The European Higher Education Area in 2024

Bologna Process Implementation Report

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FOREWORD

Twenty-five years ago, ministers from 29 countries gathered to sign the Bologna Declaration, making the first step on our transformative journey towards an open and inclusive European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Tirana Ministerial Conference at the end of May marks a major milestone: a quarter-century of progress since that inaugural ministerial conference in Bologna. Now comprising 49 higher education systems, the EHEA has seen many policy reforms come to fruition thanks to collaborative efforts of public authorities, higher education institutions and students working together within individual countries and across Europe.

In a world facing shared global challenges, broadening and deepening cooperation in higher education is not only a necessity for Europe – it brings major benefits to students, academics, higher education institutions and our societies at large. It is easy to forget that before the Bologna Process, it was unthinkable that all European countries would base their higher education systems on a common three-cycle degree framework consisting of bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies, that quality assurance standards and guidelines would be developed at the European level, and that agreements would be in place for an automatic recognition of qualifications from other countries.

Today, these ideas are a reality, and the European Commission is fully committed to deepening these policies. In March 2024, we adopted a set of ambitious proposals for Europe's higher education sector, comprising a Communication on a blueprint for a European degree and proposal for two Council recommendations to improve quality assurance processes and automatic recognition, and to make academic careers more attractive and sustainable.

Commission's support for the EHEA pre-dates the Bologna Process. Over 35 years ago, the launch of the Erasmus programme kindled a demand for student mobility that continues to grow to this day. Erasmus also highlighted the need for a more intense and better structured cooperation among European higher education institutions. Since those early days, EU higher education programmes and the Bologna Process have grown increasingly interconnected and reinforce each other.

The Erasmus+ programme now not only continues to enhance student and staff mobility, but also supports Bologna structures and events, finances cooperation projects in EHEA countries and funds teams of experts who assist countries in the EU and beyond with Bologna-inspired reforms. As a full member of the Bologna Follow-up Group and its Board, the Commission is a driving force for innovation, inclusion and interconnectedness that we aspire to achieve in the EHEA.

We can only have a truly open and inclusive European higher education if all EHEA countries fulfil the commitments that they have taken on. This edition of the Bologna Process Implementation Report provides an overview of how far European higher education systems have advanced through cohesive national reforms – and highlights areas where work is still required.

Despite many positive developments, the beginning of this decade has been challenging, marked by the Covid-19 pandemic and significant geopolitical shifts including Russia's war of aggression, against Ukraine supported by Belarus. The EHEA acted swiftly to suspend these two countries and to help affected Ukrainians including students and staff. In addition, we keenly feel the impacts of the climate emergency and the cost-of-living crisis.

However, it is in difficult times that European higher education cooperation can best demonstrate its value. We are all much stronger when we work together, sharing ideas and knowledge. This philosophy is both at the heart of the European Union and central to the ambitions of the EHEA.

Our resolve is strong: we have set ambitious priorities for the EHEA, boosted by the actions stemming from the [Commission's European Strategy for Universities](). This strategy has bolstered the [European Universities alliances]() and at the same time driven advances in higher education, research, innovation and service to society.

A quarter of a century after the Bologna Process began, it is time to step up our efforts and achieve our ambitious goals for the EHEA.

Iliana Ivanova

European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than two decades after the launch of the Bologna Process, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is now evolving in a context where a series of major crises have arrived in quick succession: the COVID-19 pandemic followed by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, a cost of living crisis, various manifestations of climate emergency and war in Israel and Gaza following the atrocities committed on 7 October 2023. These crises pose challenges to society as a whole, and also have a major impact on higher education. Like other sectors, higher education may suffer social and economic consequences at a time of crisis. At the same time it also contributes – through teaching, research and assisting rational policy development – to finding a path towards a brighter future. The 2020 Rome Communiqué, emphasises this path, outlining a vision for an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA by 2030, able to underpin a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful Europe. This report shows where steps have been taken, and gives some indication of the distance still to travel.

The report is divided into six self-contained but inter-related chapters, giving a snapshot of the European Higher Education Area, and assessing how far policy commitments have been implemented.

Key data

The first chapter on key data sets out some current realities of the European higher education landscape to provide context about the environment in which policy commitments have been taken.

Firstly it is important to note that the suspension of Russia and Belarus has changed the dimensions of the EHEA significantly, shrinking both its geographical and demographic coverage. Student numbers in the majority of the remaining EHEA countries/systems rose significantly in the 5 years from 2016-2021 – an overall 11% increase. However, there were exceptions, and student numbers declined in several countries/systems in Eastern Europe.

It is important to note that, at least in the short term, the COVID-19 pandemic led to increased enrolment in higher education. Close to 60% of students are enrolled in first-cycle, bachelor-type study programmes, which means that there are more students in this cycle than in the three other cycles (short-cycle, second cycle and third cycle) combined.

Academic staff numbers also rose in the majority of EHEA countries/systems. However, the increase in staff numbers was less significant in most countries/systems than the increase in student numbers.

Although there are considerable variations between countries/systems, overall public spending on tertiary education relative to GDP has a median value of 1%. In most countries/systems, public expenditure has been stable in recent years. However, as student and staff numbers have been increasing, this stability could be considered as a reduction in public funding.

Key commitments

The EHEA is developed through implementing shared policy commitments. All commitments are therefore important, but three key commitments underpin the structural foundations of the EHEA. They are three-cycle degree structures in line with agreed parameters; recognition of qualifications, based upon the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and with the objective of system-level automatic recognition within the EHEA, and quality assurance systems aligned to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The vast majority of EHEA countries/systems have implemented the main agreements concerning degree structures. Nevertheless there remain a handful of national systems that maintain some

structural elements that are not aligned to the EHEA commitments. These may be programmes constructed on credit ranges that are outside Bologna agreements, degree programmes that require a qualification at the same degree level for access, or providing an excessive number of long/integrated programmes leading directly to a second cycle qualification. While there may be strong arguments within countries/systems in favour of maintaining this reality, such anomalies do not serve the objective of easily understandable and comparable high education provision throughout the EHEA. Short-cycle higher education, now included in the overall Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area, is less coherent and comparable within the EHEA than the other cycles.

Establishing three-cycle degrees has been aided greatly by the development and coherent use of ECTS, Diploma Supplement and National Qualifications Frameworks. These EHEA tools have been widely adopted, and the evidence shows that there is steady improvement in implementation. Nevertheless a small number of countries/systems still have progress to make to ensure that these tools are properly developed and used.

EHEA cooperation has focused for many years on improving and simplifying recognition practices. European higher education policy has worked towards easier and fairer recognition on the basis of the Lisbon Recognition Convention – protecting the value of learning outcomes and ensuring that qualifications are easily understood and communicated. Recent years have seen a significant improvement in embedding the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention into legislation, with all main principles now included in the relevant legislation of 31 countries/systems. Similarly an increasing number of EHEA countries/systems, now reaching 18, have put in place measures to ensure system-level automatic recognition of qualifications from all EHEA countries/systems. Automatic recognition nevertheless remains a challenging concept for many working in this sector.

Quality assurance has become an established feature of European higher education. The ESG have been a major support for the development of trust, and 32 systems now have all their external quality assurance undertaken by an EQAR registered agency.

Fundamental values

The EHEA has agreed six fundamental values – academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation, and public responsibility for and of higher education. So far only one of these values – academic freedom – has been defined within a statement of common understanding adopted in the Rome Ministerial Conference. At this stage, in the absence of adopted common definitions, this report takes a first step towards monitoring these values by examining whether and how they are protected in legislation.

There is an important divide between countries/systems that protect and define values in their national contexts, and those that do not. However, in the case of academic freedom, existing definitions may not cover all aspects agreed in the EHEA understanding, and this should be examined in the future. Analysis for this report shows that the concept of freedom to learn – integral to the EHEA understanding of academic freedom – is a dimension that is most often overlooked.

While rarely specified in legislation, increasing policy attention is being given to academic integrity throughout the EHEA with plagiarism identified as the most burning issue. Other aspects, such as academic fraud and contract cheating currently receive less attention from public authorities.

In almost all EHEA countries/systems, the concept of institutional autonomy has specifically been mentioned in legislation with the majority also providing a definition. In most cases, in addition to outlining higher education institutions' independence from public authorities, the definition includes reference to academic freedom. This confirms the interrelationship between fundamental values and

the need to consider them not only independently, but also as a set where the infringement of one value may undermine all.

Student and staff participation is another important value in itself that can also be considered as an integral element of another value – institutional autonomy. Legislative requirements for student and staff participation in higher education institutions' governance structures are in place in nearly all systems, and in the large majority the legislation stipulates that all members of governing bodies have full rights to contribute to all issues.

Public responsibility for higher education can only be assessed by considering a wide number of aspects – from amounts and types of funding, appropriate quality assurance arrangements and attention to the social dimension. These dimensions of the concept are discussed throughout this report, but there are not, as yet, any umbrella indicators for such a broad concept. Indeed it is a moot question whether it would be feasible to design such indicators in a meaningful way in the future. Meanwhile the concept of public responsibility of higher education focuses very much on the role of higher education institutions, and as such extends beyond the scope and capacity of this report.

Social dimension

The social dimension of the EHEA is a policy area where data has consistently shown that the main objective of policy – that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of the populations – is far from being reached. More detailed policy commitments were taken in 2020 through the adoption of the Principles and Guidelines ([1]) (P&Gs), and monitoring has focused on the ten areas addressed by the document. In eight of these areas a scorecard indicator has been developed on the basis of the guidelines outlined in the P&Gs. In the area of strategic commitment, a more exhaustive mapping has been favoured over the development of a composite scorecard indicator, and similarly no scorecard indicator has been included for community engagement as in this case the P&Gs are mostly targeted at higher education institutions.

Regarding strategic commitment, EHEA education systems have generally implemented some strategic measures, even if the approaches can differ substantially, ranging between mainstream and targeted policies, and more centralised and decentralised approaches. However, there is a need for greater strategic commitment in almost all education systems to address the social dimension of higher education more holistically.

In the other areas, while some scorecard indicators show a strong commitment towards social dimension principles in the EHEA, others uncover a relatively lower level of policy attention.

The principles with the highest degree of implementation are related to sustainable funding for equity, inclusion and diversity in higher education, and to guidance and counselling provision. All EHEA education systems provide some form of financial support to higher education students, and there are only two countries/systems with no academic or career guidance provision. EHEA countries/systems also do relatively well in monitoring and data collection as well as in enabling flexible learning conditions. At the same time, education systems could do more to collect data on the completion of first-year students in the first cycle, and to establish legal frameworks allowing access to higher education through the recognition of prior learning.

The scorecard indicators that take middle position in terms of overall implementation relate to the principles on synergies and lifelong learning, and creating inclusive learning environments and institutional cultures. Most education systems still lack significant elements when it comes to these policy areas. The principles with the lowest level of implementation are on international mobility and policy

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([1]) Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, Annex II of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

dialogue. This result concerning mobility is particularly disappointing, as the need to support disadvantaged learners in mobility programmes has been on the EHEA policy agenda for more than a decade.

Learning and teaching

Supporting quality and innovation in learning and teaching is the objective of the Recommendations adopted by ministers in the 2020 Rome Communiqué ([2]). Three interconnected thematic areas were outlined: system-level policies and measures, student-centred learning and initiatives fostering continuous enhancement of teaching.

While only around half of the EHEA countries/systems have an ongoing system-level strategy in place promoting learning and teaching in higher education, many other system-level policy measures can be found. These measures often promote digitalisation of higher education and/or enhancement of higher education pedagogy, and there have also been regulatory changes in some countries/systems to boost learning and teaching innovation. Three countries/systems have in place national bodies dedicated to supporting learning and teaching in higher education institutions.

Student-centred learning, despite being a central objective of higher education, is not always mentioned in national policy documents and is rarely defined at national level. However, most countries/systems have in place policy measures addressing areas that are closely associated with student-centred learning. For example, top-level policy documents commonly specify that higher education programmes should include explicit intended learning outcomes, and in more than half of the systems, documents accompanying higher education qualifications must specify achieved learning outcomes.

Most higher education countries/systems have in place regulations that (to some extent) restrict flexible study arrangements. The restrictions in question commonly concern possibilities for the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, the choice of assessment methods and/or the extent of online, blended and distance learning, or part-time studies. These restrictions are often justified by quality assurance concerns. Thus, while the provision of adequate learning opportunities for all learners, including non-traditional and self-directed learners, is a stated policy objective, in practice, it is often hindered by other actions.

Unlike at other education levels, teaching staff in higher education institutions are rarely required by top-level legislation to follow training in teaching. However, the EUA Trends survey shows that higher education institutions often make training in pedagogy and didactics compulsory for their teaching staff. In other words, requirements set at institutional level regarding training in teaching for academics commonly outstrip those specified at national level.

Regulatory information also suggests that research performance remains the main criterion valued in academic career progression. Thus, parity of esteem of research and teaching has not been achieved. Nevertheless, data show that teaching performance plays a non-negligible role in academic careers.

Mobility and internationalisation

The Bologna Process has undoubtedly played an important role in stimulating greater mobility and internationalisation in European higher education.

Nevertheless, statistical data for 2020/2021 shows that the target of 20% of graduates experiencing mobility by 2020 was not met. One important explanation of this is that 2020/2021 was the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and student mobility slumped significantly as a result. As this is an anomaly

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[2] Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

year, it makes no sense to use it for purposes of comparison and establishing longer-term trends. Future reference years will give a more informative picture of mobility within the EHEA.

Nevertheless certain patterns in student mobility are clear. The first is that mobility increases with each higher education cycle – more mobility in the first cycle than the short cycle, more again in the second cycle, and the most in the third cycle. In terms of percentages of graduates experiencing mobility during their studies, the majority of credit and degree mobility therefore takes place at master and doctoral level. However, in absolute numbers, most mobility takes place in the first cycle. This paradoxical finding is explained by the much greater numbers of students enrolled in first cycle higher education programmes.

Making domestic student grants and loans fully portable is a policy commitment made by ministers two decades ago to support mobility. This is a commitment which has, however, mostly not been followed up and which continues to be neglected by many systems. The countries/systems which have taken steps to improve the situation are the exception and not the rule.

Supporting the Ukrainian academic community

Many higher education institutions around Europe have made a significant effort to support students and staff exiled from Ukraine following the war of aggression launched by Russia.

While several systems do not track Ukrainian nationals in their higher education enrolments, more than half of the systems do collect enrolment data at the top level. This is important for monitoring the evolution of Ukrainians in the academic community around Europe, as well as for the purposes of ongoing communication with the Ukrainian Ministry.

In most cases, EHEA countries/systems have made available existing forms of support in their system to Ukrainian nationals. Thus the most widespread form of support is the provision of grants to students from Ukraine. Language learning support can also be found in many systems, while less commonly preparatory courses have been set up as a bridge into the national higher education system. Academic and psychological counselling services have also been made available to Ukrainians.

While this report is not able to assess the quality of actions that have been taken, there is clear evidence that EHEA countries/systems have responded positively to the challenge of supporting the academic community of a partner country at a time of need.

INTRODUCTION

The Bologna Process

The Bologna Declaration was signed in 1999 by ministers responsible for higher education from 29 European countries. It was developed following the Sorbonne Conference and Declaration of 1998, which was signed by the higher education ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom, and called for a 'Europe of knowledge' paving the way for a genuine European Higher Education Area (EHEA). These ministerial events and declarations set in motion an intergovernmental process based on European cooperation for more convergence of higher education systems in Europe that has radically changed higher education. Reforms have affected countries within and beyond Europe, and the number of official signatory countries has reached 49 with San Marino being the most recent country to join in 2020. However, two countries – Belarus and Russia – have been suspended following the ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine launched by Russia and supported by Belarus on 24 February 2022.

The chart below outlines some of the commitments of the ministerial conferences within the Bologna Process up to 2020. It illustrates that several main themes can be followed throughout the process – mobility of students and staff, a common degree system, the social dimension, lifelong learning, a European system of credits, quality assurance and the development of Europe as an attractive knowledge region. Learning and teaching and sustainable development were added as explicit priorities in the Yerevan Communiqué, while digitalisation was recognised as an issue for attention in the Paris Communiqué in 2018. The Rome Communiqué in 2020 set out a vision for the future decade that embraces all these developments under the concepts of an EHEA that is inclusive, innovative and interconnected.

The Rome Communiqué is noteworthy for stressing socially inclusive higher education, and for adopting the Principles and Guidelines for the Social Dimension in the EHEA. The text also stresses the need to protect and promote fundamental values through intensified political dialogue and cooperation. It asks the BFUG to develop a framework for the enhancement of the fundamental values that will foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue and peer learning across national authorities, higher education institutions and organisations, while also making it possible to assess the degree to which these values are honoured and implemented in our systems.

The Rome Communiqué calls for higher education institutions to be innovative in intensifying their search for solutions to the challenges our societies face. It calls for flexible and open learning paths, and emphasises student-centred learning. It also points out how cooperation and mobility connect our systems and foster the development of intercultural and linguistic competences, broader knowledge and understanding of our world.

To transform objectives into reality, the EHEA has established three key commitments that underpin cooperation and must be fully implemented in each system. These are three cycle degree systems supported by Qualifications Frameworks and ECTS, recognition based on the Lisbon Recognition Convention, and Quality Assurance aligned to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The Bologna Process: from Sorbonne, 1998 to Paris, 2018

Sorbonne Declaration, 1998	Bologna Declaration, 1999	Leuven/Louvain la Neuve Communique, 2009	Paris Communiqué, 2018	Rome Communiqué, 2020
Mobility of students and teachers	Mobility also for researchers and adminis- trative staff	Target: 20% graduate mobility by 2020	Student digital data exchange	**Inclusive**
A common two-cycle degree system	Easily readable and comparable degrees	NQFs by 2012	Short cycle as a stand- alone qualification level Revised Diploma Supplement	
		National targets for the **social dimension** to be measured by 2020	Inclusion of under- represented and vulnerable groups	
		LLL as a public responsibility Focus on employability	Combine academic and work-based learning	
Use of credits	A system of credits (ECTS)	Implementation of Bologna tools		**Innovative**
	European cooperation in quality assurance (QA)	Quality as an overarching focus for EHEA	Ensure compliance with ESG 2015 Promote European Approach for QA of joint programmes	
Europe of Knowledge	European dimensions in higher education	Enhance global policy dialogue through Bologna Policy Fora	Develop synergies between EHEA – ERA	**Inter-connected**
			Innovation and Inclusion in Leaning and Teaching Digitalisation and digital skills	
			Support to UNSDGs	
1998	**1999**	**2009**	**2018**	**2020**

Report outline

This 2024 Bologna Process Implementation report has been prepared for the EHEA Ministerial Conference in Tirana, Albania, on 29-30 May 2024, based on the mandate from the Rome Communiqué:

'For our Conference in 2024 we mandate the BFUG to produce an implementation report assessing progress in our agreed commitments'

The report aims to provide an overview of implementation of the Bologna Process commitments from various perspectives using data collected in the first half of 2023, and with 2023/2024 as the most recent reference year. Two main principles have guided its development:

1) Focus on implementation of the commitments in the European Higher Education Area.

2) Provide a comparative snapshot of reality within a narrative that discusses implementation and change in recent years.

In line with these principles, the report combines two main types of information: quantitative data, (Eurostat and a specific data collection for non-European Statistical System countries) and qualitative data – provided by the BFUG. Additional sources have been used, notably data for the forthcoming EUA Trends 2024 report, ESU Bologna Within Student Eyes 2024 report, and Eurostudent VIII.

As with previous editions, the development of the report has been overseen by the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG), and specifically by a working group established to guide all aspects of the reporting

process. Close collaboration has also been established with all working groups established by the BFUG.

Qualitative information was gathered through a questionnaire addressed to BFUG members. No questionnaires were sent to the two suspended countries - Belarus and Russia. Serbia also chose not to submit a completed questionnaire and, except in statistical data, is therefore represented throughout the report as 'data not available'. In all other cases, questionnaires were submitted by the Bologna representatives between May and September 2023. For the United Kingdom and Belgium, two responses each were submitted. The United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) is therefore treated as a separate higher education system to that of Scotland, while the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium are considered as distinct higher education systems. However where statistical data is combined for Belgium in Eurostat's database, it is presented in a combined form in this report.

Qualitative data is based mainly on official evidence-based information about legislation, regulations and national policies, and in some cases country representatives are asked to report on their perception of specific aspects of higher education reality. The data refers to higher education institutions that are directly or indirectly administered by a public education authority, which means public and publicly subsidised private higher education institutions.

Among the indicators presented are so-called scorecard indicators that are designed to track country progress in implementing EHEA policy commitments. New scorecard indicators have been introduced in Chapter 4 on the Social Dimension, and also in Chapter 2 (Key Commitments) where there is a new scorecard indicator (scorecard indicator 1) on the implementation of agreed degree structures. Other scorecard indicators were already used in the 2020 edition of the Bologna Process Implementation Report.

The European Union's Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), working through Agilis SA, Greece, undertook a specific data collection in 2023 for the EHEA countries that are not part of regular Eurostat data gathering exercises. Data was collected for several reference years, the most recent being 2020/2021 and with the intention of illustrating short-term change. In this context short term has been understood as a five-year period. Agilis also provided advice on presentation of statistical data and provided expert advice on the analysis of the figures.

The report is divided into six thematic chapters, with a structure that aims to maintain coherence with the previous Bologna Process Implementation Reports, while also reflecting the current policy priorities of the EHEA. Chapter three, on Fundamental Values, and chapter five, on Learning and Teaching, are both new. Meanwhile chapter two, on Key Commitments, regroups information that, in previous editions, was presented in different chapters. Chapter 6 on internationalisation focuses mainly on mobility but also includes a section on responses of EHEA higher education systems to integrate academics and students from Ukraine following the launch of the war of aggression against Ukraine in 2023.

CHAPTER 1: EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA KEY DATA

The 2020 Rome Communiqué

The 2020 Rome Communiqué, adopted by Ministers of Higher Education of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the Rome Ministerial Conference in November 2020, outlines a vision for 'building an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA by 2030, able to underpin a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful Europe' and commits to 'overcoming the social inequities that still limit the achievement of a fully inclusive EHEA' [1].

Chapter outline

This chapter provides information on the framework conditions for higher education in the different countries of the EHEA. The aim is to give insight on the evolution of these conditions in the context of the Bologna Process implementation across the EHEA through statistical data on key features of European higher education. The topics covered are: evolution of student and staff involvement; access, participation, and employability of higher education students; changes in the number of higher education institutions; evolution of public funding in higher education.

Technical note

The comparative overview is based on a five-year period. Data has been produced for reference years between 2015/2016 and 2020/2021 (the most recent year with statistical data available). Data comparison between the two time-points, however, must be interpreted with caution due to the impact and limitations introduced by the COVID 19 pandemic for reference year 2020/2021.

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[1]   Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

1.1. Student population

Figure 1.1 shows the number of students enrolled in tertiary education in 2020/2021, and their distribution in each ISCED level between ISCED 5 and ISCED 8. ISCED 5 corresponds to short-cycle programmes, ISCED 6 to first-cycle programmes (bachelor programme or equivalent), ISCED 7 to second cycle (master programme or equivalent) and ISCED 8 to third-cycle programmes (doctoral or equivalent).

Figure 1.1: Number of students enrolled in tertiary education by ISCED level, 2020/2021
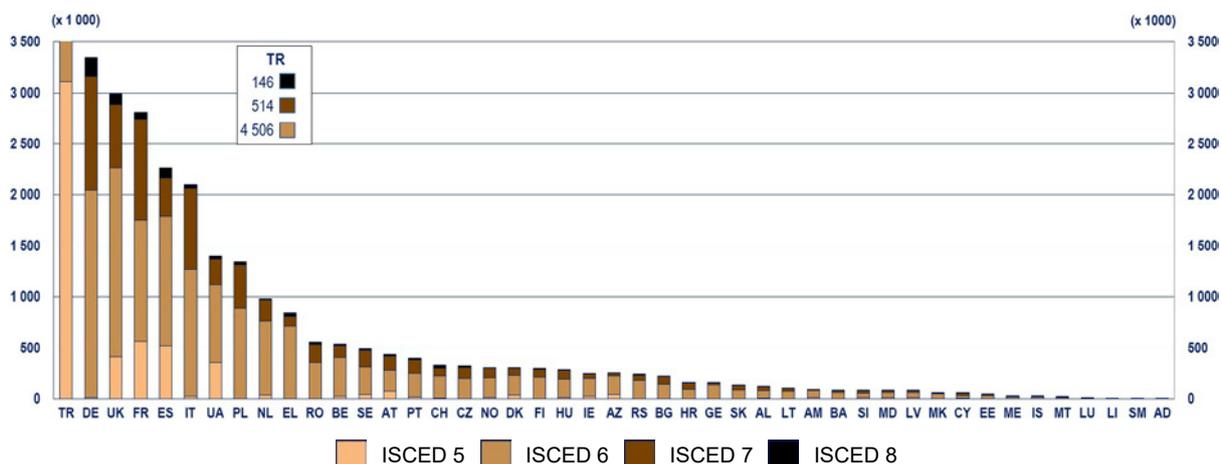
(x 1 000)	TR	DE	UK	FR	ES	IT	UA	PL	NL	EL	RO	BE	SE	AT	PT	CH
ISCED 5	3 114.6	11.0	414.3	565.7	524.3	23.1	357.0	0.5	33.8	:	:	25.1	41.0	74.1	18.1	3.3
ISCED 6	4 506.1	2 032.4	1 844.6	1 185.8	1 263.1	1 244.7	770.6	884.8	730.8	715.1	359.3	379.3	275.3	203.2	231.1	221.8
ISCED 7	514.2	1 115.9	621.2	992.7	377.9	795.7	247.6	431.9	206.2	95.0	178.1	116.6	155.1	141.7	131.0	80.6
ISCED 8	145.7	192.3	113.9	65.1	95.8	33.3	26.7	30.6	16.9	33.7	23.1	18.8	19.1	19.4	23.5	26.7

	CZ	NO	DK	FI	HU	IE	AZ	RS	BG	HR	GE	SK	AL	LT	AM	BA
ISCED 5	1.0	10.7	35.7	:	11.8	22.7	41.5	:	:	0.01	:	2.4	5.8	:	12.3	:
ISCED 6	198.7	198.0	193.9	210.6	183.2	175.2	180.6	180.0	147.8	91.9	139.2	83.2	74.4	75.2	68.9	59.1
ISCED 7	107.2	93.5	69.4	76.0	82.4	42.1	23.8	51.2	72.0	65.1	17.5	48.8	40.5	27.0	10.6	22.5
ISCED 8	21.8	9.3	9.2	18.7	10.1	9.5	3.2	11.4	6.6	3.9	3.8	6.6	3.0	2.7	0.9	1.2

	SI	MD	LV	MK	CY	EE	ME	IS	MT	LU	LI	SM	AD		EHEA
ISCED 5	10.6	14.7	14.1	:	3.8	:	:	0.8	2.4	0.9	:	:	0.01		5 397.2
ISCED 6	45.9	44.8	44.2	50.9	23.2	27.5	19.5	14.8	9.3	3.1	0.4	0.8	0.6		19 392.7
ISCED 7	22.8	18.8	18.2	3.9	24.9	15.2	3.1	5.8	6.1	2.8	0.3	0.08	0.05		7 172.8
ISCED 8	3.5	2.3	2.0	0.5	1.7	2.3	0.1	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.2	0.01	0.03		1 021.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged by the total number of students in tertiary education. The graph is scaled to three thousand for readability. >1 000 (x 1 000) no decimals; <1 000 (x 1 000): 1

EHEA: refers to total number of students across all countries with available data.

There were about 32.985 million tertiary education students enrolled in the EHEA in the academic year 2020/2021. Overall, across the EHEA, most tertiary students (58.8%) were enrolled in first-cycle programmes (bachelor programmes), while 21.7% were enrolled in second-cycle programmes (master's degree or equivalent level), and 3.1% in third-cycle programmes (doctoral or equivalent level). 16.4% of tertiary education students were enrolled in short-cycle tertiary education programmes.

Türkiye (8.3 million) and Germany (3.4 million), which each had a total population close to 85 million, accounted for the highest number of tertiary education students − equivalent to about 35% of the EHEA total student population. It is noticeable that Türkiye had an ISCED 5 student population that exceeded the combined total ISCED°5 population of the rest of the EHEA countries, and at ISCED°6 level had the

largest number of bachelor students. All education levels considered, the United Kingdom (2.9 million), and France (2.8 million), had the next largest student populations followed by Spain and Italy – each with more than 2 million students enrolled in tertiary education. These six countries accounted for 66% of the total student population in the EHEA. Ukraine and Poland had more than 1 million students, while 4 out of the 45 countries with available data (nearly 9%) had more than 500 000 students in tertiary education. In the remaining 33 EHEA countries with available data, the median number of enrolled students was 123 797, while the average number of students was 166 959.

Figure 1.2 shows the percentage change in the number of students enrolled in tertiary education over a five-year period, between the most recent time-point (2020/2021) for which data is available and 2015/2016.

Figure 1.2: Percentage change in the number of students enrolled in tertiary education, 2015/2016°-°2020/2021
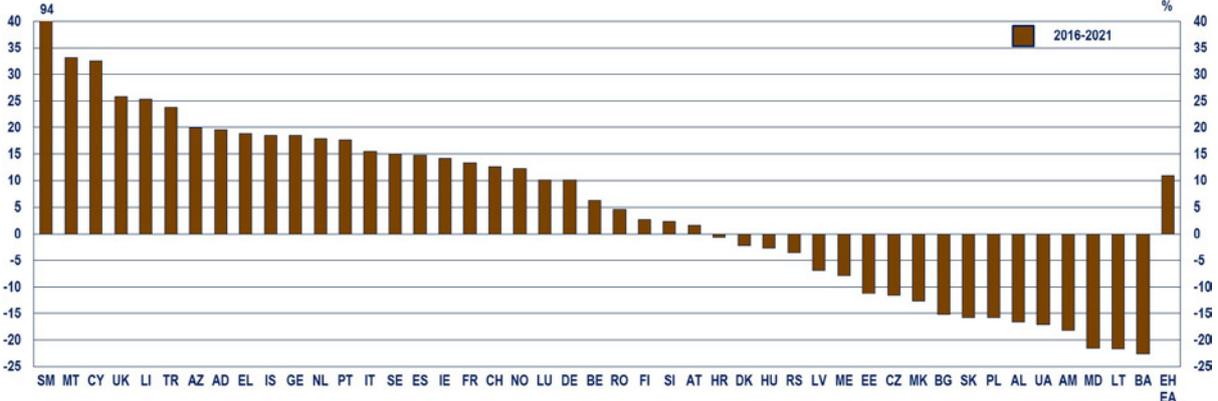
%	SM	MT	CY	UK	LI	TR	AZ	AD	EL	IS	GE	NL	PT	IT	SE	ES
2016-2021	93.8	33.2	32.6	25.9	25.5	23.8	20.0	19.5	18.9	18.5	18.5	18.0	17.7	15.5	15.1	14.9
	IE	FR	CH	NO	LU	DE	BE	RO	FI	SI	AT	HR	DK	HU	RS	LV
2016-2021	14.3	13.3	12.6	12.3	10.2	10.1	6.2	4.7	2.8	2.4	1.7	-0.6	-2.1	-2.7	-3.4	-6.8
	ME	EE	CZ	MK	BG	SK	PL	AL	UA	AM	MD	LT	BA			EHEA
2016-2021	-7.9	-11.2	-11.6	-12.7	-15.1	-15.7	-15.8	-16.5	-17.0	-18.1	-21.4	-21.6	-22.7			11.0

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged by the percentage change in the number of students in tertiary education (2016-2021).
EHEA: percentage change calculated based on total number of students of countries with data available for both reference years.

Compared to 2015/2016, the student population continued to increase in more than half of the countries. The total percentage increase registered in EHEA was 11% (calculated as the percentage change in the total student population at all education levels across the EHEA between the two reference time points).

27 of 45 EHEA countries with available data recorded an increase, and most of these countries registered a rise of more than 15% (all education levels considered). The largest percentage increase in the number of enrolled students took place in San Marino (93.8%), followed by Malta (33.2%), and Cyprus (32.6%). Among the countries with a large student population (see Figure 1.1 for reference), Türkiye and the United Kingdom recorded an increase of more than 20%, while Germany, France, Spain, and Italy saw an increase of more than 10%. The most pronounced increase was recorded in Türkiye – more than 1.5 million students, and in the United Kingdom − more than 600 000 students. A notable increase of 300 000 students or more was observed in France and Germany, and nearly 300 000 in Spain and Italy.

Despite the overall upward trend observed during this period, 18 countries saw a decline in student enrolments, with decreases ranging between 0.6% (Croatia) to 22.7% (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Steep decreases of more than 20% were also observed in Lithuania (21.6%), and Moldova (21.4%), followed by Armenia (18%), Ukraine (17%), Albania, Poland, Slovakia, and Bulgaria (more than 15%). North

Macedonia, Czechia, and Estonia registered a decrease of more than 11%. Among the countries with the largest student populations in this group, Ukraine, and Poland registered decreases of more than 250 000 students. This report is unable to analyse all the factors that may explain the different changes during the reference period. Policy and reforms in the education area may have had an impact upon the conditions to participate in higher education, and so too may broader demographic and socio-economic developments.

To understand the changing structures of the (higher) education systems it is also important to bear in mind, for example, whether short-cycle tertiary programmes exist, and whether part-time study is facilitated. Country-specific characteristics, national policies aimed at increasing tertiary entry and completion rates, financing provided to institutions and students are all important features to consider.

Changes in economic and learning conditions also influence the desire and ability of young people to enrol in higher education. Institutional conditions are also relevant and include: (a) admission rules and procedures, (b) the cost/benefit analysis involved in acquiring higher education – such as fees, financial support, employment rates of graduates, and (c) the length of studies.

Figure 1.3 presents the change in enrolment rates in tertiary education between 2015/2016 and 2020/2021 for students aged 18-34, the most frequent age-range for students attending higher education. The indicator thus shows the share of the national population aged 18-34 that studies in tertiary education.

Figure 1.3: Enrolment rates in tertiary education (as a % of the total population aged 18-34), 2015/2016°-°2020/2021
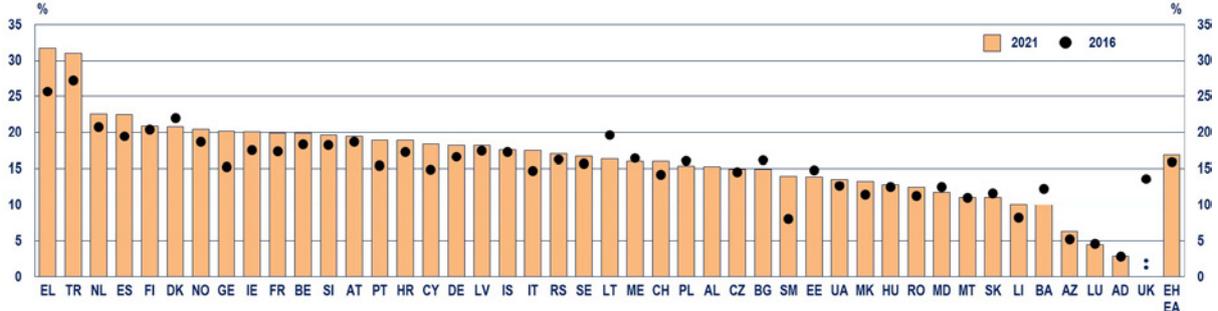
%	EL	TR	NL	ES	FI	DK	NO	GE	IE	FR	BE	SI	AT	HR	PT	CY	DE	LV	IS	IT	RS	SE	LT
2021	31.7	31.0	22.6	22.5	20.9	20.8	20.5	20.2	20.1	20.0	19.9	19.6	19.5	18.9	18.9	18.4	18.2	18.2	17.6	17.6	17.1	16.8	16.3
2016	25.7	27.2	20.8	19.4	20.4	22.0	18.7	15.2	17.6	17.4	18.3	18.2	18.7	17.3	15.0	14.9	16.7	17.5	17.3	14.8	16.2	15.7	19.6

	ME	CH	PL	AL	CZ	BG	SM	EE	UA	MK	HU	RO	MD	MT	SK	LI	BA	AZ	LU	AD	UK	EHEA
2021	16.0	16.0	15.4	15.3	15.0	15.0	14.0	13.9	13.6	13.3	12.7	12.4	11.7	11.1	11.0	10.1	10.0	6.3	4.5	2.8	:	16.9
2016	16.4	14.2	16.1	:	14.5	16.2	8.0	14.8	12.7	11.4	12.5	11.2	12.5	11.0	11.6	8.2	12.2	5.2	4.6	2.8	13.6	15.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged by the share of enrolment rates for students aged 18-34 for 2021.

EHEA: Refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

The EHEA enrolment rate median increased from 15.9% (2016) to 16.9% (2021). The EHEA average enrolment rate in tertiary education, based on available data for 43 countries for both reference years, raised from 17.3% (2016) to 19.9% (2021). The EHEA countries showed different trends regarding the tertiary education enrolment rates. 32 of 42 countries with available data for both time-points registered an increase of the enrolment rates in 2021. In 20 countries the enrolment rates increased and were above the EHEA median while 12 countries registered an increase but were below the EHEA median. Greece and Türkiye continued to be the countries with the highest enrolment rates also in 2020/2021 and registered high increases between the two time-points (respectively 6 and 3.8 percentage points). San Marino also registered a very high increase of nearly 6 percentage points but remained below the EHEA median also in 2021. The increase in the enrolment rates in Georgia (about 5 percentage points increase), Portugal and Cyprus (3.5 percentage points increase) placed them above the EHEA median for 2021 while in 2016 their enrolment rates were below the EHEA median for 2016. Among the countries with available data for both time-points, 10 countries registered a decrease with Lithuania noting the highest decline of 3.3 percentage points. The lowest enrolment rates (below 5%) were recorded in Luxembourg and Andorra. However, the data for these two countries does not reveal an accurate picture as most students aged 18-34 studied abroad.

More than a third (12 of 42 countries with available data), showed a decrease in the total population aged 18-34 but registered an increase in the student population and hence an increase in the share of people aged 18-34 enrolled in higher education programmes. This was the case of Greece, Georgia, and Spain, which were among the countries registering high increases in the enrolment rates between 2016 and 2021. Denmark registered an increase of the total population aged 18-34 but a decrease in the student population within this age group and subsequently registered a decrease of the enrolment rate. Türkiye, Germany, France, and Italy were the countries with the largest total population (above 10 million) and the largest student population (above 1 500 million) in this age group for both time-points. However, while Türkiye registered a strong increase (3.8 percentage points) in the enrolment rate, the other countries showed an increase of below 3 percentage points with Germany registering the lowest increase of 1.6 percentage points among this group of countries.

Data in Figure 1.3 also show that 16 countries registered decreases both of the total and the student populations aged 18-34. In eight countries ([2]), despite the decreases in both the total population aged 18-34 and the total student population within this age group, there was a slight increase of the enrolment rates. Conversely, in the remaining eight ([3]) countries the decrease in both the total and the student populations aged 18-34 lead to a decline of the enrolment rates.

The fluctuations in the enrolment rates could be the product of a number of different factors, such as: policy and institutional reforms creating conditions for increased interest to engage in tertiary education studies, strengthened institutional capacity to absorb and sustain a higher number of students in tertiary education; a time-lagged effect of changes in the student cohort size for this age group; changes in the labour market leading to an increased interest in higher education studies. In addition, it is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic had no negative impact in 2020/2021 on the demand for higher education, as enrolment rates in most EHEA countries continued to grow.

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[2]   Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine.

[3]   Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Slovakia.

1.2. Statistical data on access and participation

This sub-section presents statistical data on higher education students related to the following characteristics: the impact of parental education on higher education participation, gender balance, participation of migrant and mature students in higher education, and data on part-time students.

1.2.1. Access and participation

Central to the social dimension of the Bologna Process is the aim that the student body should reflect the diversity of the population, and that the background of students should not have an impact on their access to and participation in higher education. Given the diversity of socio-economic and cultural realities across the EHEA, as well as the responsibility for managing education and higher education systems that lies with public authorities, each country decides which characteristics to consider when comparing the composition of the student body with the total population. The societal groups which are identified as under-represented in higher education may therefore also differ between countries.

Nevertheless, some common themes are inevitable across countries: low socio-economic background (in the form of low income or the low educational background of parents), gender, immigrant status and disability are often agreed as main aspects of disadvantage. Such characteristics are often central to inclusion policies ([4]) as well as lifelong learning strategies for adjustment with individual and labour market needs, 'where higher education institutions play a central role in transferring knowledge and strengthening regional development, including by the continuous development of competences and reinforcement of knowledge alliances' ([5]). Mature students are specifically targeted in many countries, as students from under-represented groups that may be encouraged to enter higher education with a delay or solicited to engage in continuing education in the context of life-long learning strategies.

Parental background

The educational background of parents is one of the most important factors influencing the chances of learners to participate in higher education. Previous editions of the BPIR have observed that students with parents with tertiary educational attainment are most-likely to engage in higher education study programmes (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020).

Figure 1.4 depicts first-cycle new entrants with parents of high educational attainment, and the corresponding proportion of people with high educational attainment (ISCED 5-8) in the hypothetical parents' cohort. The figure presents the situation in 2021 ([6]). Due to changes in the methodology for data collection in 2021, break in series makes the comparison with previous years not feasible. The definition of level of education of parents has also changed. For more details, see the Glossary and methodological notes.

([4]) EURASHE's statement for the European Higher Education Area ministers' conference in Rome 2020.

([5]) Bucharest Communiqué 2012, p. 2.

([6]) Due to changes in the methodology for data collection in 2021, comparison with previous years is not feasible. For more details, see the Glossary and methodological notes.

Figure 1.4: Relationship between the educational background of first-cycle new entrants (ISCED 6) and the educational attainment of their parents' cohort (population aged 45-64), 2020/2021

Share of population aged 45-64 with high educational attainment

Share of population aged 45-64 with high educational attainment
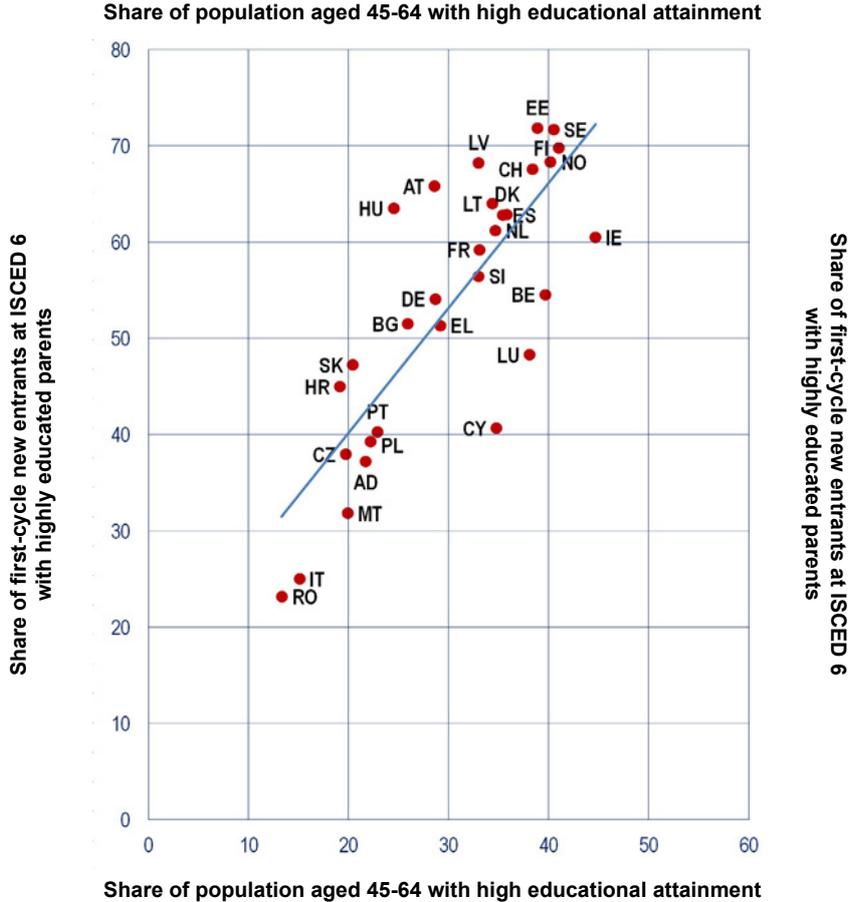
	RO	IT	MT	AD	CZ	PL	PT	CY	HR	SK	LU	EL	BG	DE	BE
New entrants	23.2	25.1	31.9	37.3	38.0	39.3	40.4	40.7	45.1	47.3	48.4	51.4	51.6	54.2	54.6
Hypothetical Parents cohort	13.3	15.1	19.9	21.7	19.7	22.2	22.9	34.8	19.1	20.4	37.4	29.2	25.9	28.7	39.7

	SI	FR	IE	NL	ES	DK	HU	LT	AT	CH	LV	NO	FI	SE	EE
New entrants	56.5	59.3	60.6	61.3	62.9	63.0	63.6	64.1	65.9	67.7	68.3	68.4	69.9	71.8	71.9
Hypothetical Parents cohort	33.0	33.1	43.3	34.3	35.4	35.8	24.5	34.4	28.7	38.4	33.0	40.2	41.0	40.5	38.8

Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, custom extraction and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Break in series for 2021.

For definitions see the Glossary and methodological notes.

Countries are arranged in ascending order according to the share of new entrants.

The graph shows the relationship between the share of first-cycle news entrants (ISCED 6), with highly educated parents, indicated on the Y axis, and the share of the population aged 45-64 with high educational attainment, displayed on the X axis. As seen from the scatterplot, there is a very clear linear relationship, around 0.8. The countries clustering close around the trend line denote a balance between the share of new entrants with parents with high educational attainment and the share of highly educated population. In 2021, in 17 of 30 countries with available data (56%) the share of new entrants was higher than 50% and the corresponding share of parents with a high educational attainment level was around a third of the population or in some cases even higher. Bulgaria and Hungary had also very high shares of new entrants (above 50%) with parents' cohort aged 45-64 accounting for a fourth of the total population. For example, in Finland, Sweden and Estonia the share of new entrants was about 70% with corresponding share of population aged 45-64 with high education attainment around 40%. On the other end, in Romania the share of new entrants was 23.2% with corresponding share of population with high educational attainment of 13.3%.

The analysis show that the educational background of parents is still a robust predictor of whether young people are likely to participate in higher education.

Gender balance

Equal opportunities for men and women to participate in higher education is a central concern of the social dimension within the Bologna Process. It is important to consider not only trends regarding overall numbers, but also gender distribution in different fields of study.

Figure 1.5 shows the percentage of women among new entrants in tertiary education in 2016 and 2021. As the figure demonstrates, in 2016, the share of female entrants was high (50% and above) in 37 out of 43 (86%) of the countries. In 2021 female students were in a majority in every EHEA country (40 out of 43 with available data) except Ukraine, Liechtenstein, and San Marino.

Figure 1.5: Share of women among new entrants in tertiary education (ISCED 5-8), 2015/2016 and 2020/2021
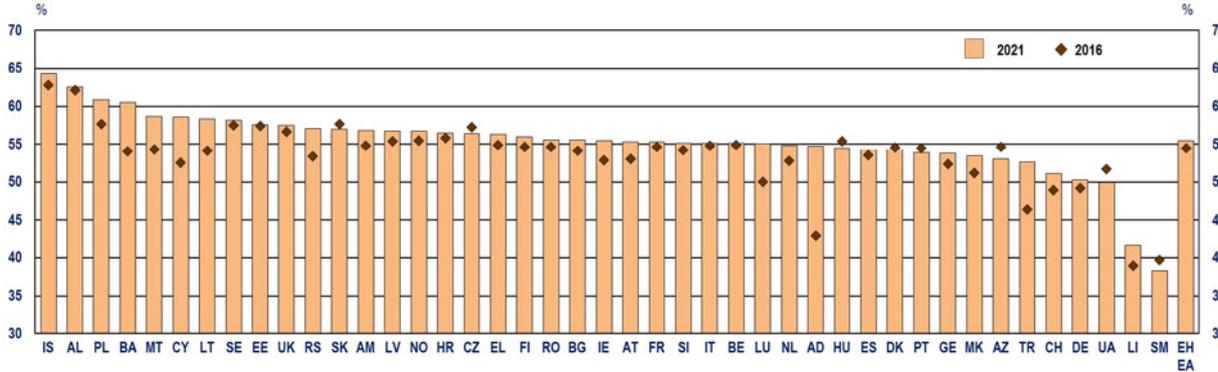
%	IS	AL	PL	BA	MT	CY	LT	SE	EE	UK	RS	SK	AM	LV	NO	HR	CZ	EL	FI	RO	BG	IE
2021	64.3	62.5	60.9	60.5	58.7	58.6	58.4	58.2	57.6	57.5	57.1	57.0	56.8	56.7	56.7	56.5	56.4	56.3	55.9	55.6	55.5	55.4
2016	62.8	62.1	57.7	54.1	54.3	52.5	54.1	57.5	57.4	56.6	53.4	57.7	54.8	55.4	55.5	55.8	57.2	54.9	54.6	54.7	54.1	52.9

	AT	FR	SI	IT	BE	LU	NL	AD	HU	ES	DK	PT	GE	MK	AZ	TR	CH	DE	UA	LI	SM	EHEA
2021	55.3	55.3	55.2	55.2	55.2	55.0	54.8	54.8	54.5	54.3	54.3	53.9	53.8	53.5	53.1	52.6	51.1	50.2	49.9	41.6	38.3	55.4
2016	53.1	54.7	54.2	54.8	54.9	50.0	52.8	42.9	55.4	53.5	54.6	54.5	52.4	51.2	54.6	46.4	48.9	49.2	51.7	38.9	39.7	54.5

Source: Eurostat, UOE, OECD and additional collection for the other EHEA countries (extract 26 January 2024)

Notes:

Countries are arranged in descending order by the share of women new entrants for 2021.

EHEA: Refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

The share of women among new entrants in 2021 was the highest in Iceland, Albania, Poland, and Bosnia°and°Herzegovina – above 60% in all four countries.

In Germany, Switzerland, Türkiye, and Andorra where the male entrants were a majority in 2016, the female participation increased to a level above 50% in 2021. As the figure demonstrates, looking at the change compared to 2016, the EHEA median slightly increased (55.4% in 2021 compared to 54.5% in 2016). This indicates that the trend for men to be under-represented in higher education has slightly grown during this five-year period.

The highest increases of female new entrants' share were observed in Andorra (11.9 percentage points), followed by Bosnia and Herzegovina (6.4 percentage points), Türkiye (6.2 percentage points), and Cyprus (6.1 percentage points). The highest decrease was registered in Ukraine (-1.8 percentage points) and San Marino (-1.4 percentage points).

While the overall change in the share of female and male students' participation is an important consideration, a clearer picture emerges through analysis of gender shares in different study fields.

Figure 1.6 depicts the median share of women among enrolled students in the first and second cycle by field of education in 2020/2021.

Figure 1.6: Median percentage of women among enrolled students in Bologna structures by field of education and level of Bologna structure (ISCED 6 and 7), 2021

Field	ISCED 6	ISCED 7
Education	80.3	80.5
Health and welfare	77.3	71.3
Arts and humanities	65.9	65.2
Social sciences, journalism, and information	64.4	69.4
Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics	56.3	57.8
Business, administration, and law	55.9	58.3
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary	49.4	63.3
Services	42.4	46.0
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	25.6	35.0
Information and Communication Technologies	18.9	27.5
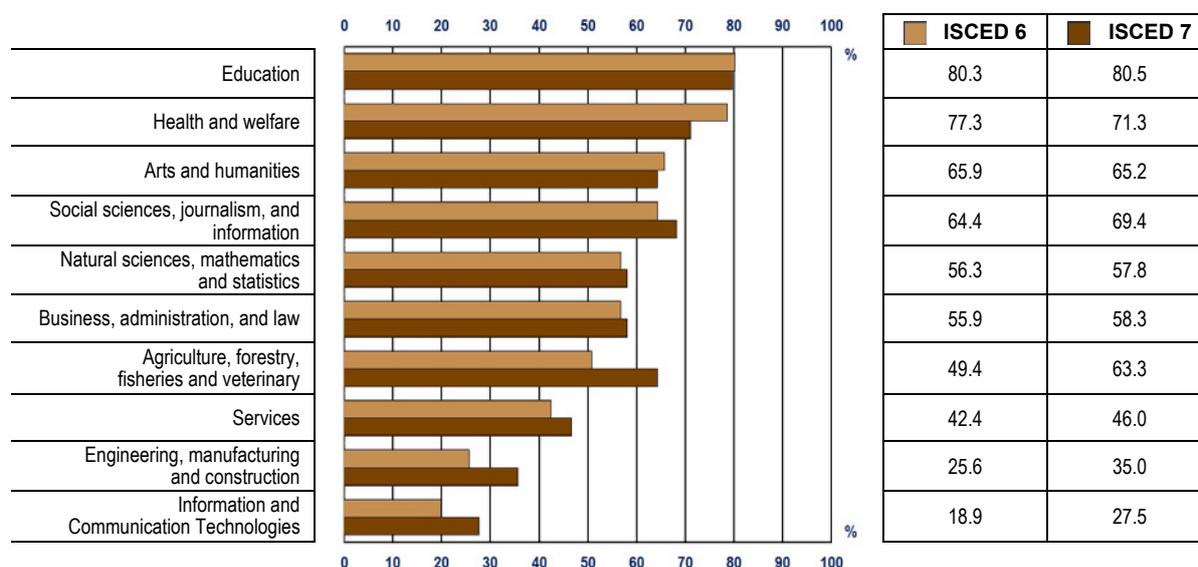
Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Fields are arranged in descending order by the median share of women at ISCED 6 level.

The median value is derived as the median of the percentage of women enrolled in Bologna structures across all EHEA countries for which data are available per ISCED level.

The country coverage varies across different study fields (see the Glossary and methodological notes).

In 2021, the median share of women varied between the fields and the different education cycles. The gender distribution among the selected fields of study should be observed in the context of the total enrolment rates in these fields. Across EHEA countries, for both education cycles, the highest median share was registered in the field of 'Education' (above 80%), followed by the field of 'Health and welfare' (above 70%). The 'Education' and 'Health and welfare' fields show the most important gender gap with both fields registering female participation of above 70% at ISCED°6 and ISCED 7 levels. In another four education fields, female representation is above 50% at both education levels. The lowest participation was registered in the field of 'Information and communication technology' as well as 'Engineering' at both ISCED levels. In these fields the difference (around nine percentage points) between the two education cycles was much more important compared to the other fields (except for the field of 'Agriculture' where the difference is close to 14 percentage points). In these two fields female participation was significantly higher in the second cycle than in the first cycle. In 2021 in 8 out of 10 fields, the percentage of women was higher in the second cycle. The share was almost equal in 'Arts and humanities'. Only in 'Health and welfare', the median share was substantially lower in the second cycle (71.3%) than in the first (77.3%) – despite still being very high. Considering this analysis with relation to gender distribution among the selected fields in EHEA countries, women participation was the strongest in 'Education' and 'Health and welfare'. In contrast, the male participation was considerably stronger (around 70% median share, both levels considered) in 'Information and communication' and 'Engineering' studies' fields. Compared to 2016/2017, the trends are similar. However, in the field of 'Social sciences' and 'Business administration' the female median share at ISCED 7 increased while the median share at ISCED 6 decreased.

Migrant status

Having a migrant background is also an important factor influencing the chances of learners accessing higher education, especially if it coincides with low parental education. Immigrants and children of immigrants might lack the sufficient cultural, economic, and social capital, which have important effects on educational success (see e.g., Griga and Hadjar, 2014).

It is difficult to gather comparable and representative information on the participation of migrant students in higher education. Eurostat data presented in Figure 1.7 uses the country of birth as the criterion defining migrants, and this has two major limitations. Firstly, the group of foreign-born students includes not only migrants who become students, but also students who moved to the country for the purposes of study, i.e., mobile students. Not only does the concept of 'foreign born' mix groups with very different characteristics, but when numbers of mobile students are substantial, as they are in several countries, the picture is distorted.

The second limitation of this data are that children of immigrants born in the country (often referred to as 'second-generation immigrants') are excluded. Also, series report a break in 2021 due to changes in the methodology for data collection. For these reasons, data must be interpreted with caution ([7]).

Figure 1.7 presents the participation rates in tertiary education of students aged 18 to 29 as a percentage of the respective total population based on their migration status, showing the situation in 2016 and 2021. The graph shows the participation of native-born 18–29-year-olds as a proportion of the total native-born population in this age group. Similarly, the following graph shows the foreign-born population thus provides the participation of the 18–29-year-olds compared to the total foreign-born population in this age group. This enables clear comparison between the two groups.

Figure 1.7: Participation rates in tertiary education among people aged 18 to 29, foreign-born, native-born and total population, 2016 and 2021
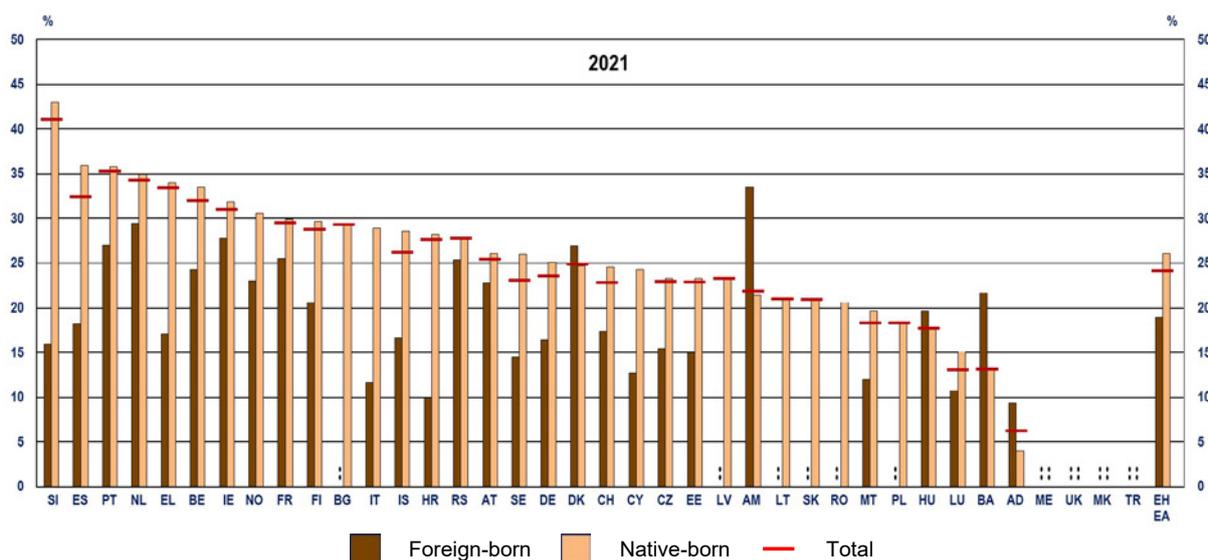
([7])   For more details, see the Glossary and methodological notes.
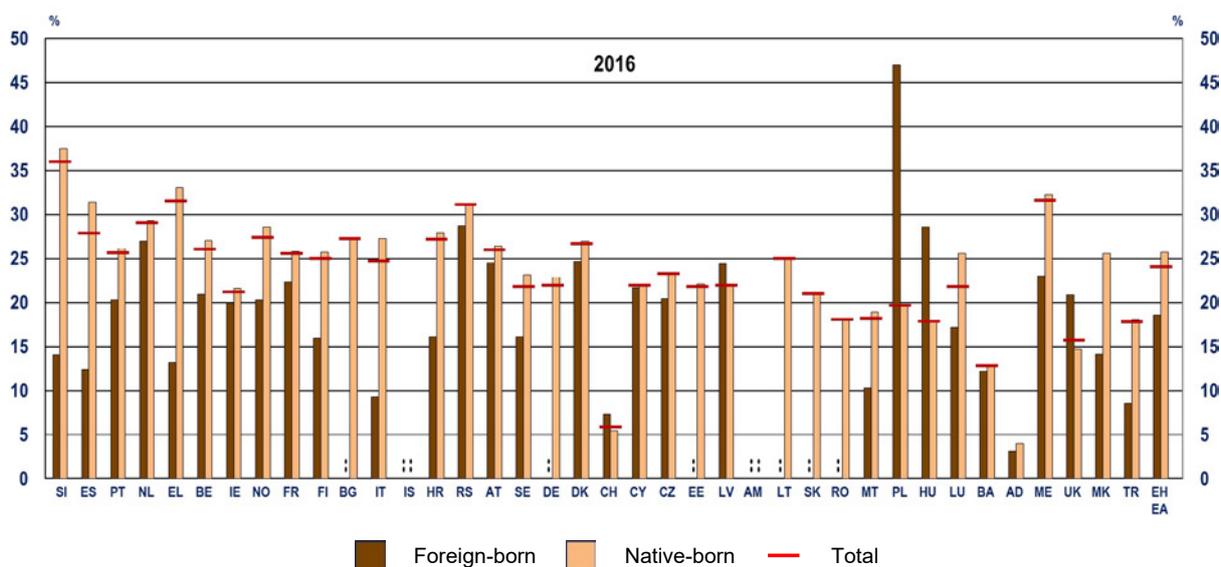
2021

%	SI	ES	PT	NL	EL	BE	IE	NO	FR	FI	BG	IT	IS	HR	RS	AT	SE	DE	DK	CH
Native-born (2021)	43.0	36.0	35.8	35.0	34.0	33.5	31.9	30.6	29.9	29.7	29.2	28.9	28.6	28.2	27.9	26.1	26.0	25.1	24.7	24.6
Foreign-born (2021)	15.9	18.2	27.0	29.5	17.0	24.3	27.8	23.0	25.5	20.6	:	11.6	16.6	10.0	25.4	22.8	14.5	16.5	26.9	17.4
Total (2021)	41.1	32.4	35.3	34.3	33.4	32.0	31.0	:	29.6	28.8	29.4	:	26.3	27.7	27.8	25.5	23.1	23.6	24.9	22.9

	CY	CZ	EE	LV	AM	LT	SK	RO	MT	PL	HU	LU	BA	AD	ME	UK	MK	TR		EHEA
Native-born (2021)	24.3	23.3	23.3	23.2	21.4	21.2	20.9	20.6	19.7	18.4	17.7	15.1	13.0	4.0	:	:	:	:		26.1
Foreign-born (2021)	12.7	15.4	15.0	:	33.5	:	:	:	12.0	:	19.7	10.8	21.7	9.3	:	:	:	:		18.9
Total (2021)	:	23.0	23.0	23.3	21.9	21.0	21.0	:	18.3	18.4	17.8	13.1	13.2	6.3	:	:	:	:		24.2

2016

%	SI	ES	PT	NL	EL	BE	IE	NO	FR	FI	BG	IT	IS	HR	RS	AT	SE	DE	DK	CH
Native-born (2016)	37.4	31.4	26.2	29.3	33.1	27.0	21.6	28.5	25.8	25.7	27.1	27.2	:	28.0	31.3	26.4	23.1	22.9	27.0	5.5
Foreign-born (2016)	14.1	12.4	20.3	27.0	13.2	20.9	20.0	20.3	22.3	16.0	:	9.3	:	16.1	28.7	24.6	16.1	:	24.7	7.4
Total (2016)	36.0	27.9	25.7	29.1	31.6	26.1	21.3	27.4	25.6	25.1	27.3	24.8	:	27.2	31.2	26.1	21.9	22.0	26.7	5.9

	CY	CZ	EE	LV	AM	LT	SK	RO	MT	PL	HU	LU	BA	AD	ME	UK	MK	TR		EHEA
Native-born (2016)	22.1	23.4	22.1	21.9	:	25.1	20.9	18.1	18.9	19.6	17.7	25.6	12.9	4.0	32.2	14.7	25.6	18.1		25.7
Foreign-born (2016)	21.7	20.4	:	24.4	:	:	:	:	10.4	47.0	28.6	17.2	12.2	3.1	23.0	20.9	14.1	8.6		18.6
Total (2016)	22.0	23.4	21.9	22.0	:	25.1	21.0	18.1	18.3	19.7	18.0	21.8	12.9	:	31.7	15.8	:	17.8		24.1

Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, custom extraction, and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

EHEA: Refers to the EHEA median, which was calculated based on countries with available data.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the share of native-born population in 2021.

EHEA: refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

2021: break in series. For more details see the Glossary and methodological notes.

Across EHEA countries, the native-born student population was 17 times more numerous than the foreign-born student population. The EHEA median for the native-born participation of young adults in tertiary education increased to 26.1% in 2021, while the median share of the foreign-born population increased to 18.9%. In most of the countries with available data, the level of participation was lower for foreign-born students, except for Hungary, Denmark, Bosnia°and°Herzegovina, Andorra, and Armenia where the foreign participation was slightly higher. In a fifth of the countries in both time-points the native-born student population was by 10 percentage points larger than the foreign-born student population.

In 2021 disparities continued to be more evident in southern Mediterranean countries where the native-born participation rates were twice as high than those of foreign-born students (Italy, Greece, and Spain). In Hungary and Switzerland, the participation rates of foreign-born students in 2016 were higher than those of native-born students. Hungary maintained the same trend despite the decrease of the foreign-born population in 2021. Conversely, Switzerland inverted the trend as both populations

increased but the native-born population had a more pronounced evolution and outnumbered by 7 percentage points the foreign-born student population share in 2021. Given the methodological problem in some countries of distinguishing between foreign born and mobile students, the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student mobility flows may be part of the explanation for the decreased number of foreign-born students shown in the figure.

Indicators looking at differences in the chances of students attaining higher education by migrant background have similar limitations as Figure 1.7. Data are not available by 'migrant background' as such. Eurostat data are limited to making differences between the foreign-born and the native-born. The indicator looks at the resident population with tertiary attainment, irrespective of the country of graduation. This means that it includes foreign-born young people who arrived in a given country after obtaining a tertiary degree. In addition, it is still not possible to evaluate the chances of second-generation immigrants since they are classified among the native-born population.

Nevertheless, it is still interesting to examine the odds ratios of the native-born over the foreign-born to obtain a higher education degree. On Figure 1.8, when an odds ratio is higher than 1, it means that the native-born population have higher chances to attain higher education; when it is below 1, then the foreign-born population have greater odds to do so.

