Social inclusion strategies in higher education within the European Higher Education Area

Austria

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Brief history of the social dimension in the EHEA

- First **used** in 2001 (Prague)
- **Defined** in 2007 (London) “student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations“
- **Targets** set in 2009 (Leuven/Louvain la Neuve) “measurable targets for widening...and increasing participation of underrepresented groups“
- Advice in 2015 (Yerevan) to develop **national access plans or strategies**
- Reference in 2018 (Paris) to **policies that [...] support higher education institutions to fulfil their social responsibility, contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive society**

See also: David Crosier, PLA Social Inclusion in HE; Brussels, 11 April 2019
What kind of social dimension policies do we want?

• Depends on what kind of society we want (to be)

• Research evidence shows that equal opportunities and greater equity in education/higher education has positive societal impact

• But what do we mean by equal opportunities and equity?

See: David Crosier, PLA Social Inclusion in HE, Brussels, 11 April 2019
See David Crosier, PLA Social Inclusion in HE; Brussels, 11 April 2019
Higher Education System, Austria
Key numbers

Types of HE institutions

- 22 public universities (new university funding, performance agreements)
- 21 universities of applied sciences (mix of funding based on the standard costing systems, 90% funded federally, fixed amount per study place)
- 14 university colleges of teacher education (9 public → direct funding, fixed educational budget; 5 private)
- 15 private universities (no federal public funding)

Total: 350,238

Students enrolled (WT 2018)

- Public universities: 53,401
- Universities of applied sciences: 14,595
- University colleges of teacher education: 13,665
- Private universities: 268,586

Total: 350,238
Strategy on Social Dimension

National strategy on the social dimension of Higher Education - towards more inclusive access and wider participation

Strategy development process 2015-2017
• conference on heterogeneity of students
• workshops with stakeholders

Target groups: „underrepresented groups“ & „groups with specific needs“
Strategy development process
National strategy on the social dimension of higher education -
towards more inclusive access and wider participation

External process consultation: IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies), examination of existing measures: 3s institute

Involvement of stakeholders

Conferences and workshops

- Information stakeholders (February)
  - Conference on "heterogeneity of students" (May)
- "Data" workshop (September)
- "Study information and guidance" workshop (September)
- Conference on disability, diversity, inclusion (October)
- "measures " workshop (September)
- "Diversity management" workshop (June)
- "Interfaces & obstacles" workshop (June)
- "Strategy Development" workshop (October)

1st half of 2016
2nd half of 2016
Consultation phase
Stakeholders involved - examples

• Ministries: Science, Research and Economy & Education
• Austrian Students’ Union,
• Universities (public and private)
• universities of applied sciences
• university colleges of teacher education
• Employees’, employers’ and industry associations
• ... and others
Strategy development process
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- "Strategy Development" workshop (October)
Underrepresented groups - examples

• Students whose parents do not have a HE qualification
• Men/women in specific fields of study
• Students with migrant backgrounds (with an Austrian entrance qualification)
• Students with a disability and/or chronic illness
• Students from areas with lower entrance rates

Groups with specific needs - examples

• Students with children/care responsibilities
• Students with disability/chronic illness
• Students with delayed entry to higher education (i.e. at least two years since leaving school or “second chance” education)
• Students in employment
Underrepresented groups – example & challenge

Students whose parents do not have HE entrance qualifications

ˈquotaˈ number of students per 1000 men in parent generation

ˈprobability factorˈ/odds ratio shows how much higher the probability for studying is for people from one group in comparison to another group
Most recent data ➔ biggest challenge

- Reduce the „odds ratio“ (indicates the difference in probability to enter HE between students with parents with/without HE entrance qualification „Matura“)

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Strategy on Social Dimension

3 target dimensions with 3 action lines each

• I: More inclusive access
• II: Avoid drop-out and improve academic success
• III: Create basic parameters and optimize regulation of Higher Education policy

9 quantitative goals until 2025

Monitoring and evaluation

• Set up monitoring process (data and measures)
• Interim evaluation 2021/2022 and final evaluation 2025
Implementation of the National Strategy – Dissemination and Awareness Raising

National

• press conference: 02/2017 (published)
• Launch event “Bologna Day”: 03/2017
• networking conferences
  - 12/2018: Networking conference: “Enabling study success”
  - 12/2019: Networking conference: “From school into Higher Education”
Implementation of the National Strategy - Dissemination and Awareness Raising

**International**

- 03/2017: PLA Mainstreaming Social Dimension in the EHEA
- 03/2018: EUROSTUDENT VI conference, Berlin
- 04/2019: PLA on Inclusion in Higher Education (focus: promoting opportunities for underrepresented groups)
- 07/2019: Kick-off conference for the ERASMUS+ PROJECT SIDERAL
- 10/2020: Erasmus+ project “3-IN-AT: STRAND 2“: Internat. PLA with ~10 countries (SD Country profiles + HEI strategies and good practices)
WP 3: Implementation of the National Strategy on the Social Dimension in comparison with EHEA-countries

- **Lunch-to-Lunch PLA**: max. 35 participants from up to 10 countries, and members of the BFUG AG “Social Dimension”
- **goal**: international comparison of SD developments (last 2-3 years)
- **publication (~500 pieces)**: country profiles & best practice examples
- **Lead**: Helga Posset, Anna Wöckinger (BMBWF) in cooperation with ESU, EUA and ministerial representatives from Hungary and Croatia
Implementation and mainstreaming in policy measures

- "[…] To ensure the implementation of measures for the social dimension in teaching as well as the inclusion of underrepresented groups into higher education, the federal minister can retain up to 0.5% of the overall university budget"
- Tender for public universities “digitalization & SD”, 50 mio.€
- Integration of SD into the “Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) through to 2023/2024” and expansion of the UAS sector
- Quantitative and qualitative development of the student support system (focal points, funding); extra support for mobility
- SOLA 2019 – comprehensive reporting in 2020; parliament
Thank you for listening!

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