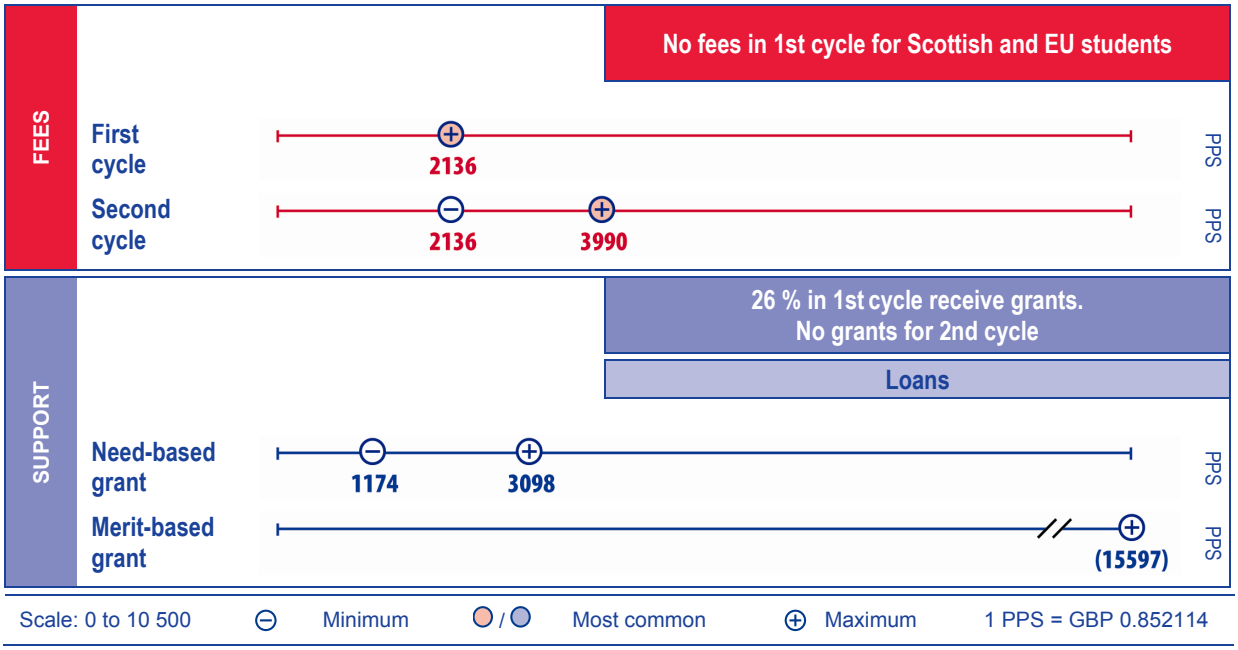
In **Wales**, following the announcement of plans to allow institutions in England to increase tuition fees, the Welsh Government approved regulations allowing institutions in Wales to charge higher fees. The tuition fee and financial support package from September 2012 includes the following key elements:

- Institutions will be able to charge a new basic annual tuition fee of GBP 4 000, but will be able to charge over this amount up to a maximum of GBP 9 000 providing fee plans demonstrate promotion of equality of opportunity and promotion of higher education. However, Welsh domiciled students will not have to pay increased fees as the additional cost will be met by the Welsh Government.
- Fee loans will be extended to part-time 1st cycle students.

In **Northern Ireland**, following the announcement of plans to allow institutions in England to increase tuition fees, an Assembly debate and a public consultation on future policy in Northern Ireland were held. The Northern Ireland Executive is currently considering a number of options for tuition fees and student finance arrangements from 2012.