Figure 1.8: Tertiary education attainment of 25 to 34-year-olds by country of birth: odds ratio of native-born over foreign-born population to complete tertiary education, 2016 and 2021

%	CY	MK	ES	SM	IT	ME	SE	NL	AT	PT	FR	BE	IS	FI	RS
2021	5.71	3.20	2.16	1.50	1.49	1.20	1.17	1.06	1.02	1.0	0.97	0.39	0.93	0.89	0.72
2016	3.57	:	1.75	1.70	1.21	:	0.74	1.49	1.04	:	0.82	1.01	:	1.03	1.18
	BA	DE	CZ	AM	CH	DK	HR	IE	LU	NO	SI	TR	UK		EHEA
2021	0.70	0.65	0.55	0.50	0.48	0.41	:	:	:	:	:	:	:		0.98
2016	0.80	0.68	1.26	:	:	0.49	0.60	0.84	0.60	1.23	1.90	0.59	0.40		1.04
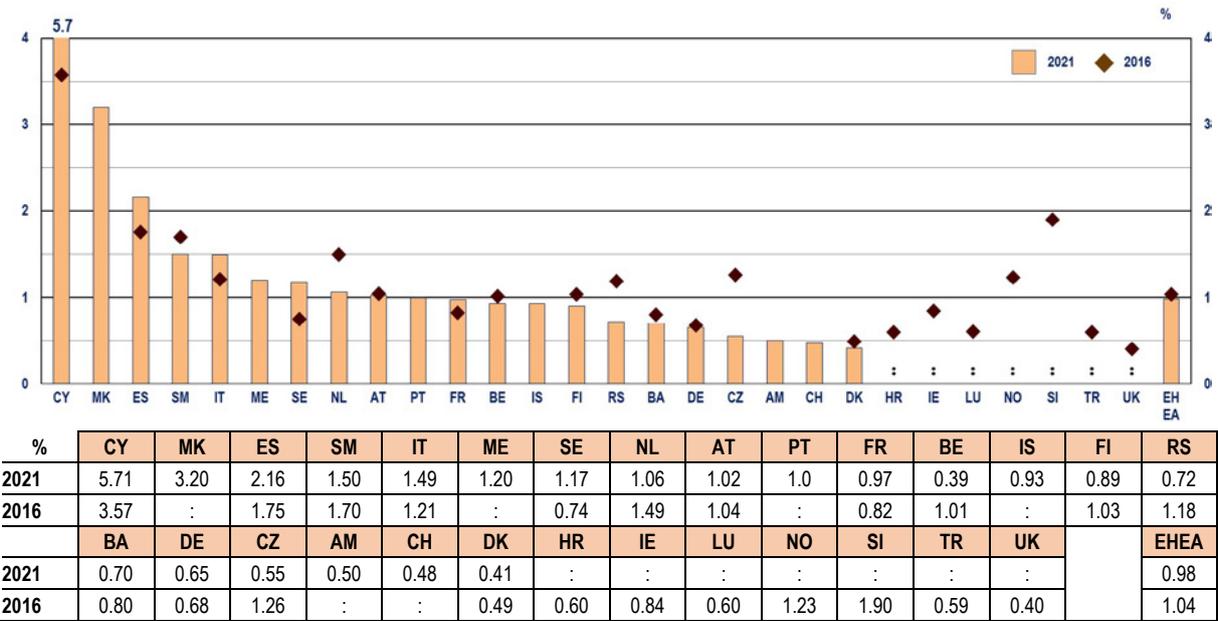
Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, custom extraction, and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.
EHEA: Refers to the EHEA median, which was calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the odds ratio values in 2021.
EHEA: refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.
2021: break in series (see Glossary and methodological note)

In 2021 the EHEA median of the odds ratio indicates an increase of tertiary education attainment of foreign-born population. Figure 1.8 reveals that in 2021 the biggest differences between the native-born and the foreign-born population in their chances to attain higher education existed in Cyprus, where the probability that native-born achieve higher education degree was five times higher compared to foreign-born. Foreign-born young people also had lower chances to attain higher education in North Macedonia, Spain, San Marino, Italy, Montenegro, and Sweden. In the Netherlands, and Austria the imbalance was not large and slightly above 1 indicating little prevalence of odds for native-born population, while in France the foreign-born population had slightly lower attainment chances. In Portugal the attainment odds ratio indicated balanced chances for the two groups. At the other end of the scale, the native-born population had much lower odds to complete higher education than the foreign-born in Denmark and Switzerland where the odds were below 0.5.

When looking at changes between 2016 and 2021 in the odds ratios, the most substantial decreases for the native-born (indicating increases in the relative chances of the foreign-born population) took place in nine countries. In Czechia, while in 2016 the native-born population had higher odds to attain higher education, the situation reversed in 2021. The opposite trend was observed in Sweden, where an increase of the native-born population reversed the odds in 2021. In Cyprus, Spain and Italy, the native-born odds ratio increased further, which increased the gap between native-born and foreign-born.

Part-time students

The social dimension of higher education is also informed by the availability of part-time studies in a higher education system. Socio-economic constraints may influence the opportunity to access full-time study. For example, people willing to follow higher education studies may have to be in full-time employment during their studies. Part-time study proposes more flexible attendance time-schedule and have a lower cost. Therefore, part-time study could be a more feasible option for people who have more limited financial means or people who are willing to continue their education but are already engaged in employment.

Figure 1.9 shows the percentage of students enrolled as part-timers among students aged 20 to 24 and those aged 30 to 34.

Figure 1.9: Students enrolled as part-timers in tertiary education by country and age (%), 2016 and 2021
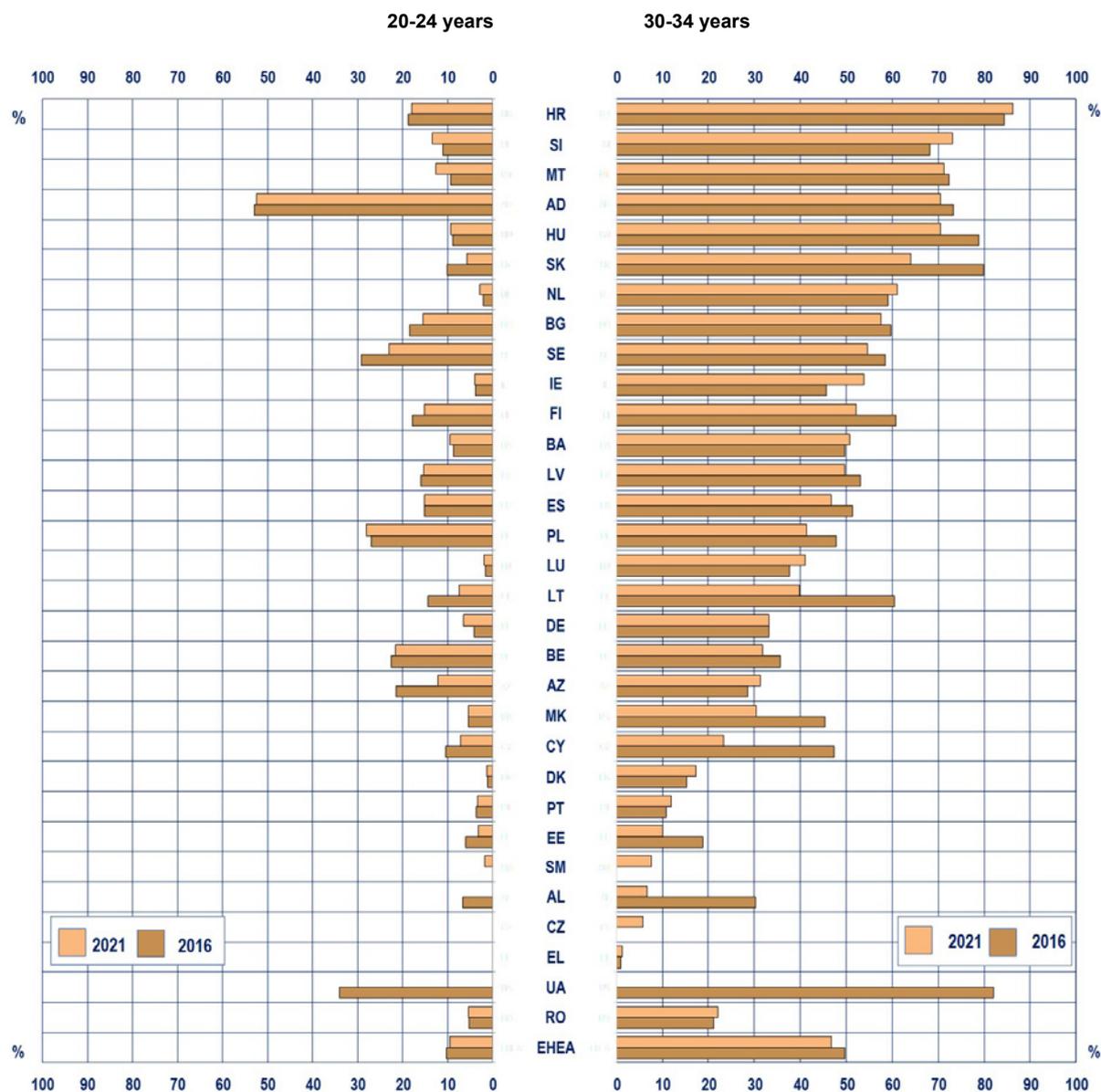
%	HR	SI	MT	AD	HU	SK	NL	BG	SE	IE	FI	BA	LV	ES	PL	LU
Y20-24 2021	18.0	13.4	12.7	52.5	9.4	5.7	2.8	15.4	23.1	3.9	15.2	9.5	15.3	15.1	28.1	1.9
2016	18.8	11.1	9.3	52.9	8.9	10.1	2.0	18.5	29.2	3.8	17.8	8.6	15.9	15.2	26.9	1.6
Y30-34 2021	86.3	73.2	71.2	70.5	70.5	64.0	61.4	57.5	54.6	53.9	52.2	50.7	49.7	46.8	41.4	41.0
2016	84.3	68.2	72.4	73.2	78.8	79.9	59.1	59.7	58.4	45.7	60.7	49.7	53.0	51.4	47.8	37.7

%	LT	DE	BE	AZ	MK	CY	RO	DK	PT	EE	SM	AL	CZ	EL	UA	EHEA
Y20-24 2021	7.5	6.5	21.6	12.1	5.4	7.2	5.5	1.2	3.3	3.1	1.7	:	:	:	:	9.4
2016	14.3	4.1	22.6	21.4	5.4	10.4	5.3	1.1	3.7	6.0	:	6.6	:	:	34.0	10.2
Y30-34 2021	39.8	33.2	31.9	31.4	30.3	23.4	22.1	17.4	11.9	10.1	7.6	6.6	5.7	1.2	:	46.8
2016	60.5	33.2	35.6	28.6	45.4	47.3	21.1	15.3	10.8	18.8	:	30.2	:	1.0	82.0	49.7

Source: Eurostat, UOE custom extraction and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

Notes:

Countries are arranged in descending order by the participation of mature students (30-34 years old) in part-time studies in 2021.
EHEA: refer to the EHEA median based on the countries with available data.

The EHEA median for both age groups slightly decreased between the two time points. However, the share of part-timers aged 30-34 remained significantly bigger compared to the younger group. In 2016 in 14 of 29 countries with available data, the part-time student population aged 30-34 represented more than half of the total student population in this age group. In 2021 12 out of 30 countries with available data the part-timers' population was more than half of the student population aged 30-34. Data show that the countries register different patterns in the evolution of the part-time student populations in both age groups. There was, however, a common reality that students aged 30-34 had a higher likelihood of enrolling in part-time studies.

In 2021, the share of part-time students in the age group 30-34 varied between 86% in Croatia to 1.2% in Greece. The shares of the younger part-timers ranged between 52.5% in Andorra and 1.7% in San Marino. In 12 of 30 countries, part-time students in the older age group represented more than half of the total number of students of the same age group. At the other end, four countries had shares of below 10%. Observing the younger age group, only Andorra had a part-time student population of more than half the total student population in this age group and 15 countries registered a share of below 10%. Seven countries had rates of part-time students aged 20-24 below 5%.

The distribution of part-time students' shares among the respective student populations varied significantly across EHEA countries. In 2021, the total 20–24-year-old student population in the Netherlands was 8 times bigger than the total population of the older age group while the number of younger part-time students was more than twice smaller. Conversely, in Belgium the part-time student population aged 20-24 was almost 9 times bigger than the part-time student population aged 30-34, and the total population of students aged 20-24 was 13 times bigger than the population of the older group. For both time points, in the two countries, the share of part-time students in the older age group was higher compared to the share of their counterparts in the younger age group, however the gap between the two part-timers age groups in the Netherlands was more significant.

Comparing the two time-points for the countries with available data, the total student population of the older age group (30-34) showed a considerably higher increase (34%) compared to the younger age group (4.4%). The part-time student population aged 20-24 showed a considerable decrease (26.7%), while the older part-timers' population remained almost the same. In seven of the eight countries where both part-time students' age groups registered an increase, the growth of the older age group was more important. Between the two time points, the share of part-time students in the older age group increased the most in Ireland (8.2 percentage points) followed by Slovenia (5 percentage points). Decreases of part-time students in this age-group occurred in 16 countries across the EHEA with Albania, Cyprus and Lithuania registering a decrease of more than 20 percentage points. For the age group 20-24, the highest increase was noted in Malta (3.4 percentage points), followed by Germany and Slovenia (more than 2 percentage points). 14 countries registered a decrease of the share of younger part-timers aged 20-24. The most pronounced decreases were observed in Azerbaijan (more than 9 percentage points), Lithuania and Sweden (more than 6 percentage points), Slovakia (more than 4 percentage points).

Mature students

An important aspect of the social dimension is that higher education should be open to non-traditional learners who missed the opportunity to enter higher education when leaving secondary education. The number of over 30-year-old students in the higher education population can be influenced by different factors. It may indicate a delayed entry into higher education studies after completion of secondary education or be the result of an extended study duration period, which has traditionally been the case in the Nordic countries, for example. The introduction of polices supporting adults' participation in higher education and the completion rates might also have an impact on the size of mature students' share. Recently introduced policies might have not yet provided for a significant change in the share of the mature students' population. Small share of mature students may also indicate low completion rates.

Figure 1.10 examines the proportion of 'mature' students in tertiary education who are aged 30 years or older in 2016 and 2021.

Figure 1.10: Adults (30-64) who attained their tertiary education degree during adulthood (aged 30-64) as a percentage of all adults (30-64) 2016-2021
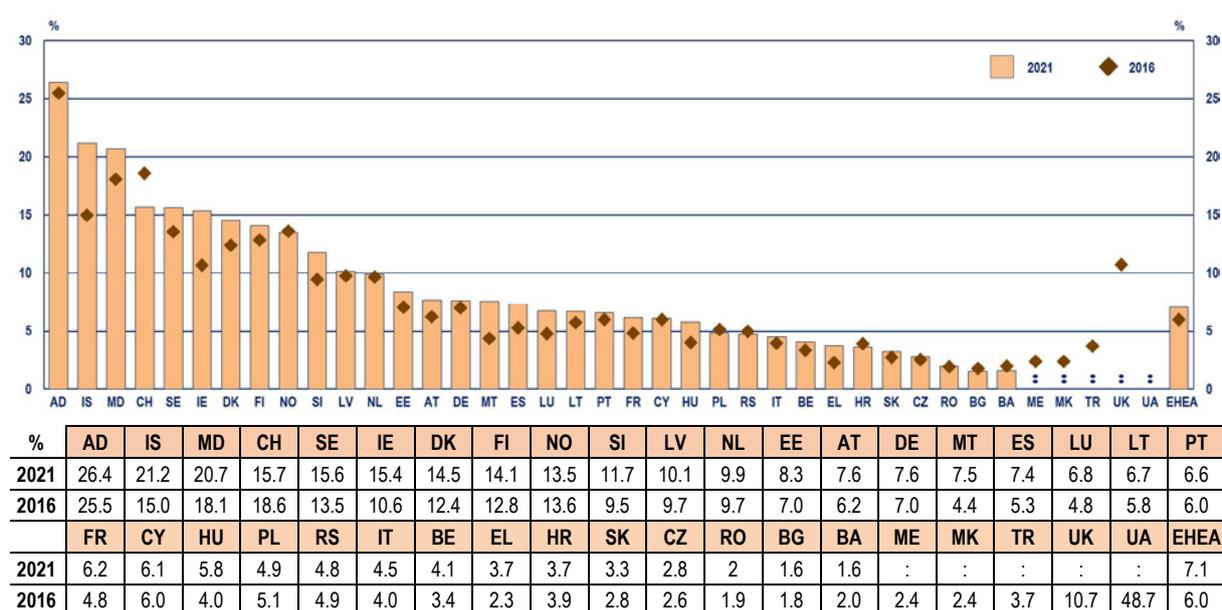
%	AD	IS	MD	CH	SE	IE	DK	FI	NO	SI	LV	NL	EE	AT	DE	MT	ES	LU	LT	PT
2021	26.4	21.2	20.7	15.7	15.6	15.4	14.5	14.1	13.5	11.7	10.1	9.9	8.3	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.4	6.8	6.7	6.6
2016	25.5	15.0	18.1	18.6	13.5	10.6	12.4	12.8	13.6	9.5	9.7	9.7	7.0	6.2	7.0	4.4	5.3	4.8	5.8	6.0

	FR	CY	HU	PL	RS	IT	BE	EL	HR	SK	CZ	RO	BG	BA	ME	MK	TR	UK	UA	EHEA
2021	6.2	6.1	5.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.7	3.3	2.8	2	1.6	1.6	:	:	:	:	:	7.1
2016	4.8	6.0	4.0	5.1	4.9	4.0	3.4	2.3	3.9	2.8	2.6	1.9	1.8	2.0	2.4	2.4	3.7	10.7	48.7	6.0

Source: Eurostat, EU-LFS, custom extraction, and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.
EHEA: refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

Notes:
Countries are arranged in descending order by the share of adults who attained tertiary education degree in 2021.
2021: break in series (see the Glossary and methodological notes).

The number of adult graduates continued to grow between 2016 and 2021. The EHEA median share for adults aged 30-64 attaining their tertiary degree in adulthood increased from 6% in 2016 to 7.1% in 2021. In 2021, 6 of 34 countries with available data registered the highest shares (above 15%). At the opposite end, 11 countries registered shares of mature adults who attained tertiary education below 5%. Overall, the Scandinavian countries registered high proportion of mature students in both time-points, which indicates that adult graduates constitute a substantial share of the total graduates' population in these countries. In 2021, the total mature graduates' population in the EHEA countries accounted for 6.7% of the total population aged 30-64.

The evolution between 2016 and 2021 evidenced that there is clearly an upward trend − in 27 of 34 countries with available data the share of mature students increased while the number of countries registering a share of adult graduates below 5% decreased. Iceland noted the highest growth (6.2°percentage points) followed by Ireland (4.7 percentage points) and Malta (3.1 percentage points). Conversely, eight countries noted a decrease in the share of mature students, with Switzerland, despite being among the countries with the highest rates for both time-points, showing the largest decline of

2.9 percentage points. Comparing the two time points, the lowest shares (below 5%) continued to be registered in Central and South-East Europe. Recent policy changes or low completion rates may be an explanation for the reported low participation rates.

1.3. Academic staff

Section 1.1 showed the ways in which student enrolments have developed between 2016 and 2021 in the framework of the Bologna Process. This section focuses on the corresponding trends about academic staff. Figure 1.11 presents the percentage change in the number of academic staff between 2016 and 2021.

Figure 1.11: Percentage change in the total number of academic staff in 2016 and 2021
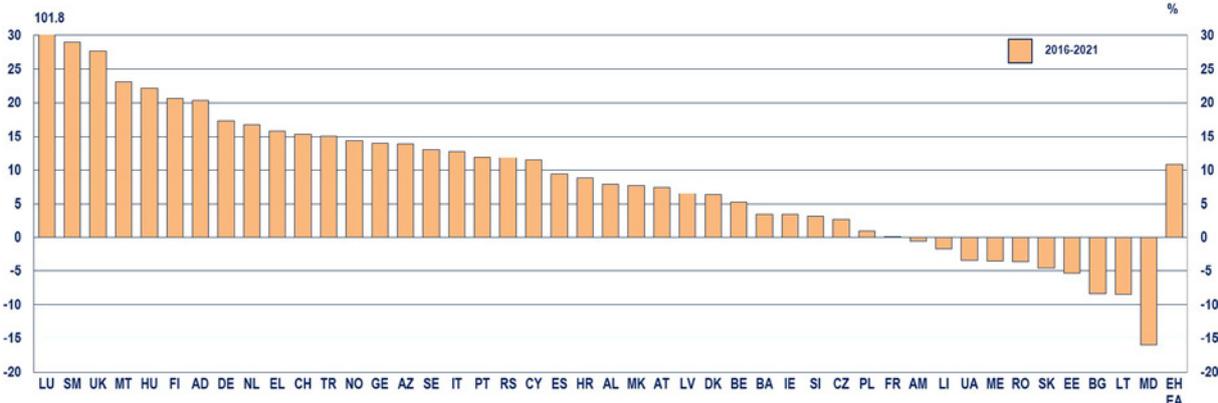
2016-2021

	LU	SM	UK	MT	HU	FI	AD	DE	NL	EL	CH	TR	NO	GE	AZ	SE	IT	PT	RS	CY	ES	HR	AL
%	101.8	29.0	27.6	23.2	22.1	20.7	20.4	17.4	16.8	15.8	15.4	15.1	14.3	13.9	13.9	13.0	12.8	12.0	11.8	11.5	9.4	8.8	7.9

	MK	AT	LV	DK	BE	BA	IE	SI	CZ	PL	FR	AM	LI	UA	ME	RO	SK	EE	BG	LT	MD		EHEA
%	7.7	7.5	6.6	6.4	5.3	3.4	3.4	3.1	2.7	0.9	0.0	-0.6	-1.7	-3.4	-3.5	-3.6	-4.6	-5.3	-8.4	-8.4	-16.0		10.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries. OECD for UK data (2021).

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the percentage change in the number of academic staff between 2016 and 2021.

EHEA: refers to the percentage change of the total academic staff across the countries with available data for both reference years.

The total number of academic staff increased from 1.9 million in 2016 to 2.2 million in 2021. The median value for number of academic staff across EHEA countries in 2021 was 20 031 while in 2016 the median was lower (18 296). Among the seven countries with big cohort of academic staff (above 100°000) in 2021, the United Kingdom, Germany and Türkiye registered above 15% increase of the total academic staff, followed by Italy and Spain with respectively 12.8% and 9.4% increase. France maintained the level of 2016, while Ukraine registered a decrease. Small education systems with smaller number of academic staff (below 2 500) registered increases of more than 20% with Luxembourg reaching 101.8%, while Montenegro registered a decrease. Overall, in 2021, more than half (33 of 44) of the countries with available data registered an increase in the number of their academic staff. Among the 10 countries which recorded a decrease, the largest decrease was registered in Moldova (-16%), while in the remaining nine countries the decrease was below -°10%.

Changes in the number of academic staff during the period did not necessarily match changes in the number of students enrolling in tertiary education (see Figure 1.2). In more than half of the countries with available data across EHEA, both the student enrolments, and the academic staff increased between 2016 and 2021. It is noteworthy that in half of the countries in this group the increase in the number of students was higher compared to the increase in the number of academic staff. In 10 of

45 countries with available data the decrease in the number of student enrolments was accompanied by an increase in the number of academic staff. Interestingly, among the 25 countries with student population above 200 000 (ISCED 5-8) in 2021, more nearly half registered a more important increase in the number of student enrolments compared to the increase of the academic staff. In this group, among the 12 countries with student population above 500 000, more than half registered more important increase of the number of students with France registering significantly larger student enrolment increase (13%) and a very modest increase in the academic staff (0.03%). Conversely, Poland registered -°15% decrease of the number of student enrolments and 0.9% increase of academic staff. Among the seven countries with the largest increase of academic staff (above 20%), only Hungary registered a decrease in the student enrolments (-2.7%), while all the other countries noted an increase. Among the 10 countries which registered a decline in the number of academic staff in 2021, all countries except Liechtenstein and Romania noted a decrease in the student enrolment rates as well. Lithuania and Moldova registered a decrease of more than 21% in the number of student enrolments in 2021 also noting the largest decline in the number of academic staff, while Bosnia and Herzegovina which registered the highest decrease in the student enrolments (-22.7%) registered a slight increase in the number of academic staff (3.4%).

Examining the proportion of total academic staff per total student population, it is observed that in Luxembourg, being among the countries with the smallest total student population in 2021 (below 10°000) the academic staff increased the most, while the increase of the number of student enrolments was moderate (10.2%). In this country the number of academic staff per 1°000 students was higher in 2021 than in 2016. Conversely, in Greece, which was among the countries with the largest student population (above 500°000), the increase of academic staff was significantly lower (15.8%), but the student enrolments increased more (18.9%), compared to Luxembourg, hence the proportion of academic staff per 1°000 students, was lower in 2021. France which had a very small (0.03%) increase of academic staff but had one of the largest student populations and registered an important increase of student enrolments (13.3%), noted a slight decrease of the availability of academic staff per 1°000 students in 2021. Interestingly, in Lithuania, which was among the countries registering the largest decrease in academic staff (-°8.4%) and registered the second high decrease of student enrolments (-°21.6%) noted a higher proportion of academic staff per 1°000 students in 2021.

Age is an important characteristic of academic staff, and particularly relevant in looking to system-level planning. It is an indicator for the preparedness of the education systems to ensure sufficient human capacity to renovate itself in the future.

Figure 1.12 presents the share of academic staff aged 50 and over for 2016 and 2021. This category is the most significant to consider as it represents the staff closest to the age of retirement.

Figure 1.12: Percentage of academic staff aged 50 or over, 2016 and 2021
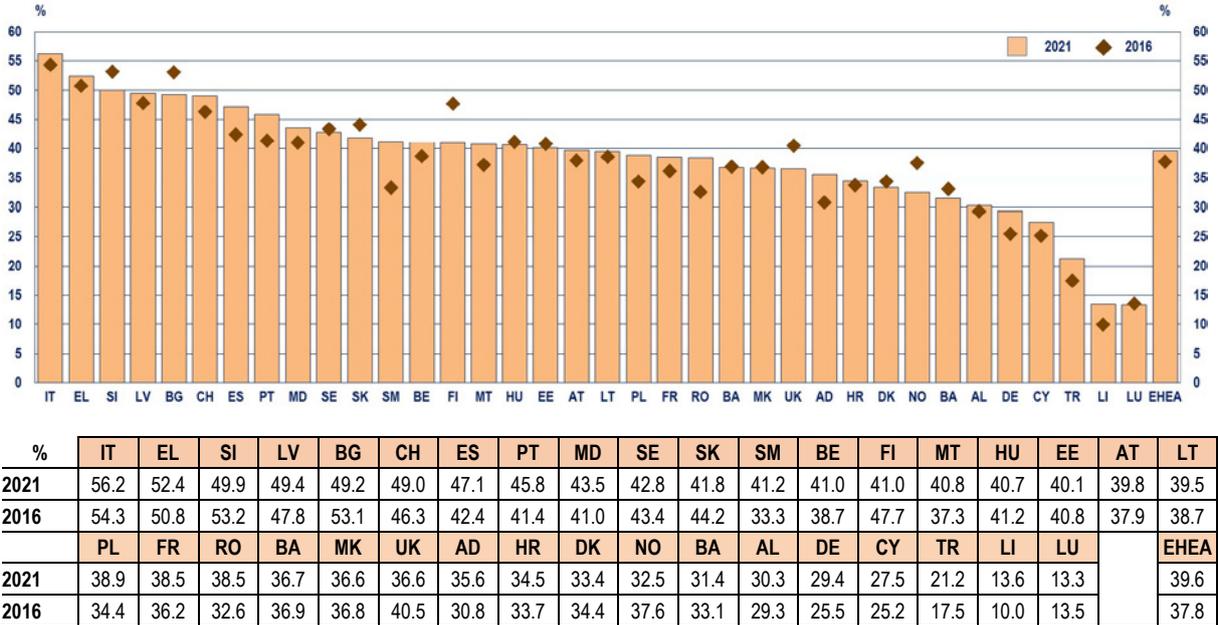
%	IT	EL	SI	LV	BG	CH	ES	PT	MD	SE	SK	SM	BE	FI	MT	HU	EE	AT	LT
2021	56.2	52.4	49.9	49.4	49.2	49.0	47.1	45.8	43.5	42.8	41.8	41.2	41.0	41.0	40.8	40.7	40.1	39.8	39.5
2016	54.3	50.8	53.2	47.8	53.1	46.3	42.4	41.4	41.0	43.4	44.2	33.3	38.7	47.7	37.3	41.2	40.8	37.9	38.7
	PL	**FR**	**RO**	**BA**	**MK**	**UK**	**AD**	**HR**	**DK**	**NO**	**BA**	**AL**	**DE**	**CY**	**TR**	**LI**	**LU**		**EHEA**
2021	38.9	38.5	38.5	36.7	36.6	36.6	35.6	34.5	33.4	32.5	31.4	30.3	29.4	27.5	21.2	13.6	13.3		39.6
2016	34.4	36.2	32.6	36.9	36.8	40.5	30.8	33.7	34.4	37.6	33.1	29.3	25.5	25.2	17.5	10.0	13.5		37.8

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries. OECD for UK data (2021).

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order according to the percentage of academic staff aged 50 or over in 2021.

EHEA: refers to the EHEA median, which was calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

Between 2016 and 2021 an increase of the share of academic staff over 50 years of age was observed in 22 out of 36 countries with available data. The EHEA median for academic staff over 50 years of age increased by 1.8 percentage points. This clearly indicates an ageing trend in academic staff in many countries.

In 2021, 17 of 36 countries registered a share of more than 40% of academic staff over 50 years of age. In two countries the academic staff over 50 years of age accounted for more than half of the total academic staff population, while in 2016 four countries had more than half of the academic staff aged 50 years and more. While in Slovenia and Bulgaria, the rates slightly decreased to below 50% in 2021, in Italy and Greece, the share of the staff over 50 increased further compared to 2016. Greece, Italy, and Slovenia were the countries with the lowest share of academic staff below 35 years of age (below 10%). In 2021, Türkiye and Luxembourg were among the countries which registered the lowest shares (respectively 21.2% and 13.3%) of academic staff over 50 years of age in 2021. In Türkiye, which was among the countries with the largest total academic staff population (above 150°000), the group of 35 to 39 years of age had the largest share (44%). Luxembourg was among the countries with the smallest total academic staff population (below 2°000), most of which (53%) was under 35 years of age. In both countries the staff under 35 decreased between 2016 and 2021 while the staff between 35 and 39 increased.

Among the countries with the largest academic staff population in 2021, Germany had the largest number of academic staff (472 418). In Germany the academic staff below 35 years of age had the largest share (40%). In the United Kingdom and France, the academic staff in the 35°-°39 age group was the largest, while the share of academic staff below 35 years of age was smaller (below 20%) compared to the share of the academic staff of over 50 years of age (above 30%).

The results from this analysis show clear tendency of ageing among the academic staff which may consist of a potential risk to human capacity renewal of the EHEA education systems.

Achieving an equitable gender distribution is also an important system-level consideration. Figure 1.13 portrays the gender distribution among academic staff showing the evolution of the share of female staff between 2016 and 2021.

Figure 1.13: Percentage of female academic staff, 2016 and 2021
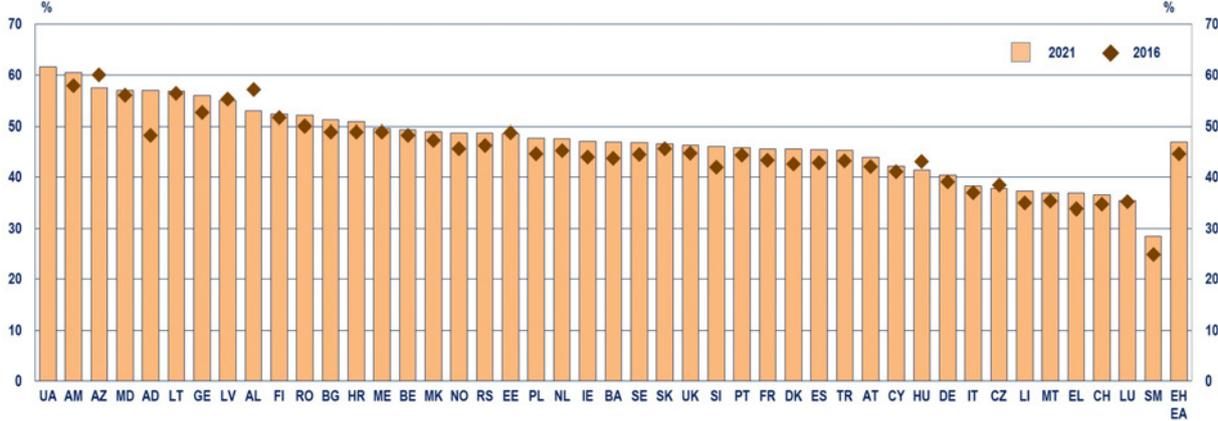
%	UA	AM	AZ	MD	AD	LT	GE	LV	AL	FI	RO	BG	HR	ME	BE	MK	NO	RS	EE	PL	NL	IE	BA
2021	61.7	60.6	57.6	57.1	57.1	56.9	56.0	55.0	53.0	52.4	52.2	51.2	50.9	49.6	49.3	49.0	48.8	48.7	48.6	47.7	47.6	47.1	47.0
2016	:	58.0	60.1	56.0	48.3	56.5	52.6	55.3	57.3	51.7	50.0	48.9	48.9	48.9	48.3	47.3	45.7	46.3	48.8	44.6	45.2	44.0	43.7
	SE	**SK**	**UK**	**SI**	**PT**	**FR**	**DK**	**ES**	**TR**	**AT**	**CY**	**HU**	**DE**	**IT**	**CZ**	**LI**	**MT**	**EL**	**CH**	**LU**	**SM**		**EHEA**
2021	46.8	46.6	46.4	46.1	45.8	45.6	45.6	45.4	45.3	44.0	42.2	41.5	40.4	38.3	37.9	37.3	37.0	37.0	36.5	35.5	28.4		47.0
2016	44.5	45.7	44.8	42.0	44.5	43.4	42.6	42.9	43.3	42.1	41.2	43.2	39.1	37.0	38.4	35.0	35.4	33.8	34.7	35.3	24.9		44.6

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries and OECD for UK data (2021).

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the percentage of female academic staff (2021).
EHEA: refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

In 2021, the EHEA median of the female academic staff was 47% and increased compared to 2016. Across countries, there were large variations. In all the countries below the median the female academic staff was more than a third of the total academic staff, except San Marino, which noted the lowest share (28.4%). The countries with the largest academic staff populations (above 100 000), Germany, the United Kingdom, Türkiye, Spain, France, and Italy registered female participation below the EHEA median while Ukraine had the highest share of female academic staff (61.7%) of all EHEA countries with available data. Among the countries with the smallest academic staff cohort, Andorra with total academic staff of 177 registered important female participation (57%), while Luxembourg and San Marino registered rates by more than 10 percentage points lower than the EHEA median.

Compared to 2016, in most countries (37 out of the 43 with available data) the share of female academic staff increased registering rises between 0.2 percentage points in Luxembourg to 8.8 percentage points in Andorra. The largest decrease (4.3 percentage points) was observed in Albania, followed by Azerbaijan (2.5 percentage points).

Despite the slight increase of the median share, female academic staff remains slightly underrepresented across EHEA countries.

1.4. Higher education institutions

The analysis of the higher education institutions' landscape provides for a more informed understanding of the developments in the higher education sector and the evolution in student and staff populations.

Figure 1.14 shows the number of public and private higher education institutions reported for the academic year 2022.

Figure 1.14: Number of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the EHEA, 2022
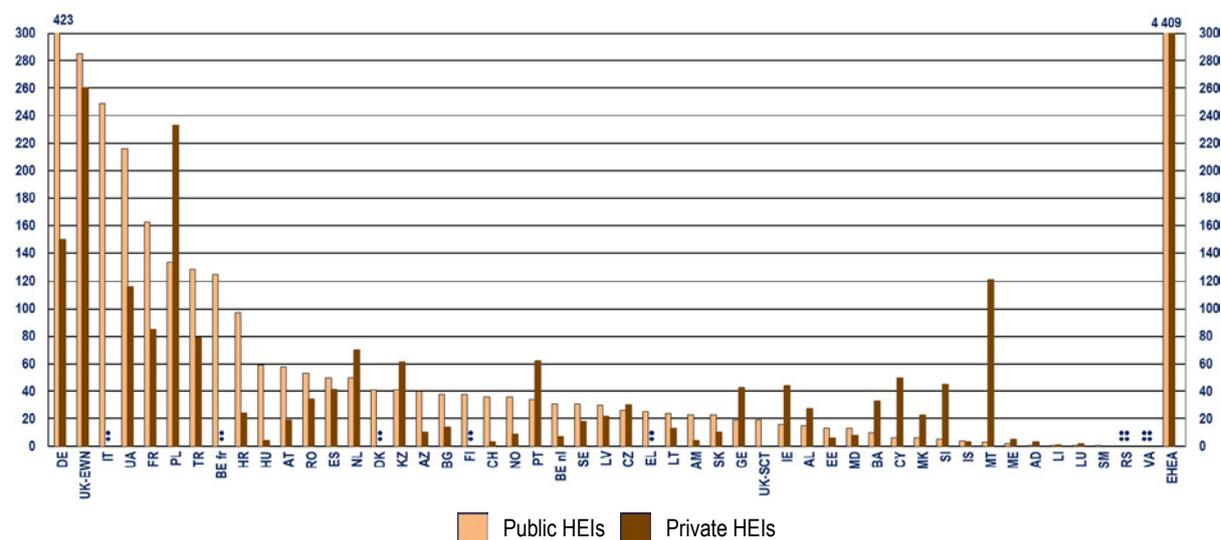
	DE	UK-EWN	IT	UA	FR	PL	TR	BE fr	HR	HU	AT	RO	ES	NL	DK	KZ	AZ
Public	423	285	249	216	163	133	129	125	97	59	58	53	50	50	41	41	40
Private	150	260	:	116	85	233	79	:	24	4	19	34	41	70	:	61	10

	BG	FI	CH	NO	PT	BE nl	SE	LV	CZ	EL	LT	AM	SK	GE	UK-SCT	IE	AL
Public	38	38	36	36	34	31	31	30	26	25	24	23	23	19	19	16	15
Private	14	:	3	9	62	7	18	22	30	:	13	4	10	43	:	44	27

	EE	MD	BA	CY	MK	SI	IS	MT	ME	AD	LI	LU	SM	RS	VA		EHEA
Public	13	13	10	6	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	1	1	:	:		2617
Private	6	8	33	50	23	45	3	121	5	3	1	2	:	:	:		1792

Source: BFUG data collection.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the number of public higher education institutions (2022).
EHEA: the value in the graph indicates the total number of higher education institutions.

In total, the number of higher education institutions in EHEA countries with available data increased from 3 537 in 2018/2019 ([8]) to 4 409 in 2022. The public higher education institutions grew to 2 617 while private higher education institutions increased their number to 1°792. However, different developments were observed during the period. In 14 of 34 education systems with available data, the number of public higher education institutions increased, with significant growth observed in the United Kingdom (England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) (+125), Germany (+110), and France (+95). Decrease was observed in nine countries but was less important in terms of number compared to the level of increase observed. The number of private higher education institutions increased in 13 countries and decreased in 15 with larger decrease observed in France. In 14 countries the number of public higher education institutions remained unchanged or increased while the number of private higher institutions declined. The opposite trend was observed in five countries.

([8])   Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2020.

Another way of looking at the number of institutions is to see how many of them there are in proportion to the overall population. Figure 1.15 shows the number of institutions per million inhabitants, indicating separately the number of public higher education institutions per million population and the total number of public and private higher education institutions per million population. This is a rather crude measure, as it does not consider the size of the institutions, but nevertheless it gives a more contextualised picture of the situation regarding higher education institutions in EHEA.

Figure 1.15: Number of higher education institutions (HEIs), public and total per million population (MP) in the EHEA, 2022/2023

Public HEIs per million population   Total HEIs per million population
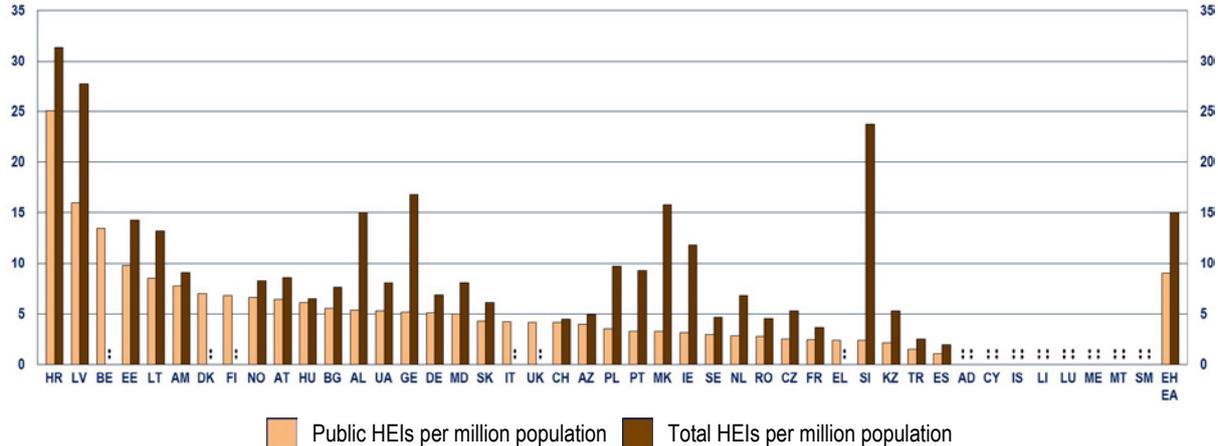
	HR	LV	BE	EE	LT	AM	DK	FI	NO	AT	HU	BG	AL	UA	GE	DE	MD	SK	IT	UK	CH	AZ	PL
Public/MP	25	16	13	10	9	8	7	7	7	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total/MP	31	28	:	14	13	9	:	:	8	9	7	8	15	8	17	7	8	6	:	:	5	5	10

	PT	MK	IE	SE	NL	RO	CZ	FR	EL	SI	KZ	TR	ES	AD	CY	IS	LI	LU	ME	MT	SM		EHEA
Public/MP	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:		9
Total/MP	9	16	12	5	7	5	5	4	:	24	5	2	2	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:		15

Source: Own calculation based on Eurostat and BFUG data collection

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the number of public higher education institutions per million population (2022).
The total number includes public and private higher education institutions.
EHEA: median calculated based on countries with available data.
Countries with population below 1 million are not presented.

The main trend observed is that the most populous countries (more than 40 million population), are positioned below the median for total number of higher education institutions per million population (15), even if they have the highest total number of institutions. Germany, Spain, Türkiye, and France had a lower total number of higher education institutions per million population (7 and below). When observing the number of public higher education institutions within the same group of countries, Germany, Ukraine, Italy, the United Kingdom ([9]), France and Türkiye had a number of public higher education institutions per million population lower to the EHEA median. Interestingly, in more populous countries with large number of students (Türkiye, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Spain), the flows of incoming students ([10]) was also high (see Figure 6.6). The median number of students per institution in this group of countries is 240°235. This finding may be indicative of the size of the higher education institutions and the higher education systems' capacity to respond to a higher demand for access to tertiary education.

([9])   United Kingdom: data on total population relevant to year 2020.

([10])   Data for reference year 2020/2021.

1.5. Expenditure on higher education

European higher education institutions are funded predominantly from public sources. This section compares public expenditure on higher education in the EHEA based on Eurostat indicators: public expenditure as a percentage of GDP, and total public and private expenditure per student in purchasing power standard (PPS). Alone, none of the indicators presented below can provide a sufficient basis for comparing EHEA countries; but taken together they provide a broad overview of similarities and differences between them.

Annual public expenditure on tertiary education as a percentage of GDP provides a measure of a government's commitment to supporting higher education and is useful when comparing countries of different economic sizes. Public expenditure on tertiary education covers expenditure from all levels of government combined and refers to direct funding on higher education as well as transfers to private households and firms.

The former includes expenditure that is directly related to instruction and research such as faculty and staff salaries, research grants, university and institutions' buildings, teaching materials, laboratory equipment, etc. The latter includes funding for entities that administer higher education (e.g., ministries or departments of education), that provide ancillary services (i.e., services provided by educational institutions that are peripheral to the main educational mission), and entities that perform educational research, curriculum development and educational policy analysis.

Transfers and payments to private entities include public subsidies to households and students as well as payments to other non-educational private entities (including scholarships and grants, public loans to students, specific public subsidies in cash or in kind for transport, medical expenses, books, and other materials, etc.). However, annual public expenditure does not include tuition fees that are not covered by scholarships, grants, or loans, and that are directly paid by households.

Figure 1.16 shows the annual public expenditure on tertiary education as a % of GDP (including Research and Development) in 2015 and 2020.

Figure 1.16: Annual public expenditure on tertiary education as a % of GDP (including R&D), 2015 and 2020

%	DK	NO	SE	AT	NL	BE	FI	MT	IS	UK	CH	DE	FR	TR	SI	PL	EE
2020	2.4	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1
2015	2.6	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.0	1.2	1.4
	ES	HR	LT	CY	SK	IT	PT	CZ	LV	IE	BG	RO	HU	EL	LU	RS	EHEA
2020	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.5	:	1.0
2015	1.0	0.8	1.2	1.1	1.4	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.5	1.1	1.2
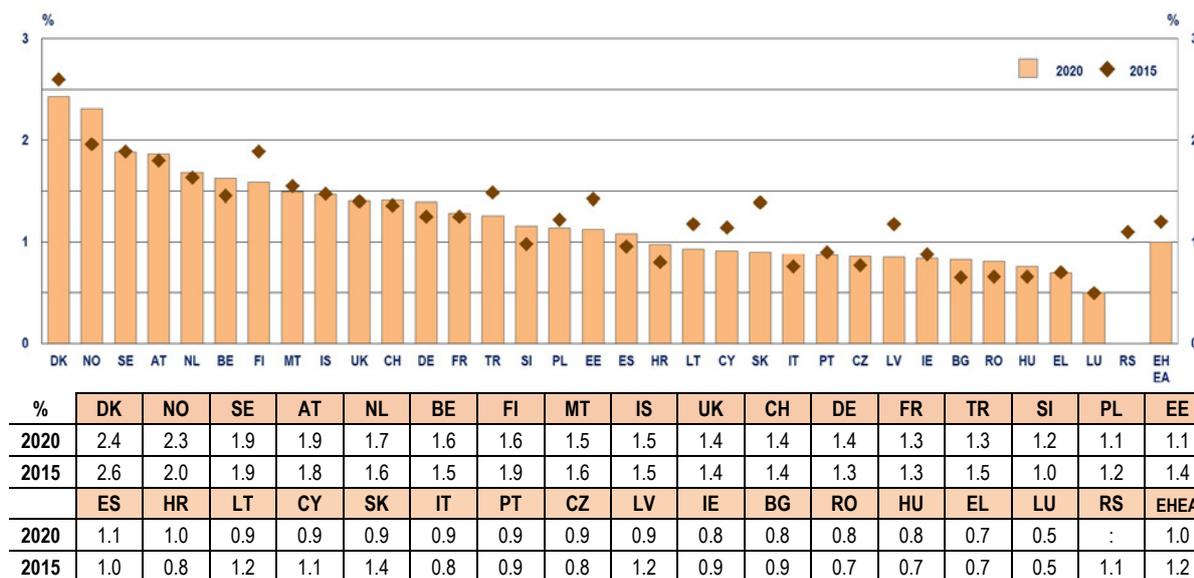
Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the annual public expenditure on tertiary education as a % of GDP, 2020.
EHEA: refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

In 2020, the median public spending on tertiary education relative to GDP accounted for 1% across the EHEA, which indicates a slight decrease compared to 2015 (1.2%). In 2020 the level of expenditure in tertiary education ranged between 2.4% in Denmark and 0.5% in Luxembourg. The public investment in higher education in the Scandinavian countries remained the highest across EHEA. In 2020, Denmark and Norway were the only countries in the EHEA where public investment in higher education was above 2% of GDP. In 2020 the countries with higher level of public investment (above 1.5%) registered also high enrolment rates of 18–34-year-olds ([11]), above 15%, with only Malta having enrolment rates below this share. However, countries with high enrolment rates in 2020, such as Türkiye (30%), Spain (21.4%), France (19.4%), and Germany (17.7%) registered public spending below 1.5%, while Greece with 29.9% enrolment rate had public spending of below 1%.

When analysing the evolution of the share of public expenditure directed to tertiary education as a percentage of GDP between 2015 and 2020, decreases were recorded in 12 of 32 countries with available data. Increases were observed in 12 of the countries with data available, while in 8 of the countries there was no change. The highest increase was registered in Norway (0.3 percentage points).

Cross-country comparisons of the levels of expenditure on tertiary education cannot be made directly due to the different size of countries' student population. In order to account for a country's size of student population, the average expenditure per student is used.

([11]) Source: Eurostat.

Figure 1.17 shows the public and private expenditure on tertiary education per full-time equivalent student in 2015 and 2020.

Figure 1.17: Annual public expenditure on public and private tertiary institutions per full-time equivalent student in euro, 2015-2020
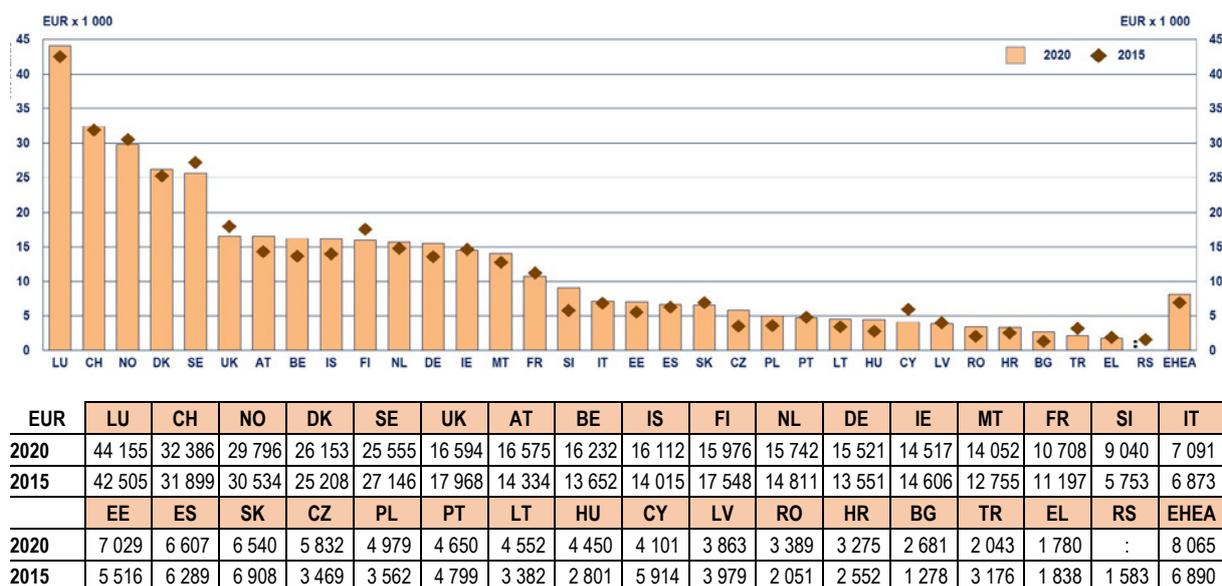
EUR	LU	CH	NO	DK	SE	UK	AT	BE	IS	FI	NL	DE	IE	MT	FR	SI	IT
2020	44 155	32 386	29 796	26 153	25 555	16 594	16 575	16 232	16 112	15 976	15 742	15 521	14 517	14 052	10 708	9 040	7 091
2015	42 505	31 899	30 534	25 208	27 146	17 968	14 334	13 652	14 015	17 548	14 811	13 551	14 606	12 755	11 197	5 753	6 873

	EE	ES	SK	CZ	PL	PT	LT	HU	CY	LV	RO	HR	BG	TR	EL	RS	EHEA
2020	7 029	6 607	6 540	5 832	4 979	4 650	4 552	4 450	4 101	3 863	3 389	3 275	2 681	2 043	1 780	:	8 065
2015	5 516	6 289	6 908	3 469	3 562	4 799	3 382	2 801	5 914	3 979	2 051	2 552	1 278	3 176	1 838	1 583	6 890

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the annual public expenditure per FTE student in euro (2020).

EHEA: refers to the EHEA median calculated based on countries with available data for both reference years.

The median spending per student (full-time equivalent) across EHEA increased from EUR 6 890 per student in 2015 to EUR 8 065 in 2020. The highest spending country in 2020 was Luxembourg (EUR 44 155) followed by Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries (except Finland) with expenditure above EUR 25 000 per student. 17 of 32 countries spent less than EUR°10 000 per student with 11 of them (34% of all countries with available data) investing less than EUR°5 000 per student.

Most of the countries (21 of 32 countries with available data for both time-points) increased their spending per full-time equivalent student. The largest increase (110%) was registered in Bulgaria. Five countries increased their spending with more than EUR 2 000, while in nine the investment per student raised by more than EUR 1 000. Conversely, five countries showed decrease by more than EUR 1 000 with Cyprus and Türkiye registering the largest decrease of more than 30%. It is noteworthy that Norway, Sweden, and Finland, while remaining among the countries with high expenditure per full-time student in 2020 (above EUR°15°000), registered a decrease in their spending compared to 2015, with Finland and Sweden showing decrease by more than EUR 1 500. The five countries with the highest spending per full-time equivalent student in 2020 (except Luxembourg) registered also high enrolment rates which in the Scandinavian countries reached above 15%, with Denmark registering 20.6%. Cyprus, on the other end, had a high enrolment rate (18.6%) but spending per full-time equivalent student of below EUR°5°000.

Figure 1.18 provides a more precise comparison across countries as the measure of spending is adjusted in terms of the differences in price levels across the EHEA while considering the size of the student population in a country through the provision of the financial spending of a country per full-time student. In addition to public expenditure, it also takes private expenditure into account to show an overall financial investment in higher education at national level.

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Figure 1.18: Percentage change in the annual public and private expenditure on public and private tertiary education institutions in PPS per full-time equivalent student between 2015 and 2020
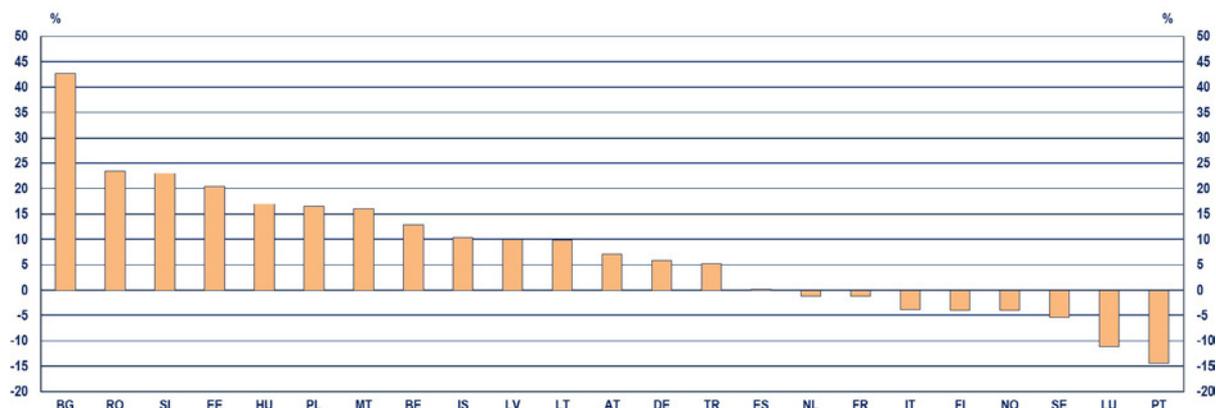
%	CZ	BG	RO	SI	EE	HU	PL	MT	BE	IS	LV	LT	EL	AT	DE
2015-2020	47.0	42.7	23.5	23.0	20.4	17.0	16.4	16.0	12.9	10.4	9.9	9.8	8.8	7.1	5.9
%	TR	DK	ES	NL	FR	UK	IT	FI	NO	SE	HR	LU	CY	PT	
2015-2020	5.3	4.6	0.2	-1.3	-1.3	-3.5	-3.8	-4.1	-4.1	-5.4	-8.1	-11.1	-12.2	-14.4	

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Countries are arranged in descending order by the percentage change in the annual public and private expenditure in PPS per FTE.

Between 2015 and 2020, most of the countries (18 of 29 countries with available data) registered a percentage increase of their spending on tertiary education institutions. Czechia ([12]) showed the highest increase (47%) in its spending on higher education institutions per full-time equivalent student, followed by Bulgaria (42.7%) and Romania (23.5%). Important increases of more than 20% were registered in Slovenia (23%), and Estonia (20.4%). The smallest increase of below 1% took place in Spain.

Across EHEA countries, the annual EHEA median of (public and private) expenditure on tertiary education institutions in 2020 was PPS°11 367 per full-time equivalent student and increased compared to the median registered in 2015 (PPS°9 568). However, the evolution of the expenditure in individual countries differed significantly. Luxembourg had the highest level of expenditure, PPS 31 684. Sweden, Malta, and Denmark spent more than PPS 15 000 per full-time student, while in 10 of 24 countries with available data the spending was below PPS 10 000. The highest spending country in 2020 invested five times more than the lowest spending country. In comparison, in 2015 the least investing country spent 13 times less than the country with the highest investment. This observation may indicate a trend of diminishing the divergencies in expenditure for tertiary education among EHEA countries.

The analysis of the changes in expenditure devoted to tertiary education institutions per full-time student against the student population in tertiary education provided some interesting findings. Among the countries which registered an increase of more than 20% in 2020, all except Slovenia had enrolment rates below the EHEA median (16.7%). This may indicate that the increase in value in these countries may be due to the decrease in the student population. However, it could also mean that the increase in investment might require a longer period of implementation before increased enrolment rates are visible. In Luxembourg, the student enrolment rate (4.4%), despite the high level of investment, remained among the lowest in EHEA in 2020. However, many students from Luxembourg enrol in higher education institutions abroad.

([12])   Czechia: data for 2019 instead of 2020.

To further review the intensity of investment in tertiary education, the next section undertakes a comparative analysis between the expenditure per full-time student and the size of the economy taking into account the population size. This perspective avoids problems of different student populations as percentages of the total population, as is the case when considering the ratio of the government expenditure on education to GDP. For higher education, cross-country comparison is more complex as enrolment rates vary in greater proportions (see Figure 1.3): countries where the enrolment rate is low could show higher expenditure per full-time equivalent students than countries with higher enrolment rates. Dividing the GDP per capita by the expenditure per full-time equivalent student provides a more harmonised and comparable measure of the intensity of the expenditure on education.

Figure 1.19 shows the annual public and private expenditure on public and private education institutions in tertiary education, per full-time equivalent student in PPS relative to the GDP per capita in PPS for the years 2015 and 2020.

Figure 1.19: Annual public and private expenditure on public and private education institutions in tertiary education, per full-time equivalent student in PPS relative to the GDP per capita in PPS, 2015 and 2020
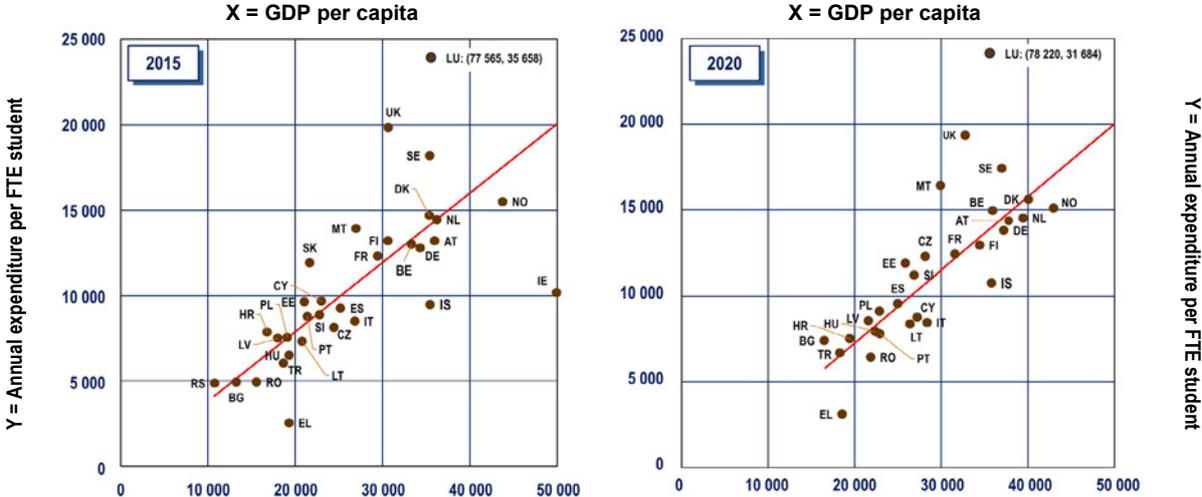
%	2015	2020	%	2015	2020	%	2015	2020	%	2015	2020
AT	36.9	37.9	EL	13.9	14.2	IT	32.1	29.2	PT	41.7	33.2
BE	39.4	41.3	ES	37.2	37.6	LT	35.9	31.0	RO	32.5	28.6
BG	38.2	43.5	FI	43.5	37.2	LU	46.0	40.5	SE	51.7	46.9
CY	42.5	29.5	FR	42.2	38.9	LV	42.4	38.7	SI	39.5	41.2
CZ	33.7	41.4	HR	47.5	35.1	MT	52.0	54.5	SK	55.5	:
DE	37.6	36.8	HU	34.3	34.6	NL	40.2	36.6	UK	64.9	58.8
DK	40.9	38.8	IE	20.6	:	NO	35.7	35.0	RS	46.4	:
EE	46.3	45.3	IS	27.1	29.7	PL	40.2	39.0	TR	33.1	35.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

N o t e s :

Country details are references in the Glossary and methodological notes.

Data shows a positive relationship between the size of the economy considering its population (expressed through GDP per capita) and the expenditure on education per full-time student (as expressed through the annual public and private expenditure on educational institutions per full-time equivalent). The positive correlation between the expenditure per full-time equivalent student and GDP per capita indicates that countries with higher GDP invest more per student, regardless of the size of the economy and the size of education sector.

However, this correlation does not imply a direct causal relationship between the two variables in the short term. Indeed, public expenditure (i.e., a major part of total expenditure on tertiary education) involves long-terms commitments (e.g., capital expenditure or staff salaries) and cannot be adjusted rapidly to unexpected changes in economic conditions. On the other hand, fluctuations in the number of students are the result of multi-cohorts' behaviours and their attitudes towards tertiary education.

Throughout 2015 and 2020, countries providing relatively high expenditure (more than PPS 15 000) on tertiary education institutions per full-time student and having a high GDP per capita (more than PPS 30 000) were Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom, while there was lower expenditure (less than PPS 10 000) on tertiary education institutions and lower GDP per capita (less than PPS 20 000) in Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Türkiye.

The tables in Figure 1.19 show the ratio of the expenditure (annual and private) on higher education institutions per student to GDP per capita, showing how much of the GDP per capita is spent on each student. This can be seen as a measure of public and private investment in higher education. It reveals that countries with different sizes of economy and annual expenditure per student may make a similar relative financial effort towards investment in tertiary education. For example, in 2020, Malta spent 55% of their GDP per capita on each tertiary student, which was slightly higher of the respective share spent by Sweden (47), in which the GDP per capita and annual expenditure per student were higher.

The fluctuations in the intensity of the investment over time can be observed through combining two measures. Firstly, the total (public and private) expenditure on tertiary education per student and secondly the GDP per capita. A constant ratio across time signifies that both investment per student and GDP per capita increased or decreased at the rate, indicating that expenditure in education is given the same priority over time. It is important to note that this measure of expenditure includes both public and private spending, so it is impossible to tell from this particular indicator how public expenditure reacts to changes in the GDP per capita.

Of the 29 countries for which data are available for the reference years analysed, the ratio of public and private expenditure per full-time equivalent student and GDP per capita decreased in 18 countries. This finding indicates that in these countries public and private investment in higher education declined relative to the country's size of economy. Between 2015 and 2020, 12 countries registered a decrease in expenditure while the GDP per capita grew. The ratio of these countries registered a decrease. Luxembourg is part of this group of countries, but it should be acknowledged that in the interpretation of data concerning the investment in education the GDP per capita ratio only considers residents in this country. In eight countries, the expenditure remained stable (fluctuations below PPS 1°000) while the GDP per capita registered an increase between the two time-points of more than PPS 2°000. The ratio of the countries in this group has also registered a decrease. Within this group of countries Lithuania registered slight increase in the expenditure while the GDP per capita marked one of the highest increases (by PPS 5°590), however the ratio between expenditure and GDP per capita decreased by almost 5 percentage points. In 15 countries the expenditure increased together with an increase in the level of GDP per capita. In this group of countries eight countries registered an increase of the ratio while the remaining seven had a decrease. 13 countries registered a more intensive pace of GDP growth compared to the level of increase in the expenditure per full-time student. In this group, despite the growth of expenditure and GDP per capita, slightly more than half of the countries registered a decrease in their ratio of expenditure per full-time equivalent student and GDP per capita. Eight countries with GDP growth above PPS 2°000, registering expenditure increase of less than PPS°2°000, registered a ratio decrease.

1.6. Conclusions

Despite the large diversity in education systems' developments the EHEA total student population continued to grow. In 2021 there were about 32.9 million tertiary education students enrolled in the EHEA. Türkiye and Germany, accounted for about 35% of the EHEA total student population. Along with the student population increase, the EHEA median of enrolment rates, raised to 16.9% with first cycle studies showing the highest student enrolments (58.8%). Policy and institutional reforms, socio-economic conditions or specific labour market development have played a role in the evolution of the enrolment rates in EHEA countries. The educational background of parents and the family's economic conditions are factors that strongly influence the likelihood of young learners to engage in and successfully complete higher education studies. In 62% of the countries the new entrants with highly educated parents were a majority and the corresponding share of population with high educational attainment level was around a third of the population or higher, indicating strong correlation between the participation in higher education and the educational attainment of parents.

Ensuring access, participation, equal opportunities, and high education attainment are paramount goals in the Bologna process. In 2021 the EHEA median share of female entrants increased to 55.4%. In 8 of 10 selected education fields, women outnumbered men, and reached above 70% at both bachelor's and master's education levels in 'Education' and 'Health and welfare' fields. The number of adult graduates (30-64) also continued to grow indicating adequate policies to support mature students. Part-time student population aged 30-34 increased and continued to have bigger share than the part-timers aged 20-24, confirming the higher likelihood for older students to engage in part-time studies. In 2021, despite the diversity of the country context across EHEA, the number of countries where foreign-born and native-born students had similar chances for successful completion of studies in higher education has increased.

The EHEA total academic staff increased by 11% in 2021. The evolution in the number of academic staff did not necessarily match the student enrolments' evolution. In nearly half of the countries across EHEA the increase of the student enrolments was more important than the increase in the number of academic staff. The EHEA median share of academic staff over 50 years of age grew, while the median share of academic staff below 35 of age decreased, indicating tendency of ageing among the academic staff, and raising concern about the human capacity renewal in EHEA education systems. The EHEA median of female academic staff increased to 47% and registered steady growth. The number of higher education institutions increased over the period. The most populous countries registered rate of institutions per million population below the EHEA median, despite having the bigger number of higher education institutions.

In 2020, the median public spending on tertiary education relative to GDP accounted for 1%, and slightly decreased compared to 2015. The percentage of public spending as a share of GDP in 2020 varied, with highest rates registered in Scandinavian countries. In 2020 the median EHEA annual (public and private) spending per full-time tertiary education student increased and was PPS 11 367. Richer countries tend to invest more per student, regardless of the size of the education sector. However, in more than half of the countries, the public and private investment in higher education declined relative to the country's size of economy. The countries which registered continuous high level of spending per full-time equivalent student between 2015 and 2020 also registered high enrolment rates indicating that investment, especially in the long run provides for increased interest to follow higher education studies. Reduction of the gap between high and low spending countries in tertiary education across EHEA was also observed.

CHAPTER 2: KEY COMMITMENTS: DEGREE STRUCTURES, RECOGNITION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The 2020 Rome Communiqué

The 2020 Rome Communiqué, adopted by ministers of higher education of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the Rome Ministerial Conference in November 2020, re-confirmed the determination to see the three bologna key commitments (degree structures, quality assurance and recognition) fully implemented [1].

The ministers committed to completing and further developing 'the National Qualifications Frameworks compatible with Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)' and asked the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) 'to update the criteria for self-certification to include a stronger element of peer review of national reports'. The ministers also mandated the Network of Qualification Frameworks (QF) correspondents to continue its work [2].

Furthermore, the governments agreed to strengthen the implementation of the Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention and apply its principles to qualifications and periods of study outside the EHEA. They committed to 'reviewing their legislation, regulations, and practice to ensure fair recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons, and persons in refugee-like situations, in accordance with Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention' [3]. They also agreed to further broadening the use of the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR).

Moreover, the governments agreed to 'make the necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition at system level of academic qualifications delivered in EHEA countries where quality assurance operates in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) [4] and where a fully operational national qualifications framework has been established' [5].

For the further development of quality assurance systems, the ministers committed: 1) to remove the remaining obstacles, including those related to the cross-border operation of the agencies registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) [6] and 2) to apply the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

Referring to student-centred learning, the ministers evoked the importance of creating flexible and open learning pathways (including microcredentials). They also recognised a growing demand and supply of smaller and flexible units of learning leading to microcredentials and asked the BFUG to explore how and to what extend such units can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by the institutions using EHEA tools.

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[1]   Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

[2]   Ibid. p. 7.

[3]   Ibid. p. 7.

[4]   ESG https://www.eqar.eu/kb/esg/

[5]   Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 7.

[6]   EQAR https://www.eqar.eu/

This chapter reviews progress made against the main commitments made by national governments to achieve the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It starts by examining the development of the degree structure and the state of implementation of three Bologna tools: the Diploma supplement (DS), the European credit Transfer and Accumulation system (ECTS) and national qualification frameworks (NQF) (2.1).

Section 2.2 gives the latest state of play regarding policy commitments linked to the recognition of qualifications. It also explores the use of the tools for recognition of refugees' qualifications such as the Council of Europe qualification passport for refugees (EQPR) as well as the toolkit for the recognition developed by the ENIC-NARIC centres within an Erasmus + project ([7]).

Section 2.3 addresses developments in the implementation of quality assurance related commitments since the Rome Communiqué. It provides an update of the main qualitative indicators and gives empirical evidence on the stage of development of external Quality Assurance systems. Much of the information for this section is provided by the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

2.1. Development of the degree structure and state of implementation of three Bologna tools

The adoption of a higher education system based on a common degree structure is one of the key commitments agreed within the Bologna Process, and arguably its most notable achievement. First agreed through the 1999 Bologna Declaration ([8]) where the framework for two-cycle degree systems was set, the ministers decided to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process in 2003 ([9]). Hence, the Bologna Process has been promoting a three-cycle higher education structure including undergraduate (first-cycle), graduate (second-cycle) and doctoral (third-cycle) programmes, with the possibility of intermediate (short-cycle) qualifications linked to the first cycle. In the 2018 Paris Communiqué, ministers added short-cycle qualifications 'as a stand-alone qualification within the overarching framework of qualifications of the EHEA (QF-EHEA)' specifying that 'each country can decide whether and how to integrate short cycle qualifications within its own national framework' ([10]).

This section starts by examining the implementation of degree structure commitments and looks at the existence of the programmes that do not conform with the Bologna Process models (integrated/long programmes and other programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure). A new composite indicator summarises the progress that countries have made in the implementation of the common degree structure. Then, the section depicts the countries where legal framework allows higher education institutions to provide courses leading to microcredentials. This is the first attempt within the Bologna Process Implementation Report to identify how countries are integrating microcredentials within their higher education systems.

This section also evaluates the progress made towards the implementation of three Bologna transparency tools: the Diploma Supplement (DS), the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation system (ECTS) and national qualification frameworks (NQFs) aligned to a European framework. These 'instruments' were adopted or developed to support the implementation of political commitments aimed at establishing the European Higher Education Area. Both DS and ECTS pre-date the Bologna Process and were taken as key instruments to underpin its development. In the early years of the Bologna

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([7])   Refugees and Recognition – An Erasmus + Project: https://www.nokut.no/en/Refugees-and-Recognition/toolkit

([8])   The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999.

([9])   Realising the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Berlin, 19 September 2003.

([10])   Paris Ministerial Communiqué, 25 May 2018.

process NQFs were present only in some national systems. However, aligned to a European framework, they become an important objective to support structural reforms through the Bologna process.

2.1.1. Workload of first-cycle programmes

Figure 2.1 depicts the workload of first-cycle programmes expressed in ECTS credits. It reveals the coexistence of different credit models of first-cycle programmes and therefore confirms the statement of the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation reports (see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 46).

Figure 2.1: Share of first-cycle programmes with a workload of 180, 210, 240 or another number of ECTS credits, 2022/2023
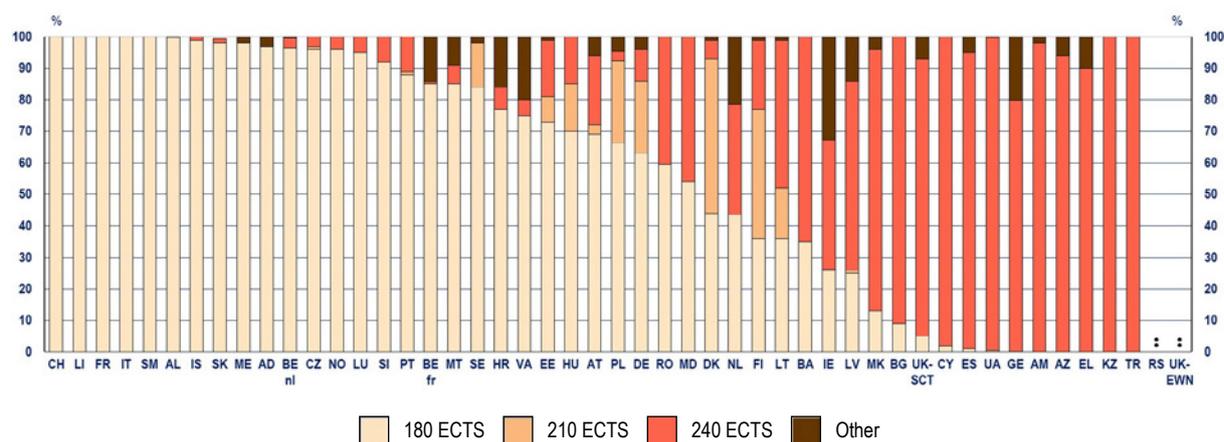
Source: BFUG data collection.

N o t e s :

Table 2.1 in Annex provides details on the share of first-cycle-programmes displayed in the figure.

The 180 ECTS workload remains the most widespread in the first cycle, characterising most programmes in more than half of all EHEA countries. In Albania, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, San Marino and Switzerland, this model applies to all first-cycle programmes, and in a further nine systems, 90% or more programmes are concerned.

The second most widespread model of 240 credits applies to most first-cycle programmes in around one-third of EHEA countries, mainly in south-eastern Europe. While in Kazakhstan and Türkiye, all first-cycle programmes are concerned, in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Ukraine, 90% or more programmes have a workload of 240 ECTS.

The 210 ECTS first-cycle programme model remains rather rare in Europe. It exists in less than a quarter of all EHEA countries and concerns more than 20% of programmes only in Denmark, Finland, Germany, and Poland. In Finland, for example, the number of first-cycle programmes with 210 ECTS workload has slightly increased compared to the previous reporting. This is due to the increase of the programmes in the field of health care and social services in response to labour-market needs.

Other workload models were reported by around half of the countries. Nevertheless, in most of them, less than 10% of first-cycle programmes are concerned. In nine education systems the proportion is 10% or higher: Ireland (33%), the Netherlands (21%), Georgia (20%), the Holy See (20%), Croatia (16%), the French Community of Belgium (14.5%), Latvia (14%) and Greece (10%).

Compared to the 2020 Bologna Progress Implementation report (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 46), no substantial reforms or changes in the use of different models of first-cycle programmes can be observed.

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2.1.2. Workload of second cycle programmes

Figure 2.2 depicts the workload of second-cycle programmes expressed in ECTS credits.

Figure 2.2: Share of second-cycle programmes with a workload of 60-75, 90, 120 or another number of ECTS credits, 2022/2023
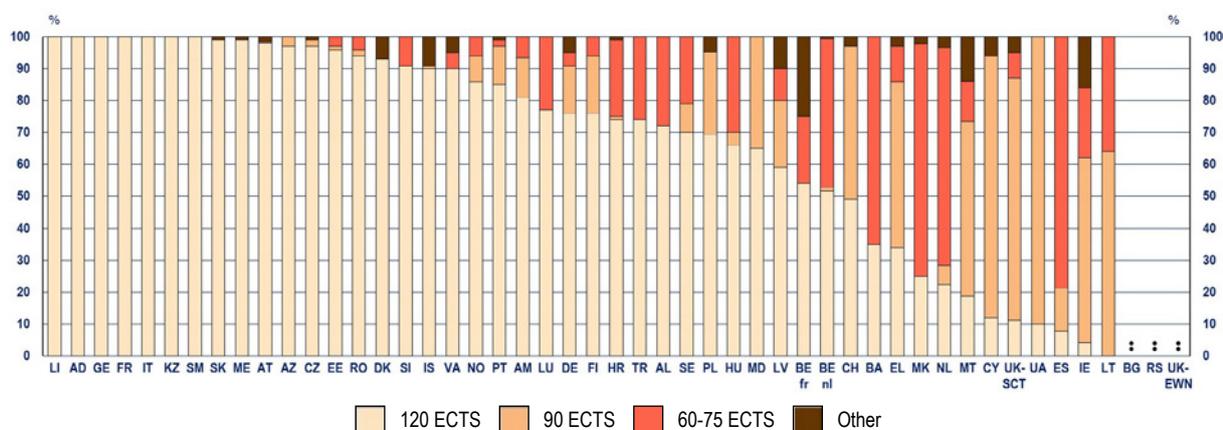
Source: BFUG data collection.

N o t e s :

The figure does not take into account integrated/long programmes, i.e. programmes leading directly to a second-cycle degree. For more details on these programmes, see Section 2.1.5.

Table 2.2 in Annex provides details on the share of second- cycle-programmes displayed in the figure.

In the second cycle, the 120 ECTS model is by far the most widespread, being present in virtually all EHEA systems. It is the sole second-cycle model in Andorra, France, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein and San Marino and it applies to most second-cycle programmes in around three-quarters of all EHEA countries.

The 60-75 ECTS model and 90 ECTS model are present in around a half of all EHEA countries. While the 90 ECTS model is predominant in Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (Scotland), the 60-75 ECTS model applies to most second cycle programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands, North Macedonia and Spain.

Second-cycle programmes with a workload outside the 60-120 ECTS interval were reported by less than half of the EHEA countries and generally, when such programmes exist, their share in the total does not exceed 10%. Only the French Community of Belgium, Ireland and Malta reported a higher proportion of programmes: 25%, 16% and 14% respectively. In the French Community of Belgium, 180 ECTS are required for specialised master programmes, a system feature that has not been reformed in line with Bologna commitments.

Compared to the 2020 Bologna Progress Implementation report (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 47) no substantial changes in the workload of the second-cycle programmes can be observed. The most common workload remains 120 ECTS.

2.1.3. Combined workload of first- and second-cycle programmes

Building on the data depicted in the two previous figures, Figure 2.3 looks at the most common combined (first and second cycle) workload. Although no Bologna process commitments have been made regarding convergence of the first-and second- cycle programmes considered together, it may have been an implicit assumption for ministers that efforts to make the first two cycles more convergent would also result in greater similarity in the overall workload of the first and second cycles combined.

Figure 2.3: Most common total workload of first- and second-cycle programmes, 2022/2023
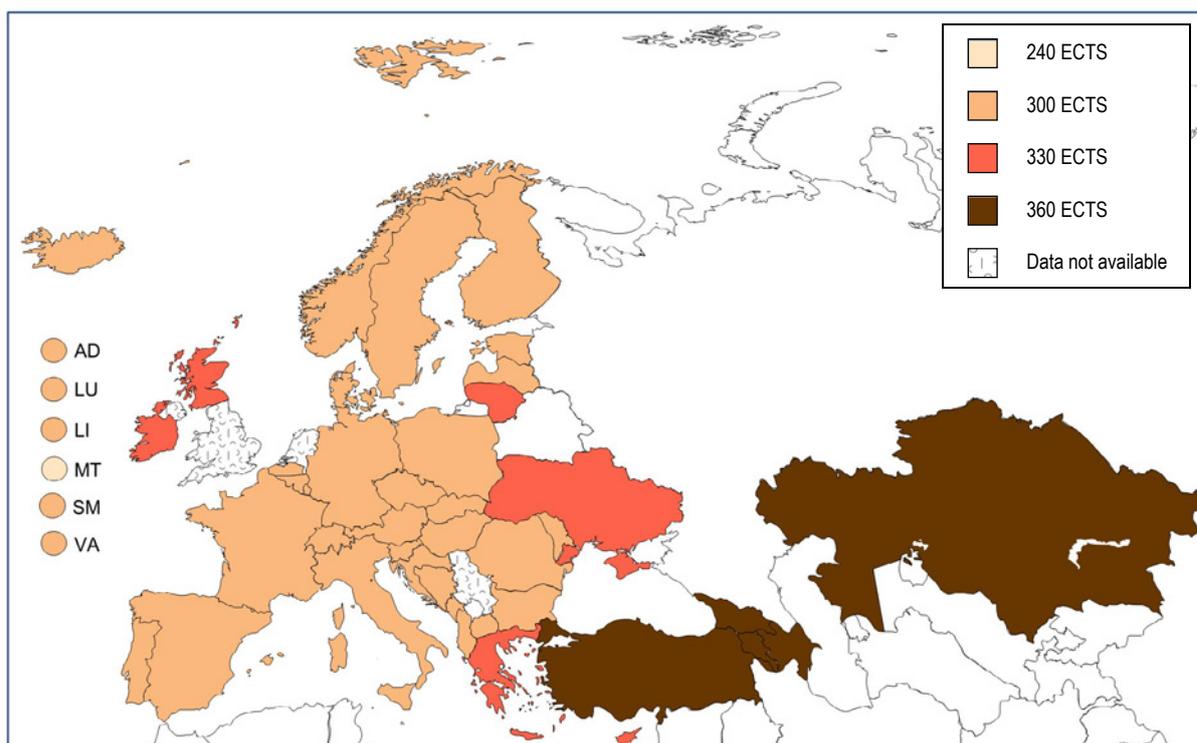
Source: BFUG data collection.

Figure 2.3 shows that in most EHEA countries, the most common total workload of first-and second-cycle programmes is set at 300 ECTS. Indeed, this is linked to the fact that the most common workload of first-cycle programmes is 180 ECTS and second-cycle programmes is 120 ECTS (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

In the eastern part of the EHEA, the most common workload is higher. It corresponds to 360 ECTS credits in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Türkiye, which is mainly explained by a higher workload of first-cycle programmes (see Figure 2.1). In a further six education systems (Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Ukraine and the United Kingdom − Scotland) the most common workload is 330 ECTS credits. In Malta, the most common workload is 240 ECTS.

It is important to highlight that in some higher education systems, the most common workload can be followed closely by another widespread workload pattern. For example, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark, the 300 ECTS pattern is only slightly more common than other workload arrangements: 240, 270 and 330 ECTS in the three systems respectively.

In addition, it is not always possible to derive the most common workload simply by mechanically combining the most common data displayed on Figures 2.1 and 2.2. This applies, in particular, to binary higher education systems, i.e. systems with two main types of higher education institutions. For example, in Finland, the first-cycle workload generally corresponds to 180 in universities, but 210 or 240 ECTS in universities of applied sciences. Those graduates who decide to enter a second-cycle programme may enter a 90 or 60 ECTS programme offered by a university of applied sciences, or a 120 ECTS programme offered at a university. The Netherlands – another binary higher education system – reports a comparable situation.

2.1.4. Short-cycle programmes

After many years of discussion about the place of short-cycle higher education programmes in the EHEA, the governments eventually agreed in the 2018 Paris Communiqué ([11]) to integrate the short cycle programmes into the overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). Nevertheless, countries in the EHEA are still far from reaching a common under-standing of short-cycle higher education that is comparable to the situation of the other three cycles.

In this report, short-cycle programmes are understood as higher education programmes of less than 180 ECTS (or lasting less than 3 years), leading to a qualification that is recognised at a lower level than a qualification at the end of the first cycle. Higher education systems are responsible for deciding whether credits obtained from short-cycle programmes may be recognised within first-cycle higher education programmes. Since the adoption of the Paris Communiqué in 2018, short-cycle qualifications are recognised as level 5 in the overarching framework of qualifications for the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and also at level 5 in the ISCED classification ([12]).

Figure 2.4 shows the presence of short-cycle programmes considered as part of the national higher education system – in line with the Paris Communiqué decision.

Figure 2.4: Presence of short-cycle programmes considered as part of higher education, 2022/2023
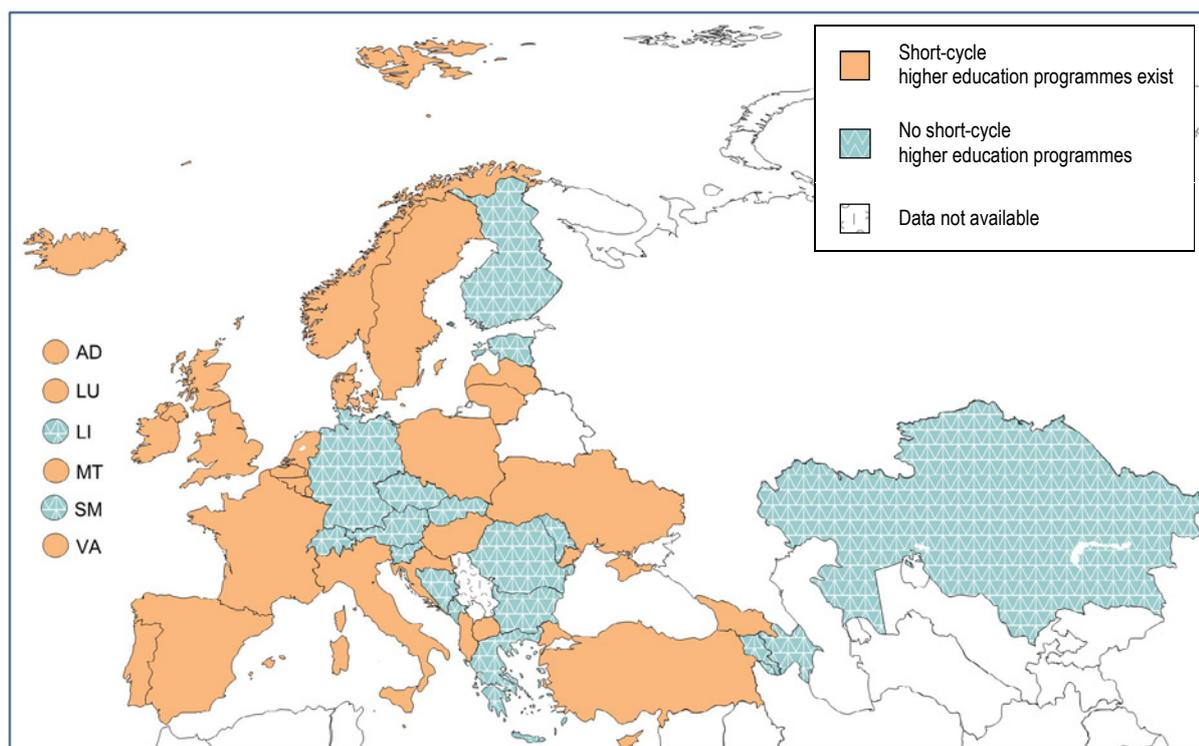
Source: BFUG data collection.

N o t e s :

The presence of short-cycle programmes considered as part of higher education refers to situations where national qualifications frameworks and/or top-level steering documents recognise the short cycle (or short-cycle qualifications) as part of the higher education system.

([11])   Paris Ministerial Communiqué, 25 May 2018.

([12])   ISCED 2011: https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf

More than half of all EHEA countries report the existence of short-cycle programmes that are considered as part of the national higher education system. In other EHEA systems, the short-cycle is either not offered, or short-cycle programmes (ISCED 5) are not recognised within the higher education system. When not recognised as 'higher education', short-cycle programmes are usually categorised as being part of a vocational education system. Indeed, some countries that do not report the existence of short-cycle higher education programmes have students enrolled in ISCED 5 programmes (see Chapter 1, Figure 1.1).

Since the previous mapping (see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 49), one more country has reported changes in this area. In Lithuania, after the adoption of a legal framework which introduces this type of provision, the first short-cycle study programmes were evaluated and accredited in 2022.

Georgia and North Macedonia reported that although their legal framework provides the possibility for short-cycle programmes to exist, there are currently no short-cycle programmes in practice.

Overall, the short cycle remains a complex field covering a range of programmes that differ at national level in terms of content, orientation and purpose, and where a common European vision is yet to be fully developed and realised.

2.1.5. Integrated/long programmes leading to a second cycle degree

As shown in the previous sections, a three-cycle higher education structure with the possibility of short-cycle provision has been implemented across all the EHEA countries. However, the programmes and degrees that comply with the Bologna-degree structure often co-exist with other higher education programmes that are structured differently. This section looks at programmes comprising both the first and the second cycle and leading to a second-cycle qualification that are commonly referred to as integrated (long) programmes.

Figure 2.5: Presence of integrated/long programmes leading to a second-cycle degree and the percentage of students in these programmes, 2022/2023
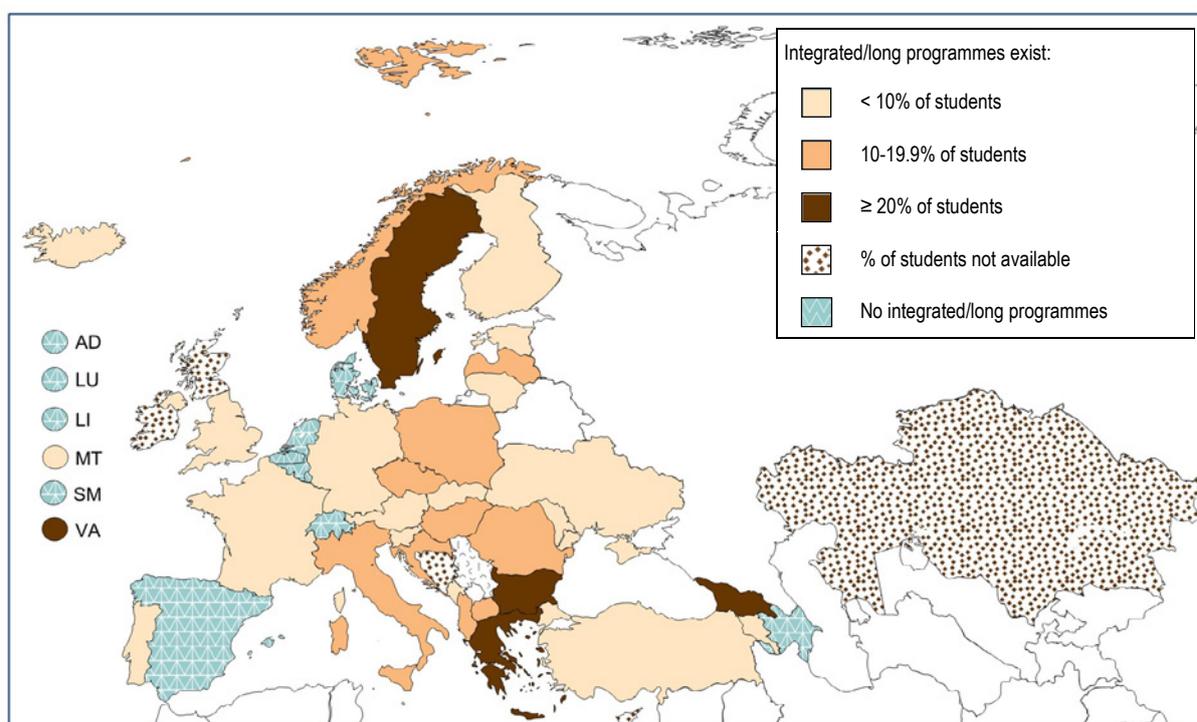
Source: BFUG data collection.

N o t e :

Integrated/long programmes refer to programmes including both the first and the second cycle and leading to a second-cycle qualification.

Figure 2.5 shows that integrated (long) programmes exist in around two-thirds of EHEA systems. However, they involve different proportions of students. In 17 systems, only up to 10% of all first- and second-cycle students are enrolled in such programmes. In 10 systems, the proportion is situated between 10% and 19.9%. Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, the Holy See and Sweden report the highest proportion of students in integrated programmes with 20% and above. In the remaining education systems, either there is no data on the proportion of students involved in integrated (long) programmes, or such programmes do not exist.

Compared to the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation report, in Armenia, Germany, Italy and Portugal, the number of students enrolled in integrated (long) programmes has decreased. In all of them, except Italy, less than 10% of students are now involved in integrated (long) programmes. While Germany has recently decreased the number of integrated (long) programmes, Portugal has limited the number of fields of study that can be organised as integrated programmes. In Armenia, the decrease is mainly due to the reorganisation of some integrated (long) programmes into the Bologna-degree structure.

Albania, Bulgaria and Georgia reported a higher number of students enrolled in integrated (long) programmes compared to the previous reporting exercise. In Albania and Georgia, this is mainly due to an increase in the number of integrated (long) programmes that are offered. Moreover, in Georgia, two more study areas − veterinary medicine and teacher training have been restructured into integrated/long programmes.

As reported in the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation report (see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 51), the most common fields for integrated programmes are medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, architecture, pharmacy, teacher training, engineering, law and theology. Several of these specialisations overlap with studies related to regulated professions. These are occupations with specific legal requirements and standards that are enforced by government to ensure public safety, protect consumers, and maintain professional standards. In the case of European Union countries, the presence of long or integrated/long programmes is most commonly justified by the Directive on regulated professions 2005/36/EC ([13]) that defines qualification requirements for specific professions (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacy and architecture), including the duration of training. While the Directive stipulates the total length of a qualification that gives access to the European labour market, it does not comment on the organisation of studies. Hence the decision to organise programmes in one or two cycles remains with Member States.

Top-level authorities also explain the existence of certain integrated programmes on the grounds that there is student demand, as well as cultural traditions (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2018, p. 111).

2.1.6. Programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure

This section discusses higher education programmes other than integrated(long) programmes which do not fully fall under the main Bologna-degree scheme. When considering the entry requirements and qualifications awarded upon completion, these programmes can be clustered into three categories:

1. Intermediate programmes between first- and second-cycle studies, i.e. programmes requiring a first-cycle degree for entry, but not leading to a second-cycle qualification.

2. Intermediate programmes within the second cycle, i.e. programmes requiring a first-cycle degree for entry, leading to a second-cycle qualification, which, however, generally ([14]) do not open access to the third cycle.

([13])   Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. OJ L 255, 30.9.2005.

([14])   In some countries, based on the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (RPL), there might be possibilities for

3. Intermediate programmes between second- and third-cycle studies, i.e. programmes requiring a second-cycle degree for entry, but not leading to a third-cycle qualification.

Figure 2.6: Programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure (other than integrated/long programmes), 2022/2023
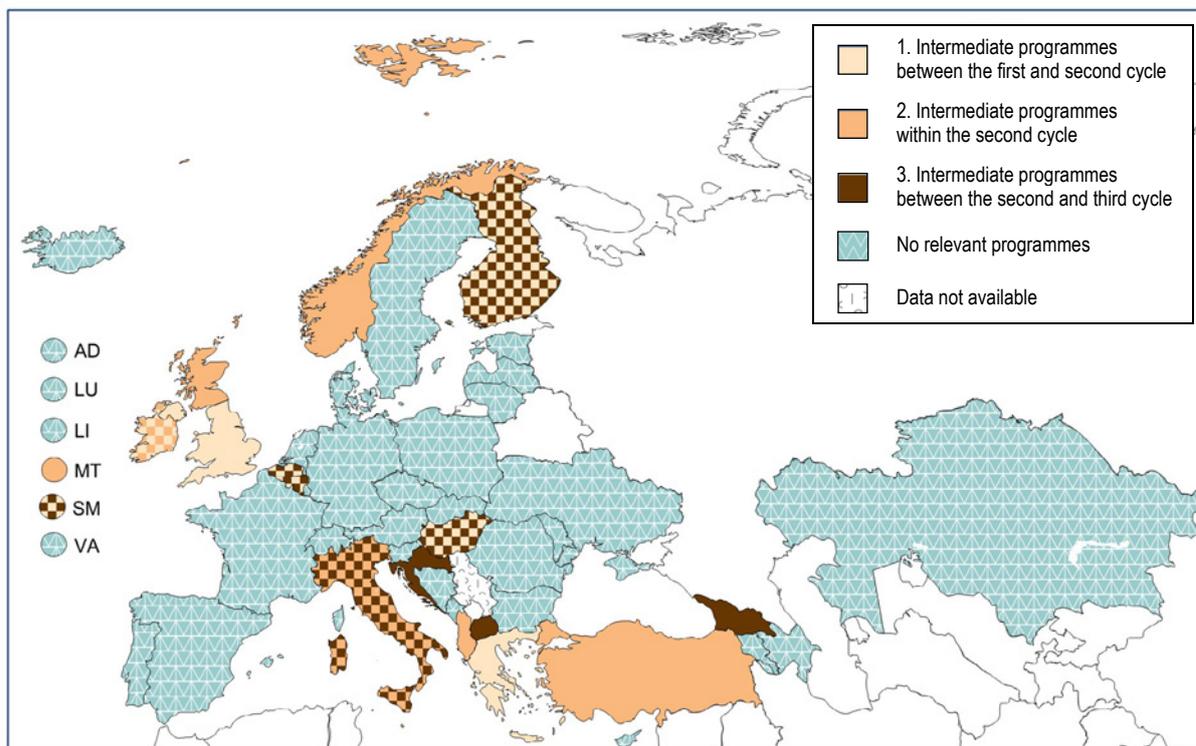
Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes:

Within the Bologna Process, ministers committed themselves to implementing the three-cycle degree system, where first-cycle degrees (awarded after completion of higher education programmes lasting a minimum of three years) should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention ([15]), to second-cycle programmes. Second-cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies (the third cycle). Within the three-cycle degree system, ministers recognised the possibility of intermediate qualifications (the short cycle) linked to the first cycle, and through the Paris Communiqué added the short cycle as a stand-alone qualification within the overall qualifications framework of the EHEA (QF-EHEA).

When referring to programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure, the figure refers to programmes that do not fully comply with the above ministerial engagements. Integrated/long programmes, which can also be seen as programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure, are excluded from the scope of the figure (they are covered by Figure 2.5).

As Figure 2.6 shows, programmes relevant for the scope of this analysis exist in around one third of the EHEA countries.

Programmes falling under the first category usually include various short specialisations after first-cycle studies. For example, in French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, there are specialised bachelors (or 'bachelor after bachelor') of 60 ECTS building on the first cycle. Ireland offers intermediate programmes, which are qualifications building on a bachelor's degree, to increase access to medicine and, in particular, radiography studies. Further programmes falling under this category exist in Finland, Greece, Hungary, San Marino and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

The second category is programmes that lead to a second-cycle qualification, but do not open access to the third cycle. These programmes exist in Albania, Iceland, Italy, Ireland, Norway, Türkiye and the United Kingdom (Scotland). They are usually professional or labour market oriented masters' programmes that do not open access to the third cycle. In Italy, first level master's programmes (*Master universitario di primo livello*) comprise 60 ECTS and aim at providing students with advanced knowledge

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graduates of these programmes to integrate third-cycle studies. However, the programmes in question are not conceived to prepare for doctoral studies. Thus, possibilities for the RPL are not considered here.

([15]) Council of Europe Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, ETS No. 165.

in specific fields or further professional training relevant for the labour market. Albania offers professional master's programmes (60-120 ECTS) giving graduates the opportunity to enter the public or private labour market, but not giving access to third-cycle programmes, while Türkiye reports similar programmes called 'non-thesis master'. In the United Kingdom (Scotland), postgraduate certificates (30 ECTS) require a first-cycle degree for entry and target those already in a career.

Programmes in the third category are comparable to those reported under the first one, the only difference being that they concern specialisations building on second-cycle studies. In the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, for instance, there are not only specialised bachelors (see above), but also specialised master's (or 'master after master') that are intended to develop the skills oriented towards the needs of the labour market. To provide masters' graduates with advanced knowledge for better occupational opportunities, Italy offers second level masters' programmes *(Master universitaria di secondo livello)*, while Croatia has created around 342 'university specialist programmes' with 60-120 ECTS workload. Further examples of intermediate programmes building on second-cycle studies can be found in Finland, Georgia, Hungary and North Macedonia.

Higher education programmes in the first and third categories have many similarities with programmes leading to microcredentials (see 2.1.8). All these programmes usually aim at developing specific skills, knowledge or expertise in a particular area and therefore may be considered as part of a continuing professional development and lifelong learning system.

Regardless of the category to which they belong, these programmes all raise the question of their compatibility with the Bologna Process. On the one hand, they appear as a 'deviation' from the agreed qualification structure. On the other hand, they claim to respond to specific needs, concerning professional development and lifelong learning. While it is debatable whether or not such provision could be incorporated within the agreed overall degree structure framework, as long as they continue to exist, it is important to ensure and optimise cross-country readability.

2.1.7. Progress in the implementation of the commitments related to the degrees structure

To remove barriers and ease mobility and cooperation in higher education, as well as to ensure international recognition of degrees, one of the key commitments agreed between the ministers withing the Bologna process was the implementation of the common degree structure.

Figure 2.7 is a composite indicator that assesses where countries are now situated in the development of such a common degree structure. It is based on two main aspects: 1) programmes' compliance with the agreed workload for the first and the second cycles; and 2) limitation of number of programmes outside the Bologna degree structure.

The indicator is based on the four indicators presented in Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.5 and 2.6, and considers the following criteria as the norms for agreed degree structures:

- More than 90% of first-cycle programmes comply with agreed ECTS workload for the first cycle (at least 180 ECTS).
- More than 90% of second-cycle programmes comply with agreed ECTS workload for the second cycle (between 60-120 ECTS).
- Less than 20% of students are enrolled in integrated/long programmes.
- There are no programmes outside the Bologna degree structure, other than integrated/long programmes.

The first two criteria conform to commitments made in the early years of the Bologna process. The requirement for first-cycle programmes of at least 180 ECTS is taken in the Bologna Declaration ([16]),

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([16])   The Bologna Declaration, 19 June 1999.

while the credit range for second-cycle programmes was set at a 2002 official Bologna seminar held in Helsinki. For the third criterion, the spirit of the Bologna Process commitments was that a small number of integrated/long programmes, particularly those leading to qualifications for regulated professions, could co-exist with the three-cycle degree structure. However, this spirit was not translated into concrete decisions fixing limits on the number of programmes, or the number of students studying in programmes, that would be considered compatible. The choice of 20% was taken after discussion in the BFUG. The fourth criterion also aligns with the spirit of the Bologna process which aimed to converge all programmes, with the exception of those integrated programmes previously mentioned, into the three-cycle degree structure.

Figure 2.7: Scorecard indicator n°1: Implementation of agreed Bologna degree structures, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■ (dark green)	All the following elements are fulfilled: ○ >90% of first-cycle programmes comply with agreed ECTS workload for the first cycle (at least 180 ECTS); ○ >90% of second-cycle programmes comply with agreed ECTS workload for the second cycle (between 60-120 ECTS); ○ <20% of students are enrolled in integrated/long programmes; ○ There are no programmes outside the Bologna degree structure, other than integrated programmes.

■ 3 out of 4 commitments are fulfilled	■ 2 out of 4 commitments are fulfilled	■ 1 out of 4 commitments are fulfilled

■ None of the commitments are fulfilled	▨ Data not available

N o t e :

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom are reported in the category 'data not available', as the data for some elements that compose the scorecard indicator is missing.

Countries where more than 90% of higher education programmes comply with the workload agreed for the first and the second cycles, where the share of students enrolled in integrated (long) programmes is less than 20%, and where there are no other programmes outside the Bologna degree structure are found in the dark green category. The other categories reflect a diminishing number of commitments being fulfilled.

As Figure 2.7 shows, slightly more than half of the education systems with available data fully comply with the four criteria and are in dark green category.

About a quarter of the systems are in the light green category, they comply with 3 out of the 4 criteria and are close to being fully aligned with commitments taken with regard to convergent degree structures. Five education systems fulfilled two criteria and are in the yellow category and two systems are in the orange category fulfilling only one criteria.

The findings for this indicator reflect the fact that revamping degree structures in line with the credit ranges set through the Bologna process has been very successfully accomplished. However, while many systems have taken a thorough approach to transforming all programmes, in some countries the heritage of previous structures remains. While this may be a relatively minor issue in terms of the numbers of programmes and students concerned, it is still worthy of reflection within the countries concerned as to whether further reforms to ensure full alignment with Bologna degree structure commitments might be beneficial.

2.1.8. Microcredentials

In the last decade, short and focused learning modules that differ from traditional degree programmes and that are now often referred as to microcredentials have gained popularity among learners and education providers. Until recently there was an absence of common definition, although the characteristics of such modules could be recognised: they tend to be short, skill-focused and usually labour market oriented. Microcredentials are typically designed to develop specific skills or knowledge in a particular subject area and may be targeted at professionals seeking to enhance their expertise, individuals looking to upskill or reskill, or anyone interested in gaining knowledge in a specific domain.

At the EU level, reflection on the place of microcredentials in the higher education landscape resulted in the Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, adopted on 16 June 2022 ([17]). This Recommendation defines microcredentials as 'the record of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a small volume of learning. These learning outcomes will have been assessed against transparent and clearly defined criteria. Learning experiences leading to micro-credentials are designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills and competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared and are portable. They may be stand-alone or combined into larger credentials. They are underpinned by quality assurance following agreed standards in the relevant sector or area of activity' ([18]). The Council Recommendation encourages the EU countries to include microcredentials in national qualification frameworks and systems where relevant and in line with national priorities and decisions to ensure the quality and transparency ([19]). The European approach to microcredentials therefore suggests that the full potential of microcredentials can be reached only with common standards ensuring their quality, transparency, cross-border comparability, recognition and portability.

In the context of the Bologna process, the concept of microcredentials has been discussed, and questions have been raised about their integration in the higher education landscape, their transparency, and relationship to quality assurance and qualification systems. The potential benefits of microcredentials such as making education more reactive to labour market needs and individual interests, supporting lifelong learning and learning among under-represented groups, as well as its flexibility, have all been acknowledged.

The Rome Ministerial Communiqué also acknowledges the potential benefits of microcredentials for student-centred learning and considers them as an element of flexible and open learning pathways. It

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([17]) Council Recommendation on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability, adopted on 16 June 2022; p. 13. Link: https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9237-2022-INIT/en/pdf

([18]) Ibid. p. 13.

([19]) Ibid. p. 18.

asks the BFUG to explore 'how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to microcredentials, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by the institutions using EHEA tools' ([20]).

To follow up to the Rome Communiqué request, this section first aims to identify the education systems where legal framework offers possibility to higher education institutions to develop learning modules leading to microcredentials. It also seeks to demonstrate whether such learning programmes are included in NQFs and expressed in the ECTS credits.

Figure 2.8 shows education systems where there are modules leading to microcredentials and those where microcredentials are not a common feature. Within the first category the distinction is made between education systems that include microcredentials in NQFs and those that do not include them in NQFs.

Figure 2.8: Inclusion of microcredentials in national qualifications frameworks, 2022/2023
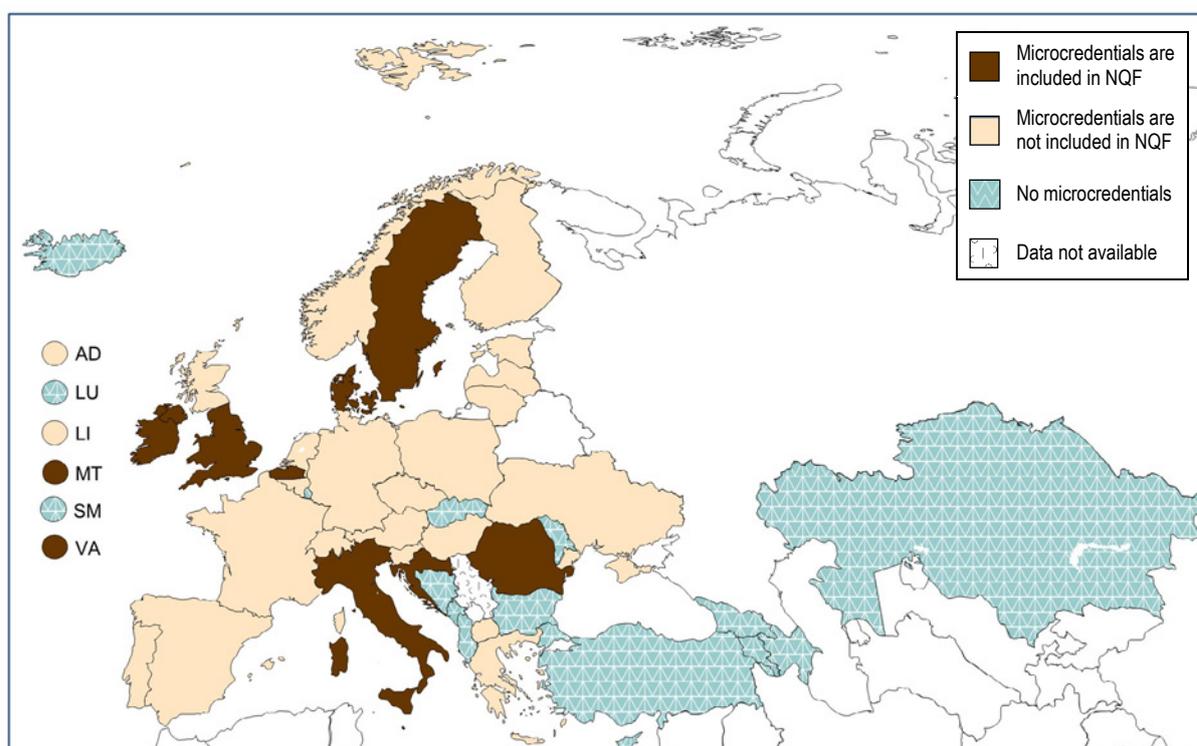
Source: BFUG data collection.

As Figure 2.8 shows, in around two-thirds of the education systems, mainly in the northern and western part of Europe, there are learning modules within higher education considered as, or comparable to, microcredentials. Ten education systems (Belgium-Flemish Community, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Romania, Sweden, the Holy See and the United Kingdom − England, Wales and Northern Ireland), have taken the important step of including microcredentials in their NQF. Moreover, in almost all of them, except for Italy and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) ([21]), learning modules leading to microcredentials are expressed in ECTS. These systems are therefore the most advanced in ensuring transparency and readability of microcredentials. Although microcredentials are not yet integrated in their NQFs, Austria, Estonia, Greece and Spain use ECTS to measure workload and thus facilitate the portability of these qualifications.

([20]) [Rome Ministerial Communiqué, Annex III](), 19 November 2020, p. 4.

([21]) The United Kingdom use a national credit system which allows to convert national credits into ECTS.

In 16 other education systems ([22]), the legal frameworks provide for the possibility for higher education institutions to develop modules leading to microcredentials although such programmes are not included in NQFs. In almost all of them, this possibility is stated in the national legislation such as Education Law, Higher Education Law or Higher Education Act, while Czechia, Greece and Lithuania offer the possibility to develop microcredentials within the lifelong learning framework. For example, the Greek legislation on higher education and recognition makes provisions for the award of micro-credentials by lifelong learning centres located in the Greek higher education institutions.

Other education systems, have neither incorporated microcredentials in NQF, nor in the legislation. However, higher education institutions are able to develop learning modules leading to microcredentials under their own autonomy. This is the case in the French Community of Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Switzerland.

Finally, in 15 EHEA education systems, short courses leading to microcredentials are not yet a common feature. In some of them, however, the concept of microcredentials and the possible establishment of an appropriate legal framework have been discussed at policy level (Armenia, Luxembourg and Moldova).

2.1.9. Monitoring the implementation of the ECTS system

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is one the main instruments that was adopted and further developed through the establishment of the European Higher Education Area. ECTS has become the cornerstone of the implementation of curriculum reforms, focusing on workload and learning outcomes. The crucial importance of reinforcing the Bologna tools and especially ECTS, to indicate achieved learning outcomes and their associated workload has been again underlined in the Rome Communiqué, 2020 ([23]).

The correct understanding and consistent implementation of ECTS is the key challenge to ensure that ECTS delivers maximal benefits. The reference point for correct implementation is the 2015 edition of the ECTS Users Guide, adopted throughout the EHEA in the Yerevan Ministerial Conference.

The scorecard indicator presented in Figure 2.9 has been developed to reflect national measures to ensure correct implementation of the system in higher education institutions. It focuses on the role of external quality assurance agencies in monitoring ECTS. External quality assurance is the best available mechanism to provide information on the level of ECTS implementation in higher education institutions, while respecting institutional autonomy. In higher education systems where external quality assurance is required to monitor ECTS implementation, national authorities and stakeholders will have access to sufficiently reliable data on the state of play of ECTS implementation, challenges and good practice.

The indicator applies equally to the different types of quality assurance systems in European higher education – whether they focus on institutional or programme-level quality assurance or combine the two. Institutional quality assurance processes tend to assess the extent to which higher education institutions' internal quality assurance system monitor key policy areas, while programme-level evaluation tends to check more directly defined quality aspects of individual higher education programmes and their delivery within higher education institutions.

In systems with an institutional focus, it is expected that agencies would check that institutions' internal quality assurance mechanisms take full account of the 2015 ECTS Users' Guide. External quality assurance would thus not monitor ECTS implementation directly, but would check that the institution's internal quality assurance framework is sufficiently robust to ensure coherent implementation. However,

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([22]) Andorra, Austria, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (Scotland).

([23]) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, Annex III, 19 November 2020, p. 3.

in systems based on programme evaluation, external quality assurance would have a more direct role in monitoring the use of ECTS.

The key issues which this indicator picks out from the ECTS Users' Guide for consideration in external quality assurance are:

- ECTS credits are allocated on the basis of learning outcomes & student workload;
- ECTS credit allocation is regularly monitored and followed up by appropriate revision if necessary;
- ECTS is used as a credit system for the accumulation of credits acquired within higher education institutions;
- ECTS is used as a credit system for the transfer of credits for student learning outcomes acquired in another institution in the country;
- ECTS is used as a credit system for the transfer of credits for periods of study abroad.
- The higher education institution has an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with problems of credit recognition.

Figure 2.9: Scorecard indicator n°2: Monitoring the implementation of the ECTS system by external quality assurance, 2022/2023
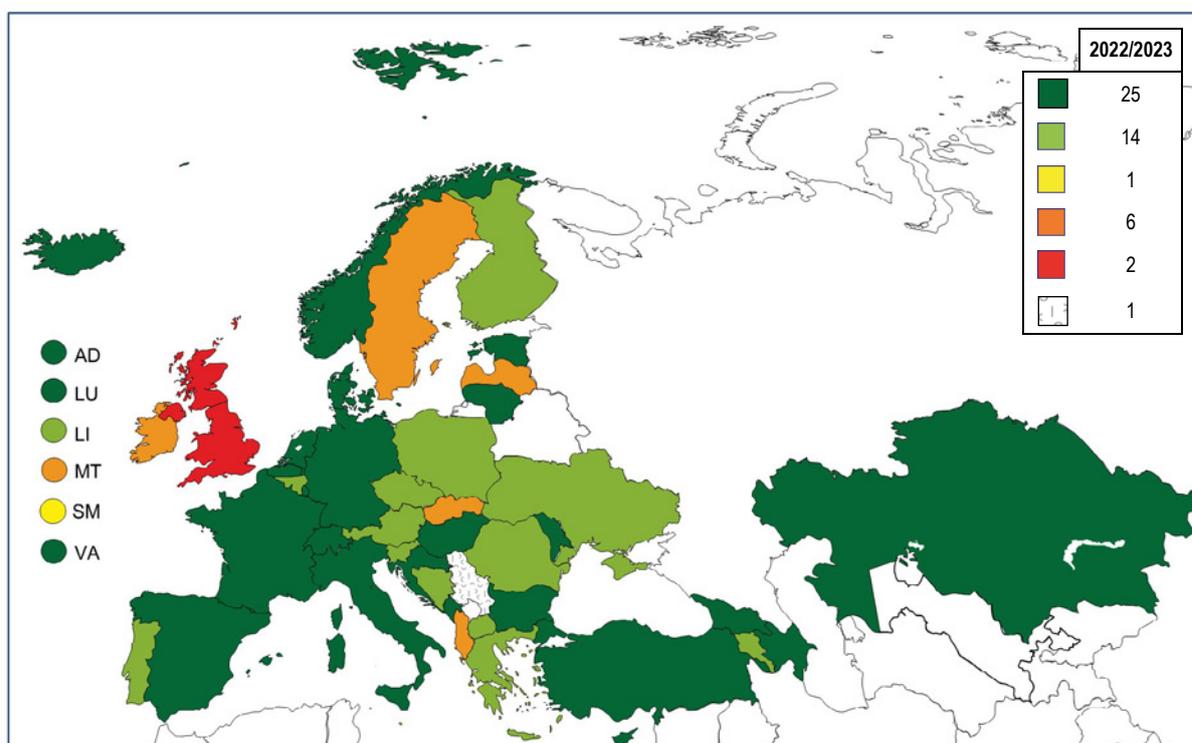
Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are required
to be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions.

All the following issues are monitored specifically:

- o ECTS credits are allocated on the basis of learning outcomes & student workload;
- o ECTS credit allocation is regularly monitored and followed up by appropriate revision if necessary;
- o ECTS is used as a credit system for the accumulation of credits acquired within higher education institutions;
- o ECTS is used as a credit system for the transfer of credits for student learning outcomes acquired in another institution in the country;
- o ECTS is used as a credit system for the transfer of credits for periods of study abroad;
- o The higher education institution has an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with problems of credit recognition.

🟩	The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are required to be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions. **Four or five** of the above issues are monitored specifically.
🟨	The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are required to be used by external quality assurance agencies as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS in all higher education institutions. **One to three** of the above issues are monitored specifically.
🟧	The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are NOT required to be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS, BUT they are generally used in practice.
🟥	The ECTS Users' Guide 2015 principles are NOT required to be used by external quality assurance as a basis to assess the implementation of ECTS, AND they are generally NOT used in practice.
▢	Data not available

On the evidence provided for this indicator, external quality assurance processes seem to pay a great deal of attention to the correct use of ECTS in respect of the Users' Guide. 25 education systems out of 48 (dark green) require external quality assurance agencies to monitor all key aspects of the implementation of ECTS during their regular evaluation processes. In a further 14 systems (light green), there are requirements for a number of these key issues to be considered. In San Marino, one to three of the above issues are required to be monitored.

In six systems, the ECTS Users' Guide principles are not required to be used by external quality assurance, but they are generally used in practice (orange category). Finally, there are two systems where there is no requirement to consider the 2015 ECTS Users Guide.

Compared to the data from the 2020 Bologna Implementation report (see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 55), some progress can be observed. Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary and Lithuania, have moved into dark green category. Armenia, Czechia, Liechtenstein and Slovenia, have made recent progress, but still need to step up action to ensure that external quality assurance agencies monitor all key aspects of the implementation of ECTS during their regular evaluation processes. It can be observed that external quality assurance agencies are less often required to monitor the existence of an appropriate appeals procedure to deal with problems of credit recognition compared to other key principles set in the ECTS Users' Guide 2015.

2.1.10. Diploma Supplement (DS)

The Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma, providing a detailed description of study components and learning outcomes achieved by its holder. The aim is to help higher education institutions, employers, recognition centres as well as other stakeholders to easily understand graduates' skills and competences. The Diploma Supplement is an integral part of several initiatives in the field of higher education internationalisation and recognition of qualifications. The first of them – the 1997 Lisbon Recognition Convention ([24]) – calls upon signatory countries to promote the Diploma Supplement or any equivalent document through national information centres or otherwise. The Diploma Supplement is also one of the five Europass transparency tools promoted by the European Commission ([25]).

The Bologna Process made the first reference to the Diploma Supplement already in 1999, when higher education ministers agreed to adopt a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement ([26]). In 2003, the ministers agreed that every student

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([24])   https://www.coe.int/en/web/higher-education-and-research/lisbon-recognition-convention

([25])   Decision No 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass).

([26])   The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999.

graduating as from 2005 should receive the Diploma Supplement automatically and free of charge, and that the document should be issued in a widely spoken European language ([27]).

These four main ministerial engagements are brought together in Scorecard indicator n°3 on the implementation of the Diploma Supplement in relation to first and second cycle (see Figure 2.10).

Figure 2.10: Scorecard indicator n°3: Stage of implementation of the Diploma Supplement, 2022/2023
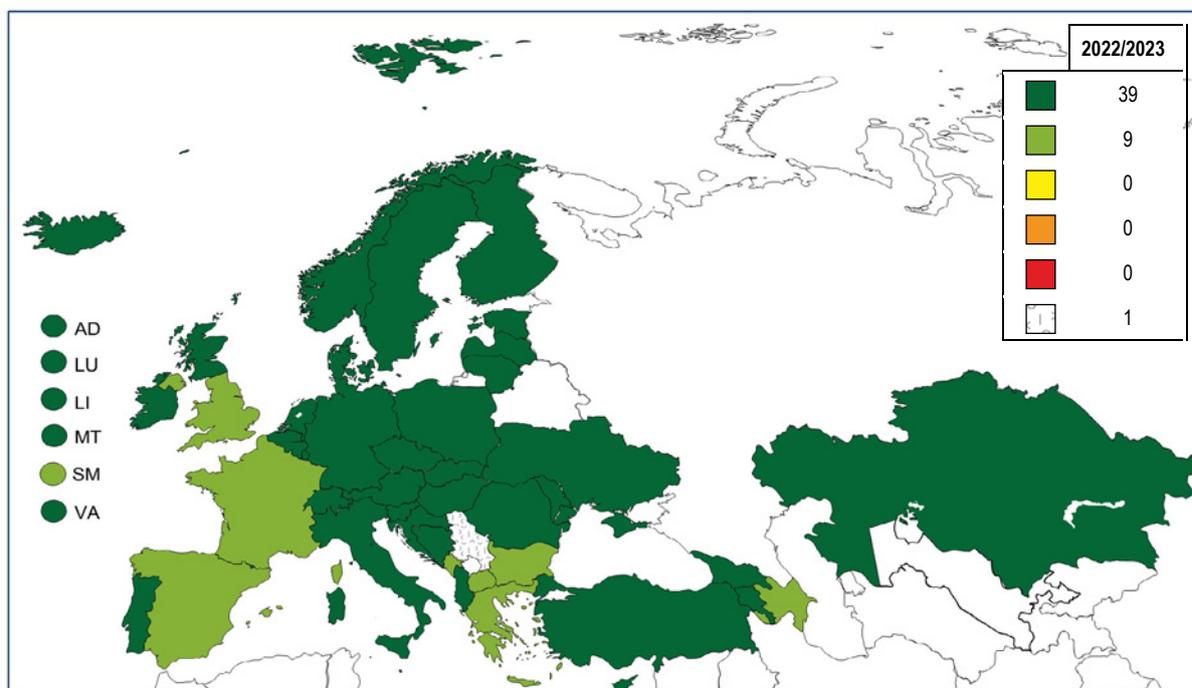
Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■ (dark green)	Diploma Supplement in the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement format is issued to first- and second-cycle graduates: o to every graduate; o automatically; o in a widely spoken European language; o free of charge.
■ (light green)	Three of the above criteria are met.
■ (yellow)	Two of the above criteria are met.
■ (orange)	Only one criterion is met.
■ (red)	None of the above criteria is met.
▢	Data not available

The indicator shows that all EHEA countries have introduced the Diploma Supplement and that most of them (39 out of 48 systems with available data) now comply with all ministerial engagements, i.e. the Diploma Supplement is issued to all first- and second-cycle graduates, automatically, in a widely spoken European language and free of charge (dark green). Ten education systems do not comply with one of these aspects (light green).

In almost all EHEA countries all first- and second-cycle graduates receive the Diploma Supplement. In the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), some institutions issue the Diploma Supplement, others deliver the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) – which is based upon and virtually reflects the Diploma Supplement, whilst remaining distinctly British –, while some others provide graduates only with a transcript. In France, the 2014 regulatory framework requires higher education institutions to deliver the Diploma Supplement to all first- and second-cycle graduates, but practice is not yet fully aligned with this obligation.

([27]) Realising the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Berlin, 19 September 2003.

In almost all countries Diploma Supplement is issued automatically. However, in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia and Spain ([28]), it is delivered upon request. To reduce the administrative burden, in Norway the Diploma Supplement template has been successfully digitalised, and is now integrated in the software used by all public higher education institutions for the registration of student results.

The Diploma Supplement is generally issued free of charge. However, in Montenegro, graduates are routinely expected to pay a fee for a printed Diploma including Diploma Supplement. When the Diploma Supplement is issued free of charge, fees may still apply in some countries to services going beyond the standard provision. For example, in Slovenia, the Diploma Supplement is issued for free in Slovenian language and in one of the official EU languages, but for a fee in a second official EU language or a non-EU language. In Slovakia, it is issued in the official language and English free of charge, whereas a foreign-language version other than English is issued for a fee. In Ireland, Diploma Supplements requiring an additional administrative workload may be linked to fees, while in Hungary, the duplicate is always issued for a fee.

In all EHEA systems, except for San Marino, the Diploma Supplement is issued in a widely spoken European language ([29]). In most cases, it is issued directly in the country language and in English. In some countries, however, the version in a widely spoken language is issued only upon request (Estonia, North Macedonia, Poland and Slovakia).

2.1.11. National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF)

National qualifications frameworks promote the readability and comparability of qualifications – both within and across countries. They are used for describing and clearly expressing the differences between qualifications in all cycles and levels of education. Qualifications frameworks are able to link many of the structural elements promoted and developed by the Bologna Process – three-cycle degree structures, ECTS credits, learning outcomes and quality assurance. This plays an important role in increasing the transparency of qualifications systems.

The implementation of QF-EHEA compatible national qualifications frameworks was agreed as one of the Bologna Process key commitments in the Paris Communiqué ([30]). In the 2020 Rome Communiqué ([31]), ministers reconfirmed their determinations to complete and further develop the National Qualifications Frameworks compatible with the Overarching Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).

Scorecard indicator n°4 (see Figure 2.11) summarises the state of play of the development and implementation of national qualifications framework for higher education. It is based upon eleven steps to develop and implement a national qualification framework to be compatible with the QF-EHEA.

([28])   In Spain, the diploma is delivered upon request and the DS is automatically delivered with the diploma.

([29])   The 2003 Berlin Communiqué does not provide a definition of the concept of 'a widely spoken European language'. However, according to the Eurobarometer survey (European Commission, 2012), when the mother tongue is considered, German is the most widely spoken language, with 16% of Europeans saying it is their first language, followed by Italian and English (13% each), French (12%), then Spanish and Polish (8% each). Regarding foreign languages, the five most widely spoken foreign languages are English (38%), French (12%), German (11%), Spanish (7%) and Russian (5%). These languages can therefore be seen as 'widely spoken European languages'.

([30])   Paris Ministerial Communiqué, 25 May 2018.

([31])   Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

Figure 2.11: Scorecard indicator n°4: Implementation of national qualifications frameworks, 2022/2023
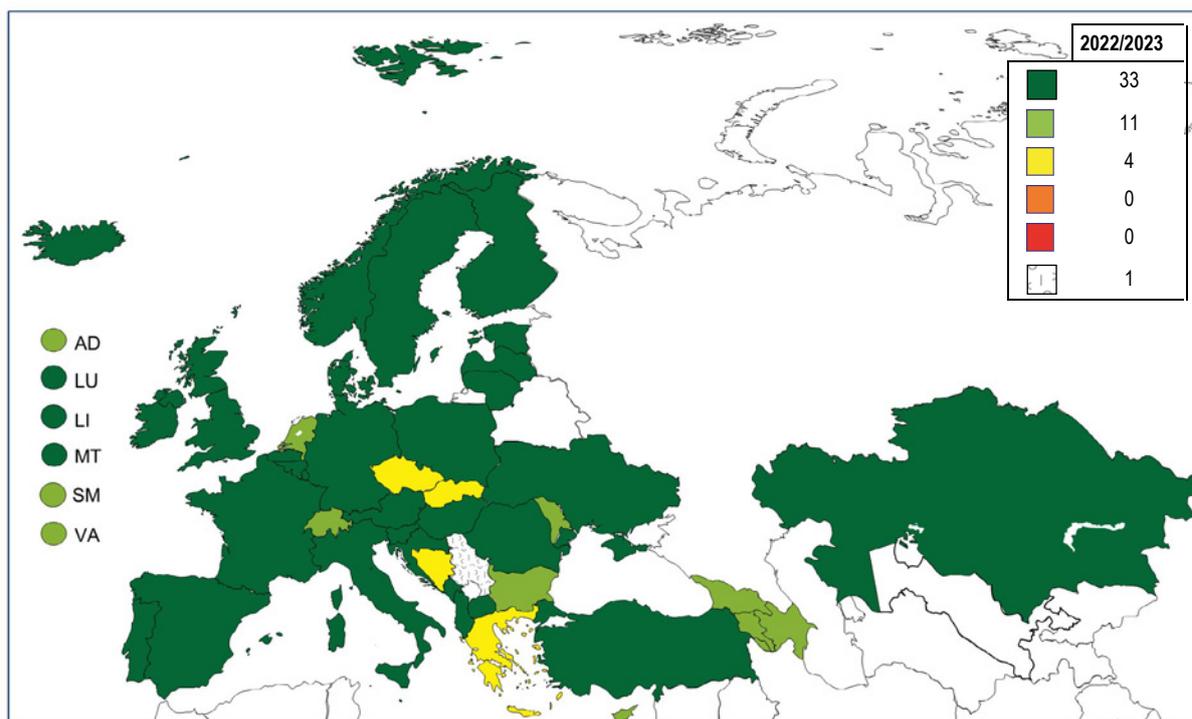
Source: BFUG data collection.

The colours in the figure indicate that the country has completed all steps related to a specific colour and all preceding steps. The red colour is an exception, countries having completed step 1 or step 2 also obtain this colour.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■ (dark green)	Steps 10-11:
	○ 11. The final NQF and the self-certification report can be consulted on a public website.
	○ 10. The NQF has self-certified its compatibility with the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area.
■ (green)	Steps 7-9:
	○ 9. Qualifications have been included in the NQF.
	○ 8. Study programmes have been re-designed on the basis of the learning outcomes included in the NQF.
	○ 7. Implementation of the NQF has started with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of higher education institutions, quality assurance agency(ies) and other bodies.
■ (yellow)	Steps 5-6:
	○ 6. The NQF has been adopted in legislation or in other high level policy fora.
	○ 5. Consultation/national discussion has taken place and the design of the NQF has been agreed by stakeholders.
■ (orange)	Step 4: The level structure, level descriptors (learning outcomes), and credit ranges have been agreed.
■ (red)	Steps 1-3:
	○ 3. The process of developing the NQF has been set up, with stakeholders identified and committee(s) established.
	○ 2. The purpose(s) of the NQF have been agreed and outlined.
	○ 1. Decision to start developing the NQF has been taken by the national body responsible for higher education and/or the minister.
▢	Data not available

Figure 2.11 shows that most countries have fulfilled their commitment to establish and use a national qualifications framework. The 33 systems in dark green have established their national qualifications frameworks for higher education and self-certified them to the QF-EHEA. In addition, in these countries, the final NQF and the self-certification report can be consulted on a public website and is used by

national authorities for at least one of the agreed purposes (³²). Albania, Kazakhstan and Ukraine have now moved into this category having completed this process. In Ukraine, the NQF recently certified its compatibility with the QF-EHEA. In 2021, the board of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine approved the self-certification report that was further made available on a public website (³³).

In the 11 systems in the light green category, the NQF is in place. However, there are still processes to finalise in relation to self-certification. Andorra and Azerbaijan have both made recent progress and moved into this category. Both reported establishing the NQF in legislation and undertaking the work of re-designing study programmes and including their qualifications in the NQF. To achieve the policy goals that national authorities together with stakeholders set for the national qualifications framework, NQFs need to be better integrated into public policy also in these countries.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia and Slovakia are still at the mid-way stage of the indicator having not made progress since adopting the NQF in legislation. They therefore now need to step up action to ensure that the work so far undertaken is meaningful. Greece has made recent improvements adopting the NQF in higher education legislation and has thus joined the yellow category.

2.2. Recognition

Fair and reliable recognition of foreign qualifications is an essential condition for the EHEA to be open, inclusive and attractive space for students. This is why recognition of qualification has been high priority for the participating countries through the Bologna process.

Various instruments aiming at facilitating fair recognition of foreign qualifications and/or study periods abroad have been developed and adopted at the European, national, regional and institutional level. From the start of the Bologna process, the Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)) (³⁴) has been providing a common and binding legal framework for recognition policies across countries in Europe. The LRC sets out principles for recognition and implementation mechanisms. As for any international treaty, the countries that ratified the LRC have an obligation to review and amend their own national legislation to remove any contradiction. Throughout the Bologna Process there have been various calls to member states to review their legislation and implement the LRC correctly. In the Berlin Communiqué (2003) (³⁵), Ministers set themselves the short-term objective 'to improve the recognition system of degrees and periods of studies'. They also 'underline the importance of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which should be ratified by all countries participating in the Bologna Process'. The 2020 Bologna Process Implementation report highlighted that although almost all countries ratified the LRC by 2020, not all of them embedded all its principles into national legislation (European Commission /EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 83). The report also states that a majority of EHEA countries do not fully implement the article VII of the LRC that frames the recognition of qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee like situation. Following this observation, in the 2020 Rome Communiqué, ministries commit to 'strengthen the implementation of the LRC and apply its principles to qualifications and periods of study outside the EHEA using common assessment criteria and reports' (³⁶).