UNITED KINGDOM – SCOTLAND

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

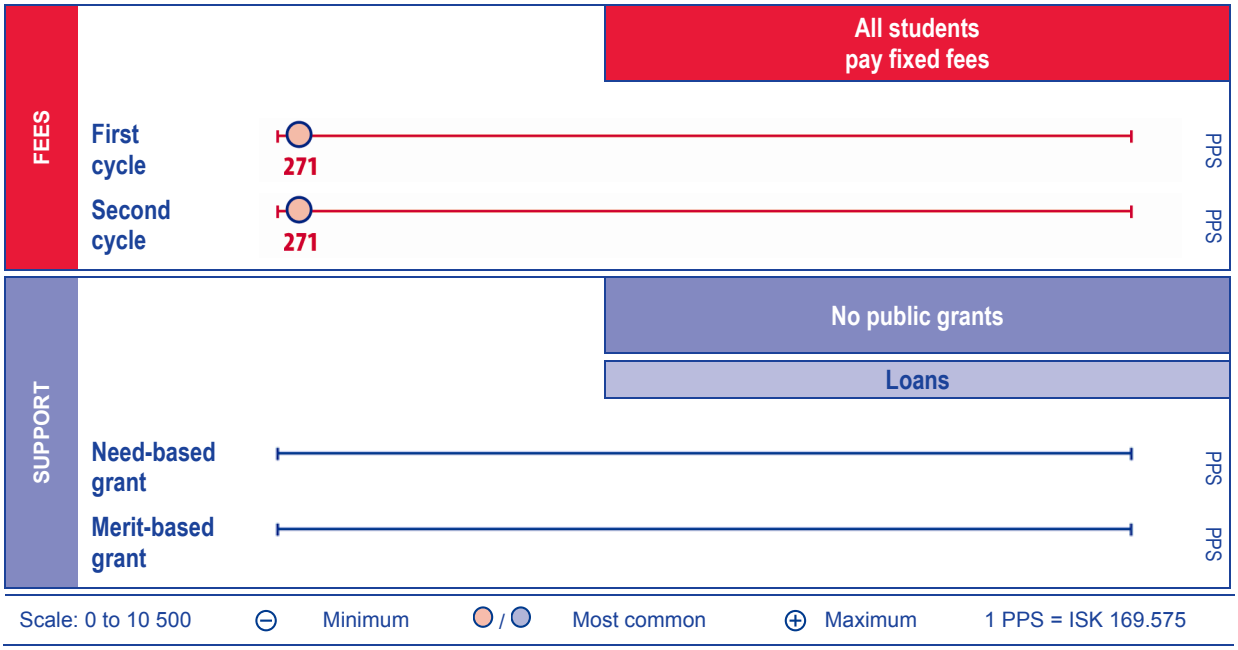
- For the first cycle, Scotland's government pays the tuition fees for Scottish and EU students.
- Fees are charged to students from other parts of the UK as well as international (non-EU) students. Fees are charged to students from other parts of the UK at the level of GBP 1 820 a year or GBP 2 895 for medical courses and are unregulated and set by HEIs for international students.
- The fee and support system has been developed for students in the first cycle. In the second cycle, fees are unregulated, differing by field of study and by mode of attendance (i.e. full- or part-time).

Support

- Both **grants** and **loans** are available to students, with **grants** being targeted to those in financial need. The "Young Students' Bursary" of up to GBP 2 640 is available to students from low income backgrounds. The "Independent Students' Bursary" of up to GBP 1 000 is available to students over the age of 25, or who are living with a partner. Other **grants** also exist for students with disabilities.
- In 2010, 60 % of students took out l**oans**. Students living with their parents can borrow a maximum of GBP 4 107 or minimum of GBP 605 a year. Students living away from the parental home can borrow a maximum of GBP 5 067 or a minimum of GBP 915.
- **Tax benefits for parents** and **family allowances** do not play a role in the student support system.