(³²) The agreed purposes are: communication with employers/skills forecasting; qualification recognition policies; policy coordination across levels and sectors of education.

(³³) https://mon.gov.ua/ua/tag/natsionalna-ramka-kvalifikatsiy

(³⁴) Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. ETS No.165. https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_en.asp

(³⁵) Berlin Ministerial Communiqué, 19 September 2003. https://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/2003_Berlin_Communique_English_577284.pdf

(³⁶) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 7.

The section first takes stock of the implementation of the principles laid out in the Lisbon Recognition Convention (2.2.1) and addresses whether procedures are in place for the recognition of refugee qualification (i.e. implementation of the Article VII of the LRC) at national level (2.2.2). Then, it shows whether and how often the European tools for recognition of qualification held by refugees are used at national level (2.2.3).

For many years EHEA cooperation has focused on improving and simplifying recognition practices. In the second decade of the Bologna Process, when countries made great progress in implementation of trust building tools such as the three-cycle system, an overarching qualification framework, the ECTS and quality assurance, the narrative around recognition of qualifications has shifted to the notion of 'automatic recognition'. The progress towards the automatic recognition of qualification for academic purposes is monitored in part 2.2.4 of this section.

2.2.1. Principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) in national Legislation

Figure 2.12 shows the extent to which the main principles of the LRC are specified in national legislation.

Figure 2.12: Principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention in national legislation, 2022/2023
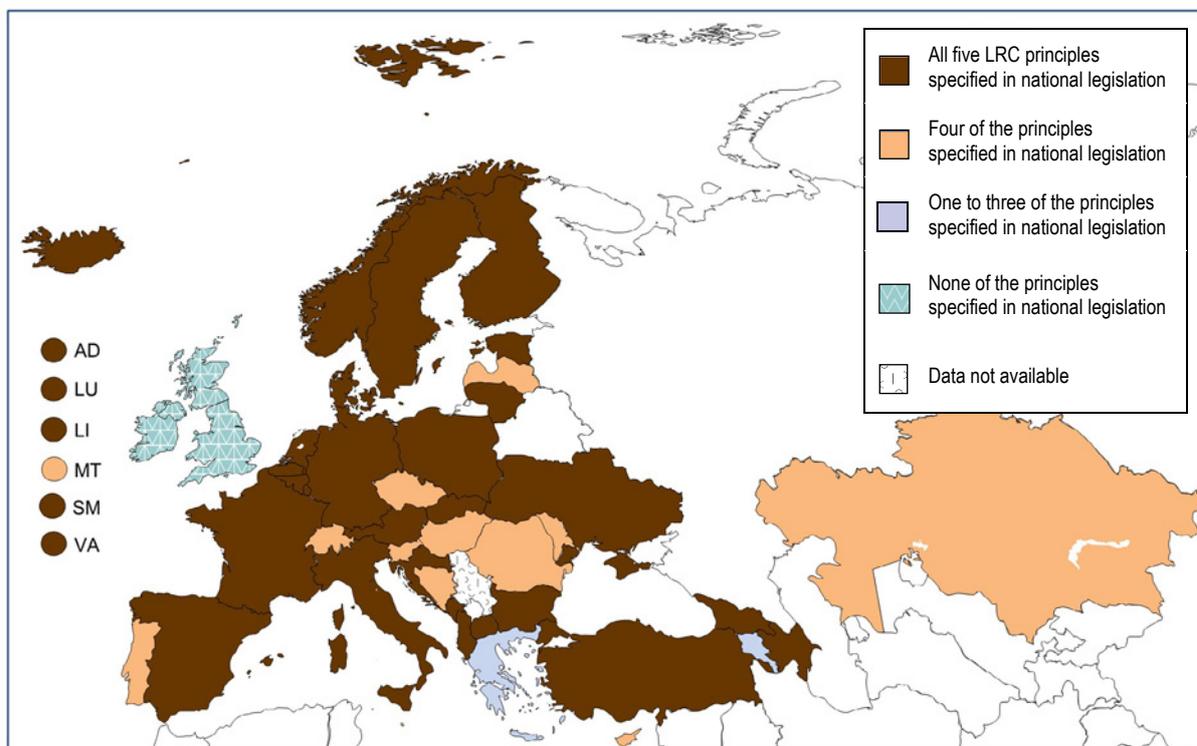
Source: BFUG data collection.

The principles highlighted in the indicator are:

1) applicants have right to fair assessment; 2) there is recognition if no substantial differences can be proven; 3) legislation or guidelines encourage comparing of learning outcomes rather than programme contents; 4) in cases of negative decisions the competent recognition authority demonstrates the existence of substantial difference; 5) applicant's right to appeal of the recognition decision. Implementation of these principles was identified by the Pathfinder Group ([37]) as an important step towards automatic recognition.

([37])   The 2012 Budapest Communiqué called for the establishment of 'pathfinder group of countries exploring ways to achieve the automatic academic recognition of comparable degrees'. (http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/72/3/EHEA_Pathfinder_Group_on_Automatic_Recognition_January_2015_613723.pdf).

Although the ratification of the Lisbon Recognition Convention has long been completed by almost all EHEA countries, several countries have not embedded all principles into national legislation.

Progress has been made since the publication of the 2020 Bologna Implementation report (see European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 84). The Figure 2.12 shows that the number of education systems where all of these main principles are specified in national legislation has risen to 31. Eight additional countries (Albania, Andorra, Austria, Croatia, Poland, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine) have now embedded all principles in national legislations. Poland and Sweden have recently added the 5th principle, namely the right of applicants to appeal of the recognition decision, to legislation, while in Austria the Universities Act 2002, amended in 2021 ([38]), promotes the comparison of learning outcomes rather than programme contents for recognition purposes.

The number of systems where four of the principles are embedded in legislation is now 12. A further two systems specify one to three principles. Ireland and the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland) does not legislate in this area as institutions have full autonomy over their admissions, and for principles to be specified in national legislation would be considered a violation of autonomy. Nevertheless, the governments and higher education institutions in these countries claim to be strongly committed to open, fair and transparent admissions processes.

2.2.2. Implementation of Article VII of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)

In recent years, large numbers of individuals of all ages have been fleeing conflict zones and relocating in other countries. Most recently, the number of refugees in Europe has dramatically increased with the arrival of around 4 million non-EU citizens who fled Ukraine because of the Russian invasion in 2022 ([39]) (see 6.3, Chapter 6).

Forced to interrupt studies or professional activity, many people bring with them competences and skills acquired in their country of origin that can be further developed in the host country through further studies, sometimes in higher education.

With requests from refugees, institutions responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications may face particular challenges in the recognition process. These are often associated with the lack of established recognition procedures and policies for qualifications with insufficient or entirely lost documentation, as well as a lack of information on legal obligations. In such cases, article VII of the LRC serves as a framework for developing good practice. It states that: 'Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the Parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence' ([40]).

([38]) https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20002128

([39]) According to Eurostat data, on 31 May 2023: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?oldid=605154

([40]) LRC, Art. VII (p.9): https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c7

Figure 2.13 shows the state of current implementation of Article VII of the LRC at national level.

Figure 2.13: Implementation of Article VII of the LRC at national level, 2022/2023
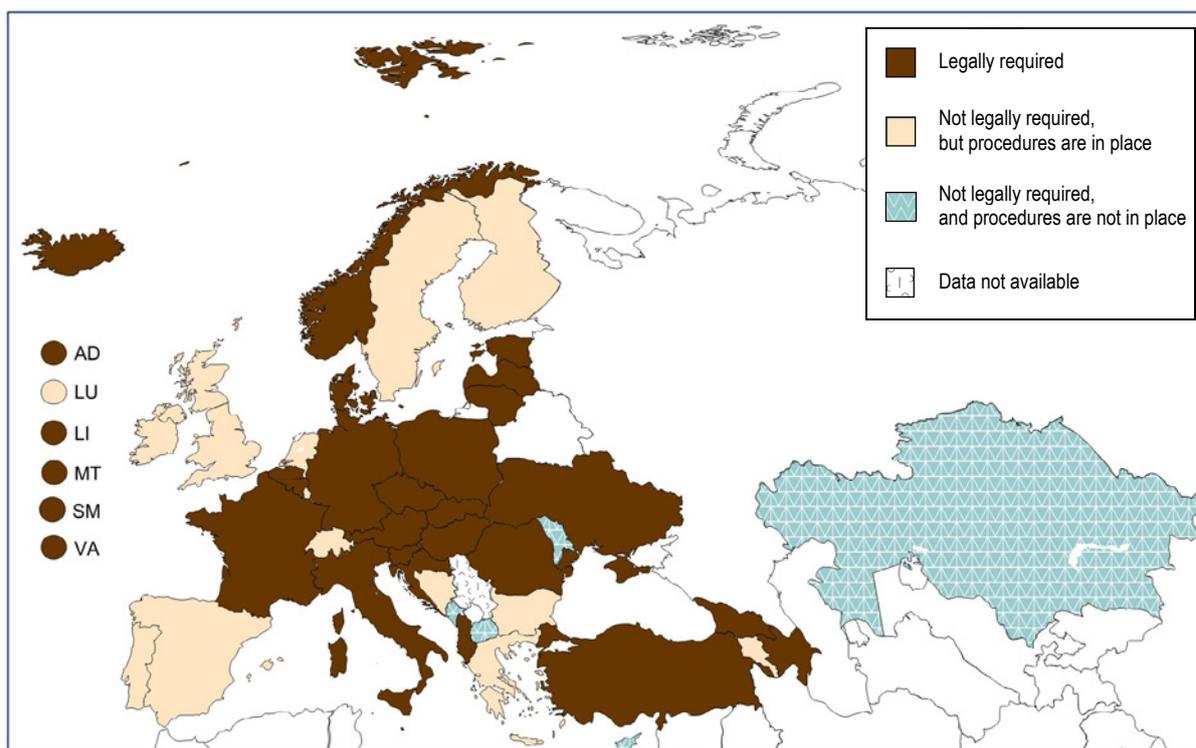
Source: BFUG data collection.

The analysed data reveal that despite the widespread ratification of the LRC, only slightly more than a half of the education systems with available data (29 out of 48) have requirements in national legislation for special recognition procedures to be in place for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. More positively, clear legislation and procedures for refugees and displaced persons with qualifications exist in the countries that are an important entry point to Europe from the conflict zones in Africa (Italy and Malta), from Middle East (Türkiye) and from Ukraine (Czechia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Romania).

Seven countries (Albania, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Latvia, and Portugal) have recently introduced a legal requirement for procedures to be followed. This can be considered as very significant progress since the 2020 Bologna Implementation report (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 84).

14 other systems claim that procedures are in place even if there is no legal requirement for them.

Five countries (Cyprus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro and North Macedonia) have no requirement for specific recognition procedures to be in place for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. This represents a serious contradiction with the international legal commitment undertaken by countries that have both signed and ratified the LRC.

2.2.3. Use of tools for recognition of qualifications of refugees

There are two main European tools developed to facilitate recognition of qualifications held by refugees even in cases of missing documentation or where the qualifications are scarcely documented: the European Qualification Passport for Refugees (EQPR) ([41]) and the ENIC-NARIC toolkit.

([41])   For more details, see: https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications

The EQPR has been created by the Council of Europe and project partners, and consists of two parts: an assessment section and an explanatory section. The methodology for the evaluation is a combination of an assessment of available documentation and the use of a structured interview with a team of two qualified credential evaluators. Through a standardised format, it explains the qualifications a refugee is likely to have based on the available evidence. Although this document does not constitute a formal recognition act, it summarises and presents available information on the applicant's educational level, work experience and language proficiency. Thus, the document provides credible information that can be relevant in connection with applications for employment, internships, qualification courses and admission to studies. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees was welcomed by ministers in the 2020 Rome Communiqué ([42]) and its use and future development were promoted.

The second tool for the recognition of refugees' qualifications has been developed by the ENIC-NARIC centres of several countries within a Refugees and Recognition − Erasmus+ project ([43]), which built upon a previous project lead by Norway's national recognition agency, NOKUT ([44]). The toolkit is a joint effort to assist ENIC-NARIC centres in the development of practical approaches to credential evaluation and recognition of the qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation. The toolkit consists of three parts – principles, tools and approaches.

Figure 2.14: Use of tools for recognition of refugees' qualifications: the Council of Europe Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR) and ENIC/NARIC's toolkit for recognition of refugees' qualifications, 2022/2023
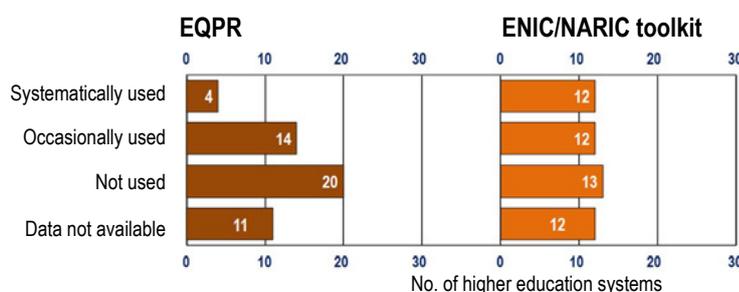
Source: BFUG data collection.

Figure 2.14 shows that despite the potential advantages of using the tools for recognition of refugees' qualifications, their use is not widespread in the EHEA countries. According to the data provided, around half of the education systems with available data use (occasionally or systematically) the EQPR (18 out of 38), while two-third of the systems make use of the ENIC/NARIC toolkit (24 out of 37).

Albania, Italy and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) are the three counties that systematically use both tools in dealing with applications from refugees. Six education systems (Armenia, Belgium − Flemish Community, Croatia, the Holy See, Slovenia and Türkiye) use both tools, but occasionally rather than systematically. Some education systems report using a national tool equivalent to the EQPR. For example, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands and Sweden are issuing a national format of the qualification passport to record the available information on the applicant's educational level, qualifications, work experience and language proficiency. This document is commonly called 'background paper', while Bulgaria labelled it 'information card for acquired educational degree'.

In around a quarter of the systems there is no data collection on the use of the above-mentioned tools.

([42]) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

([43]) https://www.nokut.no/en/Refugees-and-Recognition/toolkit

([44]) For further information, see: https://www.nokut.no/om-nokut/internasjonalt-samarbeid/qualifications-passport-for-refugees/

2.2.4. System-level automatic recognition of degrees for academic purposes

The Lisbon Recognition Convention, addressed in section 2.2.1., has provided a clear legal framework under which recognition policy operates at national and institutional level. However, in 2010, the EHEA ministers of higher education recognised that procedures for the academic recognition of qualifications continued to be often lengthy and burdensome. For this reason, in 2012 in Bucharest, the Ministers of higher education across the EHEA committed themselves to the long-term objective of 'automatic recognition' of comparable academic degrees ([45]).

While there has been much discussion and confusion about the notion of automatic recognition, several texts have specified an understanding of the concept.

Within the Bologna Process, the first reference text was the report produced by the Pathfinder Group on automatic recognition, which states: 'Automatic recognition of a degree leads to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access)' (EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition, 2015, p. 10). This definition makes it clear that automatic recognition does not imply automatic admission to any specific programme, but rather that holders of a qualification giving access to a programme of study at the next level have the right to be considered for entry. The Pathfinder Group reached the conclusion that automatic recognition is a necessary pre-condition for large-scale academic mobility, and proposed a number of recommendations to improve the situation. The Pathfinder Group recommended that a qualification based on the EHEA three-cycle structure from one EHEA country should be recognised at the same level anywhere else in the EHEA. The principle under examination is whether students who hold qualifications from other EHEA countries have the level of their qualification recognised in the same way as holders of qualifications issued within the home country. As the Pathfinder Group specified, the objective is that a bachelor is a bachelor across the EHEA.

Meanwhile, in the Yerevan Communiqué in May 2015, ministers made the commitment 'to ensure that qualifications from other EHEA countries are automatically recognised at the same level as relevant domestic qualifications' ([46]). In the 2020 Rome Communiqué, ministers confirmed their determination to make the necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition at systems level for qualifications delivered in EHEA countries where quality assurance operates in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and where a fully operational national qualifications framework has been established ([47]).

Within the European Union, the Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 took a further step in promoting the automatic mutual recognition of qualifications as well as the recognition of learning outcomes during study periods abroad ([48]), thus strengthening the 2012 commitment and increasing the speed of implementation. Indeed, the Recommendation envisages achieving the automatic recognition of qualifications by 2025 throughout the EU, providing further impetus to all participating countries in the Bologna process to follow suit.

Scorecard indicator n°5 (see Figure 2.15) monitors progress towards the automatic recognition of qualifications. A distinction is made between the higher education systems based on whether they have implemented system-level automatic recognition of qualifications, and if they have, whether such automatic recognition covers all EHEA countries.

([45])   Bucharest Communiqué, 26-27 April 2012.

([46])   Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015, p. 3

([47])   Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

([48])   Council Recommendation of 26 November 2018 on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad, OJ C444/01 10.12.2018.

Thus, for the dark green category, all higher education qualifications issued in other EHEA countries are recognised on an equal level with qualifications in the home country without any additional procedures in higher education institutions. Nevertheless, automatic recognition does not equate to immediate recognition. A normal procedure would be to check that qualification is genuine and classified at the correct level.

In the yellow category are all higher education systems where automatic recognition at system level takes place with a subset of EHEA countries based on bilateral or multilateral agreements. For other countries a separate recognition procedure is in place.

The red category groups education systems that do not apply the concept of automatic recognition, so that separate recognition procedures are in place for all education qualifications issued in all other countries.

Figure 2.15: Scorecard indicator n°5: System level (automatic) recognition for academic purposes, 2022/2023

	2022/2023
■	19
■	16
■	13
▫	1

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■	Automatic recognition is in place, meaning that all higher education qualifications issued in other EHEA countries are recognised at system level on an equal level with comparable ([49]) academic qualifications in the home country and give the right to be considered for entry to a programme of further study at the next level.
■	Automatic recognition at system level takes place with a subset of European countries.
■	There is no automatic recognition. ▫ Data not avalable

([49]) The term 'comparable' implies that foreign qualifications are treated in the same way as national degrees (e.g. a first-cycle degree from an EHEA country vs. a national first-cycle degree) for the purpose of further study at the next level without additional recognition procedures.

Figure 2.15 reveals that the European Higher Education Area is still far from achieving widespread automatic recognition. The distribution of education systems along the main categories is as follows.

There are 19 systems that practise automatic recognition for all EHEA countries, and that are shown in dark green. The number of systems in this category has slightly increased since the 2020 edition of the Bologna Process Implementation Report (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2020, p. 87). Andorra, Austria, Croatia, Greece, the Holy See, Kazakhstan, Spain and Switzerland have seen recent developments, and as a consequence have joined the dark green category.

While not yet having full system-level recognition for all EHEA countries, a further 16 systems report that automatic recognition applies to some EHEA countries. This is usually based on regional, bilateral or multilateral agreements on the mutual automatic recognition of qualifications. As a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, Armenia has recently signed a mutual recognition agreement regarding recognition of higher education qualifications both for academic and professional purposes with other members of the Union. As this agreement includes automatic recognition of qualifications from Kazakhstan, Armenia is now in the yellow category.

In 13 systems, there is no system-level automatic recognition as additional recognition procedures apply for recognition of higher education qualifications issued in all other EHEA countries.

There is a relationship between degree structures, and in particular the workload of first-cycle programmes, and automatic recognition of qualification for academic purposes. The education systems where most of the first-cycle programmes comprise 180 ECTS (see Figure 2.1) usually apply automatic recognition of qualification for academic purposes. Conversely, and with very few exceptions, education systems where the workload of most first-cycle programmes is higher (240 ECTS) additional recognition procedures for academic qualifications and degrees are in place. While this pattern can be observed from the data gathered, more research would be required to understand this apparent relationship. Is there a reason why countries with a high workload in first-cycle programmes appear to be more reluctant to implement a system of automatic recognition of qualification and degrees for further academic studies?

2.3. Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is one of the key commitments underpinning the EHEA. It ensures that higher education institutions and programmes meet the standards of quality outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). This helps in building trust in the value and outcomes of higher education among stakeholders and society both within and beyond the EHEA.

This section addresses developments in the implementation of quality assurance commitments since the Rome Communique. Section 2.3.1 discusses the stage of development of the external quality assurance systems and in particular the share of higher education institutions reviewed by a quality assurance agency registered on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

The following sections consider the level of student and international participation in quality assurance, which are two longstanding commitments dating back to the early years of the Bologna Process. Finally, the section explores the level of openness of systems for higher education institutions to choose any suitable EQAR-registered agency for their external quality assurance (in line with national requirements), as well as the possibility of employing the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

Several sources of data have been used in this section. Some of the information was gathered directly from EHEA member countries as part of the BFUG data collection exercise. Countries also provided information through the QA FIT survey ([50]) and a third source is EQAR's Knowledge Base ([51]). Further information was extracted from the data uploaded by EQAR-registered agencies into the Database for External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR). This facilitated assessment of the extent of higher education institutions' compliance with the ESG as reviewed by an EQAR-registered agency, as well as the methods used for undertaking external quality assurance of joint programmes. For the data related to the level of student and international participation in quality assurance, information collected through the BFUG data collection was cross-checked with that provided by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), by national regulations and legal frameworks as well as with external review reports of quality assurance agencies.

2.3.1. Stage of development of the external Quality Assurance systems

The key commitment on quality assurance is for external quality assurance to be conducted in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The first appendix to the 2018 Paris Communiqué explained this key commitment, as follows:

'External quality assurance (be it at programme or institutional level) is performed by Agencies that have demonstrably complied with the standards and guidelines stipulated in the current ESG. This is best ensured where only those agencies registered on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) are allowed to operate in the country ([52])'.

Guided by this Paris Communiqué text, EQAR registration is the EHEA measure that best demonstrates that quality assurance agencies operate in substantial compliance with the ESG. EQAR registration also provides legitimacy to quality assurance agencies that operate outside their national jurisdiction (whilst complying with national requirements) as per the Bucharest Communiqué (2012), reinforcing trust throughout the EHEA and beyond.

EQAR was established in 2008 following an agreement of Ministers responsible for higher education in the London Communiqué (2007) with a commitment that 'the register will be voluntary, self-financing, independent and transparent'. To date it is the only body established through the Bologna Process. It provides the public with clear and reliable information on quality assurance agencies operating in Europe, and it is web-based and freely accessible. The primary condition for an agency to be listed in the EQAR is that it 'should be evaluated on the basis of substantial compliance with the ESG, evidenced through an independent review process'.

Quality assurance agencies that are members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) but not registered in EQAR also operate in compliance with the ESG, as this is the criteria to become ENQA members. ENQA was established as a network of quality assurance agencies in 2000 and subsequently as an association in 2004. It is the designated stakeholder organisation for quality assurance agencies within the EHEA, and its mission involves representing the interests of these agencies internationally, supporting them nationally, and offering comprehensive services and networking opportunities. Under ENQA's umbrella, the community of agencies collaborates to drive innovation in quality assurance processes.

([50])   The Quality Assurance fit for the future (QA FIT) survey for ministries was carried out by EQAR and addressed all 47 governmental members of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Responses were collected between 7 November 2022 and 24 January 2023. 36 valid responses were received. See more here: https://www.eqar.eu/about/projects/qa-fit/

([51])   EQAR's Knowledge Base is available at: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/country-information/

([52])   Paris Ministerial Communiqué, 25 May 2018, Appendix I.

While the same external review reports may be used to apply for ENQA membership or EQAR registration, the decision-making processes on ESG compliance differ between the two organisations. The decision on ESG compliance in EQAR is taken by a Register Committee, with members nominated from different stakeholder groups who serve in their personal capacity. The decision-making in ENQA is under the responsibility of the ENQA Board. In practice, the ENQA Board normally uses EQAR registration as de facto confirmation of ESG compliance, except in a small number of cases where it only uses the external review report as the basis for its decision.

Figure 2.16 shows the extent to which national quality assurance systems are aligned with the Bologna commitment of having a fully functioning quality assurance system where all higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the ESG. For the purposes of the EHEA monitoring this is measured through EQAR registration. Dark green signifies that national systems are working with quality assurance agencies verified to be compliant with the ESG, as evidenced by their EQAR registration. Yellow denotes countries where only certain higher education institutions or programmes follow regular ESG-compliant quality assurance processes. Orange represents countries where external quality assurance agencies have not been externally assessed for ESG compliance, although some steps have been taken to address this (i.e. quality assurance agencies are currently seeking EQAR registration). Red indicates countries without an external quality assurance system.

Figure 2.16: Scorecard indicator n° 6: Stage of development of external quality assurance system, 2022/2023

Source: EQAR.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

🟩	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, in which all higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG) through registration on EQAR.
🟨	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but only some higher education institutions are subject to regular external quality assurance by an agency that has successfully demonstrated compliance with the ESG through registration on EQAR.
🟧	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide, but has not yet been fully aligned to the ESG.
🟥	No quality assurance system is in operation.

Currently 33 of the 49 EHEA higher education systems meet the requirement for the dark green category (see Figure 2.16). Compared to the previous implementation report, progress can be noted for Greece and Türkiye, following the positive decision from the EQAR Register Committee on the substantial compliance with the ESG of the national quality assurance bodies.

For the nine countries in yellow, external quality assurance is not always carried out by an EQAR-registered agency. Within this group, some national quality assurance agencies (Italy, Malta, Moldova and Slovakia) have nevertheless taken concrete steps, initiating their applications for EQAR-registration. In the case of Italy, the agency is a member of ENQA and is currently undergoing a new external review in order to apply for listing on EQAR.

In the case of the United Kingdom (England), following a change in legal framework, institutions are no longer subject to regular and systematic external quality assurance by an EQAR-registered agency, although some quality assurance agencies registered in the UK carry out reviews in higher education institutions in the country. The key commitment is therefore not fully met. The situation is however different for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland where the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is commissioned to carry institutional quality assurance for all higher education providers. The map shows only a distinction between UK (Scotland) and a combined picture of the remaining three higher education systems. However, the higher education system in Wales and Northern Ireland meets the criteria for the dark green category while the higher education system in England currently only meets the criteria for the yellow category within the scorecard.

In the remaining countries shown in orange, a quality assurance system is in operation nationwide but further work is required to fully align the higher education system with the ESG. This can be achieved through either the registration in EQAR of a national quality assurance body or by allowing the possibility for higher education institutions within the country to choose an existing registered EQAR-registered quality assurance agency to conduct their external quality assurance. This category includes the Holy See where the quality assurance agency is a member of ENQA, and has therefore been externally reviewed to demonstrate compliance with ESG. In this case, the agency has not requested registration on EQAR.

The BFUG Thematic Peer Group for quality assurance has been supporting higher education systems through a range of activities including submission of action plans, peer learning activities and staff mobility activities. In addition, the involvement of six countries in an EU co-funded project (SEQA-ESG) ([53]) led by ENQA to support national quality assurance agencies and national authorities in creating an ESG-compliant quality assurance system has led to visible progress in three countries − Malta, Moldova and Slovakia. These countries have made changes in their legal framework to enable their national quality assurance agency to become compliant with the ESG.

There remains work to continue in the process of defining frameworks and methodologies for quality assurance, in developing and consolidating standards for accreditation or revising such standards to ensure their fitness for purpose and to be aligned with the expectations set out in the ESG.

The share of higher education institutions that have been reviewed by an EQAR-registered agency (at programme and/or institutional level) provides additional information on the extent to which a country has realised the key commitment on quality assurance. Data provided by almost all (see note below) registered quality assurance agencies uploading their reports into the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) ([54]) illustrate the coverage of higher education institutions subject to

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([53]) The ENQA led SEQA-ESG project carried out between 2020 and 2023 supported quality assurance agencies and national authorities in meeting the expectations of the ESG. The participating countries were Albania, Czechia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro and Slovakia.

([54]) DEQAR allows for a realtime tracking of almost all EHEA members country's alignment with the Key Commitment on quality assurance. The time period considered for the validity of external quality assurance is collected from each agency. From

external quality assurance in compliance with the ESG (see Figure 2.17). To date, DEQAR includes over 90.000 quality assurance reports (55) dated from 2008 to 2023 from 50 EQAR-registered agencies.

Figure 2.17: Share of higher education institutions reviewed by an EQAR-registered quality assurance agency, 2022/2023
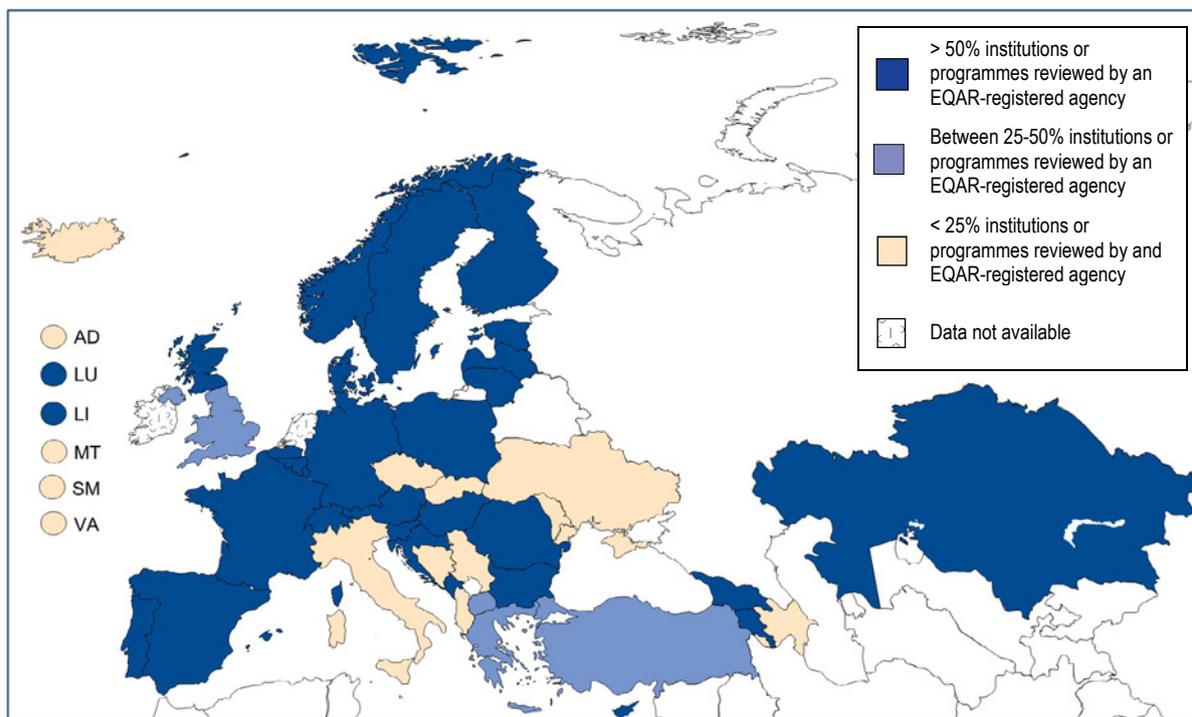
Source: EQAR.

The data shows that 29 countries have had at least 50% of their higher education institutions reviewed at programme or institutional level by an EQAR-registered agency − and Ireland and the Netherlands would be added to this group if their reports had been uploaded in DEQAR. Four systems have between 26% and 49% of their higher education institutions or programmes reviewed by an EQAR-registered agency. This leaves 14 systems where less than 24% of institutions and programmes have been reviewed by an EQAR-registered agency.

The DEQAR data read together with the previous Scorecard Indicator (Figure 2.16 above) on the stage of development of quality assurance provides a few insights that may otherwise be hidden. In particular it reveals those countries where EQAR-registered quality assurance agencies have already covered a significant part of the higher education system, even though the country's main national quality assurance agency is not registered in EQAR. This is the case for Moldova and Montenegro. The DEQAR data further shows the extent of coverage for Liechtenstein and Luxembourg where quality assurance reviews are regularly carried out by foreign EQAR-registered agencies, and proves that sufficient coverage can be achieved even if a national agency is not in place.

2023 all except three (QQI − Ireland, NVAO-Netherlands and ANECA – Spain) EQAR-registered agencies have uploaded their reports into DEQAR.

(55) https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/search/

2.3.2. Student participation in external Quality Assurance

Students are not simply passive recipients of education but actively contribute to shaping their learning journey. Their participation is understood as a fundamental value of the EHEA, and is underscored in all areas of the Bologna process including quality assurance.

The scorecard indicator below (see Figure 2.18) provides insight into students' involvement in external quality assurance, and is based on responses to the BFUG questionnaire. The indicator evaluates student engagement in five key areas of external quality assurance, deeming it satisfactory only if their involvement is achieved in five different areas i.e., participation in governance structures of national quality assurance bodies, in external review teams, in the preparation of self-evaluation reports, in the decision-making process for external reviews and in follow-up procedures. A dark green rating confirms full student participation across all areas, whereas red indicates minimal to no guaranteed involvement.

Figure 2.18: Scorecard indicator n° 7: Level of student participation in external quality assurance, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG Data Collection .

Scorecard categories

■	In all quality assurance reviews, students participate as full members at five levels:
	o in governance structures of national Quality Assurance agencies;
	o in external review teams;
	o in the preparation of self-evaluation reports;
	o in the decision making process for external reviews;
	o in follow-up procedures.

■	Students participate at **four** of the five levels mentioned above.	■	Students participate at **three** of the five levels mentioned above.
■	Students participate at **two** of the five levels mentioned above.	■	Students cannot participate or participate at only one level mentioned above.

Data not available

Compared to the results of the 2020 implementation report, countries now indicate an increased achievement in the dark green category, with 26 systems (compared to 20) having achieved a dark green rating while 9 remain in light green. Thirteen others fall into the yellow or orange categories, indicating the need for more progress towards comprehensive student involvement in quality assurance processes.

Greece and Moldova report that new provisions have been established in law to ensure student representatives participate in the governance of their quality assurance agency. For Moldova and Spain new regulations also ensure student participation in external review panels. Croatia and Moldova now also specify requirements for participation in follow-up procedures. While Andorra, Finland and the United Kingdom (Scotland) do not legally mandate student involvement, many institutions and agencies have taken the initiative to ensure it, in particular in their involvement in the preparation of self-evaluation reports and in follow-up procedures. San Marino is in the process of making legislative changes that will enhance student engagement in quality assurance.

ESU's data for the 2024 edition of Bologna With Student Eyes sheds light on the reasons why student engagement in quality assurance remains challenging. Close to two-thirds of student unions report a lack of interest as a main barrier for students to become involved in external quality assurance processes. While it is understandable that many students lack interest in quality assurance procedures, over half of the student unions also explain that there is lack of information about quality assurance provided to students, as well as a lack of training opportunities.

2.3.3. International participation in national quality assurance systems

Internationalisation has significantly influenced developments in quality assurance, evident in collaborations among nations and quality assurance agencies alike. In view of the importance attached to internationalisation in higher education, a scorecard indicator to monitor the engagement of international experts in external quality assurance was developed in the first decade of the Bologna Process, and has been used in all implementation reports.

The indicator measures the level of international participation in external quality assurance based on four elements. The first important aspect is membership or affiliation of quality assurance agencies with ENQA, which is considered as the most fruitful way to ensure international cooperation with other quality assurance bodies across the EHEA. The indicator also refers to the involvement of international experts in the governance structures of national quality assurance entities, the inclusion of international experts as members or observers within evaluation teams, and their active participation in follow-up evaluation procedures.

Figure 2.19: Scorecard indicator n° 8: Level of international participation in external quality assurance, 2022/2023
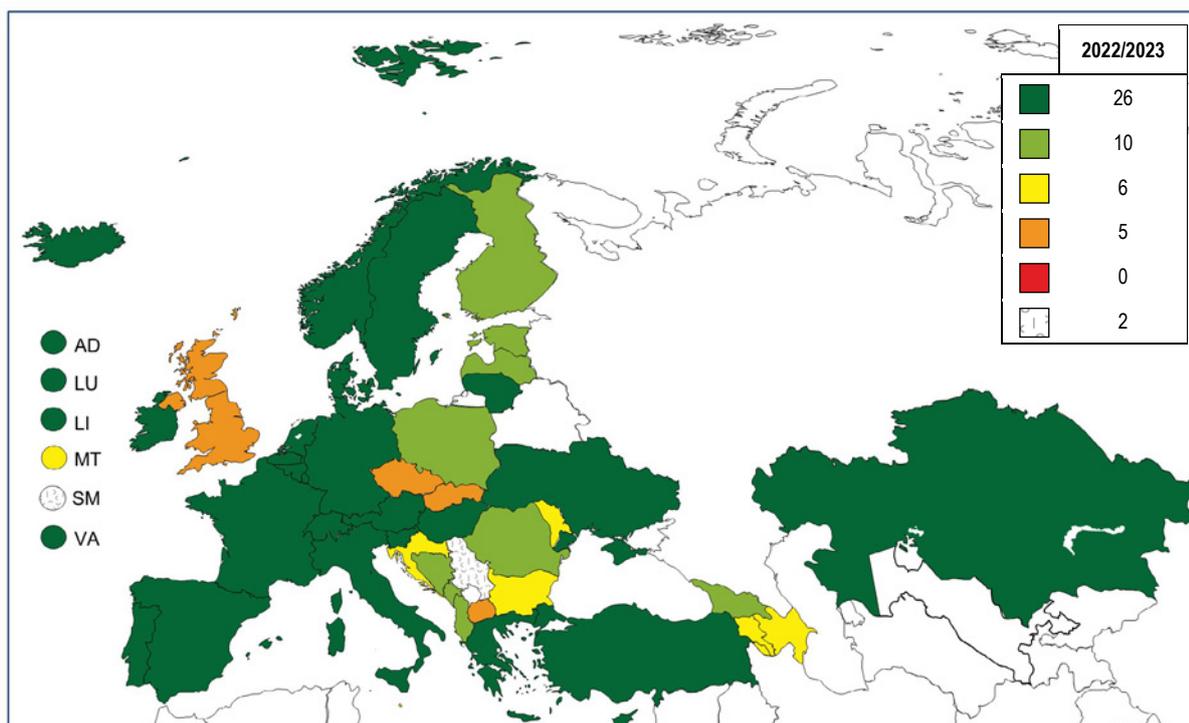
Source: BFUG Data Collection & ENQA list of members

Scorecard categories

	In all cases the following four aspects are met:
■	o agencies are members or affiliates of ENQA;
	o international peers/experts participate in governance of national quality assurance bodies;
	o international peers/experts participate as members/observers in evaluation teams;
	o international peers/experts participate in follow-up procedures.

■ **Three** of the four aspects are met.	■ **Two** of the four aspects are met.	■ **One** of the four aspects is met.

■ No international participation.	▦ Data not available.

Overall, there is a high level of international participation in quality assurance across the EHEA, with 36 systems fulfilling either all four criteria or three of them. Despite the two years where the pandemic made a strong impact on internationalisation activities in higher education − reducing physical mobility in the short-to-medium term (see Chapter 6), there has nevertheless been progress in six higher education systems (Belgium – French Community, Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Türkiye and Ukraine) in boosting international participation in external quality assurance.

The responses provided as part of the BFUG data collection exercise also reveal that five countries − Armenia, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, and Slovakia − are performing less well on this indicator than in the previous data collection.

In the context of internationalisation in quality assurance procedures, it is also relevant to note that the pandemic period brought a notable expansion in the use of digital tools. There has therefore been an increase in the implementation of online site-visits potentially facilitating inclusion of international experts through exploiting the possibility of remote working.

2.3.4. Level of openness to cross border Quality Assurance of EQAR-registered agencies

The Berlin Ministerial Communiqué (2003) recognised and underlined higher education institutions' responsibility for assuring the quality of education while the Communiques of Bucharest (2012), Yerevan

(2015) and Paris (2018) recognised higher education institutions' right to choose a suitable EQAR-registered quality assurance agency (in line with the national framework) for their compulsory external quality assurance.

EQAR has monitored system-level developments in creating legal frameworks compatible with the ESG and open to cross-border quality assurance. It also monitors the cross-border external quality assurance activities of EQAR-registered agencies.

Figure 2.20 (below) draws on EQAR data to show systems' level of openness to cross border higher education. In the most favourable scenario (represented by dark green), all higher education institutions and programmes have the liberty to opt for evaluation by an EQAR-registered agency outside their home country to fulfil their external quality assurance requirements.

Figure 2.20: Scorecard indicator n° 9: Level of openness to cross border quality assurance of EQAR registered agencies, 2022/2023

Source: EQAR.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■ (dark green)	**All institutions and programmes** can choose to be evaluated by a suitable quality assurance agency from outside the country to fulfil their obligations for external quality assurance, while complying with national requirements. EQAR registration always serves as a criterion for agencies to be allowed to carry out cross-border evaluation/accreditation/audit.
■ (light green)	**All institutions and programmes** can choose to be evaluated by a suitable quality assurance agency from outside the country to fulfil their obligations for external quality assurance, while complying with national requirements. EQAR registration does not always serve as a criterion for agencies to be allowed to carry out cross-border evaluation/accreditation/audit.
■ (yellow)	**In some cases, institutions and/or programmes** can choose to be evaluated by a quality assurance agency from outside the country to fulfil their obligations for external quality assurance, while complying with national requirements. EQAR registration always serves as a criterion for agencies to be allowed to carry out cross-border evaluation/accreditation/audit.
■ (orange)	Discussions are on-going or plans have been made to establish a legal framework allowing EQAR-registered agencies to operate in the country.
■ (red)	Institutions and programmes cannot be evaluated by quality assurance agencies from outside the country to fulfil their obligations for external quality assurance, and no plans are being discussed.

In the light green category, EQAR registration does not always serves as a criterion for agencies to be allowed to carry out cross-border external quality assurance, but all institutions and programmes may choose to be evaluated by a suitable quality assurance agency from outside the country while fulfilling their obligations for accreditation/evaluation/audit.

In the yellow category, only some institutions and/or programmes can choose to be evaluated by a quality assurance agency from outside the country to fulfil their obligations for external quality assurance, while complying with national requirements. In most of these countries quality assurance agencies are limited to a certain type of external quality assurance procedure and they further need to adapt their external quality assurance methodologies to specific national legislation.

Higher education systems in the orange category are in the process of planning the establishment of a legal framework allowing EQAR-registered agencies to operate in the country.

In the most restrictive scenario (signified by red), institutions and programmes lack the option to be evaluated by an external quality assurance agency from another country as part of their obligatory external quality assurance process.

Nearly half (23) of the EHEA higher education systems are in the dark green category, with all higher education institutions and programmes legally permitted to choose a suitable EQAR-registered agency to fulfil their obligations for external quality assurance, while also complying with national requirements.

Recent progress has been made in France, the United Kingdom − Wales (although not visible on the map) and Slovakia, where institutions have been enabled to opt for a suitable EQAR-registered agency as an integral component of their compulsory external quality assurance procedures, subject to the fulfilment of certain prerequisites. Notably, an agreement with the national quality assurance body or authority is necessitated prior to undergoing a review.

There are two notable changes in the light green category. Greece has recently introduced changes in its legal framework that allow higher education institutions in the country to be reviewed by a suitable quality assurance agency (moving the country from orange to light green), while Kazakhstan's decision in 2023 to remove EQAR registration as a necessary condition for operation within the country means a drop from the dark green to the light green category.

Six higher education systems are in the yellow category, restricting cross border evaluation to specifically defined institutions or programmes. In the cases where cross border quality assurance is permitted, EQAR registration for the foreign agency is a requirement. The latest addition in this category (moving from red to yellow) is Spain. Higher education institutions within Catalunya may choose any suitable foreign EQAR-registered agency to meet their external quality assurance requirement, following the agreement of the regional quality assurance agency (Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency). In addition, within Spain any form of cross-border accreditation by an EQAR-registered agency of any joint programme is automatically recognised.

In the orange category, three countries (Croatia, Czechia and Italy) report that they are working to establish a legal framework that would allow EQAR-registered agencies to operate within their borders.

Institutions and programmes in 13 systems lack the option to be evaluated by an external quality assurance agency from another country as part of their obligatory external quality assurance process. These systems, which report no policy discussions aimed at changing this reality, are shown in red.

Overall the picture has not progressed significantly in recent years. Compared to the information published in the 2020 edition of the Implementation Report, the number of systems in the dark green category has slightly decreased as a result of Kazakhstan dropping down to light green, while the only system to move out of the red category is Spain. These findings show that this remains a commitment where countries are divided. The commitment to cross border quality assurance is fully realised in a significant number of systems, but apparently not being addressed in policy development in an important minority of systems.

This information is confirmed by data collected by EQAR in the QA-FIT ministry survey, and also largely corresponds to the information maintained by EQAR as part of its Knowledge Base ([56]).

Some additional points can also be concluded from EQAR's data. Countries where cross-border quality assurance procedures are recognised as part of the regular external quality assurance framework also have a higher number of cross-border reviews actually taking place. It is notable that countries that permit foreign agencies to undertake quality assurance in their system are more likely to have an EQAR-registered agency that also carries out reviews across-borders. This clearly shows an openness of the whole higher education system (legal framework, quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions) towards cross-border quality assurance, and can be a new way of conceptualising the internationalisation of quality assurance within the EHEA framework.

The majority of cross-border quality assurance procedures (64% of the total cross-border external quality assurance activities) are carried out as voluntary/add-on activities, while mandatory external quality assurance procedures represent 36% of such reviews carried out within the EHEA ([57]). While there may of course be considerable value for higher education institutions and programmes to undertake additional quality assurance procedures, this is arguably not the form of cross border quality assurance that is most desired within the EHEA.

An array of practical impediments may also constrain the full realisation of the cross-border quality assurance commitment. Stringent eligibility conditions may require institutions to seek approval from a competent national body and demonstrate the benefits of foreign expertise. System level limitations might restrict the scope of review to specific institutions or programmes. And recognition of reviews may depend on approval (of the report and/or the decision) from a competent national body or the national quality assurance agency.

2.3.5. The European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA

The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA, adopted by ministers in 2015, was developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes. It seeks to remove the complexities stemming from the diversity of national standards and differing accreditation processes in European higher education. For joint programmes, different national quality assurance requirements may create heavy administrative processes, based on varying criteria in partner countries, and generating uncertainty. The European Approach is particularly relevant for higher education programmes that require accreditation. For systems where there is no need for external programme accreditation, the use the European Approach for joint programmes is still encouraged. The objective is for the European Approach to be applied directly, circumventing the need for a variety of fragmented quality assurance processes.

The European Approach is built on two foundational elements: a defined set of standards and a predetermined procedure. The standards − Part 1 of the ESG − have been integrated with EHEA tools, especially the EHEA's Qualifications Framework (QF-EHEA) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

The predefined procedure is available for use by any eligible EQAR-registered quality assurance agency, if one or more of the higher education institutions involved in the delivery of the joint programme require external programme level accreditation. An online toolkit, available on the EQAR website, serves as a comprehensive guide, including written explanations and step-by-step video guidelines.

([56])   For more information, see EQAR's mapping of system openness to cross-border quality assurance https://www.eqar.eu/kb/cross-border-qa/mapping-system-openness-to-cbqa/

([57])   Based on DEQAR data as of June 2023 provided by all except three EQAR-registered agencies. See also Search - EQAR

Despite the adoption of the European Approach by ministers in 2015, progress in implementation has been slow. Figure 2.21 shows in which countries legislation permits higher education institutions and programmes to make use of the European Approach.

Figure 2.21: Countries allowing the European Approach for quality assurance of joint programmes, 2022/2023
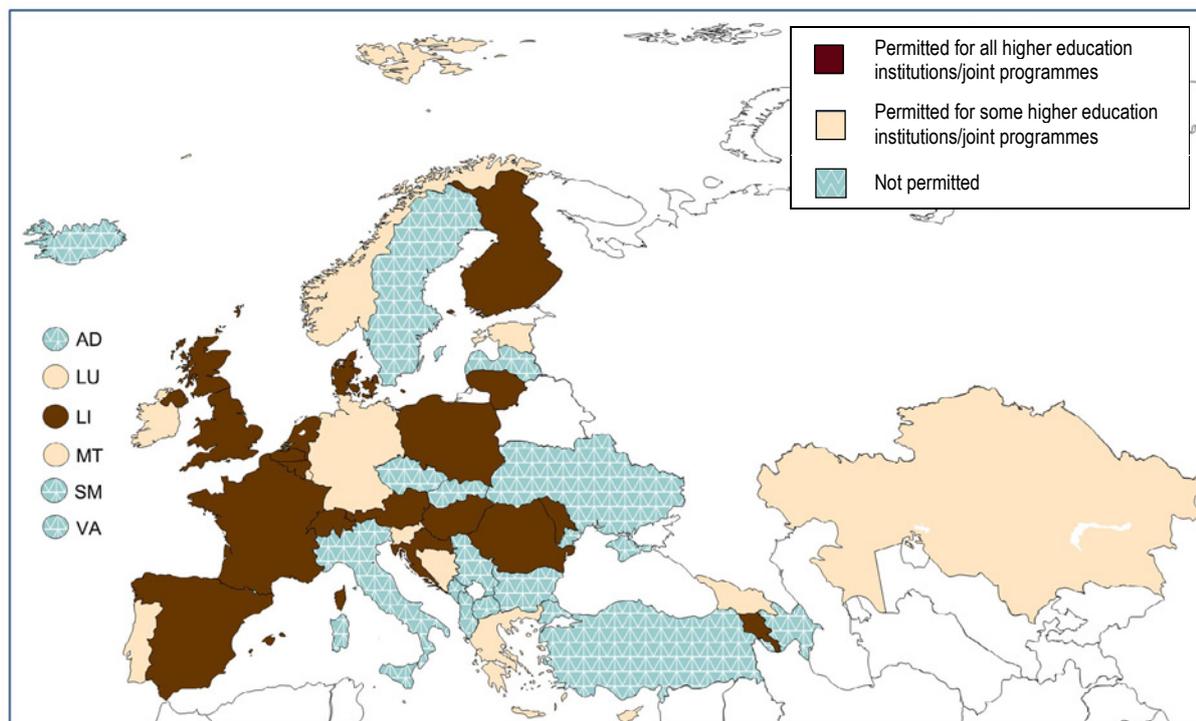
Source: EQAR.

In 2022/2023, seven years after the adoption of the European Approach at the EHEA ministerial conference in Yerevan, 20 out of the 49 EHEA systems had embraced the European Approach for all higher education institutions. This includes countries where quality assurance is largely conducted at the institutional level (Armenia, Finland, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland).

Eleven more systems allow the European Approach to be employed, albeit only for certain institutions or under specific conditions. For example, in Estonia, the use of the European Approach is possible if the joint programme has previously undergone an assessment by an EQAR registered agency and the other higher education partners have the right to provide instruction in the corresponding study programme group and academic cycle.

In Greece, joint programmes offered by Greek higher education institutions participating within a European University Alliance can make use of the European Approach, without any additional national criteria. However, institutions that are not members of a European University Alliance are required to undergo regular programme accreditation for any joint programmes they may offer.

In Georgia, the draft agreement of institutions implementing the joint higher educational programme must be 'pre-approved' by the national quality assurance body, who will check the content and implementation of the joint programme, including whether the national rules for awarding a joint academic degree and enrolment regulations are met.

In the remaining countries, the use of the European Approach cannot be used to replace compulsory national or regional processes.

Figure 2.22 shows in which countries the European Approach has actually been used.

Figure 2.22: Countries using the European Approach for quality assurance of joint programmes, 2022/2023
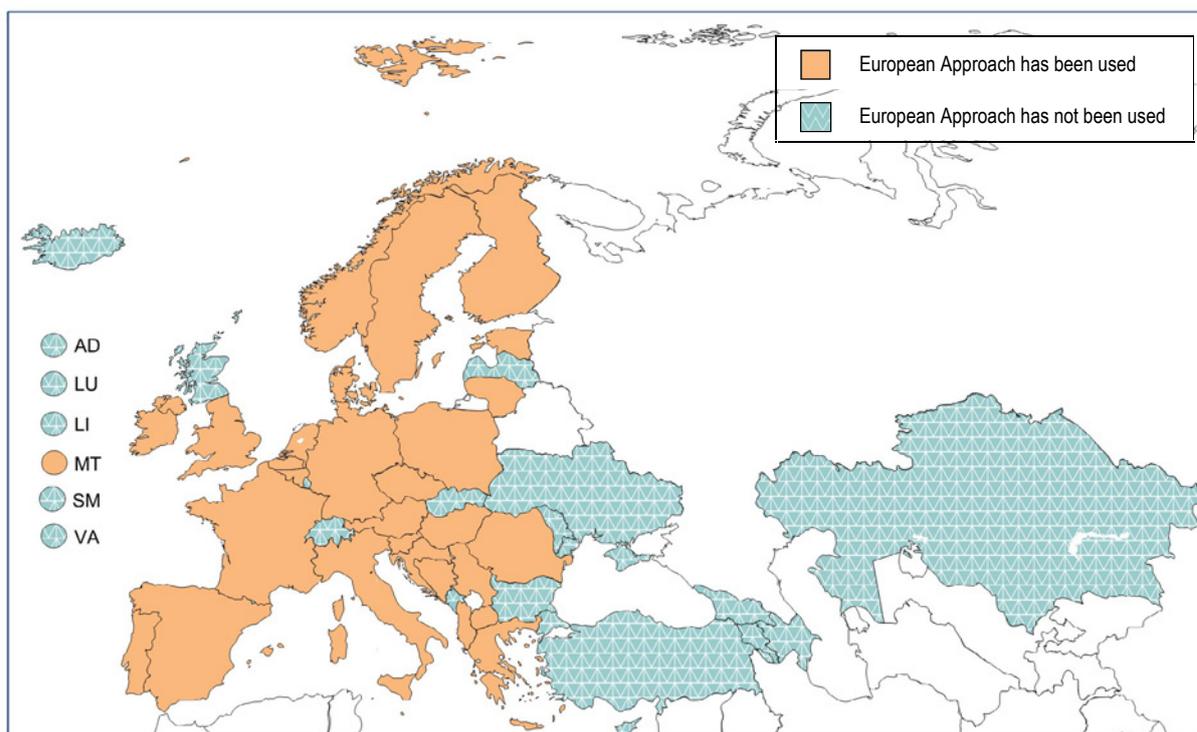
Source: EQAR.

Institutions within 29 EHEA member countries have successfully implemented the European Approach. The highest number of institutions involved in European Approach evaluations can be found in France (13) followed by Germany (12), Spain (11) and the Netherlands (6). All of these countries have introduced a legal framework to facilitate the use of the European Approach for the external quality assurance of joint programmes.

The European Universities initiative ([58]) has put increased focus on joint programmes, and in particular by introducing and testing criteria for a European Degree Label with higher education institutions among the alliances. This may lead to an increased awareness and use of the European Approach.

A total of 32 procedures using the European Approach have been completed between 2016 and 2023 according to DEQAR data. Although this is a low number, there has been an uptake in recent years. This might be a sign that there is increasing familiarity with the procedure, and gives optimism that the trend will increase in the coming years.

([58])   For more information, see European Universities initiative | European Education Area (europa.eu)

2.4. Conclusions

2.4.1. Degree Structures

This section looked at the progress made in the implementation of a common degree structure and the three transparency instruments (the Diploma Supplement, National Qualification Frameworks and the European Credit, Transfer and Accumulation Systems). It also took stock of the programmes outside the Bologna degree structure framework, and the percentage of students involved. Finally, it explored the existence of training modules within higher education institutions that lead to microcredentials.

The analysis shows that there continues to be no single model of degree programme either for the first or for the second cycle. In the majority of EHEA countries, the most common structures are those of 180 ECTS workload programmes for the first cycle and 120 ECTS credits for the second cycle. In the first cycle, the 180 ECTS workload characterises the majority of programmes in more than half of all EHEA countries. In the second cycle, the 120 ECTS model is present in virtually all EHEA systems. The most common combined (first and second cycle) workload corresponds to 300 ECTS credits in around three-quarters of all EHEA countries. In the eastern part of the EHEA, the most common workload is often more substantial, corresponding to 360 ECTS credits. This is mainly due to a higher workload of first-cycle programmes.

Slightly more than half of all EHEA systems offer short-cycle higher education programmes. In most EHEA systems, integrated/long programmes which lead directly to a second cycle degree exist, commonly justified by requirements of regulated professions.

Around one-third of EHEA systems also offer programmes outside the Bologna-degree structure, which cannot be associated easily with the three cycle-degree-structure. These programmes claim to respond to specific needs, often related to professional development and lifelong learning. They often aim to develop the skills oriented towards labour market needs, and have some similarities in this respect with programmes leading to microcredentials. Whether or not these programmes could be integrated into Bologna degree structures (as other countries have done) cross-country readability remains a key issue to ensure that these qualifications can be understood and used throughout the EHEA.

The results of the data analysis show that in more than half of the education systems with available data (29 out of 48), mainly in Western Europe, higher education institutions offer learning modules or courses that lead to microcredentials. Yet, only 10 of them place such courses in their NQFs, and even fewer express their workload in ECTS. Despite the growing popularity of microcredentials in the EHEA, few education systems have yet taken steps to ensure their transparency, cross-country readability and portability. Moreover, legal frameworks regulating microcredentials reveal that the concept is not yet understood in the same way across countries. In some education systems, microcredentials are closely associated with lifelong learning, continuing professional development and re-skilling. While the majority of countries have put in place enabling legal frameworks to ensure that higher education institutions have the possibility to develop flexible modules leading to microcredentials, seven systems that report the existence of microcredentials also report that legislation does not make provisions for them. Instead, higher education institutions have used their autonomy to pursue their development. Further research is needed to better understand the emerging role for microcredentials in the higher education landscape, and to monitor the implementation of key aspects of the European Approach outlined in the 2022 Council Recommendation.

With regard to key transparency tools, around a half of systems with available data (25 out of 48) require external quality assurance agencies to monitor all key aspects of the implementation of ECTS during their regular evaluation processes. All EHEA countries have introduced the Diploma Supplement, with a large majority (39 out of 48 of the education systems with available data) fully complying to all

ministerial engagements (issued automatically, to all first- and second-cycle graduates, in a widely spoken European language and free of charge). Most countries have fulfilled their commitment to establish and use a national qualifications framework compatible with the QF-EHEA. Most education systems (33 out of 48 the education systems with available data) have established their national qualifications framework for higher education, self-certified them to the QF-EHEA and made them available on public websites. In addition, in these countries, the NQF is used by national authorities for at least one of the agreed purposes. Although good progress can be observed in the implementation of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) compatible with QF-EHEA, more actions are needed to fulfil this key commitment across the EHEA in the near future.

2.4.2. Recognition

Formal compliance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) is well established across the EHEA. Significant progress can also be observed since the publication of the 2020 Bologna Implementation report, as eight countries have recently embedded all main principles in national legislation. However, despite the overarching legal framework established and the progress reported, many countries still need to take action to ensure that all aspects of the convention are properly implemented in national legislation.

Some countries report recent policy development in relation to the implementation of Article VII of the LRC that offers refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation the opportunity to have their qualifications recognised, including in cases where documents are missing. In total, 29 out of 48 education systems with available data now have a requirement in national legislation for specific recognition procedures to be in place. Other countries claim that procedures are in place even if there is no legal requirement for them. However, there are still five countries that have no requirement for specific recognition procedures to be in place for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, and this represents neglect to the implementation of an international legal commitment.

Despite the potential advantages of using the European Qualification Passport for Refugees and the toolkit developed by ENIC-NARIC for recognition of qualifications held by refugees in cases where documentary evidence may be lacking, few EHEA countries take advantage of these tools in practice. Only three countries use both tools systematically, while seven countries make use of them occasionally. In around a quarter of systems there is no information on the use of these tools.

System-level automatic recognition of qualifications and degrees for academic purposes applies in around one-third of the education systems (19 out of 48 systems with available data). In slightly more than one-third of the systems, automatic recognition applies to some EHEA countries, usually based on regional, bilateral or multilateral agreements. The remaining systems still need to up their game to allow qualitied learners automatic access to higher education in other countries.

A possible relationship can be observed between the workload of first-cycle programmes and automatic recognition. Education systems where most of the first-degree programmes comprise 180 ECTS (see Figure 2.1) are likely to apply automatic recognition of qualifications for academic purposes. However, with few exceptions, education systems where the workload of most first-cycle programmes is 240 ECTS have not put in place a system to facilitate automatic recognition. More investigation would be needed, however, to find out whether the high workload of first-cycle programmes is an obstacle to the automatic recognition of qualifications.

2.4.3. Quality Assurance

The quality assurance section provides an overview of the evolving landscape of quality assurance, with efforts being made to align national systems with Bologna commitments to further the trust and transparency of European higher education.

The implementation of the key commitment on external quality assurance is picking up some speed. Since the last implementation report, new countries have joined the green category, with efforts being made in Italy, Malta, Moldova, and Slovakia to develop their national quality assurance agencies and seek EQAR registration.

In some countries, student participation in quality assurance follows the agency's alignment with the key commitment, with several countries implementing measures to involve students in governance and review processes. ENQA is playing a crucial role in supporting these efforts, as well as the internationalisation goals of quality assurance agencies. This is particularly important at a time of challenges to internationalisation in the post pandemic context.

Cross-border quality assurance remains an area of considerable variation, notably in the eligibility conditions and requirements set in countries. While activities have increased in number, which is a sign of progress, many institutions lack the option for the cross-border external evaluation to be recognised in their own higher education system.

The use of European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes has increased in recent years, albeit from a very low starting point. However various national regulations continue to hinder its widespread adoption, with only 20 out of 49 EHEA systems fully embracing it.

CHAPTER 3: FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

'The EHEA of our vision will fully respect the fundamental values of higher education and democracy and the rule of law.' (Rome Communiqué 2020, p. 4)

Even if fundamental values have been present from the beginning of the Bologna Process as an underlying framework for the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), the Rome Communiqué has for the first time specifically put forward the respect of fundamental values as the key element of the EHEA vision and made certain that they are perceived as universal, even if not absolute, values. Hand in hand with democracy and rule of law, fundamental values depict the European society we wish to live in – a society that is embedded in creativity, critical thinking, and free circulation of knowledge; and the opportunities offered by technological development for research-based learning and teaching.

The Ministers have asked the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) to develop a framework for the enhancement of the fundamental values of the EHEA 'that will foster self-reflection, constructive dialogue and peer-learning across national authorities, higher education institutions and organisations, while also making it possible to assess the degree to which these are honoured and implemented in our systems' (Rome Communiqué 2020, p. 5). The Council of Europe's Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) was also noted for its possibility for all EHEA members, consultative members and partners to cooperate to reach this goal.

Since 2020, the BFUG has overseen work to develop statements that ensure the common understanding and shared definitions of the fundamental values, as well as the first stages of developing an EHEA monitoring framework on implementation of fundamental values.

Chapter Outline

This chapter focuses on the presentation of the current state of affairs, regarding the six identified fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area. It starts by recalling the commitments from the Rome Communiqué, with references to fundamental values that have already appeared in previous Communiqués.

The first value addressed is *academic freedom*, the only fundamental value for which the EHEA has already adopted a definition and an accompanying statement in 2020.

This is followed by the fundamental values whose definitions and statements of common understanding are currently in the development phase: *academic integrity*; *institutional autonomy*; and *student and staff participation in higher education governance*. The section relating to the evaluation of the two fundamental values of *public responsibility for and of higher education* is not based on data collected through a specific part of the BFUG questionnaire, as the values themselves are too broad to be captured in specific indicators. The section rather represents a reflection on future avenues for monitoring and evaluation in a synthetic manner.

It is important to keep in mind that this chapter provides only an initial glimpse into the protection and promotion of fundamental values within the EHEA. More fully developed definitions should be adopted at the Ministerial meeting in Tirana in May 2024 and the aim is for a monitoring mechanism to be put into place in the forthcoming years. As the policy framework further advances, the future versions of this report will be more elaborate and detailed.

Introduction

Fundamental values have been at the core of the EHEA since the very beginning of the Bologna Process. These values were initially assumed to be commonly understood and respected, and it seemed as if there were no need for clear definitions or evaluation frameworks to ensure that they were respected. Fundamental values moved more explicitly into policy discussions in the years prior to the 2015 Ministerial Conference. The Yerevan Communiqué (2015) presented a commitment to 'support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions' (Yerevan Communiqué 2015, p. 2). The commitment was repeated in the Paris Communiqué (2018) where the values were identified as follows: academic freedom and integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, and public responsibility for and of higher education; committing to promoting and protecting them through intensified political dialogue and cooperation (Paris Communiqué 2018, p. 1).

Following the Rome Communiqué and the Statement on Academic Freedom adopted in 2020, this report is the first attempt within the EHEA framework to investigate the protection and promotion of all fundamental values. However, this exercise is necessarily limited. With neither adopted definitions of the fundamental values, nor a monitoring framework, the methodological approach has focused almost exclusively on data provided by the EHEA member states and concentrates on how values are referenced in legislation and policy documentation. The analysis herewith is based on the BFUG data collection unless explicitly stated otherwise.

The data collection privileged de jure aspects of the protection and promotion of fundamental values, and it is understood that the picture can be only partial until de facto elements are also considered. Additional reports and data provided by nongovernmental organisations and various stakeholders, especially on academic freedom, can enrich the findings. As the report is also limited in volume, data cannot be presented in a comprehensive manner, and it is strongly recommended to look further into the references for further reading. Furthermore, it is important to underline that this report does not claim that the data provided corresponds to the full scope of the EHEA understanding of fundamental values currently being prepared for adoption at the Tirana Ministerial Conference, and nor does it advocate for any specific definition. For each value presented only central concepts have been considered, and there remain more elements to take into account in the future.

As the statement on academic freedom argues, academic freedom is deeply interconnected with all other fundamental values. This principle applies to all the fundamental values. Thus any monitoring and evaluation approach must necessarily be holistic − recognising the interdependence between the values as a whole, as well as between each of them. This report can similarly only be understood as a whole, and not as a set of separate elements. Most importantly, the values need not only to be protected, but also promoted which demands an active engagement by all relevant stakeholders. Each of the sections attempts to identify both elements.

It is important to take note of the developments under the auspices of the BFUG regarding the fundamental values. The BFUG Working Group on Fundamental Values, continuing the work undertaken by the Task Force on Fundamental Values between 2018-2020, has prepared statements on academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance and public responsibility of and for higher education to be submitted for adoption at the ministerial conference in Tirana, May 2024. The working group through its activities has also encouraged peer learning and exchange of data and research on fundamental values in the EHEA and as such has advanced the goals set in 2020.