ICELAND

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

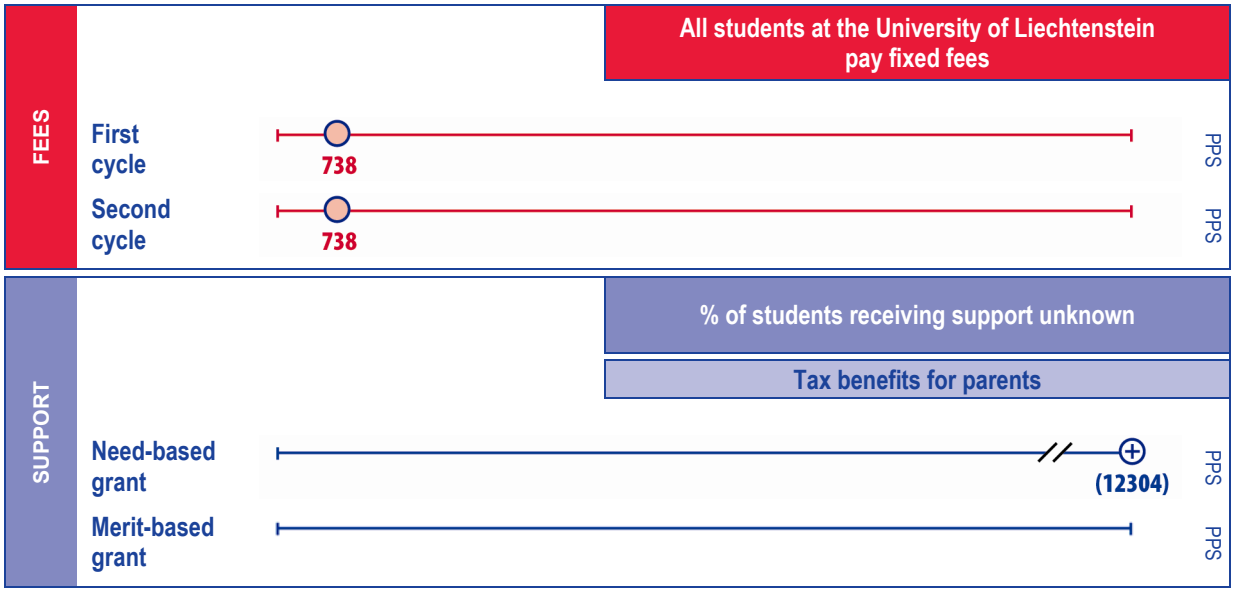
- All students at public higher education institutions pay fees at registration of ISK 45 000.

Support

- No public grants/scholarships are available.
- **Loans** are provided for the period of study. The amount depends on the size of student's family. The basic living costs are estimated at ISK 740/month for individual students.
- No tax benefits for parents and family allowances.

LIECHTENSTEIN

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10 500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = CHF 2.03173

KEY POINTS

Fees

- All students at public higher education institutions pay a fee of CHF 1 500.