Within the framework of the EU-funded project 'New building blocks of the Bologna Process: fundamental values' (NewFAV) coordinated by the Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education,

Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI) of the Republic of Romania, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway, running from 2022 to 2024, further advancement on the development of a monitoring framework for future reporting and indicators on de jure and de facto implementation of fundamental values has taken place, including Peer Learning Activities (PLA) for all fundamental values. The NewFAV project team has produced two reports: 'Measuring fundamental values: indicators, tools and initiatives. A Mapping Report' (Matei et al., 2022) and 'Assessment Report' (Craciun et al., 2023). The reports concluded that the numerous existing indicators, tools and attempts at measuring fundamental values in higher education differ in nature, scope and usefulness and that none of them would be fully sufficient and appropriate for the needs of the EHEA. The project team proposed a Technical Monitoring Framework of Indicators (Craciun et al., 2023), together with a Piloting Methodology, and the final proposal will be based on the frameworks as shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Monitoring framework for rights/freedoms values

TYPE OF MONITORING		VALUES		
		Rights/Freedoms		
De jure		Academic freedom	Institutional autonomy	Participation of students and staff in university governance
Protection *(adequate, intermediary, inadequate)*	Outlook *(negative, unchanged, positive)*			
Promotion *(absent, limited, significant)* (^{1})				
De facto				
Infringements				
Threats				
Positive developments				

Source: NewFAV project.

Table 2: Monitoring framework for obligations/duties values

TYPE OF MONITORING		VALUES		
		Obligations/Duties		
De jure		Academic integrity	Public responsibility for higher education	Public responsibility of higher education
Protection *(adequate, intermediary, inadequate)*	Outlook *(negative, unchanged, positive)*			
Promotion *(absent, limited, significant)* (^{1})				
De facto				
Degree of fulfilment				
Threats				
Positive developments				

Source: NewFAV project.

The European Universities Association's Autonomy Scorecard has been identified as the only existing tool that fully complies with the proposed EHEA definition of institutional autonomy. However, from the perspective of the proposed Technical Framework, it is missing data on infringements and partially on threats, for the needs of de facto monitoring. It also only partially covers the promotion of commitments (Craciun et al., 2023).

Through cooperation between the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Global Observatory on Academic Freedom (GOAF), a working report was prepared with the aim of assessing the linkages between quality assurance mechanisms and monitoring of fundamental values. Unfortunately, only 17 responses were

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(^{1})   Promotion of fundamental values will also include significant elements of *de facto* monitoring.

obtained from the 50 EQAR registered agencies addressed in the study, and only preliminary findings could be made. Among the responses, the majority reported that inclusion of fundamental values into quality assurance processes should be led in the EHEA through inclusion in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and subsequently in national policies. The agencies themselves should not take a lead in introducing fundamental values to quality assurance processes.

The current version of the ESG acknowledges that institutional quality assurance policy is most effective when it supports 'academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud' (ESG 2015, p. 11); and requires the participation of staff and students in quality assurance. However, quality assurance mechanisms and procedures have not been developed with fundamental values as priority objectives; hence quality assurance systems cannot currently be relied upon as a source of effective monitoring information.

As the work within the BFUG on the development of a technical monitoring framework on de jure and de facto implementation and promotion of fundamental values continues, the hope is that this chapter will also contribute to its successful realisation.

3.1. Academic freedom

In Rome 2020 the ministers of higher education in the EHEA adopted a statement outlining an agreed common understanding of academic freedom (Rome Communiqué 2020, Annex I). Academic freedom is defined as 'freedom of academic staff and students to engage in research, teaching, learning and communication in and with society without interference nor fear of reprisal'. Academic freedom is considered as 'an indispensable aspect of quality learning, teaching and research' and 'a necessary condition for higher education institutions to produce and transmit knowledge as a public good for the benefit of society'. It encompasses freedom of thought and inquiry, freedom to exchange openly, freedom to communicate the results of research, freedom to teach, freedom to research and freedom to learn (even if subject to administrative procedures and societal dialogue). However, it is framed by rigorous scientific and professional standards, respect for the rights of others, ethical conduct and the awareness of the impact of research on humans and their environment, and yet inseparable from security of employment for academic staff.

Various mapping exercises at global level have tried to identify if the concept of academic freedom is specifically mentioned in legislative frameworks. Among the most recent and significant of these are the Global Mapping of Regulatory Frameworks ([2]) (2023), of the Global Observatory on Academic Freedom (GOAF), or Academic Freedom in Constitutions Dataset (1789-2022) (Spannagel, 2023). The European University Association (EUA) 2023 edition of the Autonomy Scorecard included a report on 'Academic freedom in national legislation' based on the data provided by the EUA's collective members (national rectors' conferences). All of these sources represent an important contribution to the data presented in this report. The results of these research efforts show considerable diversity in the exact formulations and wordings of academic freedom across the globe, sometimes mentioning only 'freedom of science' or 'freedom of research', 'freedom of science and education' or 'freedom of scientific creativity', and illustrate the various ways in which academic freedom may appear in legislative frameworks.

([2])   https://elkana.ceu.edu/global-mapping-regulatory-frameworks

The Academic Freedom Index (^{3}) providing data as recently as December 2022 gives an insight into the state of affairs for 179 countries and territories worldwide. It concludes that academic freedom is in decline for over 50% of the world's population, and stagnating in the majority of the countries. Nevertheless, the EHEA countries in most cases remain in the top tiers of the Index with only Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Hungary, Türkiye and Azerbaijan in the bottom 50% (AFI 2023, p. 3). This algns with the 2018 Bologna Process Implementation Report which highlighted problematic cases in Hungary, Russia and Türkiye, together with Belarus (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2018 and Petrikowski and Becina, 2018).

The adoption of the Bonn Declaration (2020) within the European Research Area enhanced the increased concern for protecting and promoting freedom of scientific research, and complemented the work pursued in the EHEA context. The European Parliament's President Roberta Metsola also launched a new European Parliament Science and Technology Options Assessment (STOA) initiative 'The European Parliament Forum for Academic Freedom' in 2022, urged by the findings of the report 'State of play of academic freedom in the EU member states: Overview of de facto trends and developments' (Maassen et al., 2023). This report claimed that only in one EU member state, Hungary, structural de facto violations are taking place while in other EU member states there are individual threat incidents but no structural infringements.

Under the European strategy for universities there is also a concrete action to produce guiding principles on protecting fundamental academic values. This work is being based on the work of the EHEA and in synergy with on-going work under the European Research Area to protect the freedom of scientific research.

The European Students' Union (ESU) has raised serious concerns about the patterns of student repression in countries like Belarus, Russia, Türkiye and Hungary, and has launched important initiatives (^{4}) for awareness-raising on academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic integrity among students. A survey conducted by ESU 'Survey on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Integrity' (2023), where the majority of responses came from Hungary, Austria, Romania, France and the Czechia, concluded that small numbers of students feel pressured about their study choices, with significant numbers reporting that they have self-censored in fear of consequences from their higher education institutions if they expressed some of their personal beliefs.

It is also important to keep in mind that different instruments may take different perspectives, such as de facto or de jure, and produce different results: for example legal protection of academic freedom has in some studies been lowly ranked in Estonia, Malta, Slovenia or Sweden (Beiter et al., 2016), while in the Academic Freedom Index these were all considered among the countries with the highest level of academic freedom (Kováts and Rónay, 2023).

Based on the data provided by member states for this report, the majority of EHEA countries has the concept of academic freedom specifically mentioned in legislation. The only exceptions are: Belgium (Flemish Community), Estonia, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Malta, and San Marino. All other countries have the concept mentioned either in the constitution or constitution-level regulations; in education or higher education legislation or in other legislation, as shown in the map below – Figure 3.1.

Inclusion of the concept of academic freedom in the legislative framework does not mean that the formulation is in accordance with the EHEA definition. Neither does it follow that a country which does not mention academic freedom is necessarily worse in terms of protection and promotion from a de facto perspective.

(^{3})   https://academic-freedom-index.net/

(^{4})   https://esu-online.org/projects/academic-freedom/

Figure 3.1: Concept of academic freedom in national legislation, 2022/2023
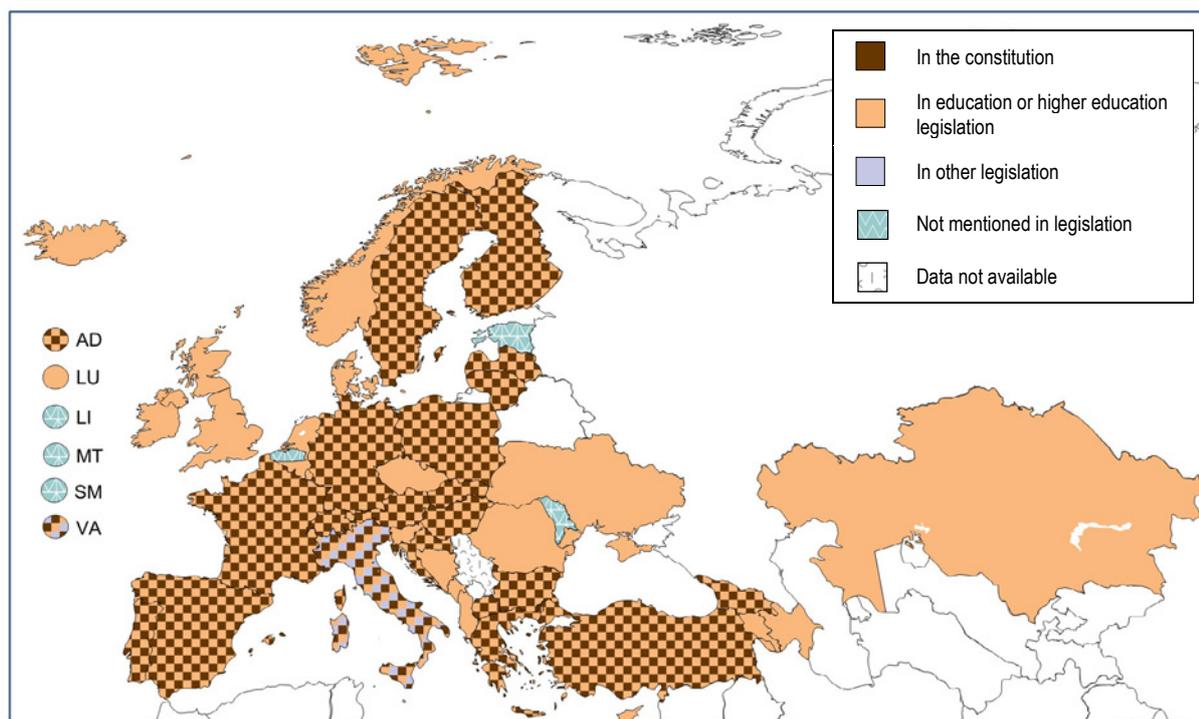
Source: BFUG data collection.

Out of the countries which include the concept of academic freedom in their legislative frameworks, around half of them define it ([5]). There are quite diverse approaches to defining academic freedom, resulting in considerable variation in definitions, as well as important differences regarding the categories of the academic community that are covered by the concept (e.g. academic freedom may be considered more in relation to academic staff than to students). At this stage it is not known whether or how countries plan to align their definitions of academic freedom with the EHEA definition.

Some of the current definitions already encompass all the crucial elements, and some even go beyond. In Czechia, for example, participation of staff in governance is considered a constitutive element of academic freedom:

'The following academic freedoms and rights are guaranteed at the university:

1. Freedom of science, research and artistic creation and the publication of their results;
2. Freedom of teaching, consisting in particular in its openness to different scientific views, scientific and research methods and artistic trends;
3. The right to learn, including the freedom to choose the focus of study within study programmes and the freedom to express one's own views in teaching;
4. The right of members of the academic community to elect representative academic bodies;
5. The right to use academic insignia and to hold academic ceremonies"([6])'.

However, some national definitions remain limited. For example, in Azerbaijan the law focuses on freedom to teach and freedom to research but does not mention freedom to learn nor to exchange openly or communicate results of research ([7]). In Switzerland legislation guarantees only the freedom

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([5]) The countries which define the concept are: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Czechia, Germany, Greece, France, Croatia, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Slovakia, Türkiye, Ukraine, UK EWNI, UK Scotland, and Holy See.

([6]) https://www.msmt.cz/file/43791_1_2/

([7]) Law on Education, provision 33.2., https://e-qanun.az/framework/18343

of research and the freedom to teach, except for the Federal Institutes of Technology which are also granted freedom of learning ([8]).

In Greece, academic freedom applies only within the university premises ([9]), and the wording of the law in Romania seems to indicate the same (Education Law 1/2011, Article 304(3)) ([10]). While indeed campus integrity and the sanctity of academic freedom within the university premises are of utmost importance for both academic freedom, and student and staff participation in higher education governance, limiting academic freedom to particular geographical settings does not ensure the right to communication in and with society. Such definitions therefore reflect a narrower vision of academic freedom than the one adopted within the EHEA.

Academic freedom cannot be understood as a concept with no boundaries. In Germany, while proclaiming the freedoms, it is stated in Article 5(3) of the Grundgesetz (constitution) that 'The freedom of teaching shall not release any person from allegiance to the constitution' making sure that academic freedom is not understood in absolute terms and is limited by provisions or laws related to defamation, hate speech, or national security ([11]). In Türkiye academic freedom does not include 'the liberty to engage in activities against the existence and independence of the State, and against the integrity and indivisibility of the nation and the country' (Article 130 of the Constitution).

Importantly, academic freedom cannot exist without the right for staff and students to express critical reflections on the university system(s) and higher education institutions themselves. In Croatia, the Act on Higher Education and Scientific Activity (2022) includes in Article 3 the 'freedom of expressing opinions about the system and institution in which they operate, the right to mutual cooperation and association, and the right to participate directly and indirectly in collegial management bodies and professional bodies of institutions in the system of higher education, scientific and artistic activities' ([12]).

Iceland is the only country making a reference to the exercise of academic freedom to teach regardless of the ownership of the higher education institution: 'The choice of research and teaching subjects in individual academic disciplines pursued at a higher education institution shall be free of the influence of the owners and financial backers of the institution' ([13]), and Luxembourg specifically identifies possible influences as 'political, economic, religious or ideological' ([14]). Freedom to learn, formulated as 'freedom of studies' is explicitly set out and defined in Latvia (Law on Higher Education Institutions, Article 6) ([15]) and also in North Macedonia (Law on Higher Education, Article 8).

The majority of the countries stated that academic freedom is indeed defined as a right, and not only a value. However, in the absence of any common definition of 'a right', it remains to be more fully evaluated in future monitoring exercises whether countries' definitions accord with the EHEA understanding.

Requirements for an external body to evaluate the exercise of academic freedom in higher education institutions seem to be in place in slightly less than half of the EHEA countries, as shown in the map

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([8]) Federal Constitution Art. 20: https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1999/404/en#art_20 ;
Higher Education Act Art. 5: https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2014/691/en#art_5 ;
ETH Act Art. 5: https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/1993/210_210_210/en#art_5

([9]) Law 4957/2022, art. 4.

([10]) https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/125150

([11]) Artikel 5 Absatz 3 Grundgesetz: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/gg/art_5.html and https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/hrg/__4.html

([12]) https://www.sabor.hr/hr/o-saboru/vazniji-propisi/ustav-republike-hrvatske-narodne-novine-broj-561990-1351997-81998-1132000 27/04/2023; https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2022_10_119_1834.html

([13]) https://www.government.is/publications/legislation/lex/2017/11/22/Higher-Education-Act-No-63-2006/

([14]) https://www.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2018/06/27/a587/jo#art_19;
https://www.legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/loi/2018/06/27/a587/jo#art_1er

([15]) https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/)legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.343430

below (Figure 3.2). When asked if there are any requirements for an external body to evaluate how the exercise of academic freedom is ensured in higher education institutions, countries indicate external quality assurance agencies as the bodies bearing this responsibility, with only Azerbaijan having another public agency −the Higher Attestation Commission − dealing with the task.

How and to what extent quality assurance processes integrate the evaluation of values depends on many features of the national context. It is, however, a significant finding that countries identify quality assurance agencies as the body where such work is taking place. The relationship of quality assurance and fundamental values is therefore important to consider throughout the EHEA. It is highly relevant to note that any promotion or protection mechanisms of academic freedom would need to include all the academic community, including students and staff, beyond the higher education institutions' governing and management bodies or state representatives.

Figure 3.2: Requirements for evaluation of academic freedom in higher education institutions, 2022/2023
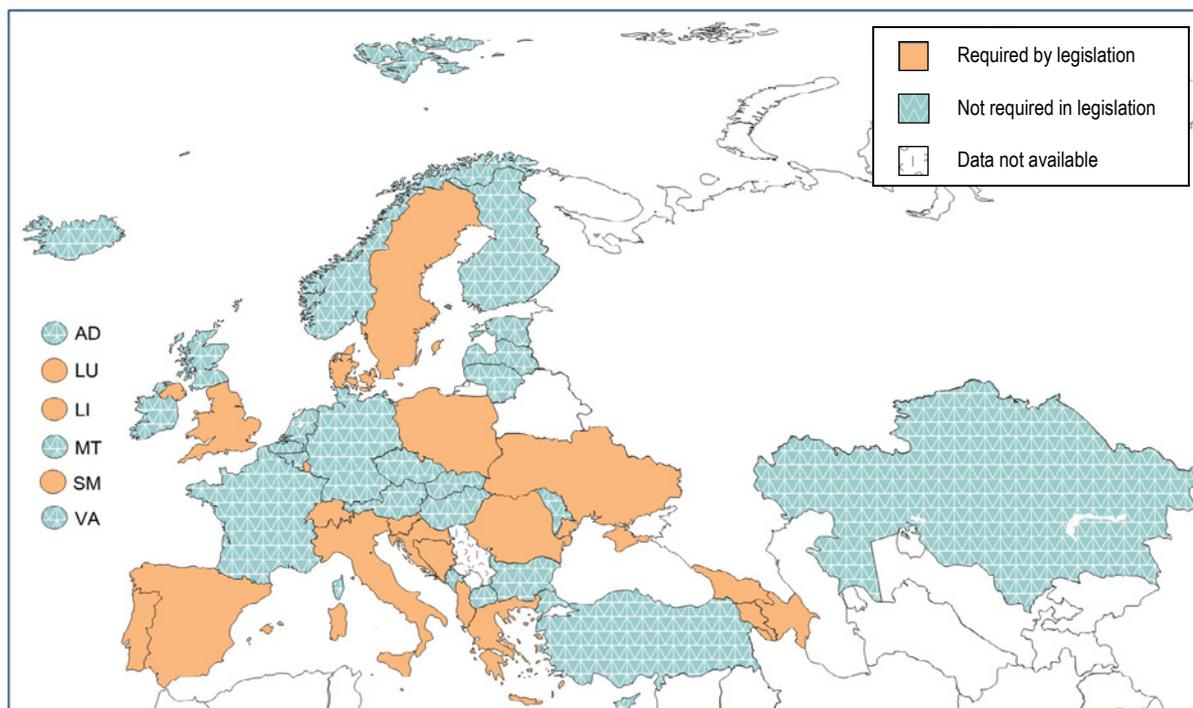
Source: BFUG data collection.

Promotion of academic freedom

Looking into the support and promotion mechanisms, only about a fifth of the EHEA countries ([16]) have developed guidelines and other mechanisms to support the exercise of academic freedom. While some confusion among the specificity of guidelines for academic freedom and guidelines for academic integrity appears in questionnaire replies, most countries did not report any top-level actions to support and enhance academic freedom. Among the exceptions, particular reports have been identified, notably in Sweden where a special report on promotion and protection of academic freedom by higher education institutions by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) is expected to be published in spring 2024; and in Norway, where a report on 'Academic freedom of expression' was published on 21 March 2022 ([17]).

([16]) Countries that have developed guidelines and other mechanisms to support the exercise of academic freedom: Switzerland, Germany, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Türkiye, and UK (EWN).

([17]) Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, Official Norwegian Reports NOU 2022:2, 'Academic Freedom of Expression', Accessible at: https://www.regjeringen.no/contentassets/ec388f0a1dcc4a628fda2fe95e5ddba7/en-gb/pdfs/nou202220220002000engpdfs.pdf

3.2. Academic integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental value that has been coupled with academic freedom in EHEA communiqués, yet in reality remains a distinct value. While a statement to develop a common understanding of academic integrity is being developed within the EHEA, it is clear that the concept builds on elements such as honesty, transparency, fairness, trust, responsibility, respect and courage.

Academic integrity is clearly linked to academic freedom – a concept that comprises the responsibility for members of the academic community to act with integrity. Without rigorous adherence to research ethics and academic integrity, it would be impossible to establish much needed trust in science and education within our societies, and between diverse higher education systems. These principles need to be shared by the whole academic community, encouraging collegiality and solidarity. Academic integrity today is endangered by new challenges such as the development of artificial intelligence, and old challenges including cheating, misconduct, and corruption. Academic integrity also remains inseparable from, and interdependent on, the other fundamental values.

Efforts to develop better systems of student information have been taken forward through initiatives such as the 'FraudS+ project – False Records, Altered Diploma and Diploma Mills Qualifications Collection' ([18]). The project builds on the FraudSCAN database ([19]), a tool that collects the scanned copies of fraudulent qualifications and qualifications issued by Diploma Mills. The database provides credential evaluators with a useful tool to carry out assessments and to prevent the circulation and the use of fraudulent qualifications, building on the expertise and experience of colleagues from ENIC-NARIC centres. It is accessible to staff of the ENIC-NARIC centres only.

Another important effort is being undertaken by the European Network for Academic Integrity (ENAI) ([20]), an association gathering higher education institutions and individual academics interested in maintaining and promoting academic integrity. They provide several free resources, including a glossary on academic integrity and a database of educational materials, as well as a victim support portal.

In an ESU survey in 2020, the majority of students reported that they are not aware either of their options in cases of academic misconduct, nor of their rights. Even if students do not have sufficient information on possible mechanisms to combat academic misconduct, in the majority of the EHEA member states, academic integrity is specifically mentioned in legislation and most notably, in (higher) education legislation, as depicted in Figure 3.3 below.

([18]) Co-financed in the framework of Erasmus+ programme of the European Union with project partners: ESU and ENIC-NARIC centers - CIMEA (Italy), Éducation International (France), Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Germany), Quality and Qualifications Ireland, Nuffic (the Netherlands), and Swedish Council for Higher Education.

([19]) http://fraudscan.cimea.it/

([20]) https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/

Figure 3.3: Concept of academic integrity in national legislation, 2022/2023
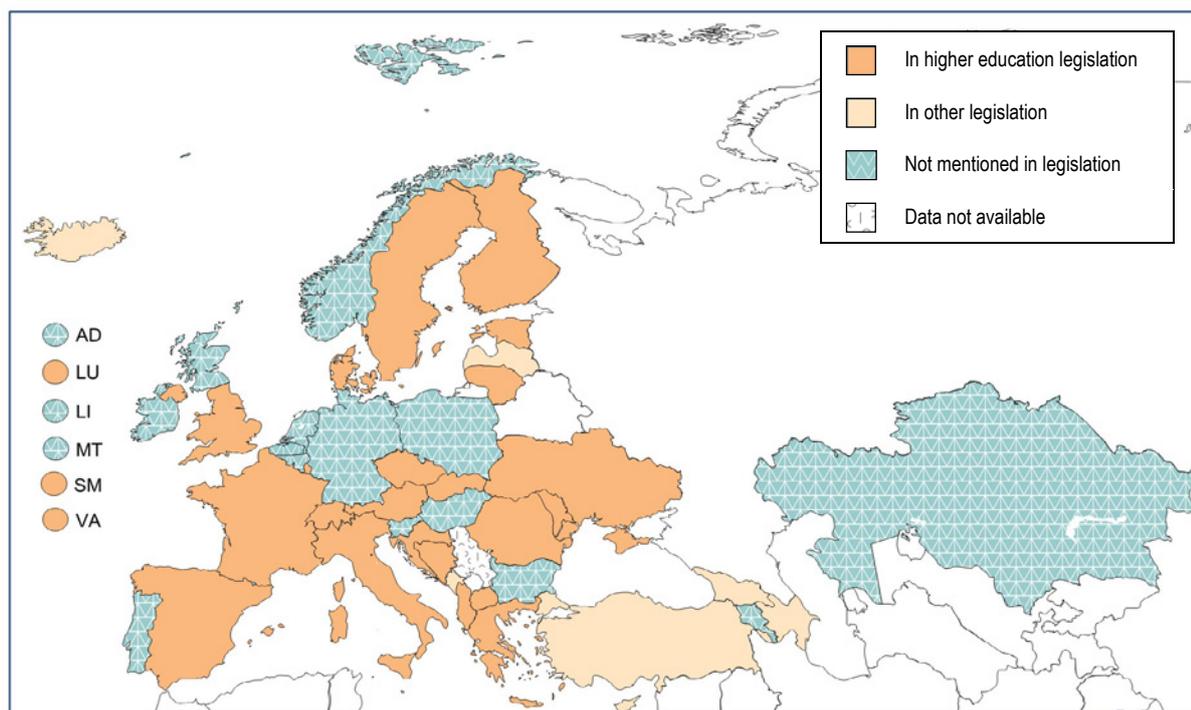
Source: BFUG data collection.

In countries in which academic integrity is mentioned in legislation other than higher education legislation, this mostly refers to legislation regarding property rights and copyright laws, as in the case of Azerbaijan or Spain, where both higher education and other legislation refer to academic integrity. However, the topic of academic integrity including issues like plagiarism, fraud and contract cheating have been gaining traction in most EHEA countries. To date, however, Montenegro is the only country that has adopted a specific Law on Academic Integrity (²¹), which it did in 2019.

Among the countries which mention academic integrity in legislation, it is defined in only one fifth. As much as these definitions diverge in volume and complexity, they all encompass issues of plagiarism and research misconduct. In some cases, like in Estonia and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), they focus more narrowly on student practices. France has one of the more comprehensive definitions and legislative frameworks, as a whole decree is dedicated to academic integrity in which the concept is defined as 'the set of rules and values that should govern research activities to ensure that they are honest and scientifically rigorous' (²²). Another example of a comprehensive definition comes from Latvia where academic integrity is understood as 'performing academic work in accordance with the highest standards of professionalism and precision, objectivity, and veracity, principles of morality and ethics, and honesty, including the prevention of plagiarism, the provision of true information and precision in academic publications, and communication and publicity measures that constitute an image of the academic environment' (²³).

(²¹)   Zakon o akademskom integritetu 2019, Republika Crna Gora. Available at: https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5825374f-0da5-41df-8d52-f9273d88a44b

(²²)   Décret n° 2021-1572 du 3 décembre 2021 relatif au respect des exigences de l'intégrité scientifique par les établissements publics contribuant au service public de la recherche et les fondations reconnues d'utilité publique ayant pour activité principale la recherche publique. Available at: https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000044411360

(²³)   Ministru kabineta noteikumi Nr. 26, Rīgā 2018. gada 9. janvārī (prot. Nr. 2 23. §), Darbības programmas "Izaugsme un nodarbinātība" 8.2.3. specifiskā atbalsta mērķa "Nodrošināt labāku pārvaldību augstākās izglītības institūcijās" pirmās un otrās projektu iesniegumu atlases kārtas īstenošanas noteikumi. Available at: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/296514-darbibas-programmas-izaugsme-un-nodarbinatiba-8-2-3-nbspspecifiska-atbalsta-merka-nodrosinat-labaku-parvaldibu-augstakas%20(point%202.1

While in most countries, responsibility for compliance with academic integrity lies with individual academics − staff or students − higher education institutions are sometimes held responsible for oversight and monitoring. This is the case in Sweden, for example, where higher education institutions are required to ensure that "good research practices", as they are called, are in place (²⁴).

In the case of the only EHEA country with a specific law on academic integrity, Montenegro, the definition understands integrity as academic behaviour in line with the principles of academic integrity, respect for legal regulations and aiming at truth. Beyond that, it outlines that it is behaviour 'ensuring preservation of academic honour, professional dignity, quality of work and work results, spirit of equal cooperation with all participants of the academic process' (²⁵).

Even if academic integrity is not defined in most of the EHEA countries, it seems to be clear what constitutes its breach. Academic fraud is most often considered a punishable offence in administrative terms. Only when it is combined with criminal offences does it become a punishable crime. When the acts in question remain within the scope of administrative offences, perpetrators can most usually face exclusion from studies or the working place; annulment of their degrees/diplomas/grades; and retraction of scientific works from being published.

About half of the countries have requirements for an external body to evaluate the exercise of academic integrity in higher education institutions - see Figure 3.4 below. Out of those, the majority indicates the external quality assurance agency as the responsible body. Another public agency or body was indicated only in the cases of Azerbaijan, Finland, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Türkiye. In Sweden, this is a recent development, as the Swedish National Board for Assessment of Research Misconduct (NPOF) was established only in 2020 as a central governmental agency, subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Research, with the task of investigating if any misconduct has taken place, based on the 2019 law on responsibility for good research practice.

Figure 3.4: Legislative requirement to evaluate academic integrity, 2022/2023

Legend:
- Required by legislation
- No legislative requirement
- Data not available

AD
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SM
VA
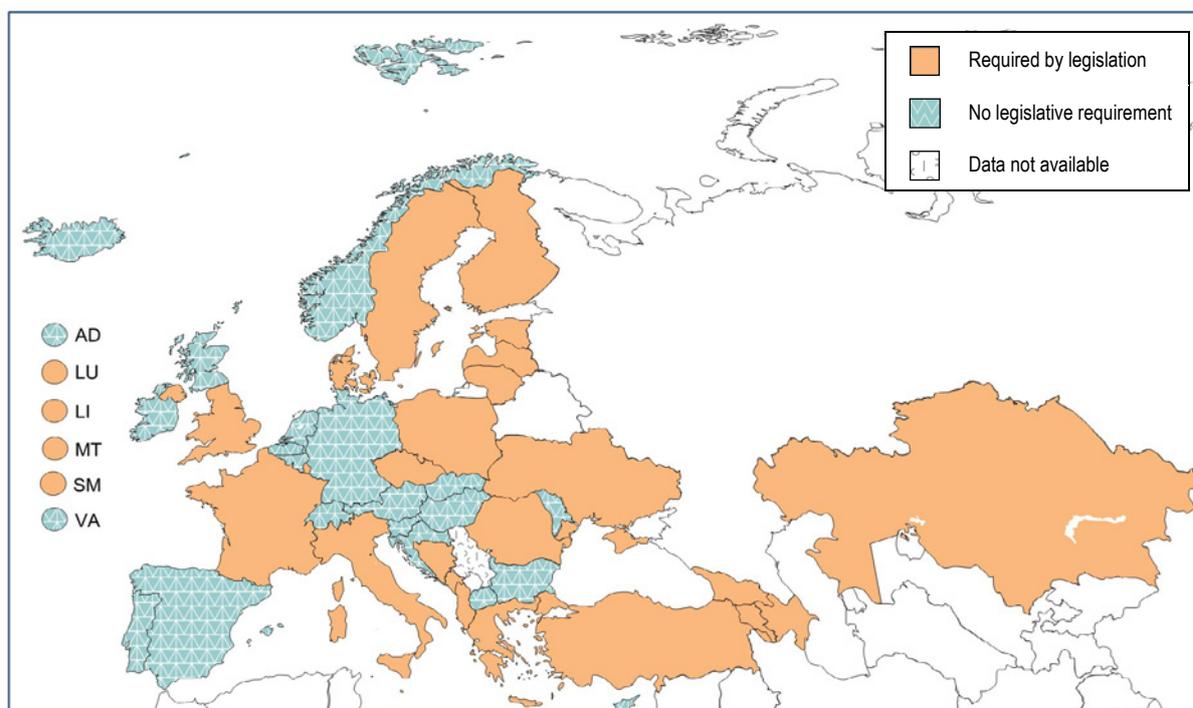
Source: BFUG data collection.

(²⁴) Lag (2019:504) om ansvar för god forskningssed och prövning av oredlighet i forskning. Available at: https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2019504-om-ansvar-for-god-forskningssed_sfs-2019-504

(²⁵) Zakon o akademskom integritetu 2019, Republika Crna Gora. Available at: https://www.gov.me/dokumenta/5825374f-0da5-41df-8d52-f9273d88a44b

Beyond evaluation, for successful monitoring and evaluation of academic integrity, transparency plays an important role. However, an overwhelming number of countries do not collect data on academic misconduct in higher education institutions, and among those that do, this data is not publicly available in many − see Figure 3.5 below. In the countries where data is publicly available, independent bodies are often charged with data collection and analysis. For example, in Finland, the National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) monitors responsible conduct of research and compiles statistics on violations which are then published in annual reports beginning in 2002 (also in English) ([26]). In Denmark, annual reviews are published on the site of the Danish Board on Research Misconduct (only in Danish) ([27]).

Figure 3.5: Data collection on academic misconduct, 2022/2023
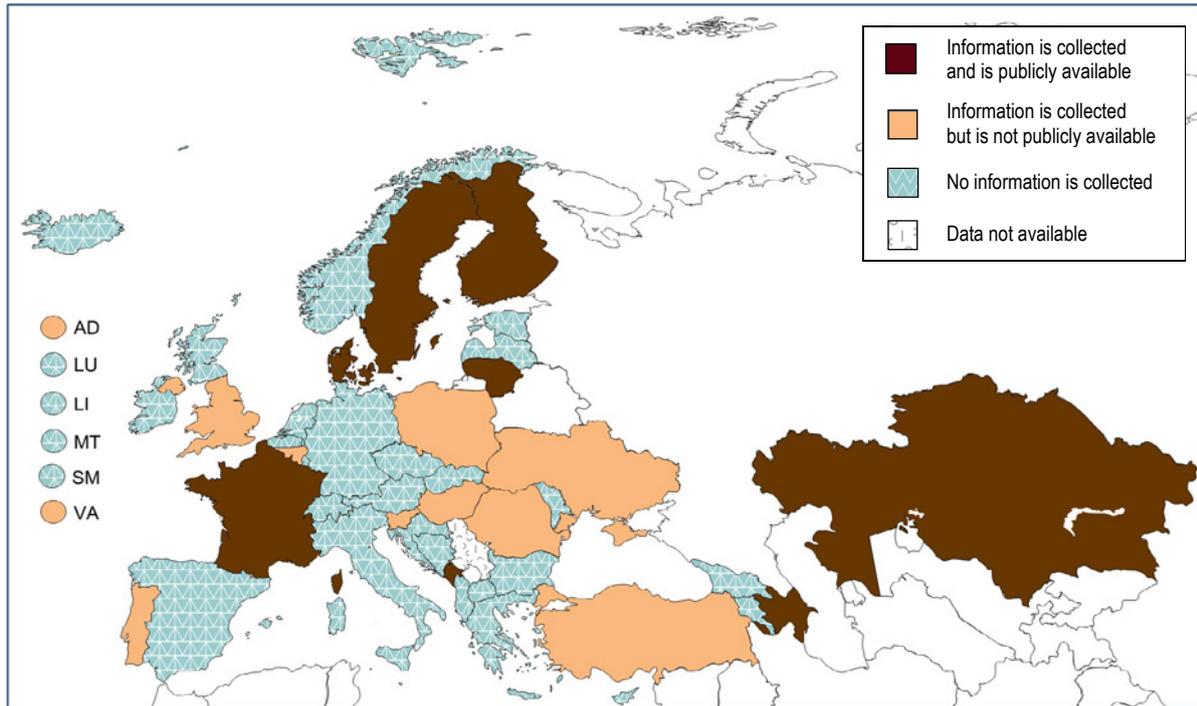
Source: BFUG data collection.

Promotion of academic integrity

Top-level authorities require higher education institutions to offer training to staff and/or students on how to identify and reduce plagiarism, contract cheating and/or academic fraud in approximately a third of EHEA countries ([28]). However, data collected for ESU's 2024 edition of Bologna With Student Eyes, suggests that in only a handful of countries such training is systematically taking place in higher education institutions, while it often takes place in around half of the countries.

According to the responses to the BFUG data collection, Austria, Moldova, Malta and Romania require training only for students and on all three above mentioned topics, while other countries require training for both students and staff on all or some topics. Contract cheating seems to be the least offered and the least demanded training topic.

([26])   https://tenk.fi/en/tenk/annual-reports

([27])   https://ufm.dk/forskning-og-innovation/rad-og-udvalg/Naevnet-for-Videnskabelig-Uredelighedelighed

([28])   Top-level authorities require higher education institutions to offer training to staff and/or students on plagiarism, contract cheating and/or academic fraud in: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Ireland, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Türkiye.

A little over half of the countries report that top-level authorities have developed guidelines for higher education institutions and/or other mechanisms to support higher education institutions with issues such as plagiarism, contract cheating and fraud. Both in guidelines and other mechanisms, the topic of plagiarism seems to have received the most attention. However, the 'Survey on Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Integrity' by the European Students Union (ESU) (European Students Union 2023) with responses predominantly from Hungary, Austria, Romania, France and Czechia, claims that in almost a quarter of higher education institutions the mechanisms do not exist.

Among the various other mechanisms top-level authorities have implemented, the Czech ministry, through the Centralized Development Project, has supported joint projects of public universities which focused on topics such as cyber security, strengthening of ethical principles, or supporting the development of internal review boards. Denmark has adopted the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity ([29]), similar to the Charter of Scientific Integrity ([30]) in France supported by the Office for Scientific Integrity, and the Code of conduct for scientific integrity ([31]) in Switzerland. In Ukraine extensive recommendations on academic integrity and plagiarism have been adopted ([32]); and in Montenegro, in addition to the special law, in June 2021, the Ethics Committee adopted an Ethics charter ([33]) which defines guidelines and principles for respect and preservation of academic integrity, aimed at the whole academic community.

Without academic freedom and academic integrity, the creation of knowledge within the collegial relationships of the academic community would be difficult to imagine. But for an academic community to flourish, it is absolutely necessary that it organises on the basis of institutional autonomy.

3.3. Institutional autonomy

Institutional autonomy is generally considered as a precondition for academic freedom (Popovic et al., 2022) and a prerequisite for universities to develop their institutional profiles and fulfil their missions. Beyond that, institutional autonomy is a significant element of the public responsibility for higher education as a primary aspect of public authorities' responsibility is to protect higher education institutions from any undue interference. Last but not least is the understanding that the principle of self-governance demands strong participation of staff and students, a fundamental value on its own. All the while, higher education institutions remain accountable to society in the exercise of their autonomy - an element of the value of public responsibility of higher education. Recognised in the Magna Charta Universitatum (1998/2020), and in the Council of Europe's Recommendation on public responsibility for academic freedom and institutional autonomy (2012), institutional autonomy should encompass the autonomy of teaching and research (academic autonomy), as well as financial, organisational, and staffing autonomy.

As previously outlined, the data collected for this report are limited. The focus is largely on the composition of governing bodies (organisational), which does not in any way imply that other aspects of institutional autonomy are less important.

([29])   https://ufm.dk/en/publications/2014/files-2014-1/the-danish-code-of-conduct-for-research-integrity.pdf

([30])   https://www.hceres.fr/fr/CharteFrancaiseIntegriteScientifique

([31])   https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Forschung/Kodex_Layout_en_Web.pdf

([32])   Recommendations on academic integrity for HEI 2017, https://zakononline.com.ua/documents/show/124272___124272; MESU letter regarding academic plagiarism 2018 https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/akredytatsiya/instrukt-list/1-11-8681-vid-15082018-rekomendatsii-shchodo-zapobigannya-akademichnomu-plagiatu.pdf; MESU letters regarding academic integrity 2017 https://mon.gov.ua/storage/app/media/npa/5a1fe9d9b7112.pdf, 2020 https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/do-pitannya-uniknennya-problem-i-pomilok-u-praktikah-zabezpechennya-akademichnoyi-dobrochesnosti

([33])   Etička povelja 2021, Republika Crna Gora. Available at: http://etickikomitet.edu.me/post/139

The European University Association's Autonomy Scorecard 2023 (³⁴) looked into 35 higher education systems in Europe, and provided detailed information on organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy. There are certainly different approaches to reflecting on these dimensions of institutional autonomy, and their relationship with other fundamental values could sometimes be in tension. For example, while tenure is highly beneficial, and may even be considered a prerequisite for academic freedom, it could also be considered as lowering institutions' staffing autonomy. These relationships must be kept in mind in the attempts to evaluate and monitor fundamental values from a holistic perspective.

Table 3 presents the changes in institutional autonomy across the four different dimensions of autonomy examined in the EUA report.

Table 3: System changes across autonomy dimensions

Autonomy dimension	Increased		Decreased		Stable	
Organisational	EL, IE, LU, LV, NL, PL, SK	7	DK, EE, SI	3	AT, BE fr, BE nl, CH, CY, CZ, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, ES, FI, FR, HR, IS, IT, LT, NO, PT, RS, SE, TR, UK-ENG	22
Financial	CZ, PL	2	AT, LU, NL, NO, SK, TR	6	BE fr, BE nl, CH, CY, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, IE, IS, IT, LT, LV, PT, RS, SE, SI, UK-ENG	24
Staffing	AT, FR, IE, LU, NL, PL, SI	7	HR, SK	2	BE fr, BE nl, CH, CZ, CY, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, IS, IT, LT, LV, NO, PT, RS, SE, TR, UK-ENG	23
Academic	AT, BE nl, CZ, EL, FR, LT, LV	7	DK, EE,	2	BE fr, CH, CY, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, ES, FI, HR, IE, IS, IT, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK-ENG	23

Source: EUA Autonomy Scorecard 2023.

Notes:

Three German higher education regional systems are included in the EUA project: DE bb Brandenburg; DE-he Hessen; DE-nrw North Rhine Westphalia.

The EUA data shows that the situation remains stable in most of the researched countries across these four autonomy dimensions. Decreased autonomy has been identified only in a small number of cases − Denmark, Estonia and Slovakia declining in more than one dimension. Increased autonomy across more than one dimension has been noted in eight countries: Austria, Czechia, France, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland.

In almost all EHEA countries, the concept of institutional autonomy has specifically been mentioned in legislation, as shown below in Figure 3.6, The exceptions are only Belgium (Flemish Community), Greece, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland). However, although institutional autonomy is not mentioned in Greek legislation, the related concept of self-governance is mentioned both in the Greek Constitution (art. 16) and in the higher education law 4957/2022, art. 3, par. 1.

(³⁴) https://eua.eu/resources/publications/1061:university-autonomy-in-europe-iv-the-scorecard-2023.html

Figure 3.6: Institutional autonomy in national legislation, 2022/2023

Legend:
- In the Constitution
- In education or higher education legislation
- In other legislation
- Not mentioned in legislation
- Data not available

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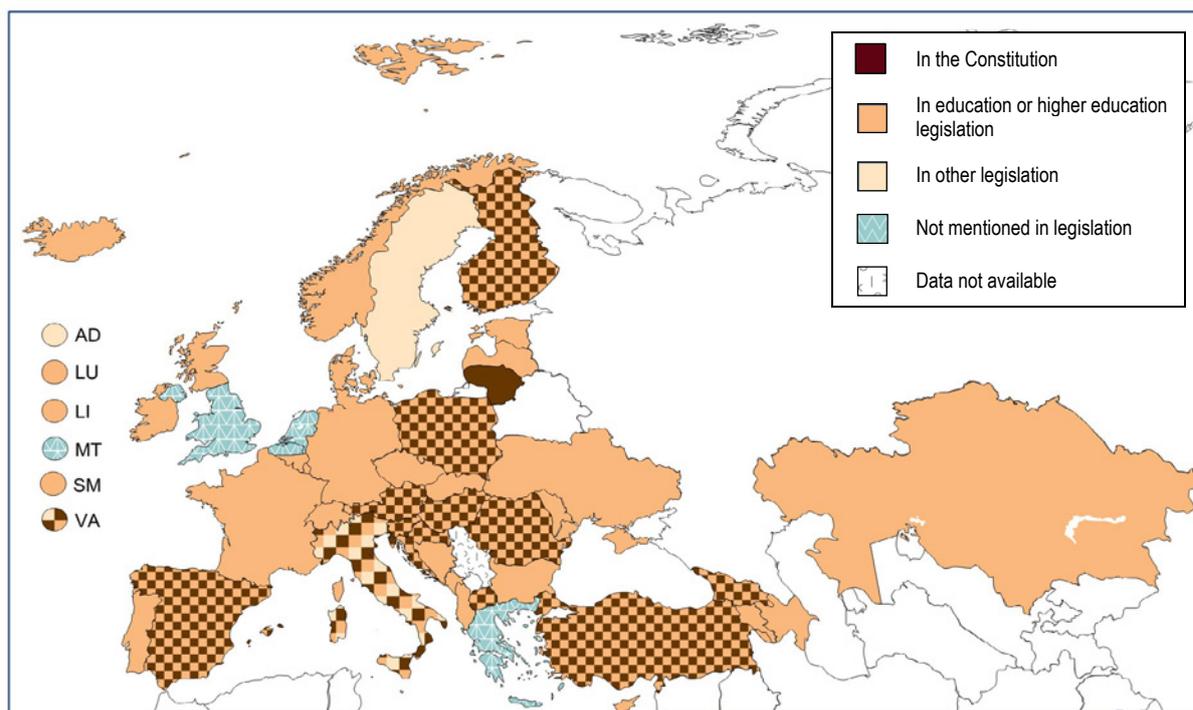
Source: BFUG data collection.

Out of the countries that mention the concept, the majority also defines it. In most of these cases simple definitions are provided: stating higher education institutions' independence from executive public authorities, political or other external influences, while remaining bound by the constitutional and legal order of the country in question. Within the definition of institutional autonomy four countries − Bulgaria, Croatia, North Macedonia, and Slovakia − specifically include campus integrity, which means that state security officials, such as police or army, are not allowed onto campus without an explicit request from the higher education institution's leader.

In Romania, university autonomy is exercised only under the condition of higher education institutions assuming public responsibility. In Armenia, principles of self-management and collegiality are highlighted, staffing autonomy is directly proclaimed, as is autonomy in student recruitment, self-governance, teaching, financial matters (except for tuition fees determined for certain categories of students), and organisational autonomy. In Czechia, autonomy is elaborated through specific bullet points, encompassing internal organisation; admission procedures; programmes' design; quality assurance; staffing autonomy; international cooperation and financial autonomy.

Such extensive definitions are also noted in the case of Croatia, which demands freedom from not only political pressure but also economic power, while reminding higher education institutions of their responsibility towards the social community; or in Latvia, North Macedonia, Slovenia, and Slovakia where also political activities of political parties and political movements are not allowed. This is an example where the tension between fundamental values can be noticed, as restrictions on political activities can raise questions about academic freedom and/or staff and student participation in higher education governance.

Participation in system-level policymaking in higher education

A large majority of countries have a legal requirement for the ministry in charge of higher education to be included in policymaking, while most other countries point out that ministry representatives are usually involved, even if there is no legal requirement. The only exceptions are Norway, San Marino and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

In almost half of the countries surveyed, the law also demands the involvement of a ministry or ministries other than the one in charge of higher education. If added to the cases in which this is common practice but not required by law ([35]), it again means that a majority of EHEA countries involve other relevant ministries in national higher education policymaking.

Quality assurance and accreditation bodies are less often required by law to be included in policy making endeavours at national level. Again, however, if the countries where these bodies are usually involved even if not required by law are included, quality assurance and accreditation bodies actively participate in the national policy making processes in a substantial majority of countries.

For associations and networks of higher education institutions, including national rectors' conferences, legal requirements exist in approximately one third of countries, but they are also usually included in another 28 countries. This is not the case only in Kazakhstan, Montenegro, San Marino and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

Labour market and employer representatives together with civil society and non-governmental organisations are required to be included in less than a third of countries. In approximately 40% of the countries, these organisations are usually included. In Luxembourg it is required by law only for labour market and employer representatives; and in Belgium (French Community) and Sweden it is only civil society. In Croatia, civil society and non-governmental organisations are usually included even if not required by law, and that is the same case for labour market organisations in Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania and Moldova.

In a handful of countries, other actors are legally required to be included. They are usually included only in five: Andorra, Finland, Iceland, Ireland and Latvia. Out of those, in most of them indication of 'other' refers to all interested citizens, which is the case in Armenia, Switzerland, Hungary and Croatia. In Spain, France and Ukraine other actors refer to representatives of regional governments and/or local authorities. In Andorra and Finland the category refers to national or international individual experts.

Participation in higher education institutional governance structures

The structures of governing bodies of higher education institutions reveal crucial information about the state of institutional autonomy. In approximately 60% of cases government/top-level authority representative(s) are not included. In the minority of cases where they are, there is a specific requirement set out by law.

As student and staff participation is analysed as a separate value here the focus is on all other actors.

Complexity arises regarding representatives such as employers and others – see Table 3.1 in Annex. For over half of the countries, there is a legal requirement for employer representative(s) to be included in governing bodies. In several countries, the inclusion of other representative(s) is required by legislation, or if not, they are nevertheless usually included. In Andorra a member representing private entities collaborating with the university is included, while PhD students are represented in various Lander in Germany. In Denmark, regional and local governments appoint board members for

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([35]) Countries in which there are no legal requirements for other ministries to be involved but they are usually included: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia, and Holy See.

professional bachelor higher education institutions, and similarly in Croatia members from the local community – county or city, or ministry − are required by law in universities of applied sciences, or similar professional higher education institutions.

In a small number of countries, other groups are required by law to participate in higher education institutions' internal steering bodies, or in three countries (Holy See, Montenegro and Ukraine) they are not required but usually participate. In Spain this refers to society representative(s) through the Social Council, in France it refers to local authorities and in Montenegro it is non-governmental organisations. In Poland, it is expected that 50% of the higher education institution's council should be comprised of external members.

None of the systems specify only the proportion of staff. However, eight systems focus only on the proportion of students, while 28 specify both student and staff proportions. Twelve systems have no legal requirements in this respect.

Among the countries which specify the proportions of students and/or staff, proportions vary largely – mostly according to the type of the governing body in question, as well as the type of higher education institution. Universities and universities of applied sciences for example tend to have diverse governance systems often with different levels of student and staff representation. Overall staff have larger numbers guaranteed than students. The systems with the highest levels of student representation in governance bodies are Belgium (French Community) and Czechia.

Contributing to all issues and participating in decision-taking

Certainly, participation in governance bodies alone does not reflect the full scope of the involvement of different actors. It is equally important to understand if all members can actually contribute to all issues, or only specific ones – usually the ones directly related to their assumed field of interest. In the large majority of EHEA countries, the legislation stipulates that all members of governing bodies have full rights to contribute to all issues; and even in systems where this is not legally required, it usually happens. Poland and Latvia are the only two countries that indicated that it is not legally required for all members to be able to contribute on all issues and that this usually does not happen.

While contribution to all issues is a widespread right for all members of governing bodies, the situation is somewhat different when it comes to taking decisions on all issues. This is not required and usually does not happen in Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Norway and Poland. In Poland, not all stakeholders can take decisions on professors' appointments, while in Switzerland decision-taking rules are in the hands of the cantonal authorities overseeing higher education institutions. In Denmark, the Chairman of the Board has specific exclusive responsibilities, including dialogue with the minister and responsibility for property issues; and vice-rectors participate in the Senate without voting rights. In Liechtenstein the Senate does not have full rights to take decisions on all issues; in Luxembourg the University Rector and the Government Commissioner have consultative rights in the Governance Council; and in Sweden students can participate in some, but not all, decisions that have a bearing on their courses or programmes or the situation of students.

Deciding the responsibilities of governing bodies

In approximately 40% of the EHEA systems, higher education institutions decide on the responsibilities of their governing bodies, yet within a legislative framework that sets some boundaries (see Table 3.2 in the Annex). Iceland is the only country where the higher education institutions' governing body enjoys absolute autonomy on this issue. In all other countries, it is defined by legislative frameworks – at least for the publicly funded institutions.

Appointments and dismissals

Appointment and dismissal of higher education institution leaders (Rectors or equivalent) is an important and complex aspect of institutional autonomy represented in Tables 3.3 and 3.4. in the Annex. Appointment is the responsibility of the higher education institution's highest governing body, or an internal higher education institution steering body in a little over half of EHEA systems. Albania and Slovenia indicate that it is the responsibility of staff and students, although it remains unclear within which framework this takes place. In the rest of the countries, it is the government or public authority that makes the decision. In some countries this is done together with higher education institutional bodies or other actors. However, in Azerbaijan, Moldova and Sweden it is an exclusive responsibility of public authorities.

For dismissal, the situation is only marginally different. In slightly less than half of the countries, the higher education institutions' highest governing body is responsible for decisions, and in several others, responsibility lies with an internal higher education institution steering body. Staff and students were indicated as having a particular role in Italy, Romania and the Holy See. The government/public authority is involved in dismissal decisions in around a fifth of EHEA systems, but only has an exclusive responsibility for dismissal in Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium (French Community), Bulgaria, and Sweden. Public authorities therefore more frequently play a role in dismissal than they do in cases of appointment.

Whenever other actors are involved, this usually refers to specific higher education institution bodies: in case of dismissal, for example, in Greece it is the Disciplinary Board; in France it is the academic council consisting exclusively of teacher-researchers; or in the Netherlands it is the Supervisory Board of higher education institutions.

The situation regarding the appointment of higher education institutional faculty leaders (Deans or equivalent), remains largely similar with the exception of a (much) lower level of involvement of government/public authorities. For appointment of deans in the large majority of cases it is higher education institution bodies that are responsible: either the higher education institutions' highest governing body or an internal higher education institution steering body. Together with these bodies, or through them, staff are responsible in Italy and the Holy See. It is exclusively a staff responsibility in the case of Azerbaijan, and a shared responsibility of staff and students in Albania and Slovenia. Belgium (French Community) is the only system where the appointment of deans is exclusively a responsibility for the government/public authority. As with appointment of Rectors, some countries also indicated the involvement of other actors.

Higher education institutional bodies also take a leading responsibility in the case of dismissal of higher education institution faculty leaders. The highest governing body and internal higher education institution steering bodies again share responsibility. Azerbaijan is the only system where staff are entirely responsible for the dismissal of deans. The government/public authority is jointly responsible with institutional bodies in Sweden, and exclusively in Albania and Belgium (French Community). In a small number of countries, it is exclusively another body that is responsible. For example, in Georgia it is the faculty council; in Andorra, Finland and Türkiye it is the Rector; and in Greece it is again the Disciplinary Board. For all these procedures there are usually multiple bodies and levels of authorities involved, so this is necessarily a simplified overview.

Responsibility for higher education programmes

Beyond the appointment and dismissal of higher education institutions' leaders, an important element to establish the state of institutional autonomy is the extent of governments'/public authorities' influence in the programme offer. This is increasingly important in the contemporary world where scientific disciplines have been prohibited, and certain departments closed for ideological reasons for a perceived 'lack of profitability'. The most direct influence on study programmes is certainly reflected in situations where the government/public authority can require or forbid particular programmes.

The histogram below (Figure 3.7) sets out the main roles played by governments/public authorities in relation to higher education institutions' programmes offers.

Figure 3.7: Government/public authority role in higher education institutions' programme offers, 2022
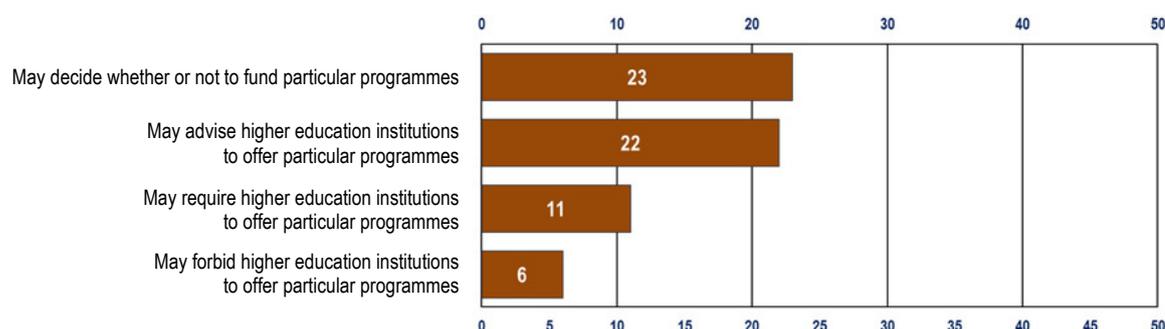
Source: BFUG data collection.

The two most frequent occurrences are for the government/public authority to be able to advise higher education institutions to offer particular programmes, and/or to have a decisive influence through funding decisions. This can be understood as the exercise of soft power over higher education institutions and suggests that attention is paid with regard to boundaries of institutional autonomy.

It is only in a few countries that governments/public authorities maintain the power to require higher education institutions to offer particular programmes, again suggesting that government influence may generally be exercised through more persuasive approaches. Only six systems acknowledge that the government has the power to forbid higher education institutions from offering particular programmes.

It is noticeable that certain de jure framework allowing governmental interference in the programme offer does not necessarily equate to a low level of institutional autonomy. For example, in the case of Austria, the government has the possibility to require higher education institutions to offer particular programmes, yet Austria still scores very highly (85% − 10th place) in the EUA Autonomy Scorecard ranking of 2023 for academic autonomy. Academic autonomy, as defined by EUA, encompasses capacity to decide on overall student numbers; ability to select students; ability to introduce programmes; ability to terminate programmes; ability to choose the language of instruction; capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms and providers; and ability to design content of degree programmes. In many countries this is considered a delicate balancing act. In Spain, for example, higher education authorities can make proposals regarding the programmes' offer, but the final decision remains with universities.

Evaluation of institutional autonomy

Figure 3.8 (below) shows the systems where there is legal requirement for institutional autonomy to be evaluated.

Figure 3.8: Evaluation of institutional autonomy in higher education institutions, 2022/2023
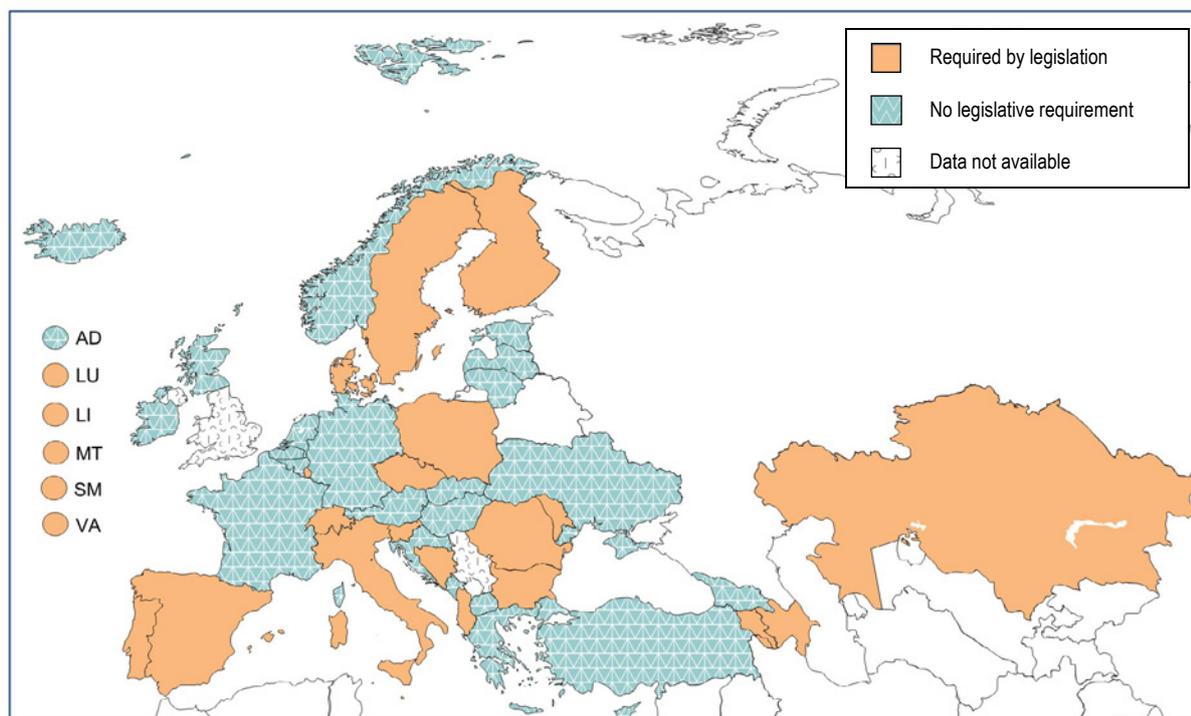
Source: BFUG data collection.

Approximately half of the countries require external bodies to evaluate the exercise of institutional autonomy in higher education institutions. In almost all these cases, this demand is placed on an external quality assurance agency, although no information was gathered on how this demand is formulated and exercised in practice.

Finland is the exception, both for academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as there is no specific body to evaluate these issues, but rather the Chancellor of Justice of the Government of Finland serves as a supreme guardian of the law, overseeing the legality of all activities under the responsibility of public authorities, including higher education institutions. The Parliamentary Ombudsman also plays a role in supervising and promoting legality and implementation of fundamental and human rights. As such, these bodies serve as guardians of institutional autonomy, even if not being tasked with undertaking specific monitoring.

Higher education institutions in most EHEA countries have the possibility of legal redress in cases of infringement. However, this does not mean that there exist external bodies which are specifically charged for the monitoring and evaluation of some or all the fundamental values.

3.4. Participation of students and staff in higher education governance

Student and staff participation is at the core of the principle of self-governance, one of the elements of institutional autonomy. It is also a value embedded in the idea of sense of ownership, accountability and responsibility of the members of academic community. Closely intertwined to academic freedom, exercising the fundamental value of student and staff participation enables students and staff to organise without fear of reprisal, pressure or undue interference from public authorities, governing bodies or other stakeholders, and to actively participate in both decision-making and decision-taking processes. Democracy within the governance structures of higher education institutions, as well as student and staff organisations, is a key prerequisite for the successful development of democratic citizens and the exercise of public responsibility for higher education.

Too few students claim that they are fully aware about the representative student bodies' structures, funding, functions and (s)election processes of their representatives, and even less about overall funding and governance structures of higher education institutions. ESU's publication Bologna with Student Eyes 2020 (European Students Union, 2020) reported some worrying trends regarding the strength of student voices within higher education institutions and underlined the need to strengthen the principle of collegiality. Election and appointment processes within the representative organisations and governance bodies play a very significant role: students and staff can indeed be present in all relevant structures, but if they are not democratically elected, independent, and autonomous the situation cannot be considered as satisfactory in terms of democratic legitimacy. Moreover, financial independence and sustainable funding play a key role in ensuring independence among students and staff representatives.

Student participation in higher education institutions' governance structures has evolved significantly across Europe after decades of student activism seeking student representation (Klemenčič, Bergan and Primožič eds., 2015). Now, student participation is required by legislation in nearly all countries. The clear exception is the Netherlands, where student participation is not required by legislation, and students are usually not included in higher education institutions' governing bodies. In Kazakhstan and the Holy See, student participation is also not required by legislation, but in these countries students are usually included. The situation is identical for staff representative(s).

In the important interconnection of institutional autonomy with the fundamental value of student and staff representation in governance, the map below (Figure 3.9) considers the specificity of legislation regarding the proportions of students and staff in higher education institutions' governing bodies.

Figure 3.9: Required proportions of students and staff in higher education institutions' governing bodies, 2022/2023
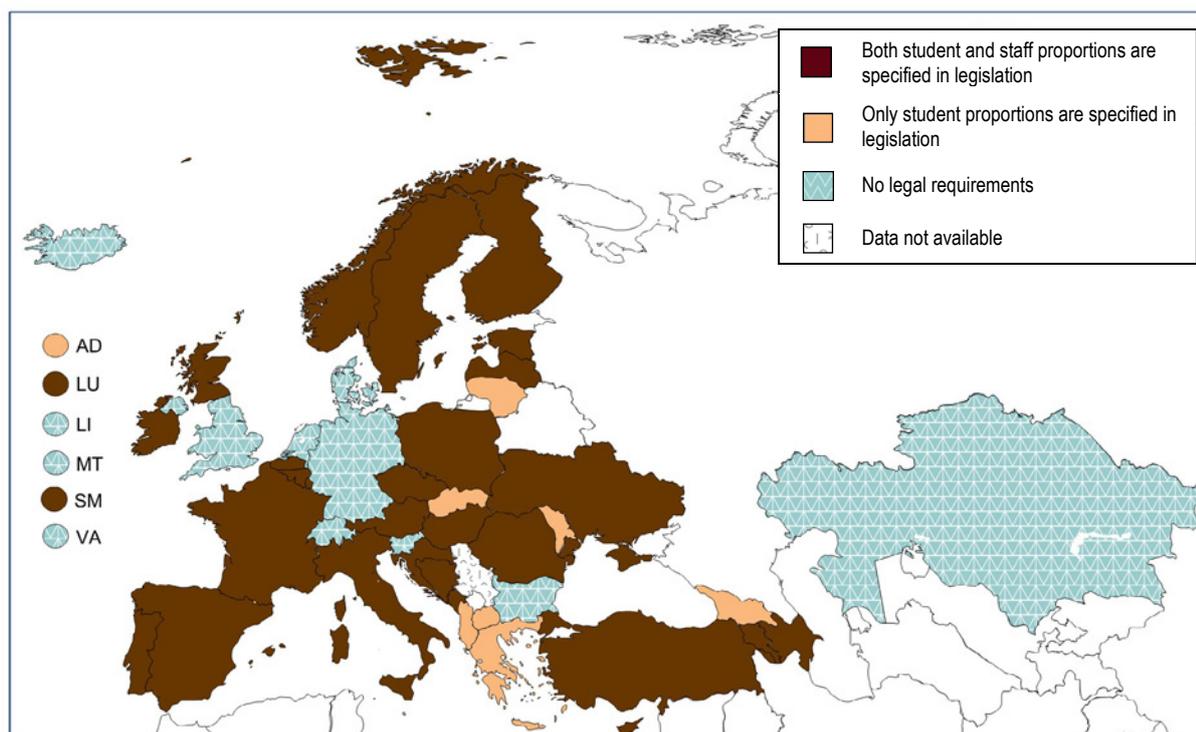
Source: BFUG data collection.

None of the systems specify only the proportion of staff. However, eight systems focus only on the proportion of students, while 28 specify both student and staff proportions. Twelve systems have no legal requirements in this respect.

Among the countries which specify the proportions of students and/or staff, proportions vary greatly – mostly according to the type of the governing body in question, as well as to the type of higher education institution. Universities and universities of applied sciences for example tend to have diverse governance systems often with different levels of student and staff representation. Overall staff have larger numbers guaranteed than students. The systems with the highest levels of student representation in governance bodies are Belgium (French Community) and Czechia.

The previous sections point to insufficient attention being given to the academic freedom of students, while infringements of academic integrity are most often considered as infringements made by students, notably through practices such as plagiarism and cheating. When developing national higher education policy, various actors may be included. Figure 3.10 outlines the requirements related to student and higher education staff associations and unions.