Support

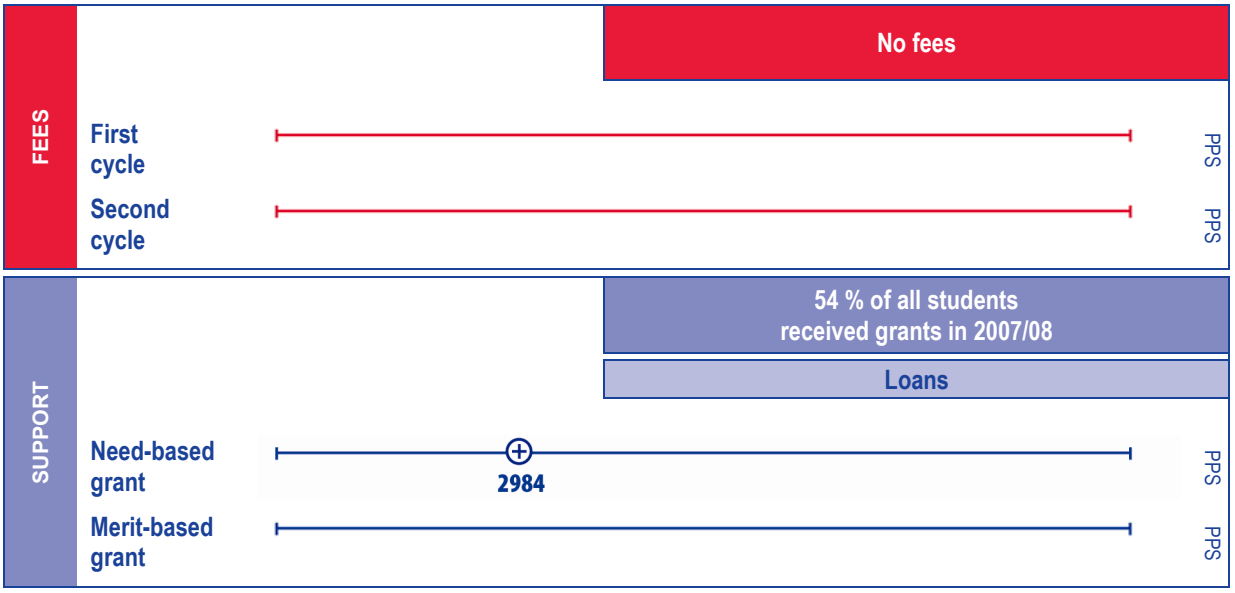
- Public support consists of a variable **combination of grants and loans**. The maximum total amount is CHF 25 000, of which 40-60 % are a grant and the rest is a loan.
- The guiding principle is that the student and/or the student's parents can fund education themselves. **Public grants** are available for students, depending on their income. They need to have the Liechtenstein citizenship or reside in Liechtenstein to be eligible.
- **Tax benefits for parents** are available of up to CHF 12 000 per year for education related costs.
- No family allowances.

Planned reforms

- The national funding system for the higher education system will be reformed in the next years as part of a discussion on the funding of research and the development of a national research strategy.
- The law on state scholarships has been revised and is currently in the decision making process. The revision has been strongly influenced by saving measures as a result of the financial crisis. Expenditures on financial support have to fall by 25 %.

NORWAY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



KEY POINTS

Fees

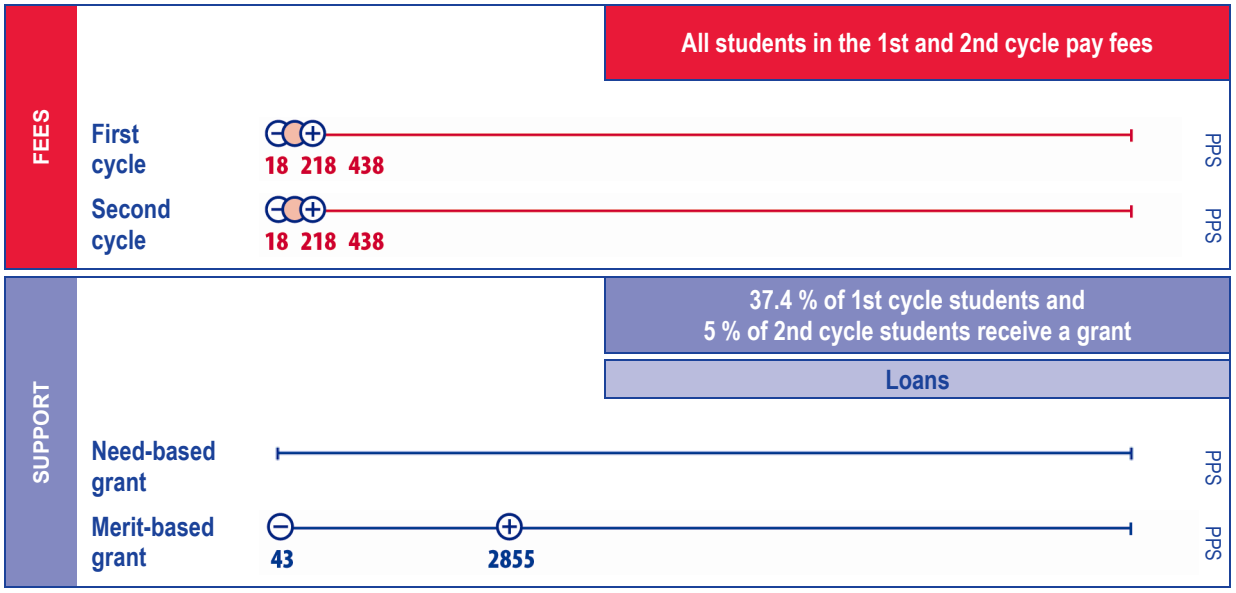
- No fees at public higher education institutions, catering for over 85 % of all students in Norway.

Support

- Norwegian students are entitled to **loans** and **grants** from the State Educational Loan Fund (NSELF). The total amount for support is at most NOK 87 600. The support is initially given as a loan, however, 40 % of the loan may be converted to a grant for students who live away from their parents. These students can also receive a grant for travel costs. Amounts are determined based on need factors.
- Financial support is also given for study abroad as there is full portability of NSELF loans and grants. Exchange students and full degree students qualify for support.
- Students taking care of children can receive a grant for each child.
- **Tax benefits for parents** and **family allowances** play no role in the student support system.

TURKEY

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS



Scale: 0 to 10500 ⊖ Minimum ● / ● Most common ⊕ Maximum 1 PPS = TL 1.23631

KEY POINTS

Fees

- Public universities, catering for 89 % of students, typically charge very low fees of TL 22.
- Not all public universities charge the registration fee, and students who need financial support may be exempted. Students who receive a scholarship from the Institution of Credits and Dormitories are also exempt from fees.
- Part-time students pay a higher fee. Enrolment in day or night time courses depends on the results of the entrance exam. Distance and non-thesis programmes carry fees of TL 460 to 2 200 and TL 360 to 1 600 respectively.

Support

- There are three main types of **grants**, provided either by the government, universities themselves or various bodies, all tending to combine financial and academic criteria.
- Government **tuition grants** are the most widespread grant and they are offered in conjunction with **loans** to approximately 40 % of students. **Loans** provide a monthly payment of around EUR 100 throughout the programme.
- Student support, however, rarely covers students' full living costs.
- **Tax benefits** and **family allowances** play no role in the student support system.

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GLOSSARY

Country codes

EU-27	European Union
BE	Belgium
BE fr	Belgium – French Community
BE de	Belgium – German-speaking Community
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands

AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	The United Kingdom
UK-ENG	England
UK-WLS	Wales
UK-NIR	Northern Ireland
UK-SCT	Scotland
EFTA/EEA countries	The three countries of the European Free Trade Association which are members of the European Economic Area
IS	Iceland
LI	Liechtenstein
NO	Norway
Candidate country	
TR	Turkey

Statistical code

: Data not available

Definitions

Age, disability, ethnic origin, and gender: Legally binding concepts on the basis of which discrimination is forbidden ([1]).

Autonomy:

Full autonomy means that the higher education institution alone takes decisions, within the limits set by national/local legislation or regulations. A recommendation by the education authority with no binding force does not restrict higher education institutional autonomy.

Limited autonomy comprises four separate situations, namely:

- higher education institutions take decisions together with the education authority or forward proposals for approval;
- higher education institutions take decisions based on a set of options predetermined by the education authority;
- higher education institutions are autonomous with regard to some decisions relating to the aspect under consideration but must refer to the education authority with regard to the remainder of decisions;
- higher education institutions are autonomous in principle but are strongly encouraged to follow official recommendations.

No autonomy means that decisions are taken only by the education authority, although the higher education institution may be consulted at a particular stage of the process (Eurydice 2009, p. 81).

Direct funding of higher education institutions: Payments by a government agency to educational institutions that have the responsibility of purchasing educational resources themselves.