Figure 3.10: Legal requirements for staff and students to participate in national HE policymaking, 2022/2023
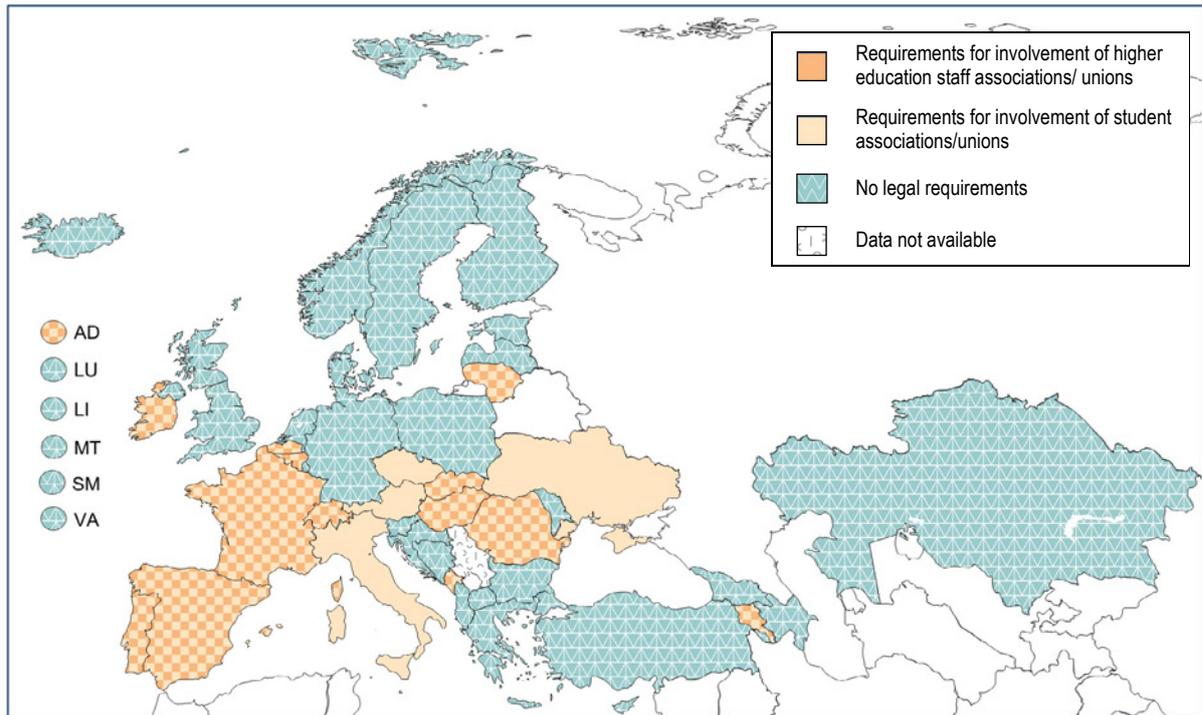
Source: BFUG data collection.

Just over a third of systems have legal requirements in place to include student and/or staff representatives in higher education policymaking. In most of these countries, both student and staff associations/unions are included. The exceptions are Austria, Czechia, Italy and Ukraine where only student associations/unions are included by law. These countries report, however, that higher education staff associations and unions are usually included.

In almost 40% of the countries, although not a legislative requirement, student associations and unions are usually included in national policymaking. However, according to national responses, students and staff are less frequently included in national policy development than in higher education institutional governance.

Participation in institutional steering bodies

Figure 3.11 shows the EHEA higher education systems where legal requirements are in place to ensure the participation of higher education staff and/or associations/unions and students/student unions in institutional internal steering bodies.

Figure 3.11: Legal requirements for staff and students to participate in HEIs' internal steering bodies, 2022/2023
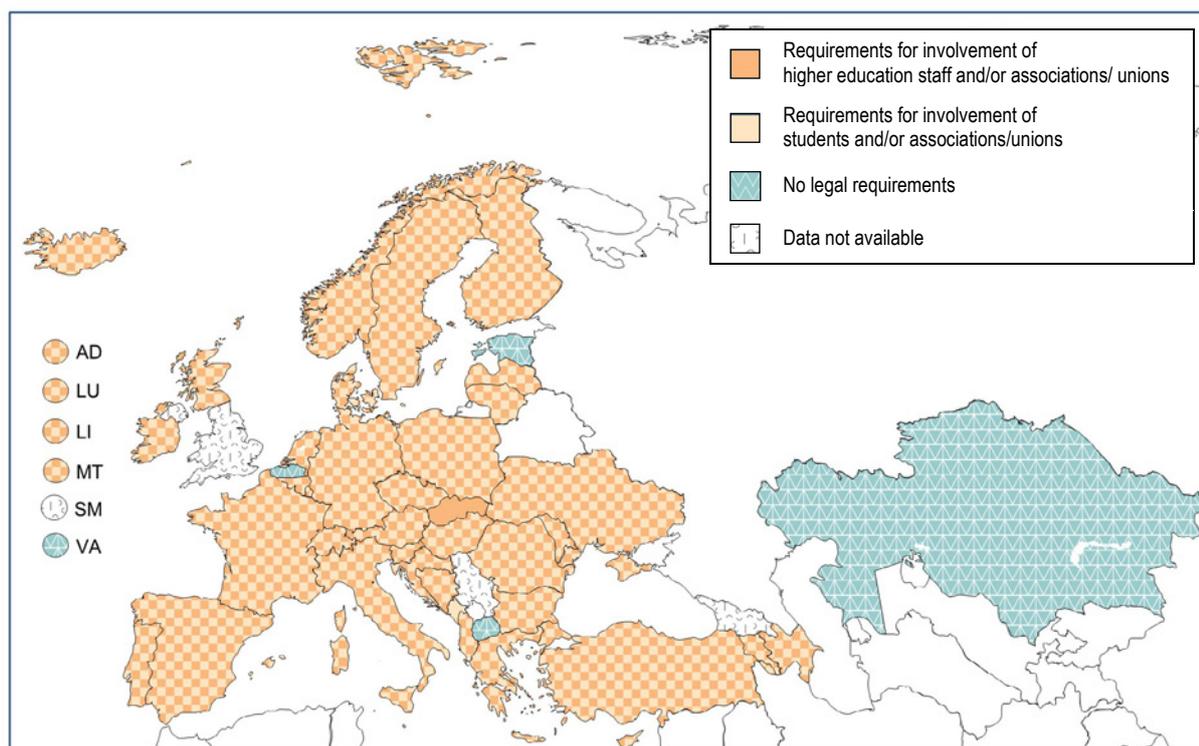
Source: BFUG data collection.

Legal requirements for student and/or student union, and staff and/or staff trade union representatives to be included in higher education institutions' internal steering bodies are in place in 39 systems. Moreover, even when not required by law, student and/or student representatives usually participate (Belgium – Flemish Community, Estonia, Kazakhstan, North Macedonia, and Holy See). This is the same for staff/staff trade union representatives.

Students and staff are overwhelmingly present in the higher education institutions' internal steering bodies. The decision-making responsibilities of these internal steering bodies are most frequently set through legislation (in close to half of the EHEA systems). In about a third of systems, it is both the legislators and the institutions' themselves that determine these responsibilities. For approximately 20% of the countries, this is an exclusive competence of higher education institutions' internal steering bodies. In Switzerland the situation varies from canton to canton; while in Estonia it varies depending on the type of decisions being made.

Malta, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Türkiye clearly state the decisions in which staff and students cannot participate. In France, students cannot participate in decisions regarding employment of teacher-researchers. Students in Poland are not allowed to take decisions regarding academic degrees. In Türkiye student participation remains restricted to 'student problems of the faculty, conservatory, or vocational school it represents'.

Half of the countries give the right to students and staff to participate in all decisions: However further exploration would be required to understand if that right means that students and staff fully participate in decision-taking.

3.5. Public responsibility for and of higher education

The two last fundamental values were not formulated as specific sections in the BFUG questionnaire, as they are both very broad values referring to a number of policy issues covered to some extent by other parts of the report. Public responsibility for higher education represents the obligation of the public sector to higher education systems – especially regarding public funding of higher education. Public responsibility of higher education focuses on the obligation of higher education towards the society – especially in its mission to share knowledge, as a public good, and to empower students with civic engagement and active citizenship skills.

Much of the information presented throughout the report can be considered relevant to public responsibility for higher education. In Chapter 1, information on public investment in higher education provides a basis for assessing whether the level of expenditure indicates a high level of public responsibility and provides sufficient funding for higher education institutions to fulfil their missions. Chapter 4 on the social dimension is addresses the public responsibility for ensuring equitable access to higher education, ensuring student welfare and support services, supporting lifelong learning, and as a consequence fostering societal development. Meanwhile information on quality assurance presented in Chapter 2 on Key Commitments also relates to the public responsibility for higher education.

With regard to the issues of public funding, a useful additional source is the EUA's Public Funding Observatory ([36]) which captures the latest funding trends. The data is laid out in a series of reports and the interactive online tool ([37]), which is updated regularly, currently contains data from 34 systems, with the latest data from 2020/2021. Public responsibility for higher education, mainly exercised at the level of the national higher education system, encompasses also political, public policy, regulatory and legal obligations as proposed by the BFUG's draft statement under development for adoption in the Tirana Ministerial conference. The draft statement also refers to the responsibility of safeguarding all proclaimed fundamental values, so all previous sections of this chapter provide further insight into the level of involvement in protection and promotion of fundamental values by national authorities.

Public responsibility for higher education is also exercised at regional and local level, as well as at supra-national level. Public authorities are also expected to ensure the implementation of freedom to learn and the provision of anti-discrimination frameworks that enable this. Relevant data analysis on this aspect can also be found in Chapter 4 on the social dimension.

Regarding the public responsibility of higher education, analysis in chapter 4 focuses on support to community engagement. This addresses a part of the public responsibility of higher education institutions to engage actively with the local community and society at large. This may involve partnering with community organisations, addressing social issues, providing expertise and resources to solve community problems, and promoting civic engagement. Issues tackled at local level may also be mirrored by broader engagement with societal challenges at national, regional and global level. The draft statement also invites higher education institutions to be at the forefront of implementation and promotion of all other fundamental values. This involves bearing a responsibility in communicating research results, sharing knowledge with the wider society and actively engaging in tackling challenges of our contemporary world. While this report focuses more on the national and system level situation, further monitoring would have to also encompass activities of higher education institutions in promotion of fundamental values and communication of research results within society.

([36])   Available at: https://eua.eu/resources/projects/586-public-funding-observatory.html

([37])   https://efficiency.eua.eu/public-funding-observatory

3.6. Conclusions

This chapter takes a first step towards the monitoring of the EHEA fundamental values – academic freedom already defined in the Rome communiqué, and the other five to be submitted for adoption at the forthcoming Ministerial meeting in Tirana in May 2024. In parallel, work continues to develop a technical framework for monitoring fundamental values. The focus of this exercise is on legal protection of values, and as such represents a limited exercise.

De jure protections of fundamental values are widespread throughout the EHEA. While this is a positive finding, the protections have been developed in specific national and cultural contexts and there may be considerable variety in the way in which values are defined. Comparative analysis of these legal realities must also be enriched with reliable de facto assessments, as the legal situation might differ significantly from the situation on the ground.

While values are sometimes defined in national contexts, and sometimes not, the existence of a definition is not sufficient to ensure that the value is understood in a way that aligns with the EHEA understanding. When statements have been adopted it will be important in future monitoring exercises to consider how closely national definitions of values align with or diverge from the concepts of the EHEA fundamental values statements.

From a first analysis of national definitions of academic freedom, not all aspects of academic freedom as specified in the EHEA statement are encompassed in national definitions. For example, the concept of freedom to learn – integral to the EHEA understanding of academic freedom − has been identified as an element of national legal definitions in only two countries − Latvia and North Macedonia.

The attention given to academic integrity seems to be on the rise throughout the EHEA, although some phenomena are far more frequently reported than others. Plagiarism seems to be identified by all member states as a burning issue, while academic fraud and contract cheating receive much less attention from public authorities.

Governance and institutional autonomy are topics that will require both examination at national and system level, as well as considering developments such as the rise of European University Alliances and other trans-institutional structures. Diversity of governance structures is a reality, and each system will need to be understood in context. Again, de facto information will be required to assess how governance structures work in the everyday life of higher education institutions. This report has highlighted the reality that external evaluation of institutional autonomy takes place in half of the EHEA systems and is almost always entrusted to quality assurance agencies.

Of all existing assessment and monitoring tools, the EUA Autonomy Scorecard has been identified as the most usable for an indispensable comparative and complementary tool to the self-reporting from the BFUG.

The current data provides an initial assessment of de jure implementation of student and staff participation in higher education governance, indicating a more embedded approach at institutional than national level. Legislation requiring student and staff representatives to participate in national policymaking is in place in just over a third of the EHEA systems.

De facto assessment would require self-evaluation by the stakeholders themselves, particularly from student and staff associations and trade unions. Student and staff participation is better established at the institutional than at the national level, and this will be important for public authorities to recognise when promoting participation.

There is an urgent need for the ministers to adopt the corresponding definitions for each of the fundamental values of the EHEA so that public authorities and all stakeholders are able to further operationalise their common protection and promotion.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL DIMENSION

The 2020 Rome Communiqué

The 2020 Rome Communiqué, adopted by Ministers of Higher Education of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the Rome Ministerial Conference in November 2020, envisions 'an inclusive, innovative and interconnected EHEA by 2030' ([1]). According to this vision, 'every learner will have equitable access to higher education and will be fully supported in completing their studies and training' ([2]). In this Communiqué, Ministers committed to reinforcing social inclusion in higher education, most importantly by adopting the *Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA* – henceforth referred to as the Principles and Guidelines (P&Gs) – developed by the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) ([3]).

The Principles and Guidelines build on the definition of the social dimension of higher education provided in the 2007 London Communiqué, which emphasised that 'the composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations' ([4]). In 2020, the BFUG Advisory Group 1 on Social Dimension enlarged this definition, stressing that the social dimension 'also encompasses the creation of an inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity, diversity, and is responsive to the needs of local communities' ([5]). The P&Gs were developed having this broader understanding in mind.

The document includes principles and guidelines in ten areas to be followed by national education authorities in order to 'interconnect the principles of accessibility, equity, diversity and inclusion into all laws, policies and practices concerning higher education in such a way that access, participation, progress and completion of higher education depend primarily on students' abilities, not on their personal characteristics or circumstances beyond their direct influence' ([6]). This essentially means the mainstreaming of social inclusion and equity principles, where all higher education policies serve the purpose of 'leaving no one behind' ([7]). As such, most P&Gs point towards measures creating the necessary conditions for an accessible, equitable, diverse and inclusive higher education.

Chapter outline

This chapter follows the structure of the Principles and Guidelines, focusing on the ten areas addressed by the document: higher education strategies addressing the social dimension; flexible study modes enabling widening access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies; the inclusiveness of the entire education system throughout lifelong learning; collecting reliable data for an evidence-based improvement of the social dimension of higher education; effective counselling and guidance for potential and enrolled students; sufficient and sustainable funding and financial autonomy to higher education institutions; inclusive learning environments and inclusive institutional cultures; fostering the participation of students and staff from vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds in international mobility programs; community engagement in higher education promoting

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([1]) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.
([2]) Ibid., p. 4.
([3]) Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, Annex II of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.
([4]) London Communiqué: Towards the European Higher Education Area: responding to challenges in a globalised world, 18 May 2007, p. 5.
([5]) Final Report of the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) Advisory Group 1 on Social Dimension, p. 23.
([6]) Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, Annex II of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 3.
([7]) Ibid.

diversity, equity and inclusion; and policy dialogue with higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders about implementing these principles and guidelines.

These areas will be discussed in turn. Each section starts by a reference to the principles and guidelines as they feature in the strategic BFUG document. Then the sections discuss the indicators that were chosen to be monitored in this report. Based on these indicators, composite scorecard indicators have been developed for eight of the areas separately. In the area of strategic commitment, a more exhaustive mapping has been favoured over the development of a composite scorecard indicator. Similarly, no scorecard indicator has been included for community engagement as in this case, the P&Gs are mostly targeted at higher education institutions.

4.1. Strategic commitment towards diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education

Principle:

The social dimension should be central to higher education strategies at system and institutional level, as well as at the EHEA and the EU level. Strengthening the social dimension of higher education and fostering equity and inclusion to reflect the diversity of society is the responsibility of a higher education system as a whole and should be regarded as a continuous commitment.

Guidelines:

Strategic commitment to the social dimension of higher education should be aligned with concrete targets that can either be integrated within existing higher education policies or developed in parallel. These targets should aim at widening access, supporting participation in and completion of studies for all current and future students.

In the process of creating strategies there should be a broad-based dialogue between public authorities, higher education institutions, student and staff representatives and other key stakeholders, including social partners, nongovernmental organisations and people from vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. This broad-based dialogue is to ensure the creation of inclusive higher education strategies that foster equity and diversity, and are responsive to the needs of the wider community.

The first area addresses the need for a strategic commitment of educational authorities towards the social dimension of higher education, including setting concrete, measurable targets through which progress can be assessed. According to the guidelines, the preconditions of creating an inclusive higher education strategy include a broad-based dialogue between public authorities, higher education institutions, student and staff representatives and other key stakeholders.

Strategic commitment to the social dimension of higher education can take many different forms. Education authorities may choose different paths to foster equity, diversity and inclusion. For this reason, instead of selecting a limited set of indicators to be monitored through a scorecard, this section aims to map these diverse approaches in more detail. Providing a broad overview of the different policy approaches can serve as a starting point for developing scorecard indicators in this area in the future.

The analysis below distinguishes between mainstream and targeted policies, and more centralised and more decentralised approaches. These different strategies, policies and measures are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but can complement each other to contribute more effectively to the strengthening of the social dimension.

As a first approach, some countries (e.g. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have opted for mainstreaming equity and inclusion principles into the structures, organisation and financing of higher education rather than following a policy model based on targeted strategies that could more frequently be subject to political change. The approach is based on the belief that 1) if social dimension conditions are favourable to all students, there is a greater likelihood of de facto equity; and 2) mainstreaming

equity consideration in all policies and strategic planning is necessary in order to ensure equity and inclusion among students and staff.

In this approach, free education, gender equality and the rights of people with disabilities are the norm in legislation. Higher education institutions should operate based on this broad legislative framework, and they need to embed these principles in their strategic planning. Traditionally, the mainstreaming model has been applied mainly to gender equality, but the approach has been widened towards diversity mainstreaming as well.

Given that the role of top-level authorities is to ensure the broad legislative framework, the mainstreaming model relies on higher education institutions in a more decentralised fashion. For example, in Norway, public higher education institutions need to develop their own equity and diversity action plans in order to strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion among both students and staff ([8]).

Alternatively, to demonstrate their strategic commitment to the social dimension of higher education, education authorities may opt for a more targeted approach, designing policies that specifically target disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of students and staff. This approach rests on the assumption that while general policy measures may also benefit disadvantaged groups, the vulnerable position of students and staff from under-represented groups requires policy action targeting their specific needs.

A common way to implement targeted strategic action, as the guidelines also specify, is through national (top-level) strategies or policy plans, which include the main strategic objectives, potential targets, and the main policy measures to be undertaken by the different stakeholders in higher education. Besides national strategies, creating legislation requiring the active participation of higher education institutions in ensuring equity and inclusion is also an option for educational authorities. Having a national strategy, a similar major policy plan or a set of targeted measures concerning students and staff is a clear signal that the top-level education authority regards equity as a policy priority that they are willing to act upon. Figure 4.1 therefore depicts education systems with strategies addressing the social dimension in higher education, for students, staff, or both. The figure includes all reported strategies (see also Table 4.1 in the Annex).

The majority of education systems with available data have strategies or action plans currently in place on the social dimension of higher education. Two thirds of these strategies target both students and academic staff, while one third of them address the situation of students only. Norway has a strategic commitment towards gender equality among academic staff.

Inclusion, diversity and equity in higher education may be included in strategies concerning the education system as a whole (as in Albania, Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Montenegro, Romania and Türkiye), or in general higher education strategies or policy plans (as in Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Malta and Slovenia). Specific strategies or policy plans on the social dimension of higher education have been adopted in Austria, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In Belgium (French Community), the inclusivity of higher education is the explicit aim of a decree on inclusive higher education, which contains a set of measures similar to that of a strategic document. Finally, in five education systems (Liechtenstein, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Ukraine), inclusion or equity strategies or action plans going beyond the field of education include provisions for higher education.

These strategies should ideally be agreed upon through a broad dialogue between the different stakeholders. Almost all countries reported having implemented a social dialogue before the adoption of their strategy, except for Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom.

([8])   For more details, see the website of kifinfo.no.

Figure 4.1: Strategic commitment to the social dimension of higher education: top-level targeted strategies, action plans and measures, 2022/2023
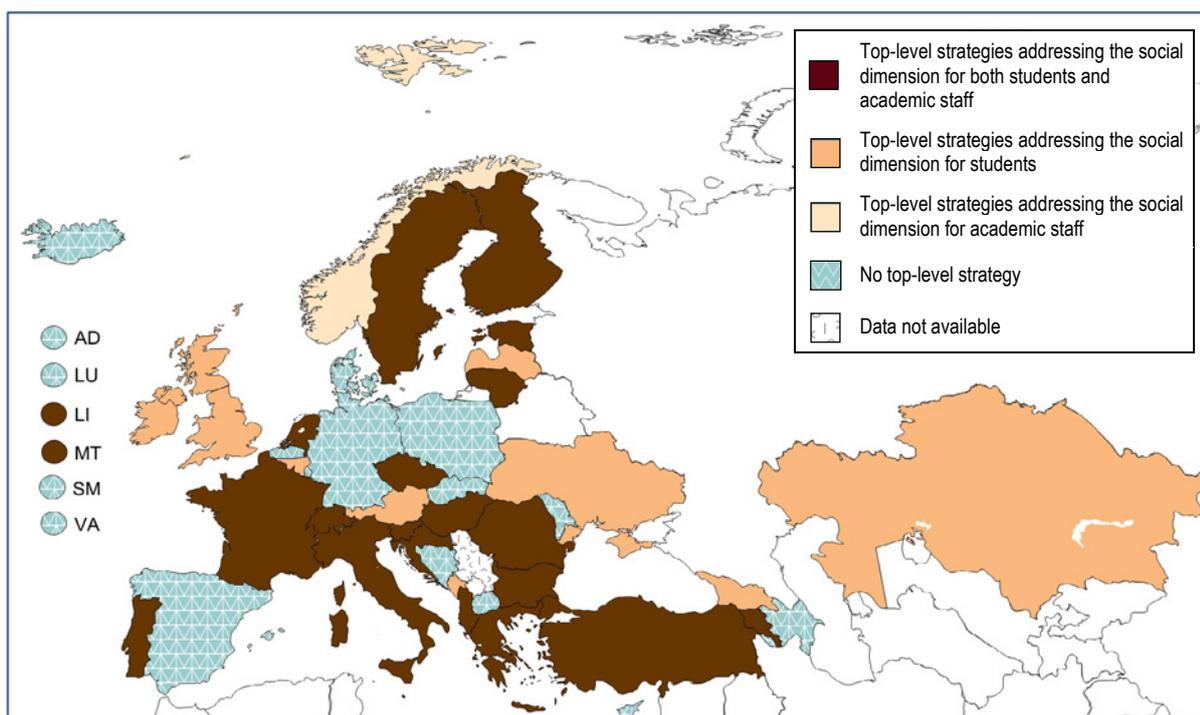
Source: BFUG data collection.

As also stressed by the guidelines, strategic commitment through targeted strategies can be further strengthened by the inclusion of concrete, measurable targets aiming 'at widening access, supporting participation in and completion of studies for all current and future students'. However, only a small minority of the above-mentioned strategies include such targets on the social dimension of higher education (see Table 4.2 in the Annex). Most of them concern the percentage of disadvantaged students entering or attending higher education programmes, where disadvantage is defined in terms of the educational background of parents (Austria), migrant status (Austria), ethnic minority status (Georgia and Ireland), disability or special educational needs (Georgia, Ireland and Ukraine), and socio-economic status, including living in disadvantaged areas (Ireland and the United Kingdom – Scotland). The targets of Armenia and Romania relate to institutional infrastructure. In Armenia, the target concerns the proportion of higher education institutions offering environments with reasonable physical adaptations for students with special educational needs; while Romania has a target on attributing a share of new and upgraded infrastructure to disadvantaged learners. Only Austria is addressing gender disparities between higher education programmes with a specific target. At the same time, the two education systems having targets on academic staff both address the proportion of women among academic staff (Sweden and Switzerland; see Table 4.2 in the Annex for more details).

Besides demonstrating strategic commitment to the social dimension of higher education through national or top-level targeted strategies, plans or measures, educational authorities may also implement a more decentralised approach, giving more responsibility to higher education institutions for developing their own policies, measures and projects enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion. In the Netherlands, for example, while there is no national target, the National Network of Women Professors ([9]) asked all higher education institutions to establish targets for the percentage of female professors, which they all did. According to the EUA Trends 2024 survey, out of the 475 higher education institutions answering

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([9])   https://www.lnvh.nl/monitor2020/

the question related to the social dimension across the EHEA, 88% reported having strategies and policies addressing inclusion, equity and diversity ([10]).

Education authorities have various tools to provide incentives for higher education institutions to implement the necessary strategic measures. First, the legislative framework may oblige the institutions to develop such strategic commitment, as demonstrated by the example of Norway above. Second, a relatively common way of ensuring the commitment to the social dimension at the level of higher education institutions is requiring quality assurance agencies to monitor what higher education institutions do for promoting equity and inclusion. As Figure 4.2 shows, this requirement exists in almost half of the education systems analysed in this report. This means that in 23 EHEA systems, it is likely that higher education institutions promote diversity, equity and inclusion, and more precise information is available in the reports from the quality assurance agencies.

Figure 4.2: Strategic commitment to the social dimension of higher education: requirement for quality assurance agencies to monitor higher education institutions' (HEIs') strategies on the social dimension, 2022/2023
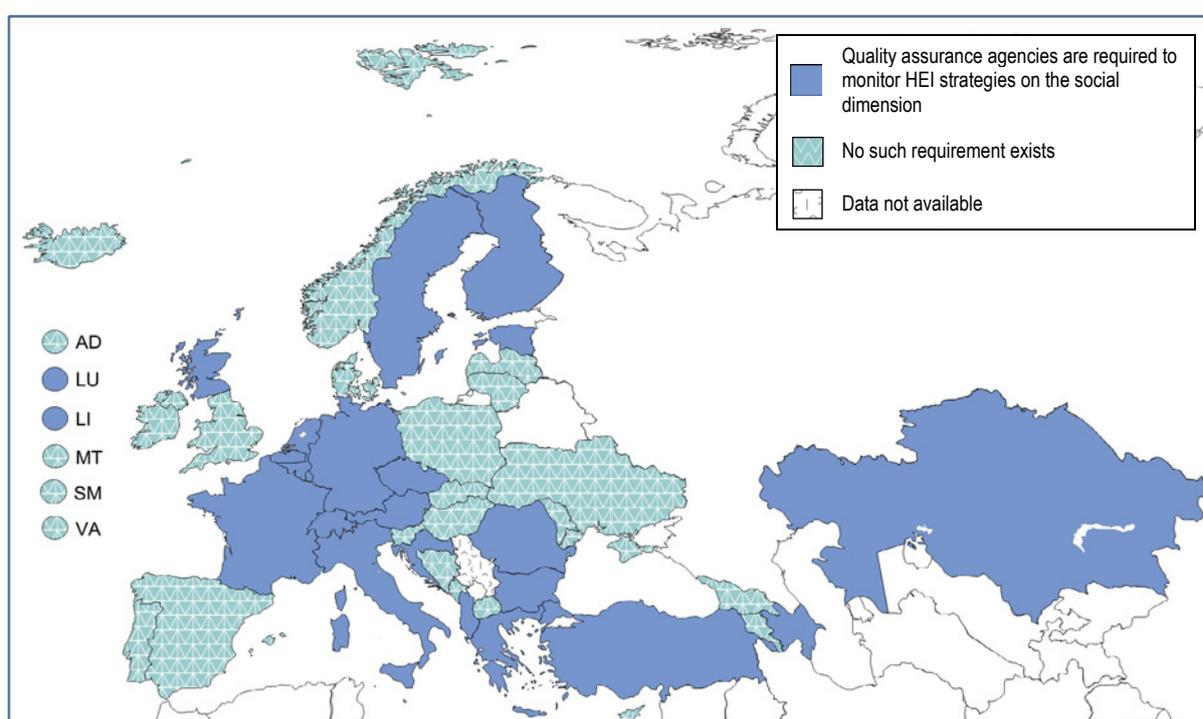
Source: BFUG data collection.

Educational authorities may also delegate the role of coordinating and developing inclusion measures and projects to specialised, external bodies. One example is from Belgium (Flemish Community), where the Support Centre Inclusive Higher Education (SIHO) ([11]), established by a decree, serves both policymakers and higher education institutions in the development and implementation of equity and inclusion measures for inclusive higher education, for example through developing guidelines, coordinating projects, and assisting students. The main role of education authorities in this case is to provide the necessary legal framework and ensure the appropriate funding.

The large majority of education systems analysed in this report have implemented at least one of the strategic measures analysed in this section. However, there is a need for more strategic commitment in almost all education systems to address the social dimension of higher education more holistically.

([10]) Data refers to Question 37 in the EUA Trends 2024 survey: 'How does your institution address inclusion, equity and diversity? Please select one option per line.' The data is based on the percentage of 'yes' answers given for the option 'The institution has strategies and policies addressing this' (n=475).

([11]) For more details, see the SIHO website.

4.2. Flexibility

Principle:

Legal regulations or policy documents should allow and enable higher education institutions to develop their own strategies to fulfil their public responsibility towards widening access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies.

Guidelines:

Legal regulations and administrative rules should allow sufficient flexibility in the design, organisation and delivery of study programmes to reflect the diversity of students' needs. Higher education institutions should be enabled to organise full-time and part-time studies, flexible study modes, blended and distance learning as well as to recognise prior learning (RPL), in order to accommodate the needs of the diverse student population.

Public authorities should promote recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (RPL) in higher education, because it has a positive impact on widening access, transition and completion, equity and inclusion, mobility and employability. RPL enables flexible modes of lifelong learning in the entire education sector, including higher education. Implementing RPL will require effective cooperation amongst the higher education system, employers and the wider community and to enable this, national qualifications frameworks should facilitate transparent recognition of learning outcomes and reliable quality assurance procedures.

The second principle and the related guidelines stress the need for creating conditions for higher education institutions to widen 'access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies'. This is envisaged to be achieved in two important ways: first, by enabling flexible study modes such as part-time studies, blended and distance learning; and second, by recognising prior non-formal and informal learning experiences, both for accessing and for the fulfilment of higher education programmes.

On this basis, the following indicators were selected to be monitored in this policy area:

1) Existence of top-level regulations allowing higher education institutions to offer flexible pathways like part-time studies, blended or distance learning programmes.

2) Existence of regulatory frameworks allowing candidates to enter higher education based on recognition of prior non-formal and/or informal learning in all higher education institutions.

3) Existence of regulatory frameworks enabling the contribution of prior non-formal and informal learning towards the fulfilment of a higher education study programme.

4) Existing requirements for quality assurance agencies to address the recognition of prior non-formal and/or informal learning in higher education in their external evaluation procedures.

The guidelines emphasise that higher education systems have to adapt to different categories of learners, providing adequate learning opportunities for as many as possible. Enabling flexible study modes is essential for those students who cannot allocate all their time for their studies, but have to reconcile several engagements: for instance, higher education studies and employment. One way to achieve this, for example, is through part-time studies. Other alternative, flexible modes of study include blended and distance learning. Blended learning is a mode of learning that combines online teaching with classroom-based learning, while distance learning refers to the education of students who are not present at an institution. This may be through online education or correspondence courses.

These flexible study modes (part-time studies, blended and distant learning) are all prevalent across the EHEA. The large majority of education systems report that organising study programmes in flexible ways is legally possible for all higher education institutions (see Table 4.3 in the Annex for details). In most countries, institutions can make use of all three possibilities; and the only education system where none of the three modes of study are legally possible in higher education is Albania. Nevertheless, a few education systems only allow one or two flexible modes of organising higher education studies, or limit such flexibility to certain institutions. For example, in Cyprus, only private higher education institutions can provide these flexible study modes in the first cycle. In Moldova, it is not possible to study medicine and pharmacy through part-time studies. Other legal restrictions may also apply, regarding the number

or share of credits that can be gained through distance or blended learning, for example. More information on these restrictions is presented in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.

The importance of the recognition of knowledge and skills gained through non-formal and informal learning has been stressed by communiqués of ministerial conferences for years. With the Bucharest Communiqué ministers explicitly agreed to 'step up [their] efforts towards under-represented groups to develop the social dimension of higher education, reduce inequalities and provide […] alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning' ([12]). For countries of the European Union, the recognition of prior learning has been encouraged through a Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning ([13]).

RPL enables flexible modes of lifelong learning in two important respects: first, it facilitates access to higher education for 'non-traditional' learners: students without formal entry qualifications to access higher education programmes. Second, it eases the completion of higher education programmes, as students' previous non-formal and informal learning experiences can contribute to the completion of their studies.

Figure 4.3 depicts legal frameworks for the recognition of prior learning in accessing first-cycle higher education and for the fulfilment of first-cycle study programmes. As the figure illustrates, accessing first-cycle higher education based on the recognition of prior learning – and thus without the standard entry qualifications – is much less widespread than allowing prior experiences to be recognised for the fulfilment of higher education studies. Accessing the first cycle based on RPL is only possible in 21 education systems, mostly situated in western Europe. Out of these 21 education systems, Austria only allows such access in the case of Universities of Applied Sciences. In addition, not all education systems recognise all types of learning experiences: only 10 systems report doing so. While most education systems with RPL recognise learning experiences resulting from work / professional activity, non-formal education and training courses or in-company training, only around half of them allow access to higher education based on experiences resulting from daily activities related to family or leisure.

Many of the education systems making it possible for non-traditional learners to access higher education through RPL also offer other alternative ways to do so. For entrants without formal entry qualifications, some countries offer the possibility of taking an entrance exam or admission test. This is not to be confused with special aptitude tests offered to the most talented, most prevalent in the field of arts. In order to be regarded as alternative routes, these examinations should be open to a wider group of learners (e.g. all applicants or applicants over a certain age). Such special entrance examinations exist for example in Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland. These entrance exams are often offered to mature learners (or 'delayed transition students'), above a certain pre-defined age (in Andorra, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden).

Some education systems organise preparatory or trial higher education programmes, or programmes leading to alternative entry qualifications. Such programmes exist for example in Belgium (Flemish Community), Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and Spain. Upon their successful completion, students can gain access to higher education degree programmes, with or without gaining a special qualification or certificate in addition. As another alternative, online 'open universities' offer degree programmes to all learners in Finland and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland).

([12]) Bucharest Communiqué: Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area,
         26-27 April 2012, pp. 1-2.
([13]) Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 20 December 2012 (2012/C 398/01).

Figure 4.3: Recognition of prior learning in accessing and for the fulfilment of first-cycle higher education study programmes, 2022/2023
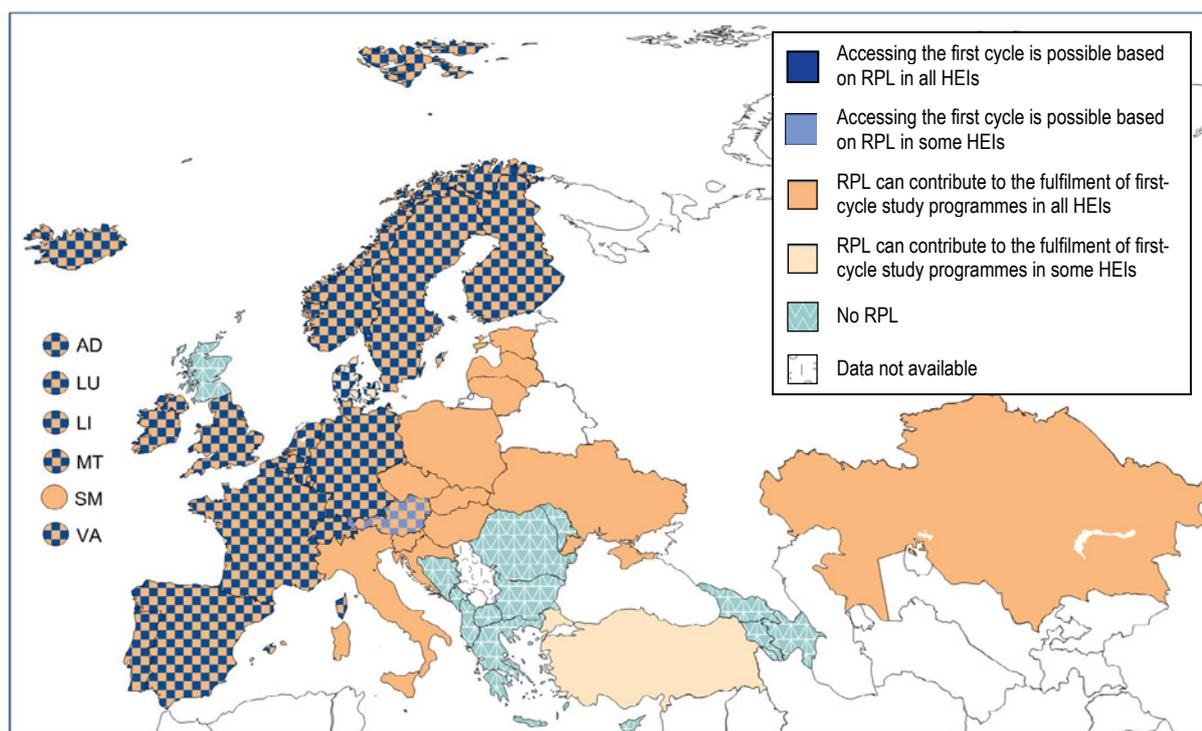
Source: BFUG data collection.

RPL can contribute to the fulfilment of first-cycle higher education study programmes in 35 education systems, so more than half of the countries analysed in this report. As such, allowing previous experiences to count towards the fulfilment of a study programme is more widespread than allowing 'non-traditional' candidates enter higher education this way. Nevertheless, education systems often define some limits to such recognition, either in terms of the types of higher education institution that can make use of it, or concerning the workload / number of credits that can be recognised or validated (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3 for more information). In addition, similarly to recognition procedures providing access to higher education, only few education systems allow all types of non-formal and informal experiences to be recognised, with experiences resulting from daily activities related to family or leisure being the least likely to be accepted.

Finally, as higher education institutions play a crucial role in implementing recognition procedures, it is also important to examine whether quality assurance agencies are required monitor the implementation of RPL. Quality assurance agencies are required to address the implementation of the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning in higher education in their external evaluation process in around two thirds of the education systems where RPL is legally possible (see Table 4.4 in the Annex for details).

Figure 4.4 shows the summary indicator for this policy area related to flexibility. Eight education systems (the French Community of Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Switzerland) fulfil all the conditions identified by this scorecard indicator: they allow all flexible study modes and the recognition of prior learning (in access to and the fulfilment of study programmes) for all higher education institutions. Moreover, quality assurance agencies are also required to monitor higher education institutions in their implementation of RPL. Nevertheless, legal restrictions and limitations on such flexible study modes and the recognition of prior learning may apply also in these cases (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3).

Figure 4.4: Scorecard indicator n°10: P & G 2: Enabling flexible modes of lifelong learning in higher education, 2022/2023

2022/2023	
	8
	20
	6
	7
	7
	1

Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

■ (dark green)	Enabling flexible modes of lifelong learning in higher education through the following four elements: • Top-level regulations allow higher education institutions to offer flexible pathways like part-time studies, blended and distance learning programmes. • Candidates are allowed to enter first-cycle higher education based on recognition of prior non-formal and/or informal learning in all higher education institutions. • Prior non-formal and informal learning counts towards the fulfilment of a higher education study programme in the first cycle. • Quality assurance agencies are required to address the recognition of prior non-formal and/or informal learning in higher education in their external evaluation procedures.

■ (light green)	Enabling flexible modes of lifelong learning in higher education through **three** of the four mentioned elements.	■ (yellow)	Enabling flexible modes of lifelong learning in higher education through **two** of the four mentioned elements.
■ (orange)	Enabling flexible modes of lifelong learning in higher education through **one** of the four mentioned elements.	■ (red)	**No possibility** for flexible modes of learning in higher education through the four mentioned elements.

▥	Data not available

A further 20 education systems still do fairly well when it comes to the flexibility of higher education studies, most often either only missing the quality assurance requirement, or not allowing access to first-cycle studies on the basis of recognition of prior learning. Six education systems are in the yellow category, and seven in orange, providing the necessary legal framework in two or only one area, respectively. Finally, seven education systems do not fulfil their public responsibility towards widening access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies.

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4.3. Synergies and lifelong learning

Principle:

The inclusiveness of the entire education system should be improved by developing coherent policies from early childhood education, through schooling to higher education and throughout lifelong learning.

Guidelines:

It is important to create synergies with all education levels and related policy areas (such as finance, employment, health and social welfare, housing, migration etc.) in order to develop policy measures that create an inclusive environment throughout the entire education sector that fosters equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is responsive to the needs of the wider community.

The social dimension policies should not only support current students, but also potential students in their preparation and transition into higher education. Participation in higher education has to be a lifelong option, including for adults who decide to return to or enter higher education at later stages in their lives. An inclusive approach needs to involve wider communities, higher education institutions and other stakeholder groups to co-create pathways to higher education.

Equity, diversity and inclusion should play a key role in the training of pre-higher education teachers.

The third principle focuses on the education system as a whole, situating higher education studies within a lifelong learning perspective. This principle and its guidelines stress that the inclusiveness of the entire education system is important, and policies fostering equity, diversity and inclusion in higher education should be developed in synergy with policies concerning other educational levels and even other policy sectors. In addition, following up on the lifelong learning approach, the guidelines highlight that social dimension policies in higher education should also support and target potential students, especially adult learners returning to education later in life. Finally, the last guideline addresses how higher education can contribute to equity and inclusion at lower educational levels: through teacher training. The guidelines stress the importance of training future teachers in matters of equity, diversity and inclusion.

These guidelines are translated into the following indicators to be monitored in this report:

1) Existence of top-level coordination structures and/or mechanisms between different levels of education with a mandate including questions related to diversity, equity and inclusion in education.

2) The systematic involvement of representatives of other related policy areas, such as finance, employment, housing, or other social services in policy discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion in education.

3) Existence of top-level measures aiming to support those who wish to access higher education during adulthood (delayed transition students).

4) Existence of top-level requirements specifying the development of competencies related to diversity, equity and inclusion within initial teacher education (ITE) programmes.

Figure 4.5 depicts existing coordination structures or mechanisms between different levels of education reported by EHEA systems. The figure details whether such coordination structures or mechanisms have been established; whether they include questions related to diversity, equity and inclusion in education in their mandate; and whether representatives of other related policy areas, such as finance, employment, health, housing, or other social services are systematically involved in policy discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion in education.

Figure 4.5: Top-level coordination structures and mechanisms between different levels of education, 2022/2023
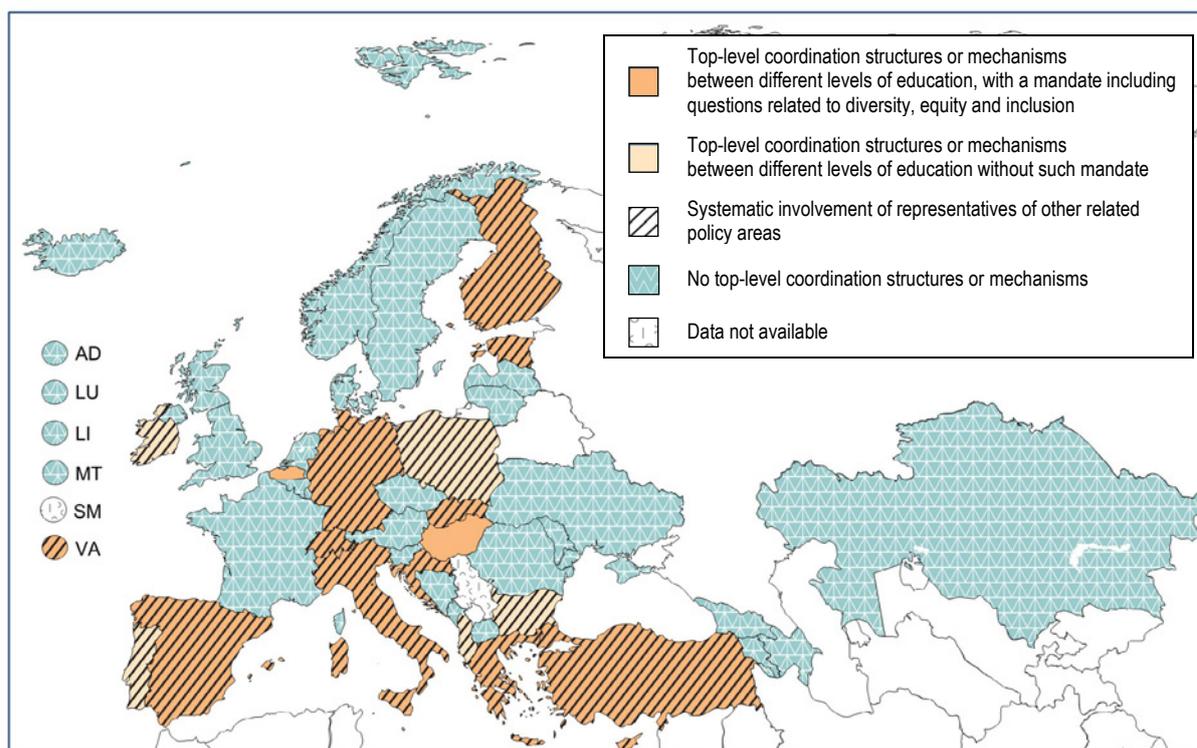
Source: BFUG data collection.

More than one third of EHEA systems report having established top-level coordination structures and/or mechanisms between different levels of education. There are two main types of such structure or mechanism. First, some education systems have established separate bodies responsible for coordinating policies across education levels. This is, for example, the Flemish Education Council (*Vlaamse Onderwijsraad*, *'Vlor'*) in the Flemish Community of Belgium ([14]), the National Skills Council in Ireland ([15]), the Stakeholder Council in Poland ([16]), the National Educational Council (*Conselho Nacional de Educação*) in Portugal ([17]), or the State School Council (*Consejo Escolar del Estado*) in Spain ([18]). While most of these bodies include questions related to diversity, equity and inclusion in their mandate, some of them have been established primarily for this purpose. This is the case, for example, of the National Group for Enhancing Social Dimension in Higher Education in Croatia, which consists of representatives of higher education, pre-tertiary education, vocational and adult education, experts, students, chamber of commerce, and other stakeholders. Second, other education systems designated specific top-level committees or other bodies/secretariats for the implementation of cross-sectoral or lifelong learning strategies. This is the case for example in Cyprus (National Committee of Lifelong Learning), Estonia (Education and Youth Board) and Italy (Interinstitutional Working Group on Lifelong Learning).

The large majority of these coordination structures also systematically include representatives of other policy areas in their discussions, most often employment, but also stakeholders from areas such as social welfare, health, or budget planning.

The second topic within this area concerns support provided to adult learners, often referred to as 'delayed transition students'. This support is strongly related to alternative access routes discussed in

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([14]) https://www.vlor.be/about-the-vlor
([15]) https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/7637e6-national-skills-council/
([16]) https://kwalifikacje.gov.pl/o-zsk/rada-interesariuszy
([17]) https://www.cnedu.pt/pt/
([18]) https://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/mc/cee/portada.html

the previous section: many alternative access measures explicitly target mature students – that is, students above a pre-defined age threshold. For this reason, not surprisingly, all education systems allowing candidates to access higher education programmes based on the recognition of prior learning or other alternative routes report having measures supporting delayed transition students.

In addition, education systems list other ways of supporting adult learners: through financial support that is accessible with a high upper age limit, or no age limit at all (e.g. in Austria, Cyprus, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom – Scotland), financial support that is accessible specifically to students combining work and studies (e.g. in Belgium – Flemish Community, Finland and Luxembourg), support for the development of micro-credentials (e.g. in Czechia, Hungary and Spain), modular higher education accessible for a low fee (in Belgium – French Community), or the preferential treatment of adult learners (e.g. in Cyprus and Türkiye). All in all, the majority of education systems provide support to adult learners (see Table 4.5 in the Annex for details).

Finally, the last indicator in this section concerns whether top-level authorities require the development of competencies related to diversity, equity and inclusion within initial teacher training programmes. Around half of the education systems (25) report having such requirements concerning initial teacher education programmes. A further nine education systems state that there are top-level recommendations on the development of competencies related to diversity, equity and inclusion within ITE programmes (see Table 4.6 in the Annex for details). At the same time, continuous professional development (CPD) activities are provided and/or supported for practicing teachers in the large majority of EHEA systems.

Figure 4.6 shows the scorecard indicator developed on synergies within the education system and lifelong learning. Based on the four indicators described above, only four education systems are placed in the highest, green category: Estonia, Germany, Spain and Switzerland. Nevertheless, the majority of EHEA countries create some of the conditions that could facilitate synergies within the education system as a whole for an inclusive lifelong learning, most often through supporting delayed transition students and requiring ITE programmes to focus on questions of diversity, equity and inclusion when training future teachers. However, education systems often lack top-level coordination structures or mechanisms between different levels of education with a mandate linked to the social dimension of education; and in eight education systems, none of the conditions identified in this section are present.

Figure 4.6: Scorecard indicator n°11: P & G 3: Facilitating synergies for an inclusive lifelong learning, 2022/2023

2022/2023	
■	4
■	10
■	14
■	10
■	8
▨	1
▭	2

AD
LU
LI
MT
SM
VA

Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

■	Facilitating synergies for an inclusive lifelong learning through the following four elements: • Top-level coordination structures and mechanisms between different levels of education with a mandate including questions related to diversity, equity and inclusion in education. • Representatives of other related policy areas, such as finance, employment, housing, or other social services are systematically involved in policy discussions on diversity, equity and inclusion in education. • Top-level measures aiming to support those who wish to access higher education during adulthood (delayed transition students). • Initial teacher education programmes are required to develop competencies on diversity, equity and inclusion in education.

■	Facilitating synergies for an inclusive lifelong learning through **three** of the four mentioned elements.	■	Facilitating synergies for an inclusive lifelong learning through **two** of the four mentioned elements.
■	Facilitating synergies for an inclusive lifelong learning through **one** of the four mentioned elements.	■	**No synergies** for an inclusive lifelong learning through the four mentioned elements.
▨	Not applicable	▭	Data not available

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4.4. Monitoring and data collection

Principle:

Reliable data is a necessary precondition for an evidence-based improvement of the social dimension of higher education. Higher education systems should define the purpose and goals of collecting certain types of data, taking into account the particularities of the national legal frameworks. Adequate capacities to collect, process and use such data to inform and support the social dimension of higher education should be developed.

Guidelines:

In order to develop effective policies, continuous national data collection is necessary. Within the limits of national legal frameworks, such data collection should provide information on the composition of the student body, access and participation, drop-out and completion of higher education, including the transition to the labour market after completion of studies, and allow for the identification of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

In order to make such data collection comparable internationally, work on categories for administrative data collection that are relevant for the social dimension should be developed at the EHEA level through Eurostudent or similar surveys. With the aim to rationalize the process and avoid administrative burden on public administration and higher education institutions, this development should take account of existing national practices and relevant data collection processes.

Such national data collection exercises could, where relevant and necessary, be complemented by higher education institutions undertaking additional surveys, research and analysis to better understand vulnerability, disadvantages, and underrepresentation in education, as well as transitions of students across the education system.

This principle and its guidelines focus on monitoring systems that are an essential aspect of policy-making and development. The first step towards widening participation is actually collecting information on the existing situation regarding the participation of under-represented or disadvantaged groups in higher education. Such information collected through systematic monitoring can provide evidence to education authorities also on the effectiveness of measures aiming to improve the inclusiveness of higher education. The principle highlights that data should be relevant to the goals that have been set. In addition, if data is collected but not used to support the further development of social dimension policies, then this is also insufficient.

The guidelines outline the kind of national processes that are required within a successful equity policy. First, it is important to collect relevant information on the composition of the student body, access and participation, as well as drop-out and the completion of higher education and the transition into the labour market. While there may be some limits to the nature of data on personal characteristics that are collected in some systems (e.g. legislation may forbid collecting data on ethnicity), wherever there are vulnerable, disadvantaged and under-represented groups, it is important that they can be identified through the data collected. The guidelines also encourage national authorities to participate in the Eurostudent and similar surveys – as this allows following progress at European level form a comparative perspective.

On this basis, the following indicators have been selected to be analysed in this section:

1)   Monitoring student characteristics at entry to higher education based on administrative data.

2)   Monitoring the completion rate of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups of students.

3)   Monitoring completion rates at the end of the first year of the first cycle, which can be broken down by student characteristics.

4)   Participation in the Eurostudent survey.

The composition of the student/graduate body can be monitored at four different stages: at entry, during higher education studies, at graduation and after graduation. Monitoring entrants can provide information on the inclusiveness of admission systems; monitoring students during higher education can give an insight into differences in drop-out rates based on students' specific characteristics; monitoring graduates can reveal the chances of specific groups of students to complete higher education; and finally, monitoring graduates some years after graduation is typically used to analyse employment patterns of graduates as a whole, as well as that of specific groups of young people.

Regarding higher education completion and drop-out, research indicates that drop-out rates are the highest at the end of the first academic year. First-year students are in a particularly vulnerable situation, since their expectations might be very different from what they actually encounter. This might be even more the case for disadvantaged learners. Therefore, monitoring drop-out rates at the end of the first year is especially crucial.

Figure 4.7 shows whether education systems monitor student characteristics other than age and gender at entry to higher education, at the completion of the first cycle, and at the end of the first year of the first cycle. The criterion 'other than age and gender' has been added, as regular monitoring tends to include these two student characteristics in all cases.

Figure 4.7: Monitoring student characteristics other than age and gender at higher education (HE) entry, at the completion of the first cycle, and at the end of the first year of the first cycle, 2022/2023
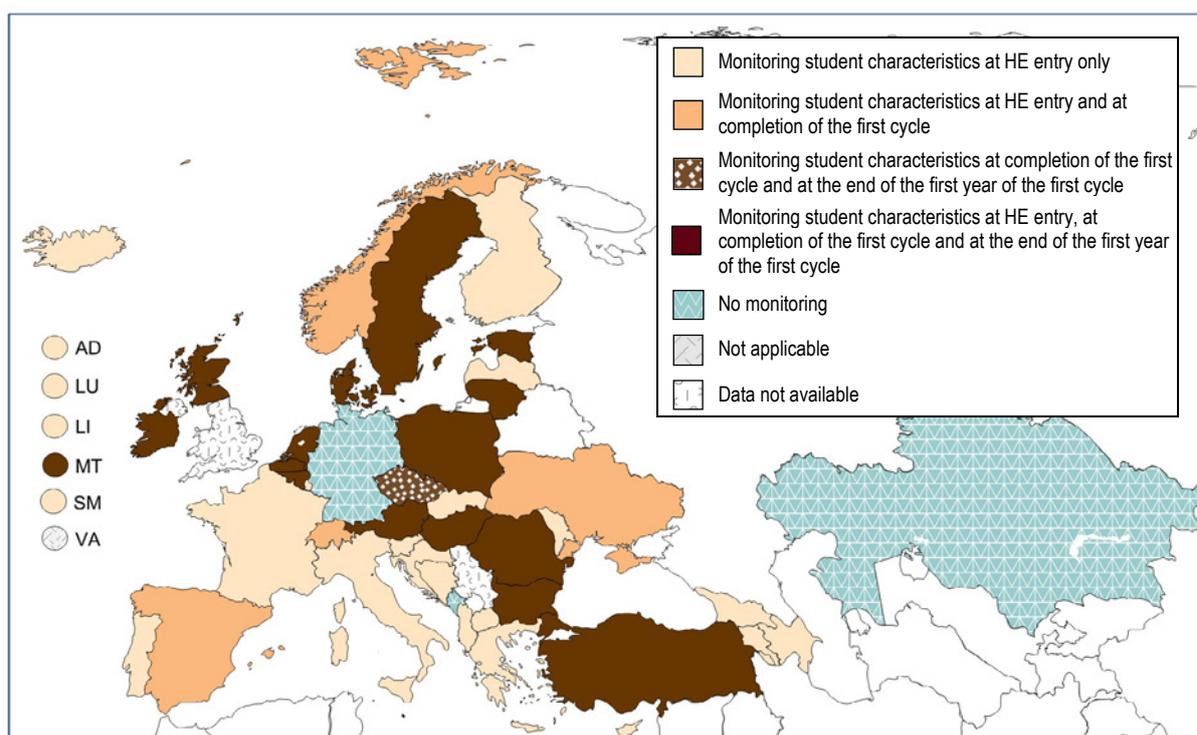
Source: BFUG data collection.

Monitoring student characteristics at higher education entry is reported to be a widespread practice across the EHEA. The large majority of education systems (42) report collecting administrative data on students at this stage. Other than age and gender, monitoring most often includes disability or special educational needs, migrant or refugee status, and socio-economic status. Collecting data on completion rates at the end of the first cycle is less widespread, reported by less than half (21) of education systems. Seventeen education systems report systematically collecting data at the end of the first year that can be broken down by student characteristics other than age and gender.

More than half of the education systems covered in this report (30) have participated in the Eurostudent survey (either in the previous or in the current round), which monitors the social and economic conditions of student life in Europe (see Table 4.7 in the Annex and the website of the Eurostudent survey for more details ([19])).

The composite scorecard indicator is depicted on Figure 4.8. For this scorecard indicator, more than a quarter of education systems are in the top category, as they monitor higher education students at all stages and by all means identified in this section: at entry, at the end of the first year of the first cycle, at the end of the first cycle, and through the Eurostudent survey. Only two education systems report not having any of the defined monitoring mechanisms in place: Kazakhstan and Montenegro.

Figure 4.8: Scorecard indicator n°12: P & G 4: Monitoring and data collection, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■ (green)	Monitoring and data collection in higher education by the following four means: • Student characteristics other than age and gender are monitored at entry to higher education based on administrative data. • Completion rates of students are monitored at the end of the first cycle, and data can be broken down by (at least some) characteristics of students other than age and gender. • Completion rates of students are monitored at the end of the first year of the first cycle, and data can be broken down by (at least some) characteristics of students other than age and gender. • Participation in the Eurostudent survey.
■ (light green) Monitoring and data collection in higher education by **three** of the four mentioned means.	■ (yellow) Monitoring and data collection in higher education by **two** of the four mentioned means.
■ (orange) Monitoring and data collection in higher education by **one** of the four mentioned means.	■ (red) **No monitoring** and data collection in higher education.
▨ Not applicable	▢ Data not available

([19])   https://www.eurostudent.eu/

4.5. Policies to ensure effective provision of academic and careers guidance, and psychological counselling services

Principle:

Public authorities should have policies that enable higher education institutions to ensure effective counselling and guidance for potential and enrolled students in order to widen their access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies. These services should be coherent across the entire education system, with special regard to transitions between different educational levels, educational institutions and into the labour market.

Guidelines:

Public authorities should create conditions that enable collaboration between different public institutions that provide counselling and guidance services together with higher education institutions in order to create synergies and omit duplication of similar services. These services should uphold the principles of clarity and user-friendliness, because end users must be capable to understand them easily.

Within a diverse student body, special attention should be directed towards students with physical and psychological health challenges. These students should have access to professional support to secure their success in accessing and completing higher education studies. Special focus should be placed on prevention of psychological challenges caused by the organisation of study and students' living conditions.

Public authorities should also consider setting up ombudsperson-type institutions that will have the capacity and knowledge to mediate any conflicts, particularly related to equity issues that may arise during accessing or participating in higher education, or conflicts that hinder the completion of studies.

This principle and its guidelines focus on the capacity of guidance and counselling systems to support both potential and enrolled students to succeed to the best of their abilities. The principle draws attention to the need for coherence in service provision across the entire education system.

The first guideline points to the conditions that enable collaboration and notes the need for clarity and user-friendliness of services. The guidelines also emphasise support not only to enrolled students but also to potential students, stressing the need for flexibility in system design and for individuals to be able to move back into the education system at any time during their lives. Finally, the guidelines highlight the need for institutions to have the capacity to mediate conflicts, particularly related to equity issues.

On this basis, the following indicators were selected to monitor effective guidance and counselling services:

1) The existence of a top-level legal requirement and support to provide free, accessible, and timely academic and careers counselling and guidance services to potential and enrolled students in higher education.

2) The existence of a top-level legal requirement to provide free, accessible and timely psychological counselling and guidance services to potential and enrolled students in higher education.

3) Existing requirements for quality assurance agencies to monitor career, academic as well as psychological counselling and guidance services in higher education.

4) Existence of public institution(s) with a formal role in conflict resolution and in mediating conflicts related to social dimension in higher education.

The services under consideration can help actual and potential students in many different ways, including instilling confidence to achieve academic success; developing skills to improve organisation, study habits, and time management; working through personal problems that may affect capacity to study effectively and live well; identifying interests, strengths, and aptitudes, and preparing for future academic, career, and social challenges. Because of the many potential benefits, the principle and its guidelines recommend that services are accessible to all actual and potential students and provided free of charge.

Figure 4.9 focuses on whether there is a top-level legal requirement to provide academic, careers and psychological counselling services to potential or actual students. The first criterion for the indicator is

that the top-level legal requirement should specifically address at least one of the two categories – students already enrolled in higher education institutions or potential students (i.e., upper secondary school students or adults interested in entering higher education). The second criterion is that the services should be free of charge.

Figure 4.9: Legal requirement for free guidance and counselling services for actual and/or potential students in higher education, 2022/2023
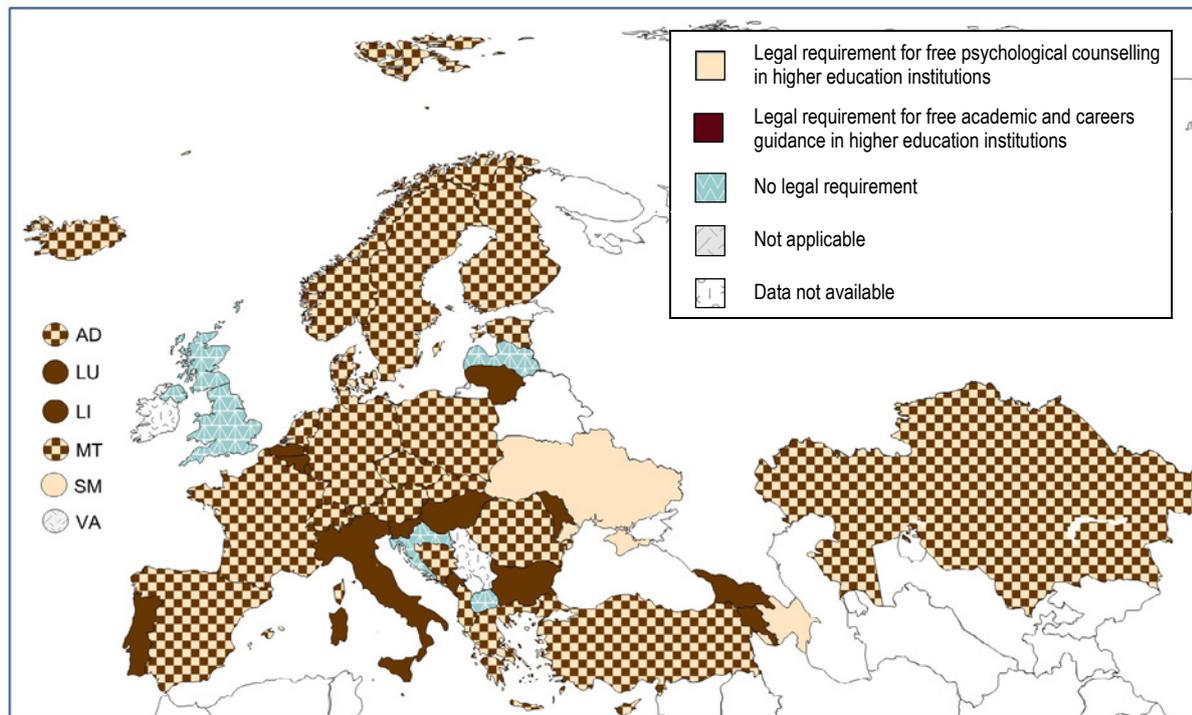
Source: BFUG data collection.

Only five EHEA systems (Croatia, Latvia, North Macedonia and the UK education systems) have no legal requirement for either academic, careers or psychological guidance services. It is important to point out, however, that even in these systems higher education institutions may often provide such services despite having no legal obligation to do so. This is the case in Croatia. Academic and careers guidance services are legally required in 38 systems while for psychological counselling services the requirement exists in 27 systems.

While this picture is rather positive – particularly given the fact that services may also be provided in the countries which do not have a legal requirement – the indicator is unable to assess whether in reality all students or potential students who need these services are actually able to benefit from them. This key question cannot be answered from the type of data received from ministry representatives. It would require qualitative research to be undertaken with potential and actual students and higher education institutions.

This topic is also explored by the European Students Union in the survey for the 2024 edition of Bologna With Student Eyes. Student unions were asked to evaluate the accessibility and timely availability of services. Only 35% considering psychological counselling to be available in a timely manner, and even fewer (24%) responding positively for academic counselling. On the question of costs, 70% reported career counselling services to be free, while this was the case in only 49% of cases with regard to psychological counselling.

The next issue under consideration is the requirement for quality assurance of these support services. National respondents were asked whether quality assurance of these services is required by law. More specifically respondents were asked whether quality assurance agencies have standards and criteria to

check in their external evaluations whether higher education students have access to academic, career and/or psychological counselling services? According to the responses, 33 EHEA systems specify requirements for quality assurance of services within the mandate of quality assurance agencies (see Annex, Table 4.8).

The fourth indicator with regard to this set of principles and guidelines concerns the existence of public institutions that provide formal mediation for conflicts. Where such an institution exists, the mediation role needs to include issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion in order to be considered here. Around a third of the EHEA systems (16) have such conflict mediation institutions (see Annex, Table 4.9).

Figure 4.10 shows the scorecard indicator developed on the basis of the four indicators outlined above.

Figure 4.10: Scorecard indicator n°13: P&G 5: Effective guidance and counselling services, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

■	Effective guidance and counselling services are demonstrated through the following four elements: • Legal requirement to provide free academic and careers counselling services to potential and enrolled students in higher education. • Legal requirement to provide free psychological counselling services to potential and enrolled students in higher education. • Requirement for quality assurance of career, academic and psychological counselling, and guidance services in higher education. • Existence of public institution(s) with a formal role in conflict resolution and in mediating conflicts related to social dimension in higher education.

■	**Three** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	**Two** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	
■	**One** of the four mentioned elements is implemented.	**None** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	
▨	Not applicable	Data not available	

Overall, 38 systems are in the top three categories, with 10 in dark green, 18 in light green and 10 in yellow. In all of these systems two or more of the criteria are met. Seven systems are in the orange category with only one of the four criteria being met. Only one system is in the red category. This

indicates that in most higher education systems requirements are in place for the type of services covered in this principle and its guidelines. Nevertheless, there remains room for improvement to extend the coverage and ensure the quality of such services.

4.6. Policies to ensure sustainable funding for equity, inclusion and diversity in higher education

Principle:

Public authorities should provide sufficient and sustainable funding and financial autonomy to higher education institutions enabling them to build adequate capacity to embrace diversity and contribute to equity and inclusion in higher education.

Guidelines:

Higher education funding systems should facilitate the attainment of strategic objectives related to the social dimension of higher education. Higher education institutions should be supported and rewarded for meeting agreed targets in widening access, increasing participation in and completion of higher education studies, in particular in relation to vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. Mechanisms for achieving these targets should not have negative financial consequences for higher education institutions' core funding.

Financial support systems should aim to be universally applicable to all students, however, when this is not possible, the public student financial support systems should be primarily needs-based and should make higher education affordable for all students, foster access to and provide opportunities for success in higher education. They should mainly contribute to cover both the direct costs of study (fees and study materials) and the indirect costs (e.g. accommodation, which is becoming increasingly problematic for students across the EHEA due to the increased housing, living, and transportation costs, etc.).

This principle and its guidelines focus on two key objectives of higher education public funding: first, that it should be sufficient and sustainable, and second, that higher education institutions should have and use autonomy to embrace diversity and enhance equity and inclusion.

The first guideline proposes that higher education funding systems should be closely aligned to strategic objectives related to the social dimension. Higher education institutions should be supported and rewarded for meeting agreed targets, such as widening access, increasing participation in, and completion of, higher education studies, especially in relation to vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups. However, this should not be done at the expense of core funding.

The second guideline focuses on financial support systems to students. The aim should be for financial support to be universally applicable. However, where this is not possible, support should be primarily need-based, rather than rewarding academic performance. Support should also contribute to direct and indirect costs of study.

The following indicators were selected to monitor sufficient, sustainable and equitable funding:

1) Public funding for higher education institutions that meet targets in widening access, increasing participation or completing higher education, in particular in relation to underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

2) Public provision of universal or need-based grants for first-cycle students that cover direct and indirect costs of study.

3) Public provision of top-level student financial support for indirect costs of study.

4) Eligibility of part-time students for the same direct or indirect financial support as full-time students.

The first element – attributing funding to higher education institutions that meet targets in widening access, increasing participation or completing higher education, in particular in relation to

underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups – remains very much a minority feature of European higher education today (see Annex, Table 4.10).

Only eight systems report system-level funding that corresponds to this approach. The countries where funding is most directly used for targeting social dimension objectives are Austria and Romania. In Austria, the funding follows the objectives of the national strategy on the social dimension of higher education. Every public university has a performance agreement with the ministry which includes measures regarding the social dimension, and the foreseen earmarked part of budget is only transferred if these social dimension measures are implemented. Meanwhile in Romania, a part of higher education institutional financing is based on the share of the number of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds in the total number of students.

Czechia, Estonia and Norway attribute additional funding to higher education institutions in relation to completion rates. While improving completion is an important objective, it has only an indirect impact on disadvantaged students, as they are not specifically targeted by the measure. In contrast, Italy uses a funding mechanism which targets completion of the first year of higher education studies. This is the year in which students, and especially vulnerable students, are most likely to drop out. Germany also has funding mechanisms that, particularly at state (*Land*) level, may target social dimension objectives such as attracting first-generation students.

The second indicator focuses on grants. This is a form of public financial support that is provided directly to students and, in contrast with loans, does not need to be paid back. Government support through grants can contribute to promoting social mobility by providing equal opportunities for students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. By ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder access to higher education, governments can help to engender a more equitable society where individuals can achieve their full potential regardless of their economic circumstances.

When all students are eligible for grants with no other criterion than student status involved (such as academic performance or financial status), the type of grant system is understood as 'universal'. This is the model which is seen as the gold standard in the principle and its guidelines. Disadvantaged students are not specifically targeted, but due to the universal approach, benefit from it. As all students are treated equally, there is no potential for any stigma in relation to receiving a grant.

In many systems, grants are awarded on the basis of assessed financial need. Eligibility is determined on the basis of a set of socio-economic criteria, the most frequent being family income. These systems intend grants to reach those students with the greatest financial need, and are therefore designed to support the participation of disadvantaged students.

Figure 4.11 depicts the use of universal and need-based grants in the EHEA. The first cycle is chosen as this cycle has the largest enrolment of students. Need-based grants are shown in relation to the percentage of recipients – under 10%, between 10 – 30% and over 30%.

Universal grants are provided in seven EHEA systems, with the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway joined by Azerbaijan, Luxembourg and Malta. Need-based grants are far more widespread in the EHEA, with 34 systems providing them. In 16 systems they are provided for under 10% of the student population. This may indicate that there has been a decision to support only those students who have the greatest financial need, but it may also indicate a relatively low level of investment in student support. In 11 systems need-based grants reach between 10 – 30% of students, and in seven systems they are attributed to over 30% of students. Six systems provide no need-based grants at all. In these systems the student support funding model is not aligned with the philosophy of the principle and guidelines.

Figure 4.11: Grants awarded in the first cycle of higher education, 2022/2023
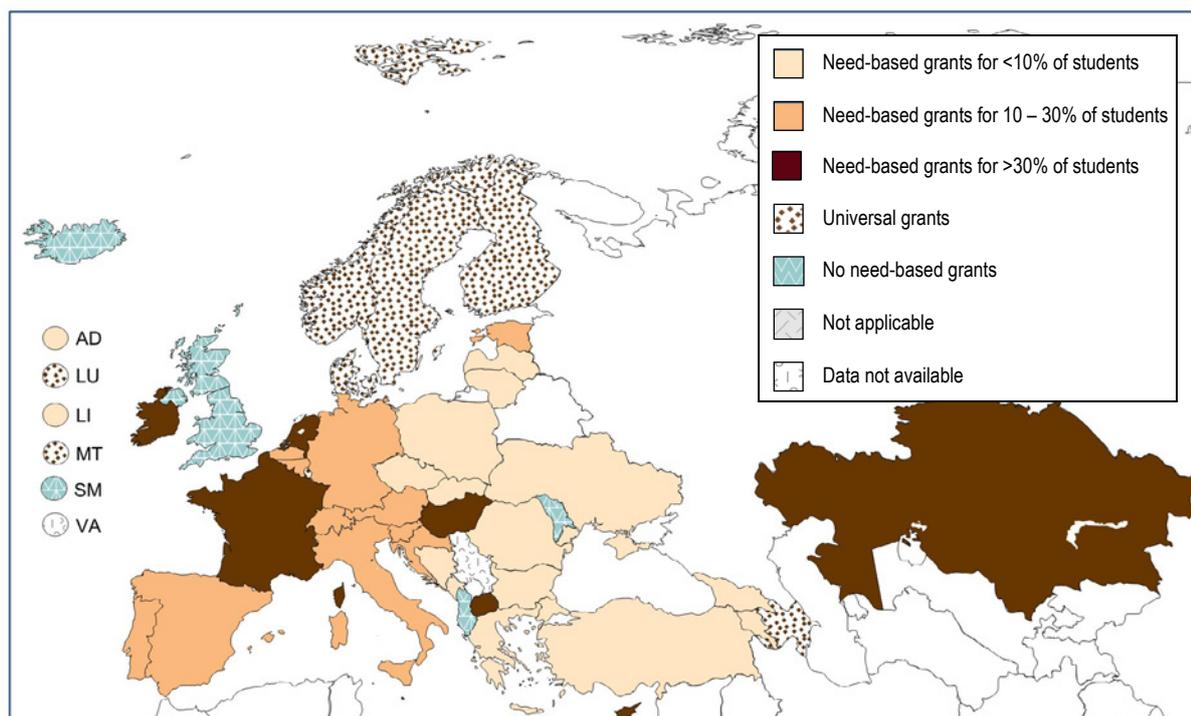
Source: BFUG data collection.

The third indicator related to this principle and its guidelines is whether the public authority provides top-level student financial support for indirect costs of study. Indirect financial support means all other forms of public subsidy to students that are not received directly as are grants and loans. The main forms considered here are subsidies for student accommodation, transport and meals, but subsidies for study materials such as books and Information Technology equipment are also very relevant.

Governments providing indirect financial support to higher education students can help higher education become more affordable and accessible for students from lower-income backgrounds. This allows students to focus more on their studies rather than worrying about related expenses. Indirect financial support can also enable students to access better educational resources and facilities, including research materials, laboratories, and library resources. This can contribute to improved educational outcomes and a higher quality of educational experience. Indirect financial support can therefore add to the incentives for students to pursue higher education.

Some level of indirect financial support is provided by the majority of EHEA countries. Indeed it is only in eight systems that no indirect financial support is put in place for transport, meals or accommodation (see Annex, Table 4.11).

The fourth indicator in this section relates to part-time students and assesses whether or not the forms of student support that are in place for full-time students are also in place for part-time students. Providing financial support to part-time higher education students plays an essential role in ensuring equal access, encouraging lifelong learning, fostering social mobility and addressing skills gaps. The guidelines also aim to promote the idea that financial support should be provided for all students, whether studying full or part time.

With respect to this indicator, part-time students are far from being treated equitably across the EHEA (see Annex, Table 4.12). Indeed it is only in about one-third of countries that they are entitled to grants on the same basis, pro-rata, as their full-time counterparts. They are also unable to access indirect financial support in around two-thirds of countries. This evidence means that there is a clear equity policy issue to be tackled in many EHEA systems.

Figure 4.12 is the scorecard indicator encompassing the four indicators outlined above.

Figure 4.12: Scorecard indicator n°14: P & G 6: Sustainable funding for equity, inclusion and diversity in higher education, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■	Sustainable funding for equity, inclusion and diversity is demonstrated through the following four elements: • Public funding is attributed to higher education institutions that meet targets in widening access, increasing participation or completing higher education, in particular in relation to underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. • Public authority provides universal or need-based grants for first cycle students that cover direct and indirect costs of study. • Public authority provides top-level student financial support for indirect costs of study. • Part-time students are eligible for the same direct or indirect financial support as full-time students.

Three of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	**Two** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	**One** of the four mentioned elements is implemented.
None of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	Not applicable.	Data not available

Nine systems are in the dark green category, and therefore score positively on all four elements included. 14 systems are in light green, and 18 in yellow. In these cases, the systems lack one or two of the elements. Five systems are in the orange category which means that only one of the four elements is adequately addressed. However, there are no countries that are in the red category, and this is a positive reality as it indicates that there is some attention to sustainable funding supporting equity, inclusion and diversity in all EHEA systems.

4.7. Policies to create inclusive learning environments and institutional cultures

Principle:

Public authorities should help higher education institutions to strengthen their capacity in responding to the needs of a more diverse student and staff body and create inclusive learning environments and inclusive institutional cultures.

Guidelines:

Public authorities should support and provide adequate means to higher education institutions to improve initial and continuing professional training for academic and administrative staff to enable them to work professionally and equitably with a diverse student body and staff.

Whenever possible, external quality assurance systems should address how the social dimension, diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusion are reflected within the institutional missions of higher education institutions, whilst respecting the principle of autonomy of higher education institutions.

This principle and its guidelines focus on the relationship between public authorities and higher education institutions regarding their capacity to respond to the diversity of the student and staff body. It considers the learning environment and the learning culture.

The first guideline focuses on the role of public authorities in supporting and providing adequate means to higher education institutions to improve initial and continuing professional training for academic and administrative staff in the area of diversity and inclusion. Working 'equitably and with a diverse student body and staff' is not necessarily easy or obvious. Therefore, appropriate training can help academic and administrative staff to respond better to the needs of a diverse student body and to work better with colleagues of different backgrounds and/or orientations.

The second guideline considers the topic from the perspective of quality assurance. It examines whether quality assurance systems focus on equity and inclusion, and also whether these issues are integrated into the institutional missions of higher education institutions and/or their study programmes. The second guideline, therefore, is about whether equity and inclusion inform the core values of the higher education institutions and/or of their study programmes.

The following indicators were selected to monitor this policy area:

1) Existence of top-level requirements or recommendations for higher education institutions to offer training on diversity, equity or inclusion to academic and administrative staff.

2) Existence of support offered by top-level public authorities to higher education institutions to offer training on diversity, equity or inclusion to academic and administrative staff.

3) Existence of guidelines issued by public authorities to quality assurance agencies to consider whether social dimension is addressed in the mission and strategy of higher education institutions.

4) Public provision of financial means to higher education institutions to make their buildings and infrastructure easily accessible and adjusted to the needs of underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students and staff.

Figure 4.13 shows aspects of the first two indicators. It considers both whether top-level requirements or recommendations are in place for higher education institutions to provide training to staff on equity, inclusion and diversity, and whether targeted financial support is provided for such activity.

Figure 4.13: Support to higher education institutions (HEIs) for staff training on equity, inclusion and diversity, 2022/2023
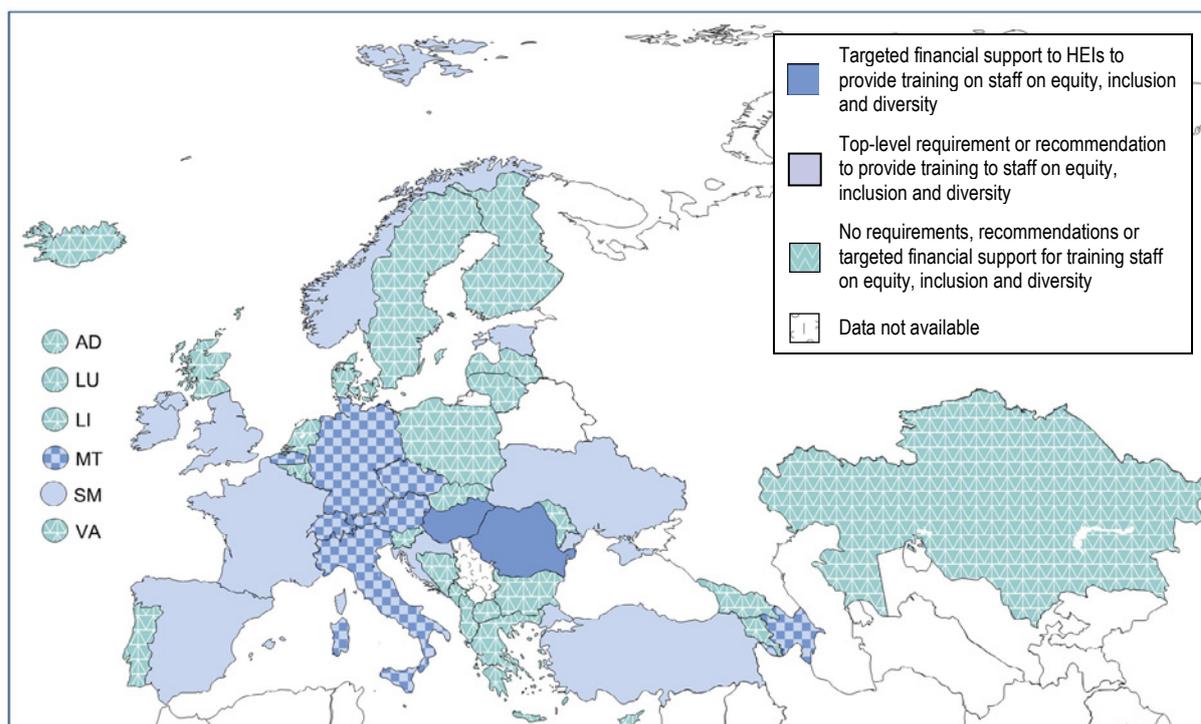
Source: BFUG data collection.

The majority of systems (28) have no requirements or recommendations, and offer no specific financial support to higher education institutions to undertake staff training on equity, inclusion and diversity. There is therefore significant scope for future action, and the minority of systems that already take action can offer examples of practice to build upon.

The Flemish Community of Belgium has established an organisation called the Support Centre Inclusive Higher Education (SIHO, *Steunpunt Inclusief Hoger Onderwijs*) ([20]) to support inclusive higher education. Its primary objective is to ensure that students with disabilities or specific educational needs have equal opportunities and access to higher education. However, the concept of inclusion is also considered more broadly, so that in 2023, for example, financial support was given through SIHO to develop and organise training on student mental health issues.

In Germany, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is funding the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) to develop an initiative called 'Diversity at German Universities' ([21]). The initiative aims to promote diversity at universities through concrete projects and campaigns at individual institutions as well as through cross-project dialogue and exchange at national level.

Finland develops work in this area through ministry-commissioned research projects. The idea is to provide new knowledge on the state of equality advancement in higher education institutions, as well as new tools and approaches which can be adopted by different institutions.

While Belgium (French Community) has no requirements in place regarding staff training, it has put in place measures to contribute to a safer and more secure learning environment. These are gender-balanced measures on campus and include the establishment of a gender contact point to be used in cases related to sexual harassment.

The third indicator concerns the role of quality assurance agencies, and more specifically illustrates whether public authorities issue guidelines requiring social dimension issues to be addressed in the mission and strategy of higher education institutions. Around half of the higher education systems (23) reported that such guidelines are issued to quality assurance agencies in their system (see Annex, Table 4.13).

([20])   For more details, see the SIHO website.
([21])   See https://www.hrk.de/themen/hochschulsystem/diversitaet/initiative-vielfalt-an-deutschen-hochschulen/

The fourth indicator is about the role of public authorities in ensuring that higher education institutions are accessible and that the built infrastructure is adjusted to the needs of underrepresented, vulnerable and disadvantaged students and staff. It shows that only about a quarter of EHEA systems (12) provide support systematically to higher education institutions to make infrastructure improvements for the benefit of students and staff that have access issues (see Annex, Table 4.14).

In most of countries where such support is provided, it is within a broader framework of accessibility to buildings and infrastructure. For example in Lithuania, all new buildings must include the criteria of universal design, while all infrastructure renewal projects must fulfil criteria related to accessibility if public money is to be awarded.

Figure 4.14 presents the scorecard indicator that comprises the elements outlined above. Austria, Czechia and Malta are the only countries that fulfil all criteria. At the other extreme, there are 11 systems in red that currently fulfil none of the criteria. The large majority of systems (34) therefore fulfil one or more of the criteria.

It is clear from this picture that this is a topic where there is much policy development work to be undertaken in future years if the commitment to an inclusive learning environment is to be realised.

Figure 4.14: Scorecard indicator n°15: P&G 7: Inclusive learning environment and institutional culture, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■	Inclusive learning environment and institutional culture is demonstrated through the following four elements: • Top-level requirements or recommendations for higher education institutions to offer training on diversity, equity or inclusion to academic and administrative staff. • Support offered by top-level public authorities to higher education institutions to offer training on diversity, equity or inclusion to academic and administrative staff. • Public authority issues guidelines to quality assurance agencies to consider whether social dimension is addressed in the mission and strategy of higher education institutions. • Public authority provides financial means to higher education institutions to make their buildings and infrastructure easily accessible and adjusted to the needs of underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students and staff.

■	**Three** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	■ **Two** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	■ **One** of the four mentioned elements is implemented.
■	**None** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	▭ Data not available	

4.8. Mobility

Principle:

International mobility programs in higher education should be structured and implemented in a way that foster diversity, equity and inclusion and should particularly foster participation of students and staff from vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds.

Guidelines:

International experiences through learning mobility improve the quality of learning outcomes in higher education. Public authorities and higher education institutions should ensure equal access for all to the learning opportunities offered by national and international learning and training mobility programmes and actively address obstacles to mobility for vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of students and staff.

Besides further support to physical mobility, including full portability of grants and loans across the EHEA, public authorities and higher education institutions should facilitate the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support blended mobility and to foster internationalisation at home by embedding international online cooperation into courses. Blended mobility is the combination of a period of physical mobility and a period of online learning. Such online cooperation can be used to extend the learning outcomes and enhance the impact of physical mobility, for example by bringing together a more diverse group of participants, or to offer a broader range of mobility options.

Not all students have equal access to learning mobility opportunities. Evidence shows that students from low socio-economic backgrounds and students with disabilities are less likely to participate in such programmes (Hauschildt et al., 2021; European Commission, 2019). Disadvantaged students therefore miss out on the benefits conferred by these experiences, further deepening the divide with their peers. Disadvantaged groups of staff – e.g. staff with special needs – may also face additional difficulties when going on international mobility. The first guideline related to mobility therefore emphasises the need for public authorities and higher education institutions to ensure equal access for all students and staff to all opportunities offered by mobility programmes. The second guideline focuses on the support provided by public institutions in fostering student participation in both physical and blended mobility.

On this basis, this section examines the following indicators related to supporting disadvantaged students and staff in international mobility programmes:

1) Existence of top-level measures supporting vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented students in international learning mobility.

2) Existence of a top-level mobility policy focused on vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of staff.

3) Collecting data on and monitoring the participation and experiences of beneficiaries in all types of international mobility programmes, including their background characteristics (gender, age and at least one other student characteristic) based on a standardised methodology.

4) Existence of top-level support to higher education institutions to foster blended learning mobility and/or internationalisation at home.

Institutions need to address difficulties or impediments that might hinder or even completely prevent access to mobility programmes especially for students from vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups. Top-level authorities can provide the necessary framework conditions and incentives for institutions for this to happen. In this section, the following three forms of top-level measures supporting vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented students in international learning mobility are monitored: 1) targeted or universal mobility grants, 2) top-level recommendations or incentives provided to higher education institutions to introduce targeted measures encouraging the participation of disadvantaged learners, and 3) top-level measurable targets on the participation of disadvantaged learners. Most of these measures require a specific focus on disadvantaged learners. While general or mainstream policy measures may also enhance the participation of these groups of

students in learning mobility, given the vulnerable position of students from under-represented groups, this indicator aims to capture the presence of targeted policies in the education systems under analysis. The exception from this rule is universal grants, as providing mobility grants to all (or almost all) students will necessarily reach disadvantaged learners as well.

Figure 4.15 shows the presence of these policy measures across the EHEA. The most widespread measure is providing mobility grants (targeted or universal), which exist in the majority of education systems with available data. It is important to note that in this category, only grants which are either provided specifically for mobility purposes, or explicitly and purposefully designed to be used for studying both at home or abroad are taken into account. This means that portable domestic grants are not included on the figure. Regarding portability, more information is presented in Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.

Less than one third of EHEA systems report providing recommendations or incentives for higher education institutions to introduce targeted measures encouraging or enabling more disadvantaged learners to participate in international mobility. When they exist, such top-level policy incentives, guidelines or recommendations are often formulated in higher education or internationalisation strategies and action plans (e.g. in the Flemish Community of Belgium, Austria, Czechia, Greece, Ireland and Portugal). In Spain, national regulations establish that universities should promote the participation of students with disabilities in international mobility programmes, establishing the relevant quotas, guaranteeing sufficient funding in each case, as well as information and cooperation systems between the units that cater for these students ([22]). Financial incentives exist in Italy, where the proportion of disadvantaged students and students participating in learning mobility programmes are taken into account in the funding awarded to higher education institutions.

Figure 4.15: Top-level measures supporting vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented students in international learning mobility, 2022/2023
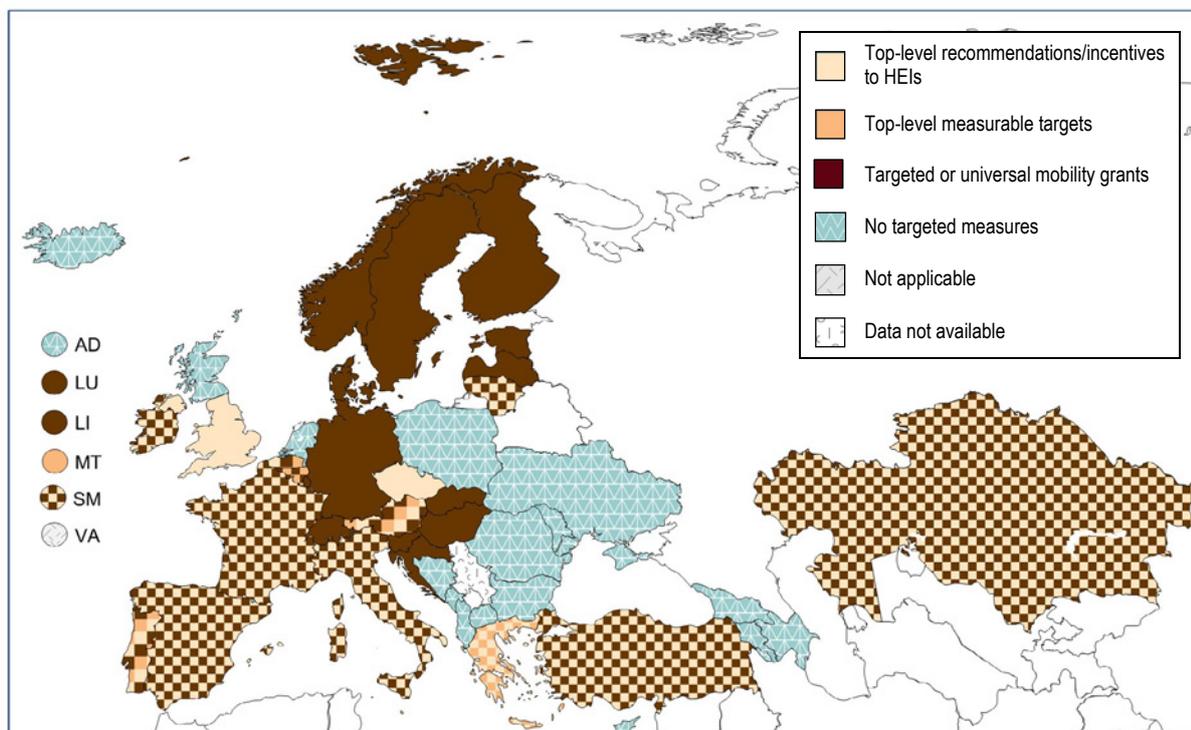
Source: BFUG data collection.

([22]) Article 18 of the Royal Decree 1791/2010 of 30 December, approving the Statute of the University Student, https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2010-20147#a18

Top-level measurable targets are long- or short-term quantitative objectives set by top-level authorities for the proportion of disadvantaged students participating in learning mobility, signalling a strong political commitment towards increasing the participation of disadvantaged students in learning mobility programmes. However, these targets are rather rare, as they exist only in six education systems (Austria, Belgium – Flemish and French Communities, Greece, Malta and Portugal). Long-term objectives (over one year) on the participation of disadvantaged students in mobility programmes are usually set as part of top-level strategies on higher education or learning mobility, as in Austria and Belgium. Alternatively, year-on-year targets are typically defined by national Erasmus+ agencies, as in Greece, Malta and Portugal. For more details on top-level targets, see Table 4.15 in the Annex.

While top-level policy measures concerning the mobility participation of disadvantaged students exist in the majority of education systems, this is not the case for disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of staff. Only five education systems report providing targeted support for disadvantaged groups of staff for mobility purposes: Finland, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and Türkiye. In all five cases, extra financial support is provided for staff (academic and non-academic) with a disability or special needs.

Monitoring systematically the participation and experiences of beneficiaries in all types of international mobility programmes, where data can be broken down by students' background characteristics (other than age and gender) is reported by 17 education systems (see Table 4.16 in the Annex). This means that while all countries participating in the Erasmus+ programme are required to monitor participation in this specific programme, this monitoring is not always extended to all types of mobility experiences.

Finally, the last element concerns the importance of new technologies in supporting blended mobility and promoting internationalisation at home. Integrating physical mobility with online learning could facilitate the bringing together of a more diverse group of participants as well as offering a broader range of mobility options. However, less than half of education systems across the EHEA report providing systematic support to higher education institutions to foster blended learning mobility and/or internationalisation at home (see Table 4.17 in the Annex). The organisation of blended learning and the implementation of internationalisation at home are supported by just above a quarter of EHEA systems each, often within the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.

Figure 4.16 depicts the composite scorecard indicator in the area of international mobility. There are only two education systems providing systematic support to vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of students and staff by all the means outlined in this section: Finland and Türkiye. Seven education systems fulfil almost all conditions, most often lacking a top-level policy concerning disadvantaged groups of staff or a systematic monitoring practice. However, the majority of education systems are placed in the two bottom categories, orange and red. Thus, in most EHEA countries, there is still a lack of clear political commitment towards facilitating the participation of disadvantaged students and staff in learning mobility.

Figure 4.16: Scorecard indicator n°16: P&G 8: Supporting vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of students and staff in participating in international mobility, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■ (dark green)	Supporting the participation of disadvantaged learners and staff in international mobility by the following four means: • Top-level measures supporting vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented students in international learning mobility. • Top-level mobility policy focused on vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of staff. • Monitoring the participation and experiences of beneficiaries in all types of international mobility programmes, including their background characteristics (gender, age and at least one other student characteristic) based on a standardised methodology. • Top-level support to higher education institutions to foster blended learning mobility and/or internationalisation at home.
■ (light green)	Supporting the participation of disadvantaged learners and staff in international mobility by **three** of the four mentioned means.
■ (yellow)	Supporting the participation of disadvantaged learners and staff in international mobility by **two** of the four mentioned means.
■ (orange)	Supporting the participation of disadvantaged learners and staff in international mobility by **one** of the four mentioned means.
■ (red)	**No targeted support** provided for the participation of disadvantaged learners and staff in international mobility in higher education.
▨	Not applicable
▢	Data not available

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4.9. Community engagement

> **Principle:**
>
> Higher education institutions should ensure that community engagement in higher education promotes diversity, equity and inclusion.
>
> **Guidelines:**
>
> Community engagement should be considered as a process whereby higher education institutions engage with external community stakeholders to undertake joint activities that can be mutually beneficial. Like social dimension policies, community engagement should be embedded in core missions of higher education. It should engage with teaching and learning, research, service and knowledge exchange, students and staff and management of higher education institutions. Such engagement provides a holistic basis on which universities can address a broad range of societal needs, including those of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, while enriching their teaching, research and other core functions.
>
> Community stakeholders (e.g. local authorities, cultural organisations, nongovernmental organisations, businesses, citizens) should be able to meaningfully engage with higher education actors through open dialogue. This will enable genuine university-community partnerships, which can effectively address social and democratic challenges.

This principle and its guidelines highlight the important role of higher education institutions in developing community engagement activities. Community engagement is understood as a process whereby higher education institutions engage with external community stakeholders to undertake joint activities that can be mutually beneficial. Such stakeholders can be local authorities, cultural organisations, non-governmental organisations, businesses and citizens or citizens' groups. Higher education institutions and external community stakeholders may collaborate on issues that concern the local or regional environment and the general wellbeing of citizens.

In contrast to the other Principles and Guidelines, this one is more specifically focused on higher education institutions rather than on public authorities. One of the difficulties in assessing the way in which community engagement action takes place is that it may be undertaken without the awareness of public authorities. As this report is unable to compare the nature and extent of community engagement activities, there is no scorecard indicator for this topic.

Information on community engagement activities of higher education institutions can, however, be found in the European University Association (EUA) Trends 2024 survey, the results of which will be published in May 2024. The survey highlights issues that are most frequently addressed by higher education institutions in their community engagement work. Preliminary information shared by EUA identifies the top three issues for higher education institutions as skills development relevant for the labour market, regional and local development and environmental sustainability and greening.

This report focuses on the actions of public authorities in supporting community engagement activities. The following indicators were selected to monitor top-level support to community engagement:

1) Financial support provided by top-level authorities to higher education institutions in developing community engagement activities focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

2) Existing public support for higher education institutions to train their staff and students on how to increase their community engagement activities focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

3) Existing networks initiated and supported by top-level authorities at the local, regional or national level for both staff and students in implementing community engagement activities, particularly those focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

4) Existence of requirements for external quality assurance agencies to evaluate community engagement activities of higher education institutions focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Figure 4.17 shows the extent to which public authorities provide funding to higher education institutions for social engagement activities. It distinguishes between those countries where institutions are able to use general funding for community engagement activities, and those where additional funding is provided specifically for community engagement.

Figure 4.17: Top-level funding of higher education institutions (HEIs) for community engagement activities, 2022/2023
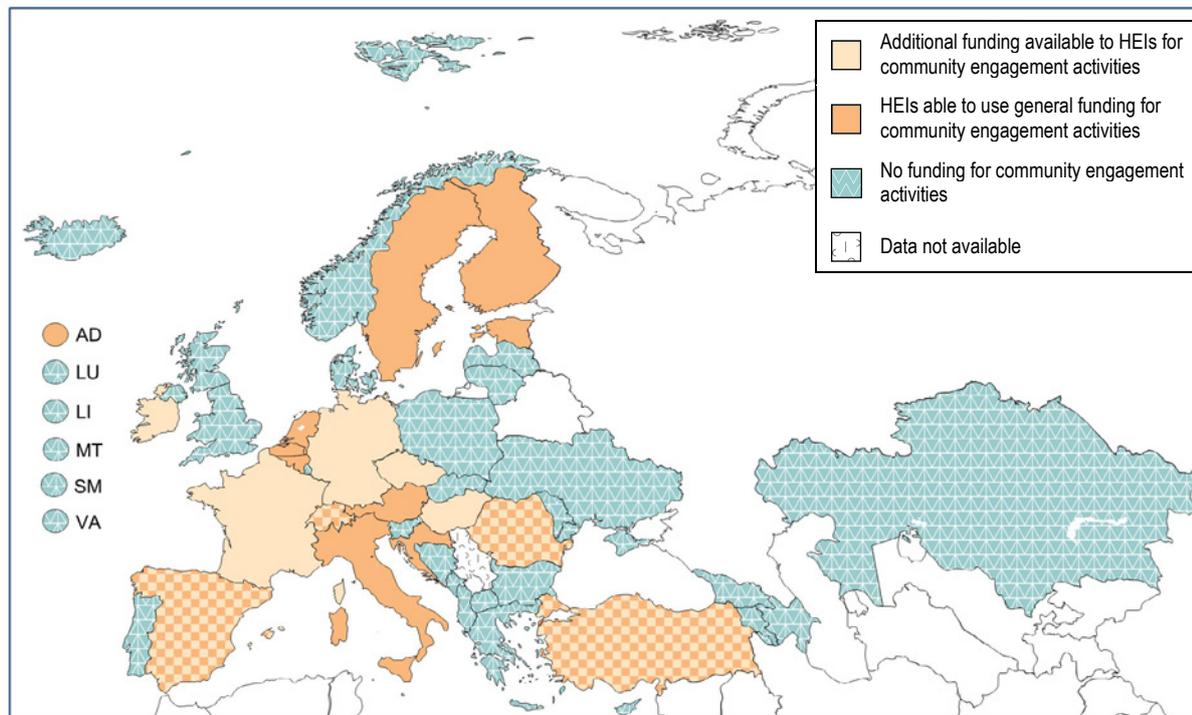
Source: BFUG data collection.

The most common EHEA reality – to be found in 29 systems – is for no funding to be provided for community engagement activities. Additional funding specifically for community engagement actions is provided in nine EHEA systems, while in 14 systems there are opportunities for higher education institutions to use general funding sources for community engagement activities. In four countries – Switzerland, Spain, Romania and Türkiye – there is the possibility for higher education institutions to benefit from both additional funding and general funding. In all the other systems there is no funding with community engagement role in mind.

The paucity of funding suggests that there is currently a relatively low level of interest for community engagement from public authorities. This picture is confirmed when looking at other support that may be provided, as this is even less common. Only five EHEA systems (Switzerland, Italy, Lithuania, Türkiye and the Holy See) reported the provision of public support to organise training for students and staff on social dimension topics (equity, inclusion and diversity) within the remit of community engagement. Similarly only five systems (Switzerland, Czechia, France, Türkiye and the Holy See) reported involvement of public authorities in initiating and supporting networks at the local, regional or national level for both staff and students in implementing community engagement activities.

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External quality assurance requirements for community engagement actions are, however, more commonly found − even if this remains a practice for a minority of systems. As illustrated in Figure 4.18, 11 EHEA systems require external quality assurance agencies to evaluate the community engagement activities of higher education institutions. Curiously in three countries (Albania, Armenia and Portugal) quality assurance agencies are required to assess community engagement activities even though there is neither public funding nor other public support provided by top-level authorities. In these systems it appears that public authorities set requirements for quality assurance agencies in areas where they provide no funding or support.

Figure 4.18: External quality assurance requirements for community engagement activities, 2022/2023
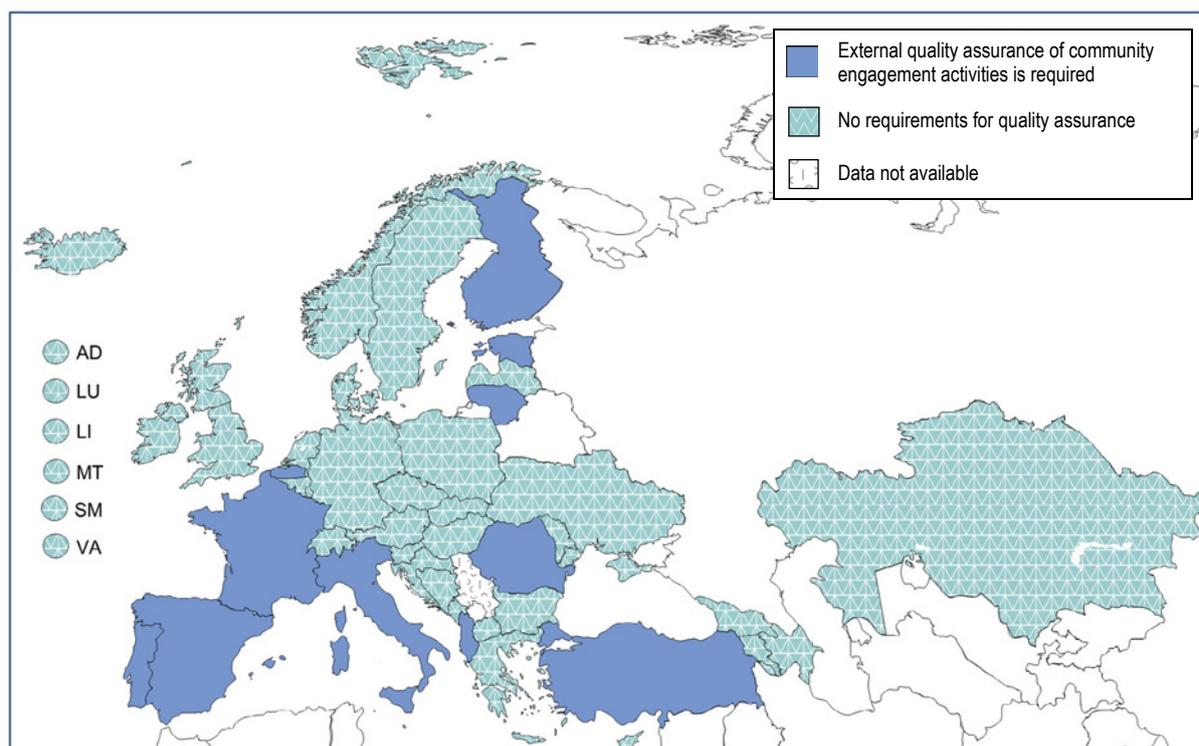
Source: BFUG data collection.

Overall, the data collected for this report signals an absence of funding and support to community engagement activities by public authorities. This is the case for 31 systems. Only three systems – France, Switzerland and Türkiye – appear to offer a high level of support to higher education institutions for community engagement activities focused on the social dimension. In the majority of countries, there are some foundations in place that can be developed in the future. Nevertheless, there is little tangible evidence of a strong concern to support the community engagement work of higher education institutions.

4.10. Policy dialogue

Principle:

Public authorities should engage in a policy dialogue with higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders about how the above principles and guidelines can be translated and implemented both at national system and institutional level.

Guidelines:

Such policy dialogue should allow to develop fit for purpose policy measures, which should respect institutional autonomy, avoid any unnecessary administrative burden, and thus enable concrete progress towards diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education.

Within the scope of the above principles and guidelines, peer support and exchange of good practices are crucial among EHEA countries in order to facilitate progress towards the inclusiveness of higher education systems.

This principle and its guidelines focus on the implementation of the overall set of Principles and Guidelines. It aims to ensure that dialogue between public authorities, higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders is established to take forward the implementation of the different P&Gs.

The following indicators were selected to monitor this policy dialogue:

1) Existence of a policy dialogue established by top-level authorities in a specific forum dedicated to the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines.

2) Representation of key stakeholders (higher education institutions, students and staff) in the established policy dialogue.

3) Existence of international peer learning activities and exchange of good practices on strengthening social dimension of higher education in which top-level authorities participate.

4) Existence of policy developments as a result of a policy dialogue.

Figure 4.19 covers the main aspects of the first two indicators. It shows whether or not a policy dialogue has been established to address the implementation of the principles and guidelines, and it also shows which stakeholders are represented in this dialogue.

The most significant observation is that, so far, more than half of the EHEA countries have not yet established a national policy dialogue focusing on the implementation of the principles and guidelines. While some may consider that only two years passed from the adoption of the commitment to implement principles and guidelines in 2020 and the data collection for this report, nevertheless it would be reasonable to expect that an issue that is a policy commitment would have stimulated action during this period.

Among the 20 systems where policy dialogue has been established, considerable variety in stakeholder participation can be observed. Only five systems (Finland, Poland, Sweden, Türkiye and Ukraine) involve representatives of all the key stakeholders – higher education institutions, students and staff. Overall in the EHEA systems where policy dialogue has been established, higher education institutions and students are the most widely represented (15 systems). Representatives of staff are less likely to be included in this policy dialogue, as only eight systems include them.
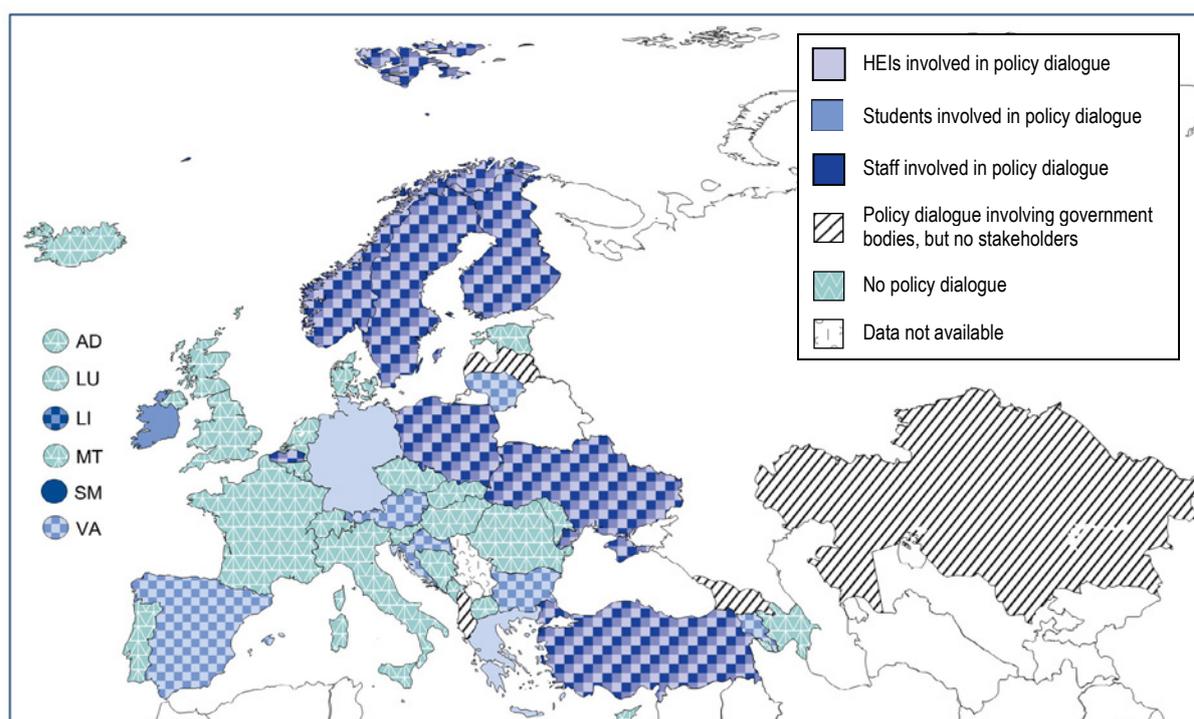
Source: BFUG data collection.

The third indicator concerns international peer learning activities related to the social dimension. Here countries that answered positively (see Annex, Table 4.18) tended to refer to activities established at European level, such as European projects or structures such as the Bologna process working group on the social dimension. Very few countries reported action that they had initiated at international level. One notable exception is the Flemish Community of Belgium which points to its role in initiating and coordinating several international projects on inclusion and mobility in cooperation with its specialised organisation dealing with issues of inclusion in higher education, SIHO (*Steunpunt Inclusief Hoger Onderwijs*).

The final indicator looks at the outcomes of policy dialogue, and addresses the question of whether dialogue has led to any concrete policy developments. Despite relatively little time since the policy dialogue has been established, 14 systems nevertheless claim that policy changes have already resulted from this dialogue (see Annex, Table 4.19). In many of these cases, the development builds on a process that was already established. For example, in Armenia the dialogue has provided input into draft legislation, in Estonia it has fed into the development of performance agreements with higher education institutions and in Georgia it has been considered with regard to updating institutional accreditation requirements. In other cases, policy is in the process of changing. Poland has reviewed its legislation in view of the principles and guidelines, Spain and Finland are in the process of ensuring that higher education institutions have fully developed accessibility plans and Croatia also has developed a draft plan of measures at national level. Ireland is developing two pathways into higher education, the first based on universal design principles and the second focusing particularly on the needs of traveller and Roma communities.

Clearly, around Europe, there has been a response to the adoption of the principles and guidelines, and this is also visible in Figure 4.20, the scorecard indicator that brings together the indicators outlined above.

Source: BFUG data collection.

S c o r e c a r d   c a t e g o r i e s

■	The establishment of policy dialogue is demonstrated through the following four elements: • Top-level authorities have established policy dialogue dedicated to the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines. • The key stakeholders (higher education institutions, students and staff) are represented in the established policy dialogue. • Top-level authorities support and participates in international peer learning activities and exchange of good practices on strengthening social dimension of higher education. • Policy dialogue has led to policy developments.

■ **Three** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	■ **Two** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	■ **One** of the four mentioned elements is implemented.
■ **None** of the four mentioned elements are implemented.	▢ Data not available	

There is much room for progress, as no country has yet met all the criteria. There are also 19 systems in red indicating that no policy dialogue has yet begun with regard to the implementation of the principles and guidelines. Seven systems are far advanced and in light green. As these systems are spread throughout several regions of the EHEA, this suggests that geographical factors have little influence in the decision to take forward social dimension objectives seriously. A further 12 countries are in yellow having taken some steps in this area, and 10 in orange which also indicates the first step in implementation has been taken.

Conclusions

This chapter examined how and to what extent EHEA education systems have implemented policies aiming to strengthen the social dimension of higher education. The chapter followed the structure of the Principles and Guidelines developed by the BFUG ([23]), focusing on the ten areas addressed by the document. In eight of the ten areas, a scorecard indicator has been constructed to be able to monitor and evaluate the overall policy picture in relation to the P&Gs. The elements of the scorecard indicators were developed on the basis of the guidelines outlined in the Principles and Guidelines document. In the areas of strategic commitment and community engagement, the chapter opted for a more detailed analysis instead of developing scorecard indicators. Nevertheless, such scorecard indicators might be constructed in the future.

Having scorecard indicators also enables the relative progress made by EHEA education systems in the different policy areas to be compared. Indeed, the scorecard indicators reveal considerable variance concerning the degree of implementation of the ten principles. While some scorecard indicators show a strong commitment towards social dimension principles in the EHEA, others uncover a relatively lower level of attention to certain policy areas.

The principles with the highest degree of implementation are related to sustainable funding for equity, inclusion and diversity in higher education, and to academic and career guidance and counselling provision. For these two scorecard indicators, around half of EHEA education systems with available data are in the top two categories. All EHEA education systems provide some form of financial support to higher education students, and there are only two countries with no academic or career guidance provision. When it comes to financial support, the large majority of countries provide both need-based grants and other forms of support covering the indirect costs of education to higher education students. At the same time, progress still needs to be made when it comes to targeted support provided to the institutions themselves. Regarding guidance, while most education system provide guidance and counselling services that are also monitored by quality assurance agencies, only a minority of them have established public institutions specialised in conflict resolution and mediating conflicts.

EHEA countries do relatively well in monitoring and data collection as well as in enabling flexible learning conditions. In these areas, there are still more education systems in the top two than in the bottom two categories, though there are more education systems in the bottom categories than for the first two areas on funding and guidance. At the same time, it is the indicator on monitoring and data collection that has the highest number of education systems (12) in the top, dark green category. The weakest area within this scoreboard indicator is collecting data on the completion of first year students in the first cycle. The scorecard indicator on enabling flexible lifelong learning covers flexible learning modes (such as part-time, blended and distance learning) as well as the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning for accessing and contributing towards the fulfilment of higher education programmes. Among these elements, most progress is needed in establishing legal frameworks allowing access to higher education through RPL, and requiring quality assurance agencies to monitor how this is implemented by higher education institutions.

The scorecard indicators that take middle position in terms of overall implementation levels relate to the principles on synergies and lifelong learning and creating inclusive learning environments and institutional cultures. For these two indicators, more than a third of EHEA education systems are in the bottom two categories, but still more than a quarter of them are in the top two. This relative distribution shows that most education systems still lack significant elements when it comes to these policy areas. Most countries are yet to establish top-level coordination structures or mechanisms between different

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([23]) [Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA](#), Annex II of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

levels of education with a mandate linked to the social dimension, and most education systems could invest more in teacher training on diversity, equity and inclusion and in making existing infrastructure more accessible and inclusive.

Finally, the principles with the lowest level of implementation are on international mobility and policy dialogue. The scoreboard indicators on mobility and policy dialogue show more than half of EHEA education systems in the bottom two categories. This result is particularly disappointing, as the need to support disadvantaged learners in mobility programmes has been on the EHEA policy agenda for more than a decade. The fact that many EHEA education systems have not yet established a policy dialogue between public authorities, higher education institutions and other stakeholders for the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines could be considered as more expected, given that this document was adopted in 2020. Nevertheless, given the importance of the issues addressed by the Principles and Guidelines, the lack of apparent urgency in tackling implementation should be examined.

CHAPTER 5:
LEARNING AND TEACHING

The 2020 Rome Communiqué

The 2020 Rome Communiqué, adopted by ministers of higher education of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the Rome Ministerial Conference in November 2020 ([1]), puts emphasis on innovative learning and teaching practices. In this communiqué, ministers committed to support higher education institutions in further implementing student-centred learning and teaching by adopting the Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA ([2]) prepared by the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Advisory Group on Learning and Teaching.

The recommendations build on the 2018 Paris Communiqué, in which ministers announced that the time has come 'to add cooperation in innovative learning and teaching practices as another hallmark of the EHEA' ([3]). In this context, they committed to 'developing new and inclusive approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching across the EHEA' […] 'in full respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy' ([4]).

The recommendations adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué promote increased support for all learners, and for teaching and non-teaching higher education staff. They are structured around three interconnected themes, namely 1) the need for student-centred learning, 2) the fostering of continuous enhancement of teaching, and 3) the strengthening of higher education institutions' and systems' capacity to enhance learning and teaching. The recommendations also underline the crucial importance of reinforcing the Bologna tools and the other Bologna key commitments.

The BFUG has been asked to support the implementation of the recommendations and to report on the results in the framework of this report.

Chapter outline

This chapter follows closely the content and organisation of the BFUG questionnaire, which was developed in collaboration with the BFUG Advisory Group on Learning and Teaching. The questionnaire considered both the recommendations adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué and the type of information accessible to national higher education administrations.

The chapter starts by exploring system-level strategies and other policy measures to support learning and teaching in higher education. In its initial sections, the chapter also examines the extent to which policy developments in this area are subject to dialogue with different stakeholders, and the role of quality assurance agencies in relation to learning and teaching in higher education.

The chapter then moves to student-centred learning. In this context, it investigates how top-level (national) steering documents address and understand this concept, to what extent learning outcomes are used in higher education, and whether there are any legal requirements or restrictions potentially limiting the implementation of flexible student-centred learning.

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[1] Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.
[2] Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.
[3] Paris Communiqué, 25 May 2018, p. 3.
[4] Ibid.

The final part investigates policy measures to enhance high-quality teaching, by exploring training requirements and opportunities for higher education teachers, students' views on their teachers, as well as the role of teaching in the recruitment and promotion of academics.

The chapter is mainly based on data collected within the BFUG data collection. This main data source has been complemented by two additional sources, namely the Trends 2024 survey of the European University Association (EUA) and the Eurostudent 8 survey ([5]).

Information presented in this chapter complements and develops data provided in some other chapters, in particular Chapters 2 and 4. Therefore, when relevant, the chapter guides the reader to data in other parts of this report.

5.1. Top-level strategies and other policy measures

The recommendations adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué call for 'including the enhancement of learning and teaching in national higher education strategies and approaches' ([6]). Considering this objective, this section starts by mapping top-level (national) strategies that include major references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. The section than explores policy levers other than top-level strategies that follow the same objective.

5.1.1. Top-level strategies promoting learning and teaching in higher education

Figure 5.1 shows that in slightly more than half of the higher education systems surveyed (27 out of 47 for which data are available) there is an ongoing top-level strategy that includes major references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. The figure and the related table ([7]) also demonstrate that the reported strategies differ in terms of their thematic focus and coverage. Three types of strategies can be distinguished in this regard.

First, there are **strategies that focus on higher education** (Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, France, Hungary, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Malta ([8]), Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Türkiye and Ukraine). For example, following its higher education strategy, Bulgaria aims to update existing and create new higher education curricula, to introduce flexible forms and methods of learning and teaching, and to improve, more generally, the organisation and effectiveness of higher education studies. In Czechia, the higher education strategy promotes inclusive and interactive teaching at universities with a focus on competence building. In Hungary, the focus is on the implementation of learning outcomes, flexible programmes, and practice-oriented learning and teaching. The higher education strategy in Ukraine, in turn, refers to the enhancement of the student-centred learning, especially by promoting learning technologies and different modes of programme delivery.

Second, there are **strategies covering all sectors of education, including higher education** (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Switzerland). Although higher education is only one area treated in these strategies, there are explicit references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in this sector. For example, the education strategy reported by Albania includes, among its different objectives, an objective to improve teaching and research competences of academic staff by creating centres at universities for training in teaching and research. The education strategy in Croatia promotes the improvement of digital maturity of higher education institutions, including the provision of hybrid and online teaching and learning.

Third, there are **strategies that extend beyond education** but still include explicit references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education (Italy, Lithuania and Romania). More

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([5]) For details regarding different data sources, see the Glossary and methodological notes section.
([6]) Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 4.
([7]) Table 5.1 in Annex lists all the reported strategies.
([8]) The strategy reported by Malta covers two education sectors: further and higher education (see Table 5.1 in Annex).

specifically, Lithuania formulates in its National Progress Plan an objective to renew and financially support the implementation of guidelines to improve competences of academics, in particular their foreign language skills and digital competences. In Italy, the National Recovery and Resilience Plan calls for the innovation in the higher education sector and, in this context, it refers to broadening of scientific, technological and linguistic skills of higher education students and teachers. The same plan in Romania promotes the digitalization of higher education, including the development of digital competences of both students and teachers.

Figure 5.1: Top-level strategies with major references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education (by the type of strategy), 2022/2023
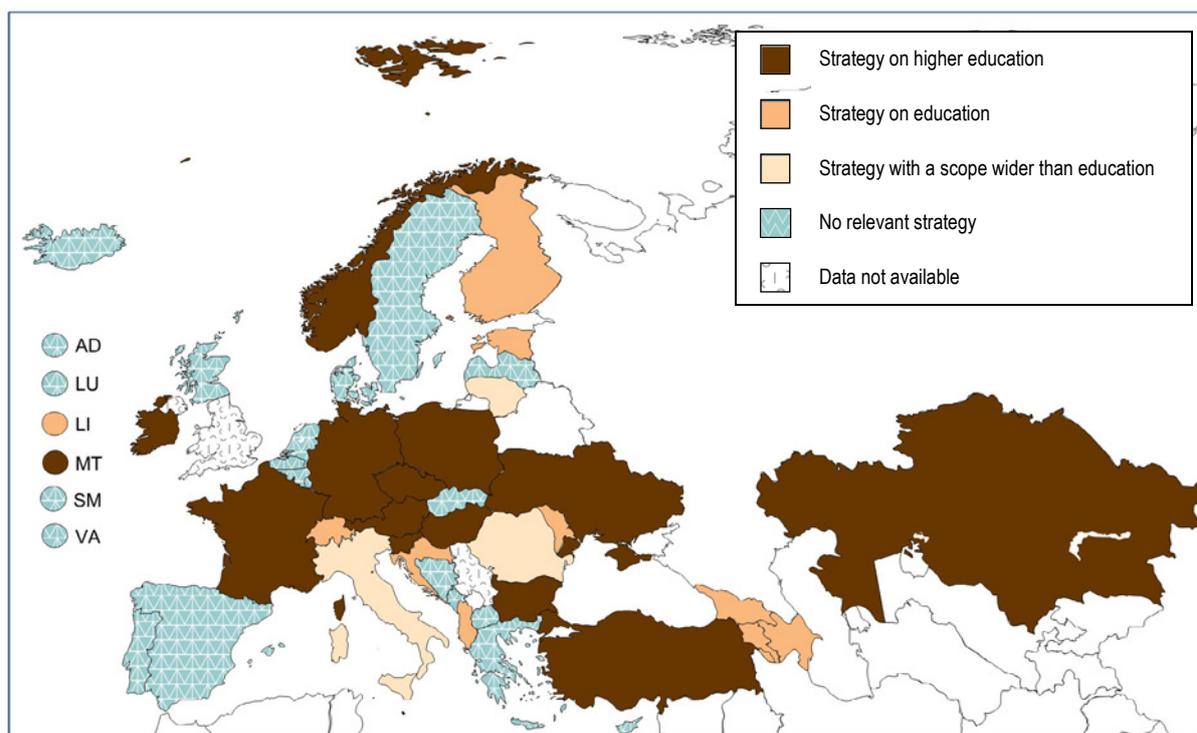
Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes:

Respondents from the systems with several relevant strategies were asked to report the most important (ongoing) strategy in relation to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education.

Table 5.1 in Annex lists the reported strategies.

Regardless of the type of strategy, most countries with a relevant ongoing strategy reported that the strategy includes an implementation plan as well as measurable targets. Moreover, the implementation of most strategies has been supported by dedicated funding, which commonly combines national and international resources, such as European Union funding.

A rather striking feature of Figure 5.1. is a relatively high number of countries with no ongoing strategy including major references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. However, this finding would benefit from further research, in particular research looking at how national data providers understand and interpret their existing top-level strategies in relation to the concept of enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. Indeed, a wider or narrower understanding and interpretation of this concept could lead to cross-country differences in data provided and could (at least partly) explain the lack of relevant strategies (⁹). Moreover, some strategies could have been under preparation during the academic year 2022/2023, which is not captured by data displayed in Figure 5.1.

(⁹)   In this context, it is noteworthy to mention findings of the Trends 2018 survey (Gaebel et al., 2018). Within this survey, 31% of responding higher education institutions indicated a dedicated national strategy for higher education learning and teaching and further 47% reported a national higher education strategy that includes learning and teaching among other matters (ibid., p. 23). However, responses from different higher education institutions within the same country often did not converge, which suggests that this question may be subject to different interpretations.

5.1.2. Policy levers other than strategies

Top-level strategies are not the only policy approach to manage and shape learning and teaching in higher education. Indeed, as displayed in Figure 5.2, in most higher education systems investigated (34 out of 47 for which data are available), national authorities promote the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education through other measures.

Figure 5.2: Top-level policy measures (other than top-level strategies) to support learning and teaching in higher education, 2022/2023
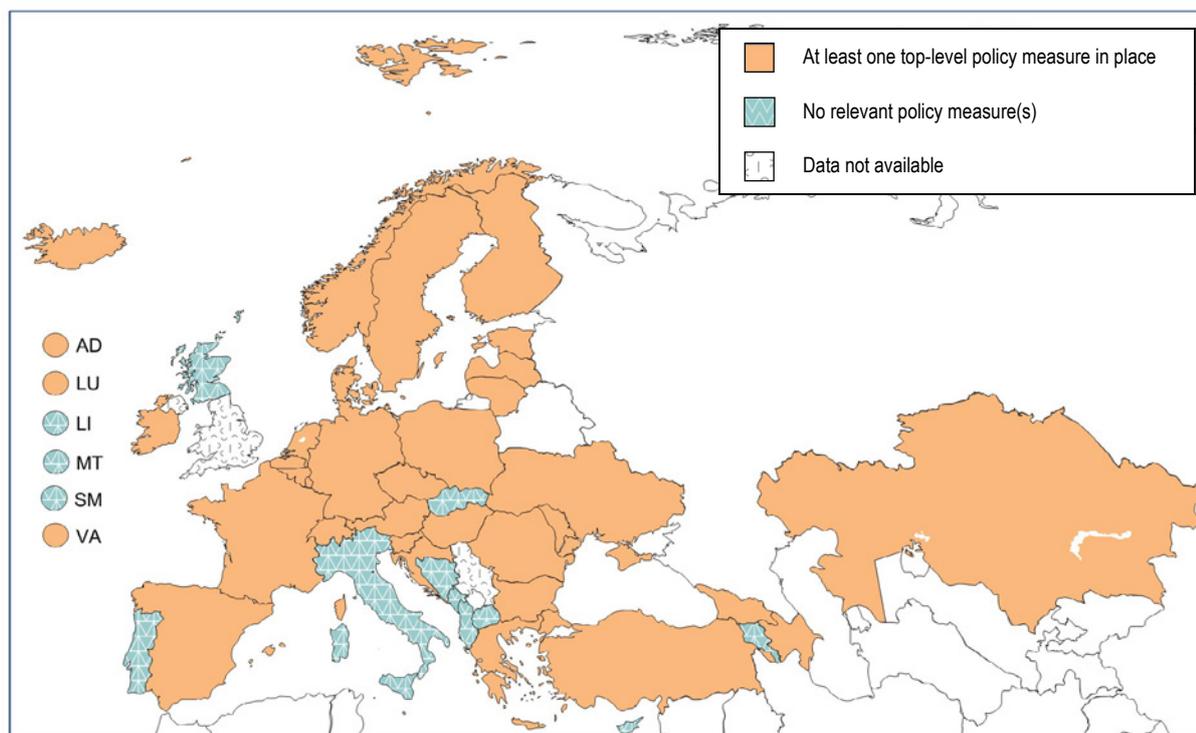
Source: BFUG data collection.

The most widespread measure (other than top-level strategies) consists of **system-level (national) projects** to enhance learning and teaching in higher education.

Although the system-level (national) projects differ in terms of their scope, thematic focus and size, one recurring area on which they concentrate is the digitalization and digital transformation in higher education. For example, national authorities in France launched, in 2021, a call for expressions of interest 'Digital Demonstrators in Higher Education' (*Démonstrateurs numériques dans l'enseignement supérieur*) ([10]), which supported 17 institutional projects experimenting different dimensions of the digital transformation in higher education (total budget of EUR 100 million). These projects should now inspire further initiatives, with a view to generalise the digital transformation in higher education on a national scale. Finland, in turn, has been conducting the national programme 'Digivisio 2030' ([11]), which involves all Finnish higher education institutions and aims at building flexible and easily accessible learning opportunities, particularly by using digital facilities. In Switzerland, one national project ([12]) aims to strengthen digital skills in higher education teaching, by subsidising measures focusing on both students and teachers, and, more generally, on higher education institutions (CHF 30 million for the period 2019-2024). Lithuania has been conducting the project 'EdTech' ([13]), which aims at changes in the education

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([10])   https://www.gouvernement.fr/enseignement-et-numerique
([11])   https://digivisio2030.fi/en/frontpage/
([12])   https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/themen/digitalisierung/digital-skills
([13])   https://www.edtechlithuania.com/

system (at all levels) through education technologies. In the field of higher education, the project aims to provide academics with knowledge and skills related to digital learning and teaching innovations.

The system-level (national) projects cover also other areas than digital transformation. For example, in Sweden, during 2021-2023, national authorities launched two initiatives (calls for expressions of interest): one aiming to boost higher education pedagogy (SEK 5 million in 2022; at least SEK 15 million in 2023) and one concentrating on quality of distance education (^{14}). These initiatives allow higher education institutions to apply for funding to develop related projects. The Netherlands has been running the eight-year national programme 'Npuls' (2022-2030) (^{15}), which covers different types of institutions (all vocational education and training institutions, research universities, and universities of applied sciences) and includes several objectives, among which are technological improvements (ICT infrastructure) and the creation of a centre for learning and teaching in every institution.

It is noteworthy that the system-level (national) projects often use international support, especially international financial assistance. For example, Moldova has conducted the World Bank Project 'Moldova Higher Education Project' (^{16}) that enables national authorities to finance various initiatives enhancing teaching and learning practices in higher education. In Ukraine, national authorities, in cooperation with the British Council and other organisations, have been implementing the 'Ukraine Higher Education Teaching Excellence Programme' (^{17}), which aims to foster teaching and learning excellence in the sector. In Latvia, academic staff development and training activities are addressed under the EU structural funds programme 'Growth and employment', the sub-programme 'Strengthening academic staff of higher education institutions in areas of strategic specialisation' (^{18}).

Less common compared to system-level (national) projects are **recent regulatory changes** aiming to enhance learning and teaching in higher education. Greece, for instance, adopted in 2022 a legal framework (^{19}) stipulating that every Greek higher education institution should establish a learning and teaching support centre. Ireland adopted in 2022 a new higher education act (^{20}) reforming the higher education sector and impacting the governance as well as learning and teaching (see also Section 5.1.3). A slightly longer time ago, in 2018, France adopted a legal framework (^{21}) reinforcing learning support for undergraduate students through various means (new curricula, modularisation, personalised support for each student, etc.), with the aim to increase study completion rates.

Outside the main types of measures identified above, there are **other policy measures** across the EHEA that may positively impact learning and teaching in higher education. The most noteworthy is the establishment of top-level (national) bodies – in Germany, Ireland and Kazakhstan – that focus on the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education (see Section 5.1.3). Further examples of measures include national teaching awards (Austria and Denmark), a dedicated national fund to increase the collaboration between higher education institutions, with a focus on enhancing the quality of education and research (Iceland), and changes in national quality assurance frameworks aiming to improve the evaluation of learning and teaching in higher education (Georgia).