Employment of administrative and academic staff: Refers to the autonomy of the higher education institution to both hire and dismiss staff.

European level funding: Funding coming from the EU budget. This might be e.g. Framework 7 research funds, funds from the lifelong learning programme, tenders, or structural funds when used for modernising higher education.

Fees/contributions: Any sum of money paid by students with which they formally and compulsorily contribute to the costs of their higher education. Can take the form of registration fee, tuition fee, etc.

Funding formulas: Formulas that automatically allocate funds to institutions. They may vary on the basis of the factors used in their development. These might include among others inputs, such as students or staff, nominal, real or average costs per student and performance-based criteria (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 10).

([1]) See Council Directives 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin (OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22), 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16) and 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services (OJ L 373, 21.12.2004, p. 37).

Geographic location: Refers to either the origin of an individual or the location of a higher education institution which merits special support and/or attention. This could mean that institutions in rural areas receive more money or that special support is available for students from remote areas. This could also apply to the differentiation rural vs. urban.

Guaranteed right to higher education: A legal right to a higher education place equivalent, for example, to the legal right for a child to attend school.

Higher education budget: expenditure from the public budget in the following categories:

- **Educational core goods and services inside**: all expenditure on e.g. teacher, maintenance of school buildings, teaching material, books, and administration of higher education institutions, etc.
- Research and development: all expenditure related to research and development carried out in educational institutions
- **Non-instruction**: all expenditure broadly related to student living costs or services provided by institutions for the general public.

  Expenditure in these categories may be distributed **inside and outside** higher education institutions (UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat 2009, pp. 11-14).

Indirect funding: Purchases by a government agency of educational resources to be used by educational institutions (UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat 2009, p. 61). In other words, public funding provided by public authorities to higher education institutions NOT in the form of money, but in material form, such as buildings or equipment. Also salaries paid directly to staff from the public budget would be indirect funding. → cf. Direct funding

Input-based mechanisms: Mechanisms that focus on the demand side of higher education, e.g. the number of students studying at a higher education institution.

Loan: Repayable financial aid. Student loan models may differ in many aspects, such as in their repayment plans, the level of subsidy, the expenses covered, eligibility rules, etc. A loan is *subsidised* when the government bears a part of the costs. This can take the form of a government *guarantee*, when student loans are guaranteed or insured against the risk of default and loss by the government (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 43).

Negotiated allocations for higher education institutions: Usually transferred from the state as a lump sum to the higher education institution. They are negotiated between government entities and higher education institutions. Their calculation may be based on previous years' allocations or on other conditions, such as student or staff numbers and may contain certain variables. In contrast to funding formulas, negotiated allocations are not an automatic allocation (Lepori et al. 2007, pp. 87-88).

Performance-based mechanisms: Funding mechanisms are related to actual or intended results by an institution over a certain period. They may be based on outputs, such as number of graduates, or inputs, such as number of students/staff *with certain characteristics*. Performance-based mechanisms may take the form of performance contracts, performance set asides and payments for results in research and/or education (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 16).

Private investment: Funds from private sources invested in public higher education. Private sources can be individuals, businesses, private foundations, charities etc. The form of these investments can take the form of contracts, where a certain benefit is specified between the investor and the higher education institution. Donations are funds given to higher education institutions either for a specific purpose or without conditions. Loans are funds, which have to be repaid by the higher education institution and are often charged with an interest. Finally, private-public partnerships (PPP) are cooperative endeavours between public higher education institutions and private investors to attain a clearly defined goal and both parties invest monetary and non-monetary resources to attain that goal.

Public authority: A body that has the power to take binding decisions on the basis of laws and/or the constitution. This could be a ministry, a public agency as part of a ministry or another administrative public authority.

Public grant/scholarship: Non-repayable public aid given to students (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 3).

Public higher education institution: An institution in the field of higher education directly or indirectly administered by a public education authority. For the purpose of this study, "public higher education institution" includes two categories of institution as defined by the UOE data collection manual:

- **"public institution"**, i.e. an institution directly managed by a government agency/authority or by a governing body, most of whose members are either appointed by a public authority or elected by public franchise, and:
- **"government-dependent private higher education institution"**, i.e. an institution controlled/ managed by a non-governmental organisation or where the governing board consists of members not selected by a public agency but receiving 50 percent or more of its core funding from government agencies or whose teaching personnel are paid by a government agency – either directly or through government (UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat 2009, pp. 34-35).

Purchasing power parity (PPP): A currency conversion rate which converts economic indicators expressed in a national currency into an artificial common currency that qualises the purchasing power of different national currencies. In other words, PPP eliminates the differences in price levels between countries in the process of conversion to an artificial common currency, called Purchasing Power Standard (PPS).

Purchasing power standard (PPS): The artificial common reference currency unit used in the European Union to express the volume of economic aggregates for the purpose of spatial comparisons in such a way that price level differences between countries are eliminated. Economic volume aggregates in PPS are obtained by dividing their original value in national currency units by the respective PPP. PPS thus buys the same given volume of goods and services in all countries, whereas different amounts of national currency units are needed to buy this same volume of goods and services in individual countries, depending on the price level.

Purpose-specific funding: Funding based on expenditure categories, where expenditure by higher education institutions is directly linked to certain functions, tasks and objectives (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 9; Lepori et al. 2007, p. 88). This type of funding is often distributed through competitive processes. May also be called targeted funding (cf. Technopolis 2010, p. 11).

Recognised higher education institution: Public, government-dependent private and private institutions in higher education that may issue recognised degrees to students.

Representative body at national, regional or local level: Refers to a parliament, an elected council or another elected body.

Socio-economic status: A combined economic and sociological measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family's socio-economic status, the household income earners' education and occupation are examined, as well as combined income, versus with an individual, when their own attributes are assessed (Wikipedia, 2010). Parents' educational attainment is often taken as a proxy measure for socio-economic status (Koucký, Bartušek and Kovařovic 2009, pp. 14-16).

Steering documents: Different kinds of official documents containing guidelines, obligations and/or recommendations for higher education policy and institutions. They can refer to programme content and the governance of higher education institutions. Several types of steering documents can exist for higher education at the same time.

Stimulus package: Government spending package on a wide variety of things, from the military and police to services like education and healthcare, as well as transfer payments such as welfare benefits with the goal to cushion the impact of economic recession and to stimulate economic recovery (Wikipedia, 2010).

Tax credit: Tax relief given through the reduction of taxes to be paid. This is usually a direct reduction in tax liability, not dependent on the taxpayer's tax bracket (The Free Dictionary, 2010).

Tax deduction: Tax relief given through the reduction of taxable income. One form of tax deduction is *lump sum tax deduction* or *tax allowance*, when a defined proportion of a person's income is not subject to tax. This can potentially alter the taxpayer's tax bracket, since it allows the person to receive a certain income free of tax, which means that only the income above this sum counts as taxable. Another form of tax deduction is when certain *expenses* (e.g. interest paid on loans, education expenses, etc.) can be deducted from the taxable income.

Tax relief: Any type of tax-based benefit.

Vouchers: Vouchers given to students are the so-called "demand side" vouchers. In this case, students (and/or their families) receive a coupon (the voucher) representing a certain amount of money to be used exclusively for higher education related expenses. Students then carry this voucher to the institution in which they enrol, and the institution then redeems the value of the coupon from the government (Salmi and Hauptman 2006, p. 28).

TABLE OF FIGURES

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EN

The **Eurydice Network** provides information on and analyses of European education systems and policies. As of 2011, it consists of 37 national units based in all 33 countries participating in the EU's Lifelong Learning programme (EU Member States, EFTA countries, Croatia and Turkey) and is co-ordinated and managed by the EU Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency in Brussels, which drafts its publications and databases.

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