(^{14})   https://hpu.uhr.se/utvecklingsprojekt/
(^{15})   https://npuls.nl/en/
(^{16})   https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/loans-credits/2020/03/05/moldova-higher-education-project
(^{17})   https://www.britishcouncil.org.ua/en/programmes/education/teaching-excellence-programme
(^{18})   Implementing regulations of 9 January 2018 for the first, second and third project applications selection round of specific objective 8.2.2 'To strengthen academic staff of higher education institutions in the areas of strategic specialisation' of the Operational Programme 'Growth and employment'.
(^{19})   Law 4957/2022, Article 129.
(^{20})   Higher Education Authority Act 2022.
(^{21})   Law n° 2018-166 of 8 March 2018 relating to the orientation and success of students.

5.1.3. Top-level bodies supporting learning and teaching in higher education

Building on the analysis presented in the previous section, Figure 5.3 emphasises one specific policy measure: the presence of top-level (national) bodies dedicated to supporting learning and teaching in higher education institutions. Currently, such dedicated bodies exist only in 3 higher education system (out of 48 for which data are available): Germany, Ireland and Kazakhstan.

Figure 5.3: Top-level bodies dedicated to supporting learning and teaching in higher education institutions, 2022/2023
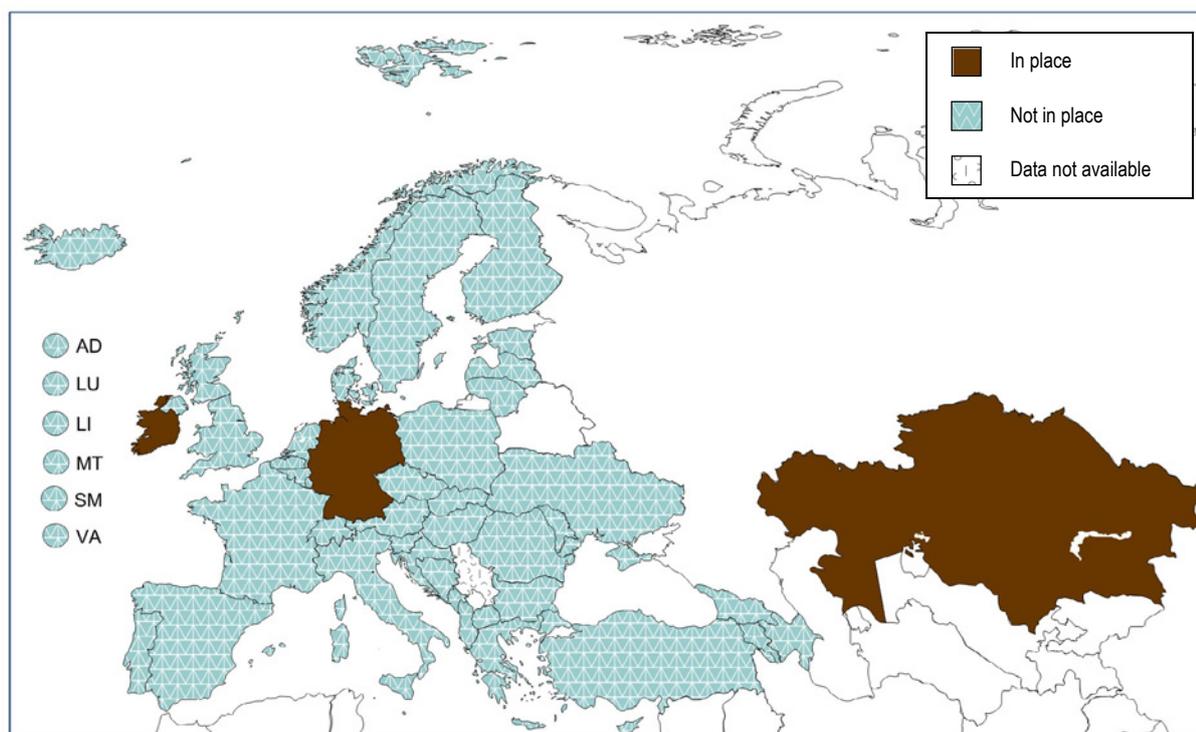
Source: BFUG data collection.

More specifically, in Germany, the federal government and the states (Länder) established, in 2020, the Foundation for Innovation in Higher Education (*Stiftung Innovation in der Hochschullehre*) [22], which started operating in 2021 under the auspices of a non-profit organisation. The objective of the foundation is to promote innovation in academic study and teaching, provide stakeholders with networking opportunities, and support the transfer of knowledge. Based on this objective, the foundation provides funding for projects conducted in higher education institutions. All funding (EUR 150 million per year) is provided by the federal and state governments.

Ireland re-established, in 2022, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (National Forum) [23]. This body now operates under the auspices of the Higher Education Authority, which is a statutory body that leads strategic developments in the Irish higher education system. The National Forum is responsible for advising on the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education, and it provides and administers funding for projects in this area. One example is the project (funding allocation) 'Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Funding in Higher Education' [24] with financing initiatives focusing on education for sustainable development, digital transformation and academic integrity (EUR 6.4 million during 2022-2023).

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[22]   https://stiftung-hochschullehre.de/
[23]   https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/; the re-establishment of this body follows the Higher Education Authority Act 2022 that is referred to in Section 5.1.2.
[24]   https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/funding/#!/Funding-Calls

Kazakhstan established, in 2018, a national council dedicated to learning and teaching in higher education: the Republican Education and Methodology Council for Higher and Postgraduate Education ([25]). This body cooperates with consultative and advisory units (so called 'academic methodological associations') established in higher education institutions ([26]).

Even if top-level (national) bodies dedicated to supporting learning and teaching in higher education institutions are scarce, other types of bodies exist across Europe that contribute to this cause. These can be clustered into several categories.

First, the highest decision-making body responsible for higher education, which is generally the ministry of education, may be directly involved in activities that support innovative practices in higher education learning and teaching (e.g. through the coordination of top-level strategies or other policy measures). Moreover, national quality assurance agencies can also intervene in this area since their activities aim at guaranteeing that some minimum requirements of quality in learning and teaching are met, and that the quality of learning and teaching is continuously improved.

Second, some countries have in place national bodies – other than ministries of education and/or quality assurance agencies – with a range of roles, including roles relating to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. For example, in Sweden, the Swedish Council for Higher Education ([27]) conducts several activities, among which is the coordination of two recent national initiatives that aimed at boosting higher education pedagogy and distance education (see Section 5.1.2 for details). In other words, while the Swedish Council for Higher Education is not specifically and explicitly dedicated to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education, it manages projects comparable to those that are managed by the dedicated agencies operating in Germany and Ireland. Similar bodies with a wider role exist in several other EHEA countries.

Third, there are bodies that do not benefit from direct national subsidies, but still conduct activities supporting innovations in learning and teaching in the higher education sector. One key example is the organisation Advance HE ([28]), which is a member-led British charity (membership organisation) that was created in 2018 by merging some previously existing organisations. Advance HE covers various areas related to higher education, including teaching and learning, governance, leadership development and equality, diversity and inclusion. The organisation uses different channels to deliver its support, including professional development programmes, events, fellowships, awards and consultancy services.

In addition to the above-mentioned bodies, higher education institutions themselves may provide relevant services through dedicated learning and teaching centres ([29]). As shown is Section 5.1.2, these centres are sometimes established within national policy projects or measures. For example, one objective of the ongoing national project 'Npuls' in the Netherlands is to create a centre for teaching and learning in every institution (see Section 5.1.2 for details).

Overall, the BFUG data collection points to a scarcity of publicly funded bodies specifically dedicated to supporting learning and teaching in higher education institutions. At the same time, the data collection shows that other types of bodies and policy approaches can be used to enhance learning and teaching innovations in the higher education sector.

([25])   Based on the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 12 October 2018 no. 562.
([26])   See, for example: https://www.kaznu.kz/en/25736/page/
([27])   https://www.uhr.se/en/start/
([28])   https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/
([29])   The report presenting findings of the EUA Trends 2018 survey (Gaebel et al., 2018, p. 18) indicates that 65% of higher education institutions have a dedicated learning and teaching centre or unit for the entire institution.

5.2. Stakeholders' involvement

The recommendations on learning and teaching adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué not only call for the inclusion of the enhancement of learning and teaching in national higher education strategies and approaches but also specify that '[t]he design and implementation of such strategies and approaches should serve as a basis for a structured and continuous dialogue with higher education institutions and other stakeholders in the learning and teaching community' ([30]). Building on this objective, this section starts by exploring the involvement of different stakeholders in policymaking related to learning and teaching in higher education. The section then looks at the role of quality assurance agencies in this area.

5.2.1. Stakeholders involved in policy developments

The development of national higher education learning and teaching policies may involve a range of stakeholders. Figure 5.4 displays some key stakeholders that may have an interest in influencing learning and teaching in the higher education sector. The figure indicates the number of higher education systems (out of 48 higher education systems for which data are available) that reported a common involvement of a specific stakeholder in the development of national higher education learning and teaching policy.

Figure 5.4: Stakeholders commonly involved in the development of national higher education learning and teaching policy (number of systems reporting different stakeholders), 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.
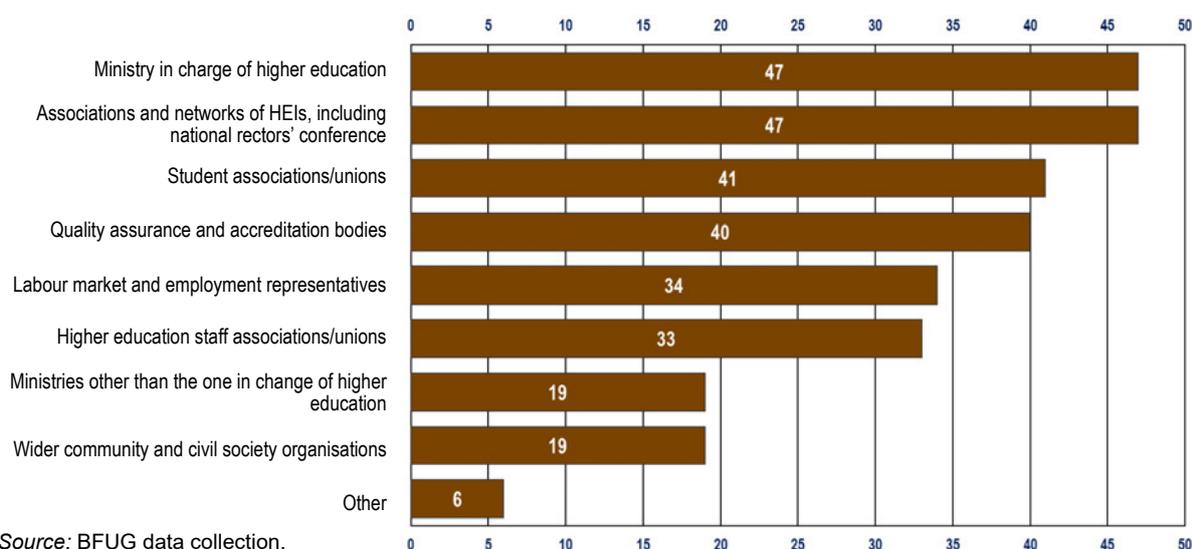
N o t e :

The figure is based on data supplied by 48 higher education systems.

As the figure shows, the development of national learning and teaching policies most commonly involves the national ministry responsible for higher education (47 systems), and associations and networks of higher education institutions (47 systems). Indeed, these stakeholders have been reported by virtually all the higher education systems investigated.

Alongside the above stakeholders, student associations and unions are also commonly involved in the development of national learning and teaching policies (41 systems), as well as national quality assurance and accreditation bodies (40 systems). Further quite frequently represented parties are labour market and employment organisations (34 systems) and higher education staff associations and unions (33 systems). All these stakeholders have been reported by more than half of the higher education systems investigated.

([30]) [Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA](#), Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 4.

Less commonly involved stakeholders include ministries responsible for areas other than higher education (19 systems), and the wider community and civil society organisations (19 systems).

In a limited number of higher education systems (6 systems), additional stakeholders come into play. For example, in Spain, alongside all the stakeholders listed in Figure 5.4, regional authorities are commonly involved in the development of national higher education learning and teaching policy. In Germany and Switzerland, which are both federal systems, other stakeholders include national coordinating bodies, namely the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Germany) and the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (Switzerland). The Flemish Community of Belgium involves in the development of higher education learning and teaching policy the Flemish Education Council (*Vlaamse Onderwijsraad*), which is a strategic advisory council on education and training that includes representatives from the entire educational landscape. Slovenia, in turn, involves the National Academy of Science and Art (*Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti*).

5.2.2. Role of quality assurance agencies

National quality assurance agencies play a crucial role in ensuring the quality, credibility, and continuous improvement of higher education within a country. Figure 5.4 has shown that they are commonly involved – as one of the stakeholders – in the development of higher education learning and teaching policies. Figure 5.5 provides further information on their role in relation to learning and teaching in higher education.

Figure 5.5: Role of quality assurance agencies in relation to learning and teaching in higher education (number of systems reporting different roles), 2022/2023
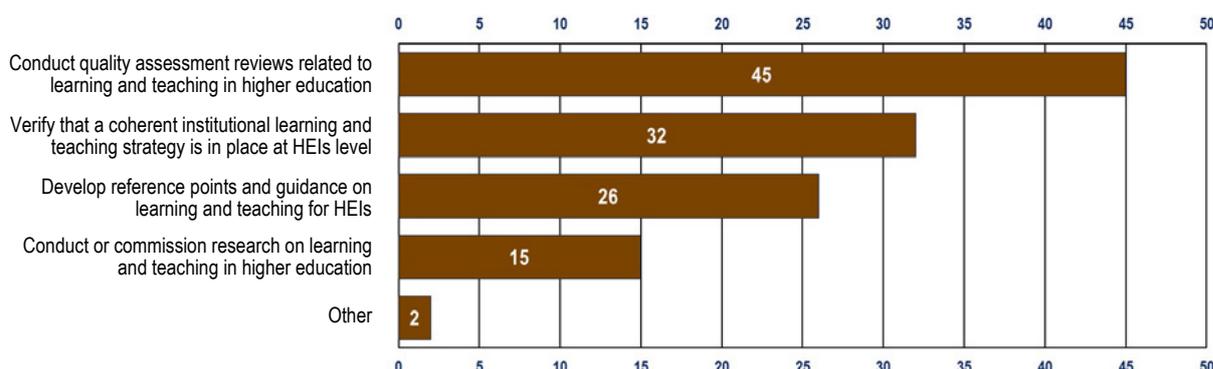
Source: BFUG data collection.

N o t e :

The figure is based on data supplied by 47 higher education systems.

As the figure demonstrates, the most common role of quality assurance agencies in relation to learning and teaching in higher education is to conduct quality assessment reviews (45 higher education systems out of 47 with data). These may involve various approaches, including site visits, data analysis and stakeholder feedback. In around two thirds of the systems surveyed (32 systems), quality assurance agencies verify, within their reviews, that higher education institutions have in place a coherent institutional learning and teaching strategy. In around half of the systems (26 systems), quality assurance agencies develop reference points and guidance on learning and teaching for higher education institutions. A slightly less common role for quality assurance agencies is to conduct or commission research on learning and teaching in higher education (15 systems).

In supporting the quality enhancement of learning and teaching, quality assurance agencies may also conduct other activities. For example, in Armenia, they commonly organise workshops for higher education institutions to exchange on practices related to learning and teaching.

5.3. Student-centred learning

Student-centred learning has been part of the Bologna Process for more than a decade. Already in 2009, ministers responsible for higher education incorporated this concept in their communiqué, highlighting that '[s]tudent-centred learning requires empowering individual learners, new approaches to teaching and learning, effective support and guidance structures and a curriculum focused more clearly on the learner in all three cycles' [31]. In this context, the ministers put forward 'the necessity for ongoing curricular reform geared toward the development of learning outcomes' [32]. The shift towards learning outcomes was specified as a means to achieve 'high quality, flexible and more individually tailored education paths' [33].

The ministers reiterated the topic of student-centred learning in their subsequent communiqués. Most recently, student-centred learning was put forward in the 2020 Rome Communiqué, in which the ministers highlighted that '[f]lexible and open learning paths, part of the original inspiration for the Bologna Process, are important aspects of student-centred learning and are in increasing demand in our societies' [34]. Moreover, the ministers have committed to support higher education institutions in further implementing student-centred learning and teaching by adopting the Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA [35].

This section examines student-centred learning in three parts. First, it investigates whether and how top-level (national) steering documents related to higher education define this concept and which elements are put forward in the national definitions. Second, the section examines the implementation of learning outcomes, by investigating the extent to which they are required to be used in higher education. The final part looks at the existence of regulatory barriers that may limit the provision of flexible and individualised studies. This part can be complemented by the analysis provided in Chapter 4, Section 4.2, which covers flexibility in higher education.

5.3.1. Student-centred learning in top-level steering documents

Policy documents related to the Bologna Process understand student-centred learning as a multidimensional theme. They associate it with a range of closely related topics, such as learning outcomes, individually tailored and flexible learning paths, active involvement and participation of students in the learning process, high-quality and innovative teaching as well as appropriate assessment methods. Considering these different aspects, the BFUG data collection examined whether top-level (national) steering documents define the concept of student-centred learning and, if they do, what elements are incorporated in the national definitions.

Figure 5.6 shows that in around one third of European higher education systems (14 out of 48 for which data are available), national steering documents related to higher education do not mention the term 'student-centred learning' (or an equivalent expression in the state language). In more than half of the systems (28 out of 48 with data), the term is mentioned, but it is not defined. It follows that in only a few higher education systems (6 out of 48 with data), student-centred learning is both mentioned and defined in national steering documents.

[31] Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009, p. 3.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 6.
[35] Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

Figure 5.6: References to student-centred learning in top-level steering documents, 2022/2023
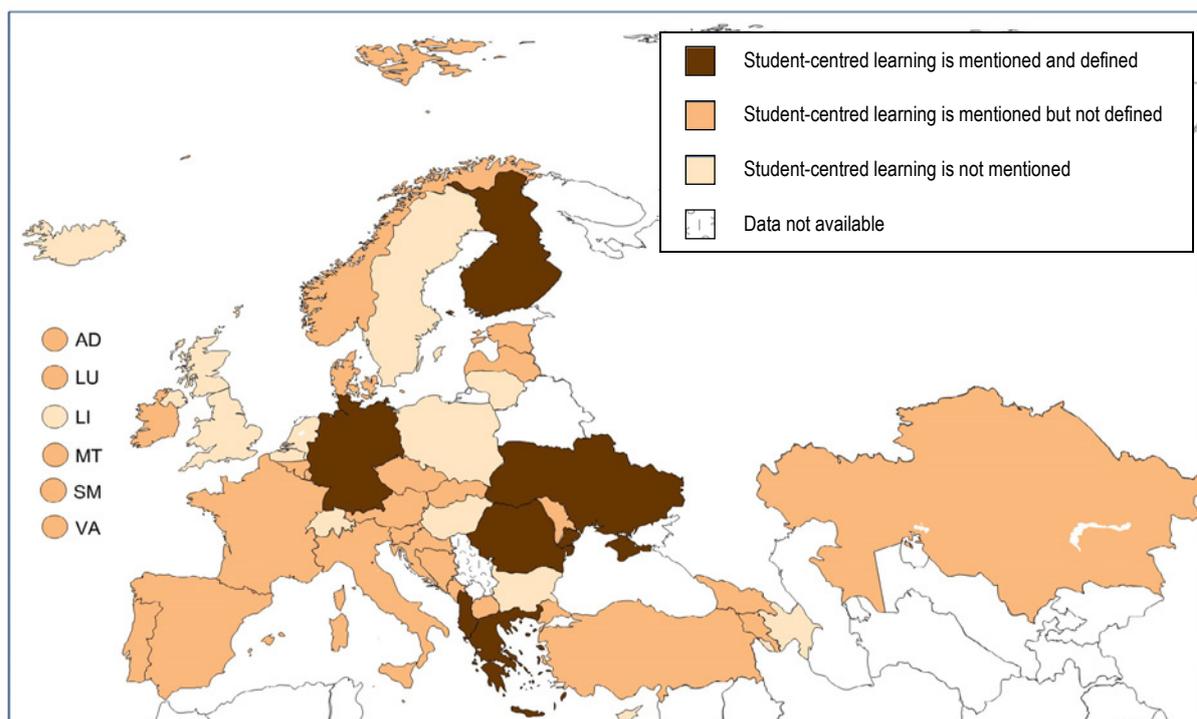
Source: BFUG data collection.

An example of national definition of student-centred learning has been provided by Ukraine, which refers to student-centred learning in its national law on higher education (³⁶) and defines the concept as follows:

> Student-centred learning is an approach to organising the educational process that involves:
>
> • encouraging students to take on the role of autonomous and responsible agents in the educational process;
>
> • creating an educational environment that is focused on meeting the needs and interests of students, including providing opportunities for individual learning trajectories;
>
> • building the educational process on principles of mutual respect and partnership among participants in the educational process.

In Finland, a definition was provided from an external quality assurance manual (³⁷) stating that

> [i]n the student-centred approach, students are encouraged to take an active role in the learning process. This can be done, for example, by supporting students' motivation, self-assessment abilities and well-being, as well as enabling flexible study paths.

Romania dedicates one chapter of its national education law (³⁸) to 'promoting student-centred university' and, within this chapter, specifies that 'students are considered partners of higher education institutions and equal members of the academic community'. A more detailed definition of student-centred learning is provided in an external quality assurance manual (³⁹).

The above examples suggest a general alignment of national interpretations of student-centred learning with the Bologna Process conceptualisation. Still, the main outcome of the investigation is that national steering documents rarely define student-centred learning and, quite commonly, they do not even mention it. At the same time, country replies show that even when the term 'student-centred learning' is not explicitly used, national steering documents commonly refer to different aspects associated with

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(³⁶) Law of Ukraine on higher education, non-official translation from Ukrainian.
(³⁷) Audit manual for higher education institutions, p. 6.
(³⁸) Law No. 1/2011 of 5 January 2011 - National Education Law, Chapter X, Article 199.
(³⁹) Due to its length, the definition in question cannot be presented in this chapter, but can be consulted in the Methodology of external evaluation and of the list of performance indicators of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Section 4.IP.B2.1.4 on student-centred learning.

student-centred learning. Moreover, what may count more than the presence of a definition is the existence of actual measures aligned with the idea of student-centred learning. One of these measures – the implementation of learning outcomes – is discussed in the next section.

5.3.2. Use of learning outcomes

Learning outcomes, which refer to statements describing what the individual knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a particular course, module, or programme ([40]), have been widely referred to in the Bologna Process ministerial communiqués. They have been closely associated not only with the concept of student-centred learning, but also with the implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area ([41]). When it comes to student-centred learning, learning outcomes are expected to support flexible and individually tailored learning paths. This relates to the idea that clearly defined learning outcomes may facilitate the recognition of various forms of learning, including non-formal and informal learning.

Figure 5.7 looks at the presence of top-level (national) requirements or recommendations on the use of learning outcomes in higher education and specifies areas covered by these requirements or recommendations.

Figure 5.7: Use of learning outcomes as required or recommended in top-level steering documents, 2022/2023
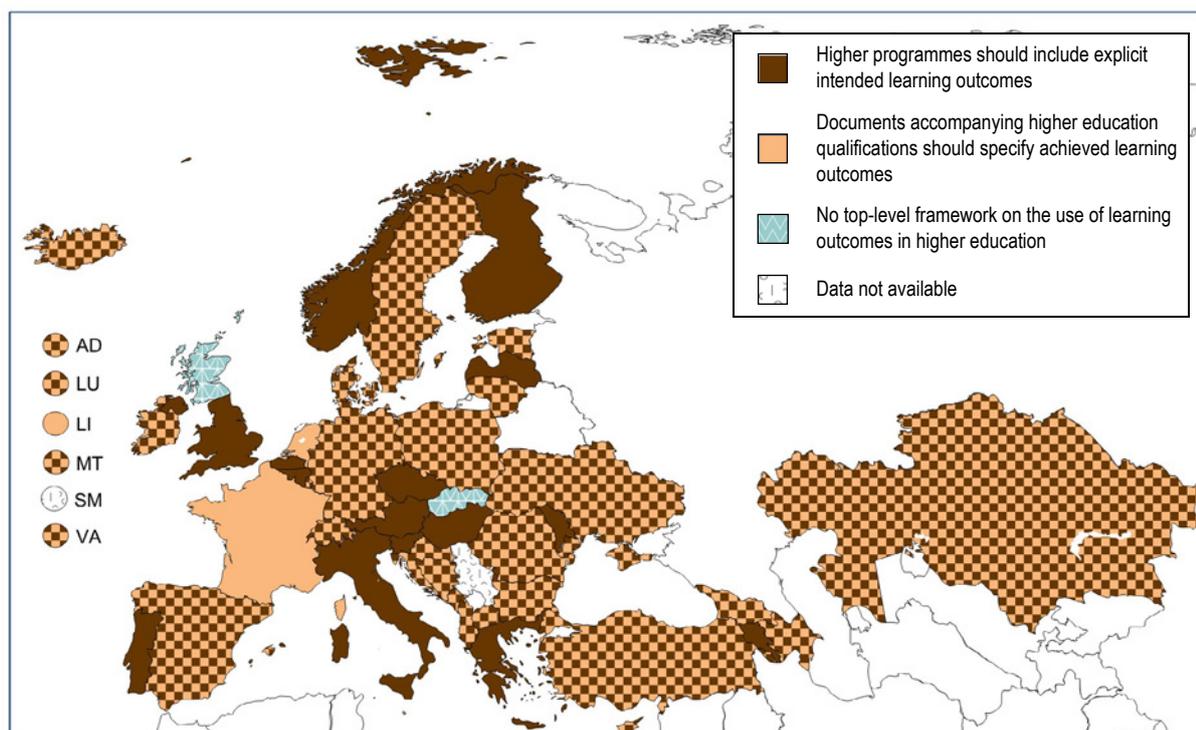
Source: BFUG data collection.

As the figure shows, top-level requirements or recommendations on the use of learning outcomes exist virtually everywhere in Europe, namely in 45 higher education systems out of 47 with data (Slovakia and the United Kingdom – Scotland are the only systems reporting no relevant requirements or recommendations). In almost all the systems with top-level requirements or recommendations (42 out of 45), steering documents indicate that all higher education programmes should include explicit intended learning outcomes. In around two thirds of the systems (30 out of 45), there are requirements

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([40]) For the full definition of 'Learning outcomes', see the Glossary and methodological notes.
([41]) For the definition of 'European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System' and 'Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area', see the Glossary and methodological notes, and for the related analysis, see Chapter 2.

or recommendations stipulating that documents accompanying higher education qualifications should specify achieved learning outcomes. France, Liechtenstein and the Netherlands are the only systems with requirements or recommendations covering only the second aspect, but not the first one.

Although Figure 5.7 does not make a distinction between 'requirements' and 'recommendations', country data suggest that learning outcomes are most often covered by (at least some) top-level requirements. Indeed, learning outcomes are commonly referred to in steering documents that have a binding character, including the main higher education legislation (the higher education act or similar), legal frameworks related to the implementation of national qualifications frameworks and/or documents stipulating quality assurance procedures. In addition to the above, learning outcomes may also be referred to in various guiding documents having a non-binding character (type 'recommendation'). Kazakhstan and the United Kingdom (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) are the only systems, among those with the relevant steering documents, addressing learning outcomes only in top-level recommendations and not in binding top-level steering documents.

Overall, Figure 5.7 and the related analysis suggest that, from a policy perspective, learning outcomes have become an integral part of the design and implementation of higher education programmes throughout the EHEA.

A similar finding is provided by the EUA Trends 2024 survey within which higher education institutions across European countries were asked to report on the implementation of learning outcomes (Figure 5.8). Out of 484 institutions, 71% reported that learning outcomes have been implemented in all courses ([42]) and further 18% indicated the implementation in some courses (a total of 89% when considering the implementation in both all and some courses).

Figure 5.8: Implementation of learning outcomes in higher education institutions (% of institutions), 2023

Legend:
- ■ Yes, for all courses across the institution
- ■ Yes, for some courses
- ■ Not yet, but planned
- □ No
- ■ Information unavailable / Not applicable
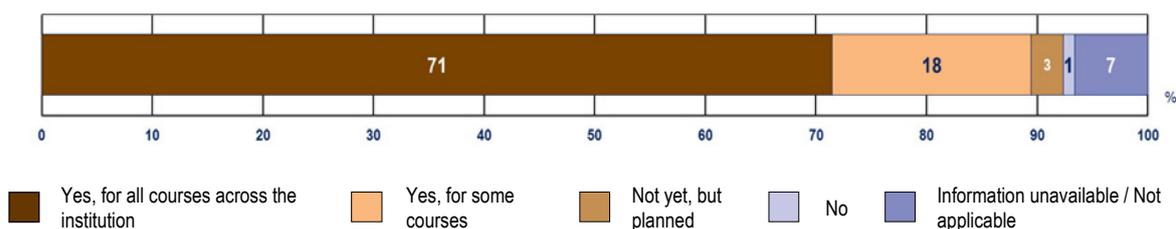
Source: EUA.

Notes:

Data refer to Question 30 in the EUA Trends 2024 survey: 'Have learning outcomes been implemented? Please select one option'. The figure displays the options that were proposed.

The figure is based on data supplied by 484 higher education institutions.

The EUA Trends 2024 survey also shows (Figure 5.9) that higher education institutions often do not face problems with specific aspects of the implementation of learning outcomes (33% to 42% of the institutions reported no problems regarding the aspects surveyed) or are able to overcome initial difficulties (20% to 37% of the institutions). However, the implementation of learning outcomes remains a challenge for many institutions. For example, one third of higher education institutions (33%) that have been using learning outcomes struggle with insufficient resources to support staff in implementing this approach. Other common ongoing issues include the impact on the workload of students (27% of institutions using learning outcomes face this issue), the necessity to revise assessment methods (27%), time pressure for introducing learning outcomes (24%), the lack of understanding among staff regarding learning outcomes (20%) and, finally, the challenge to design curricula based on learning outcomes across the institution (18%).

([42]) When it comes to the implementation of learning outcomes in all courses, data from previous editions on the Trends survey point to a steady increase between 2010 and 2018, namely 53% in 2010, 64% in 2015 and 76% in 2018 (Gaebel et al., 2018, p. 35). In this context, the most recent data displayed in Figure 5.8 suggest some stagnation in this field.

Figure 5.9: Problems encountered by higher education institutions when implementing learning outcomes (% of institutions), 2023

	Has been no problem	Was a problem, but has been solved	Continues to cause problems	No information / Not applicable
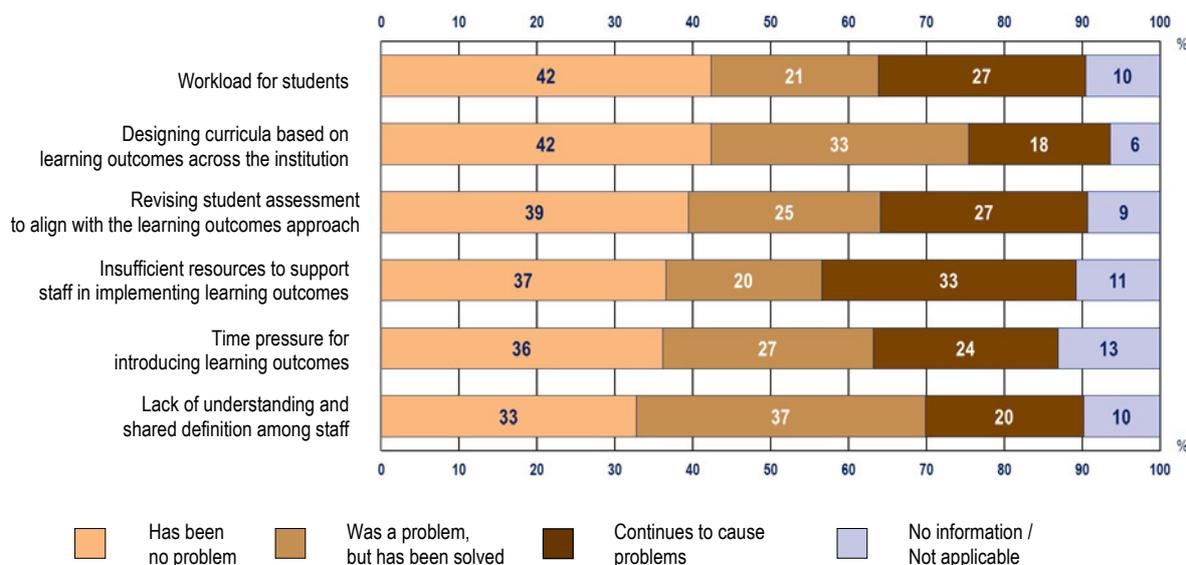
Source: EUA.

Notes:

Data refer to Question 30.1 in the EUA Trends 2024 survey: 'How would you describe issues encountered when implementing learning outcomes?'. The figure displays the options that were proposed.

The figure is based on data supplied by 433 higher education institutions, namely those where learning outcomes have been implemented in all or some courses (see Figure 5.8).

5.3.3. Regulations potentially limiting flexibility and individualisation of studies

The previous section concentrated on learning outcomes, which, when appropriately implemented, are expected to facilitate flexible and individually tailored learning paths. Several additional approaches can be used to create flexible learning environments. Many of these approaches have already been outlined in Chapter 4, in Section 4.2. This section complements the previously presented data by focusing on legal requirements and restrictions potentially limiting flexible and individualised higher education studies.

Figure 5.10 indicates some specific requirements and restrictions that may limit flexibility and individualisation in higher education, and it displays the number of higher education systems in which these requirements or restrictions exist.

As the figure shows, there are commonly regulatory restrictions regarding the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning (RPL), i.e. learning taking place outside formal higher education programmes. These restrictions have been identified in 31 higher education systems out of 48 for which data are available. Two main categories of higher education systems can be distinguished regarding the RPL restrictions.

First, there are higher education systems without possibilities for RPL. This means that all learning that can be recognised and counted towards a higher education qualification must take place within formal higher education programmes. These countries, which are included in the numbers displayed in Figure 5.10, are specified in Chapter 4, Figure 4.3 (category 'No RPL' ([43])).

Second, there are countries with possibilities for RPL, but which have restrictions regarding the extent to which non-formal and informal learning can be recognised and counted towards a higher education

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([43]) In addition to the category 'No RPL', Figure 4.3 in Chapter 4 demonstrates that in several countries RPL can contribute to the fulfilment of study programmes but cannot be used for accessing studies. This limitation (when not accompanied by other RPL limitations) is not considered in this section as the present discussion focuses on flexibility and individualisation during higher education studies.

qualification. These restrictions are expressed in various ways. Often, they refer to the maximum number or proportion of ECTS credits that can be validated through RPL. For example, in Italy, the recognition is limited to 12 ECTS credits in each programme; in Spain to 15% of ECTS credits; in Austria to 60 ECTS credits; and in the French Community of Belgium, in the higher education sector dedicated to mature students, to 120 ECTS credits in the first cycle and 60 ECTS credits in the second cycle. When referring to ECTS credits, some countries do not specify the maximum extent of RPL, but rather indicate the minimum number of credits that must be achieved in formal higher education programmes. This is the case in Luxembourg and Norway, where at least 60 ECTS credits must be obtained through courses in the higher education institution awarding the degree. Beyond references to ECTS credits, there are other closely related ways of expressing RPL restrictions, including the proportion of programme workload that can (or cannot) be recognised. For example, in Andorra, RPL cannot exceed 20% of the programme workload; in Ukraine, the maximum, which depends on the programme, is situated between 25% and 50% of the workload; and in Hungary, at least one third of the programme must be completed in the degree-awarding institution. Latvia, in turn, specifies that RPL cannot replace the final examination and/or the thesis.

Figure 5.10: Legal requirements or restrictions that may limit flexibility and individualisation in higher education (number of systems reporting different requirements or restrictions), 2022/2023
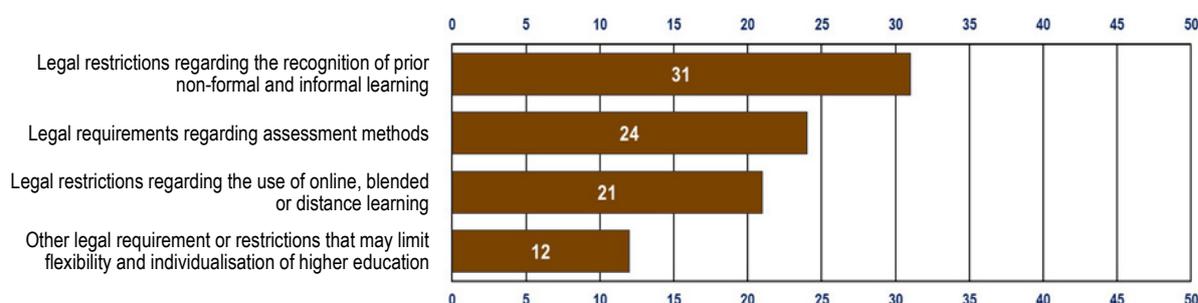
Source: BFUG data collection.

Note:

The figure is based on data supplied by 48 higher education systems.

Another aspect that may limit flexibility and individualisation in higher education is the existence of legal requirements covering assessment methods. These have been identified in half of the higher education systems investigated (24 out of 48 with data). Commonly, the requirements in question specify some compulsory type of assessment that all students (or all students in specific programmes) must undertake. They often cover the final stage of degree studies and include elements such as the final degree examination and/or the thesis. For example, in Czechia, legislation stipulates that each degree programme is completed with the final state examination, and, in addition, there is the thesis deference, which is voluntary in the first cycle and compulsory in the second and the third cycle. A comparable framework is in place in Estonia, where all first- and second-cycle programmes end with the thesis or the final examination, and the third-cycle programmes with the thesis. In the Holy See, regulations require a comprehensive examination or equivalent test at the end of the first and the second cycle. In addition to these examples, there are restrictions related to assessment methods and RPL, namely those that exclude the final examination and/or the thesis from the scope of RPL (see the above example of Latvia).

In a considerable number of EHEA systems (21 out of 48 with data), there are regulatory restrictions related to online, blended or distance learning. The related restrictions sometimes specify the amount of learning that can (or cannot) take place through these modes of study. For example, in Lithuania, at least 10% of full-time and 5% of part-time studies should take place face-to-face; in Luxembourg, at least 50% of ECTS credits in first- and second-cycle programmes must be achieved through in person classes; in Latvia, the remote study can comprise up to 50% of the total number of contact hours related

to each programme; and in Türkiye, 30% of ECTS credits, at most, can be delivered through distance education. In Romania, study programmes cannot be delivered entirely online, meaning that the blended learning format must be used. Montenegro, in turn, has in place regulations specifying that examinations must take place in the premises of higher education institutions, while the teaching process may be organised online. In addition to these examples, as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2, countries' legal frameworks sometimes regulate the extent to which different types of higher education institutions can (or cannot) provide blended and/or distance learning. These restrictions, which have been incorporated in Figure 5.10, are mapped in Table 4.3 in Annex.

There are also other legal requirements that may potentially limit the implementation of flexible and individualised learning pathways in higher education (identified in 12 higher education systems out of 48 with data). For example, as outlined in Chapter 4 and shown in Table 4.3 in Annex, some countries have in place legal restrictions related to the provision of part-time studies, meaning that part-time studies are either legally possible only in some higher education institutions or not possible at all. Examples of additional restrictions include limited or no possibilities for students to extend their studies while benefiting from public funding (e.g. Ukraine), the obligation to organise programmes leading to regulated professions only as full-time studies (e.g. Albania), the necessity for higher education institutions to deliver programmes in full alignment with the conditions under which they were accredited, which implies, for instance, that distance learning is only possible if a degree programme has been accredited as a distance learning programme (e.g. Czechia and Portugal).

Figure 5.11 looks at all the discussed requirements and restrictions from a country perspective, distinguishing between higher education systems where at least one requirement or restriction – among those displayed in Figure 5.10 – has been identified and the systems with no requirement(s) or restriction(s) identified. The figure clearly shows that virtually everywhere in Europe, there are some regulations potentially limiting flexibility and individualisation of higher education programmes.

Figure 5.11: Presence of legal requirements or restrictions that may limit flexibility and individualisation in higher education, 2022/2023
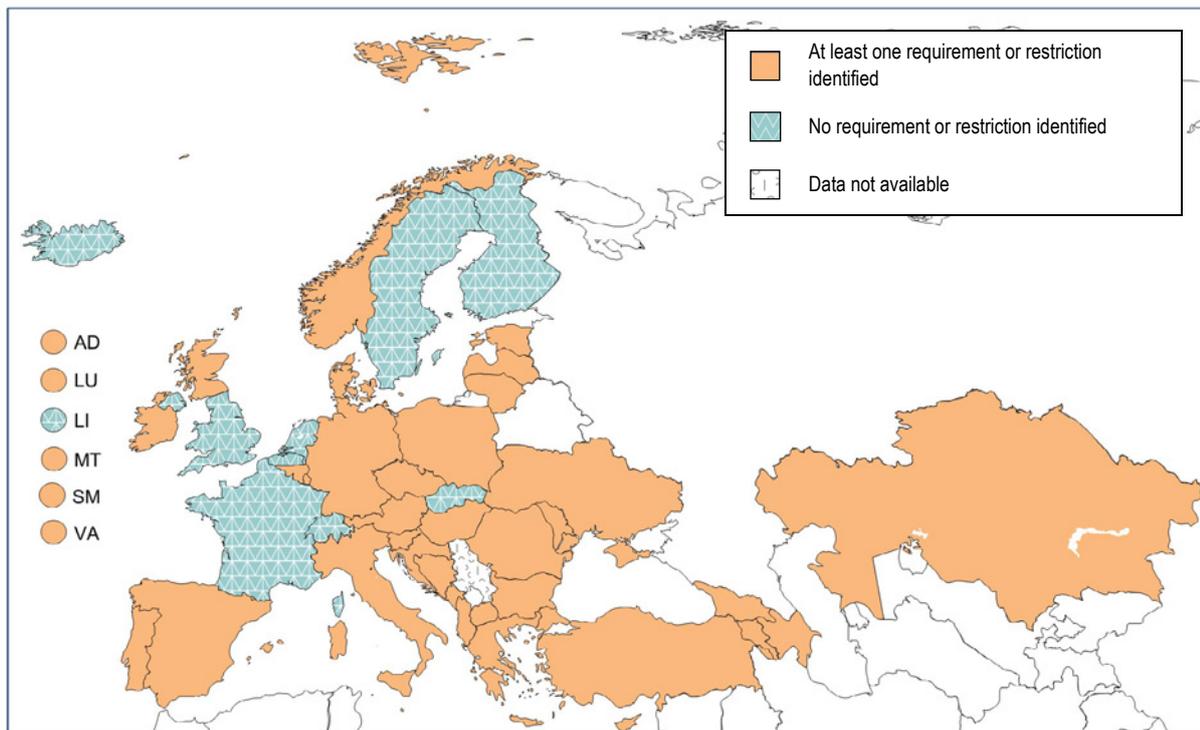
Source: BFUG data collection.

These findings raise the question of whether EHEA systems are sufficiently responding to the claimed Bologna Process objective to provide flexible and individualised learning pathways and, more generally, student-centred learning. Indeed, data in Figures 5.10 and 5.11 demonstrate that students may be facing regulatory barriers when seeking to achieve a higher education qualification in a flexible and/or non-traditional way. At the same time, contextual information reported by countries suggests that legal requirements potentially impacting flexibility of higher education programmes often aim to guarantee that all students meet the necessary standards of their higher education degree or qualification. Therefore, there seems to be a challenging balancing exercise for policymakers who need to find the right equilibrium between regulatory standards and requirements, on the one hand, and flexible and individualised study opportunities, on the other hand.

5.4. Enhancing the quality of teaching

One key objective of the Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA ([44]) adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué ([45]) is to foster continuous enhancement of higher education teaching. Different means and approaches are specified in this context, including the necessity to foster new and innovative teaching methods in higher education and to support higher education institutions in enhancing the continuous professional development of their teaching staff.

Considering the objective to enhance higher education teaching, this section starts by investigating whether top-level policy frameworks specify the necessity for higher education teaching staff to follow a training in teaching. The section that looks at top-level measures other than compulsory training, which may encourage academics with a teaching role to take part in teacher training. The section is complemented by data from the EUA Trends 2024 survey capturing teaching support measures available in higher education institutions, and Eurostudent data looking at the degree of students' satisfaction with the quality of teaching.

5.4.1. Requirements for academics with a teaching role to receive training in teaching

Prospective teachers at levels below higher education commonly follow programmes combining subject knowledge, pedagogical theory and classroom practice (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2021). When it comes to higher education, the situation is more complex and varied. Within doctoral studies, which commonly precede academic careers, teaching is most often not specified as a standard element to be included in all programmes (European Commission / EACEA / Eurydice, 2017). Moreover, beyond doctoral studies, other pathways may lead to teaching in academia. This raises the question of whether academics with a teaching role receive, systematically, training in teaching.

Figure 5.12 explores the above question by looking at the presence of top-level regulations requiring academic staff with a teaching role to receive training in teaching. The figure shows that only a few EHEA systems (7 out of 48 with data) have in place top-level regulations specifying such a requirement.

([44]) Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.
([45]) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

Figure 5.12: Top-level regulations requiring academic staff with a teaching role to receive training in teaching, 2022/2023
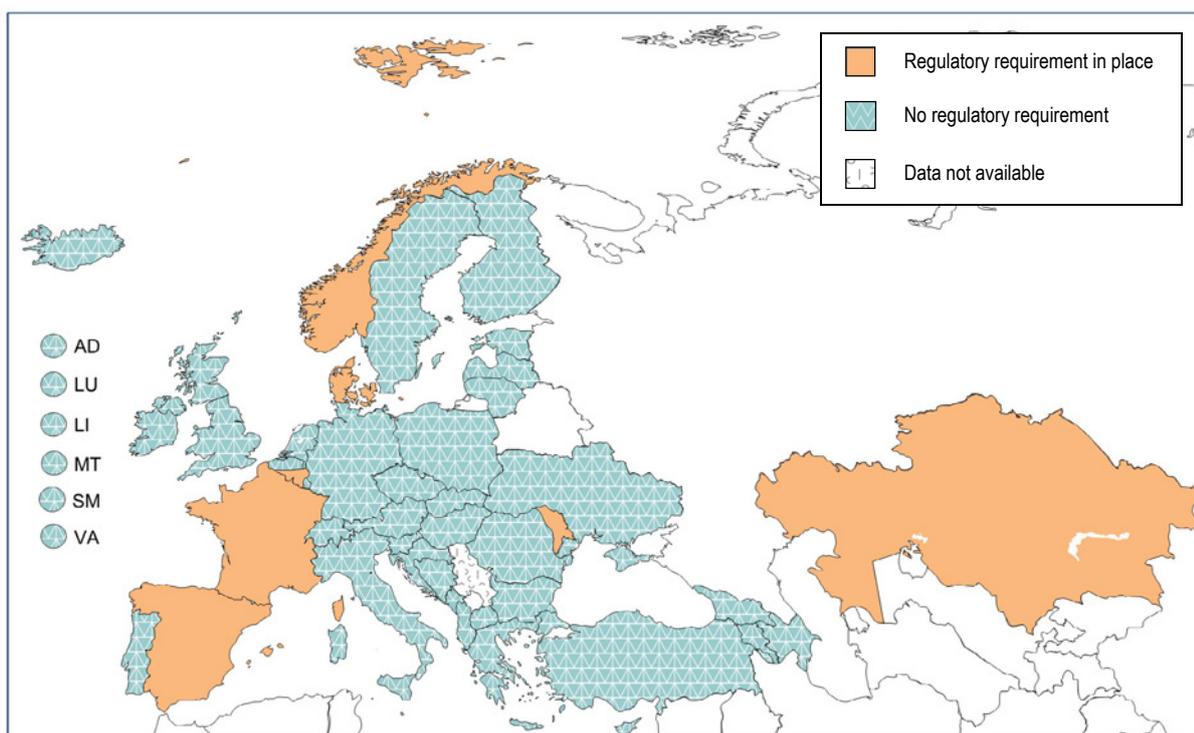
Source: BFUG data collection.

Note:

Table 5.2 in Annex provides details on the regulatory requirements displayed in the figure.

In two higher education systems – the French Community of Belgium and Kazakhstan – the requirement in question covers only some higher education institutions or programmes. More specifically, in the French Community of Belgium, the requirement concerns only higher education institutions other than universities, namely *Hautes Écoles* and higher education establishments for social advancement (*établissements d'enseignement supérieur de promotion sociale*), and it specifies that those teaching in these institutions have to obtain, within six years, a teaching aptitude certificate (*Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique Approprié à l'Enseignement Supérieur*). In Kazakhstan, the requirement concerns only academics involved in the delivery of online higher education programmes. They are requested to complete a training related to this study modality lasting at least 72 hours.

Sometimes, the training requirement is a pre-requisite for teaching in academia. This is the case in Moldova, where anyone teaching in higher education should complete a teacher training module, which can be either followed during studies or taken additionally as a microcredential prior to being engaged in the teaching process.

In some other cases, the requirement covers mainly the early contract stage and/or early stage of teaching in academia. This is the case in France, where lecturers are initially appointed as trainees for a period of one year and, during this period, they are requested to follow training aimed at deepening their pedagogical skills ([46]). In Spain, professors and assistant professors must undertake, in the first year of the contract, an initial teacher training course defined by universities' units responsible for training and innovation.

([46]) In addition to this requirement, regulations in France also provide some specifications regarding doctoral studies, stating that training in pedagogy is provided within doctoral studies when it contributes to the doctoral student's professional activity or project. This is not considered in Figure 5.12.

Regulations may also emphasise training in teaching in relation to higher academic ranks. For example, in Denmark, lecturers must complete professional postgraduate teacher training (*universitetspædagogikum*) and this training is a prerequisite for higher academic positions, including a professorship. In Norway, there is a regulatory expectation for academic staff with a teaching role to follow a 200-hour teacher training course, but professors need to document further qualifications than the minimum.

Although Figure 5.12 indicates that there are only a few EHEA systems requiring academics with a teaching role to follow training in teaching, some further aspects and measures need to be considered. First, many EHEA countries have in place regulatory frameworks which specify, in a general way, that academics should (continuously) improve their teaching skills (or skills in general) and/or that higher education institutions should provide continuing learning opportunities for their staff. These regulations are not considered in Figure 5.12 since they are not enough explicit and prescriptive regarding the participation in and/or completion of teacher training. Second, when there is no system-level requirement for academics to follow training in teaching, higher education institutions may still have in place a systematic provision of such training and may even make it obligatory, through their internal regulations. The institutional practice is outside the scope of Figure 5.12 but is discussed at the end of Section 5.4.2 and in Section 5.4.3.

5.4.2. Other systems-level measures promoting teacher training for academic staff

Apart from regulations requiring academics to follow training in teaching, other system-level measures are in place across the EHEA to stimulate the provision of teacher training for academic staff and the participation in it. These measures fall under various categories and are comparable only to a limited degree. For this reason, they are not displayed in a dedicated figure. Nevertheless, some key clusters of measures are outlined below.

To start with, there are top-level measures aiming to systematise the provision of teacher training for academic staff across the higher education sector. For example, in Austria, public universities conclude performance agreements with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research every three years ([47]) and, within these agreements, they commit to provide pedagogical training to their teaching staff. In Spain, according to legislation adopted in 2023 ([48]), universities should develop initial and continuous teacher training, provide tools and resources necessary to achieve quality teaching, and continuously evaluate teaching (including through student surveys). In Norway, all universities and colleges must offer skills development in university and college pedagogy, either at their own institution or in collaboration with other institutions. Slovenia attempts to systematise the provision of teacher training for academic staff with support from the European Social Fund. More specifically, between 2018 and 2022, the country conducted the public tender 'Innovative and flexible forms of teaching and learning', which concentrated on training for academic staff related to new teaching methods and innovative work with students.

When it comes to the actual development of teacher training, one important operational aspect is the definition of skills and competence to be achieved. It follows that the development of competence frameworks for academic positions can contribute to the development of relevant training provision. Activities in this area are taking place in several EHEA systems. For example, France adopted, in 2019, the competence benchmarks for academic positions (*Repères pour l'exercice du métier d'enseignant-chercheur*) ([49]), which aim to guide the development of initial and continuing training for academic staff, including the compulsory pedagogical training for newly appointed lecturers (see the previous section). In Ireland, already in 2016, the National Forum (see Section 5.1.3) published the National Professional

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([47]) https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/HS-Uni/Hochschulgovernance/Steuerungsinstrumente/Leistungsvereinbarungen.html
([48]) Organic Law 2/2023 of 22 March on the University System, Articles 6.4 and 6.5.
([49]) Benchmarks for the exercise of the profession of teacher-researcher.

Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education (⁵⁰). The same body coordinates the Open Courses for Professional Development (⁵¹), which are aligned with the above framework and target all those who teach in higher education. In Ukraine, policy documents adopted in 2020 and 2021 (⁵²) define professional competences for higher education teachers, including teaching competences. It is explicitly recommended that higher education teachers follow training leading to the expected competences. Lithuania adopted, in 2020, the guidelines for the development of competences of higher education teachers (⁵³) that refer to three types of competences: teaching and learning, research, and general competences. The aim of the guidelines is to encourage higher education institutions to develop an effective training system for their staff.

Networking activities represent yet another way to stimulate the provision of higher education teacher training and the participation in it. For example, in Germany, there are several university networks on academic teaching in the individual Länder. One example is the Network for Higher Education Teaching in North Rhine-Westphalia (⁵⁴), which promotes academic teaching at universities in this state. The network runs the programme Professional Teaching Competence for Higher Education leading to a teaching qualification. Another example is the Higher Education Network 'Digitalization of Teaching' in Baden-Württemberg (⁵⁵) that focuses on the development of digital teaching and learning.

Beyond system-level measures, the information reported by several countries suggests that higher education institutions themselves are often active both in providing teacher training and in encouraging academics to take part in it (⁵⁶). For example, in Finland, many higher education institutions developed pedagogical guidelines and strategies, and some make teacher training even mandatory for academic involved in teaching. In Sweden, higher education institutions commonly offer training courses in higher education teaching (usually around 10 weeks) to both newly hired and more senior employees. A rather extensive training provision for academic staff has also been reported by Switzerland, where continuing education courses covering teaching competences can built up to a certificate of advanced studies (one example is the certificate offered by the University of Zurich (⁵⁷)). These examples suggest that it is useful to complement data on national support measures related to higher education teacher training by data on institutional activities in the same area. This is the focus of the next section.

5.4.3. Support provided by higher education institutions to their teaching staff

The EUA Trends 2024 survey shows that higher education institutions commonly have in place measures to support their teaching staff (Figure 5.13). They frequently provide exchange and collaboration opportunities for teachers, digital skills training opportunities, training in pedagogy and didactics, and support related to technical issues (80% to 90% of the institutions surveyed). Slightly less common, but still widespread, are open online repositories for educational materials (72%) and learning and teaching units supporting teachers in enhancing their teaching (63%).

(⁵⁰)   National Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education.
(⁵¹)   https://opencourses.ie/
(⁵²)   Order of Ministry of Education of Ukraine of 4 December 2020 n°1504 regarding professional development of academic staff, and Order of Ministry of Economics of Ukraine of 3 March 2021 n°610 on approval of professional standard on professions group 'Higher education teachers'.
(⁵³)   Ministerial order approving guidelines for the development of competences of higher education teachers.
(⁵⁴)   https://hd-nrw.de/
(⁵⁵)   https://www.hnd-bw.de/
(⁵⁶)   This can partly be explained by the content of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) which specify, in Section 1.5, that higher education institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers and should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.
(⁵⁷)   https://www.weiterbildung.uzh.ch/en/hochschuldidaktik/ls/cas.html

Figure 5.13: Support provided by higher education institutions to teaching staff (% of institutions), 2023

Legend: Yes | Not yet, but planned | No | No information / Not applicable
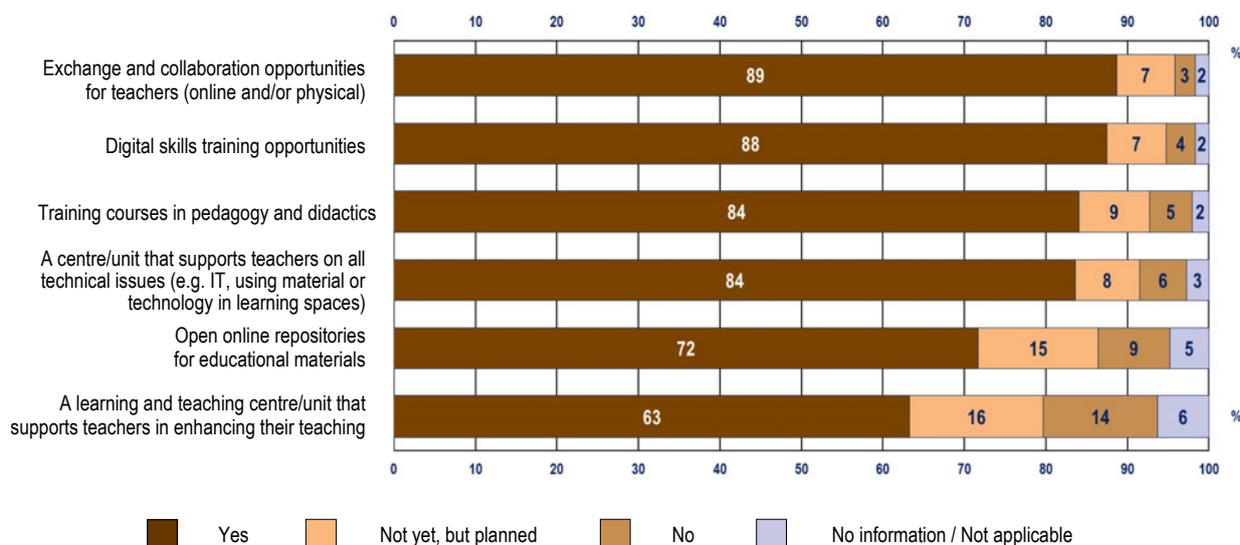
Source: EUA.

Notes:

Data refer to Question 33 in the EUA Trends 2024 survey: 'Does your institution support teaching staff with […]'. The figure displays the options that were proposed.

The figure is based on data supplied by 483 higher education institutions.

The EUA Trends 2024 survey also allows to evaluate the extent to which training courses for higher education teachers, when provided by higher education institutions, are compulsory (Figure 5.14). Data reveal that almost half of all institutions providing training courses for teachers [in pedagogy and didactics] (44%) make them compulsory for all teaching staff. This shows that while top-level (national) regulations rarely impose teacher training on higher education teachers (see Figure 5.12 and the related analysis), higher education institutions commonly do so. The compulsory training [in pedagogy and didactics] may also focus on specific categories of academic staff, including newly hired teachers or early-stage teachers, and/or doctoral candidates.

Figure 5.14: Categories of academic staff for which training courses for teachers are compulsory (% of institutions reporting different categories), 2023
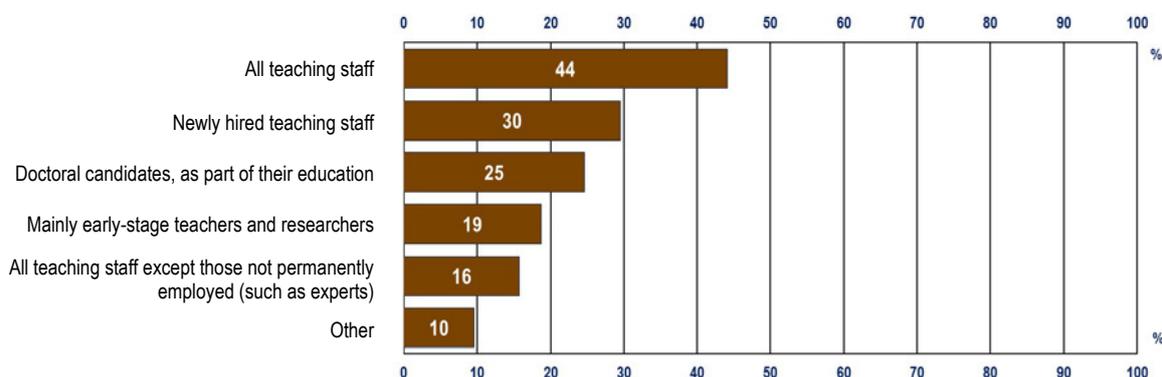
Source: EUA.

Notes:

Data refer to Question 33.3 in the EUA Trends 2024 survey: 'If your institution offers training courses for teachers, for which categories of staff are the enhancement courses compulsory? Please select all applicable options.' The options that were proposed within the survey are displayed in the figure. The question concerned only those institutions that indicated, under Question 33 (see the previous figure), that they provide training courses in pedagogy and didactics.

Data cover 406 institutions, namely those institutions (out of 438) that reported the provision of training for teacher [in pedagogy and didactics].

5.4.4. Students' perspective

After having discussed different approaches to enhancing the quality of teaching, the question of how higher education students perceive their teachers (lecturers) can be raised. The Eurostudent survey addresses this question by surveying students' views on different aspects of teaching, namely the quality of explanations, the provision of feedback and teachers' contribution to students' motivation.

Figure 5.15 covers 23 countries for which Eurostudent data on the above aspects are available. The figure shows that, among the three aspects surveyed, students in almost all the countries are the most positive about the quality of explanations. On average, across the 23 countries, 53% of students agree or strongly agree that their lecturers are extremely good at explaining things. This aspect is followed by the provision of helpful feedback, with 49% of students across the countries agreeing or strongly agreeing that their lecturers normally give them helpful feedback on how they are doing. 46% of students, on average, agree or strongly agree that the lecturers motivate them to do their best work.

There are substantial variations in the assessment of the three aspects across countries. Students in Azerbaijan show the highest degree of satisfaction with their lecturers in relation to all the aspects: 84% rate (very) positively the feedback they receive, 77% the contribution of the lecturers to their motivation and 75% the quality of explanations. Students in Georgia, Iceland, Latvia and Norway are also relatively positive regarding all the aspects surveyed since 50% or more agree or strongly agree with all the statements regarding their lecturers displayed in the figure. In contrast, in Portugal, only 28% of students evaluate (very) positively the provision of helpful feedback by their lecturers, 37% the contribution of the lecturers to their motivation and 39% the quality of explanations. Germany shows a pattern characterised by substantial differences between how students evaluate different teaching aspects: 64% of the students are (very) satisfied with explanations provided, but only 41% indicate a (high degree of) satisfaction with the feedback received and with how lecturers motivate them to do their best work.

Figure 5.15: Percentage of students (strongly) agreeing with different statements related to their lecturers, 2022
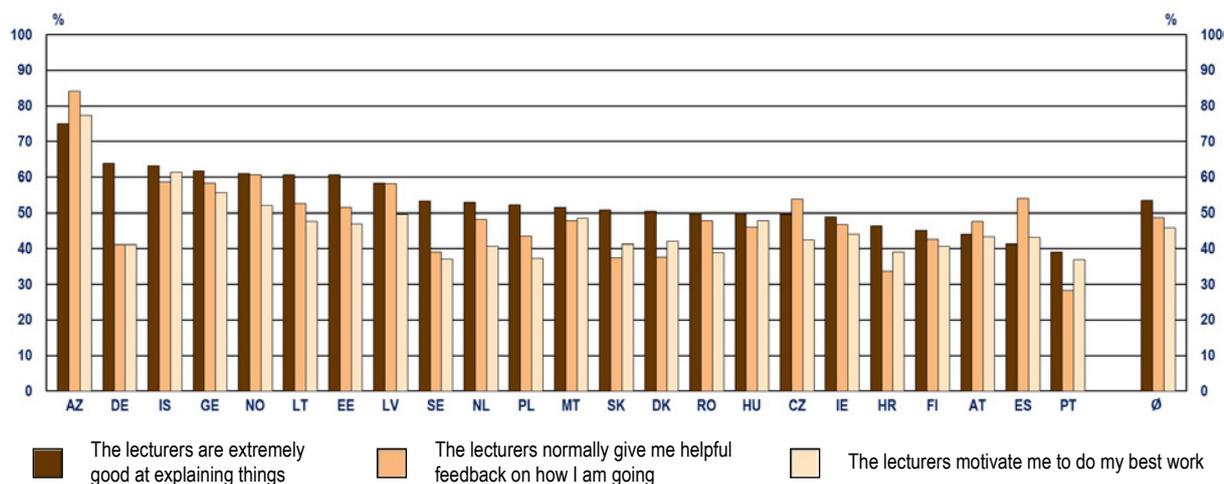
%	AZ	DE	IS	GE	NO	LT	EE	LV	SE	NL	PL	MT	SK	DK	RO	HU	CZ	IE	HR	FI	AT	ES	PT	Ø
The lecturers are extremely good at explaining things	75	64	63	62	61	61	61	59	53	53	52	52	51	50	50	50	50	49	46	45	44	41	39	53
The lecturers normally give me helpful feedback on how I am going	84	41	59	58	61	53	52	58	39	48	43	48	38	38	48	46	54	47	34	43	48	54	28	49
The lecturers motivate me to do my best work	77	41	61	56	52	48	47	50	37	41	37	49	41	42	39	48	42	44	39	41	43	43	37	46

Ø = refers to the average across the 23 countries with data

Source: Eurostudent.

5.5. Recognition of teaching in the recruitment and promotion of academic staff

The Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA ([58]) adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué ([59]) invite policymakers in charge of higher education to foster continuous enhancement of teaching, by 'structural measures to assure the parity of esteem for teaching and research' ([60]). In this context, the recommendations specify that, '[i]f needed, academic career schemes should be revised to ensure a better recognition for teaching in academic careers' ([61]). Considering the above objective, this section investigates criteria (to be) considered in the recruitment and promotion of academic staff as specified in top-level policy documents (regulations or recommendations).

Figure 5.16 shows that in most higher education systems participating in the Bologna Process (36 systems out of 47 for which data are available), top-level policy documents specify at least some criteria to be considered within the recruitment and/or promotion of academic staff. The figure also displays that in most higher education systems, top-level policy documents refer to the criteria related to both the recruitment and the promotion. In a limited number of the systems, top-level policy documents cover only one of these two areas.

Although the figure does not make a distinction between requirements (which refer to rules that must be followed) and recommendations (which refer to suggestions or proposals), most higher education systems have in place at least some top-level requirements covering the recruitment and/or promotion of academic staff. Indeed, this area is often covered by higher education legislation, which generally sets a broad framework for the recruitment and/or promotion processes. In addition to the requirements, there may be different recommendations. In a few higher education systems, there are no relevant requirements, but recommendations covering these areas are in place. This is the case in Finland and Iceland (recruitment and promotion), and Lithuania (promotion).

([58]) Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

([59]) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

([60]) Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA, Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020, p. 4.

([61]) Ibid.

Figure 5.16: Existence of top-level requirements or recommendations specifying criteria that should be considered within the recruitment and promotion of academic staff, 2022/2023
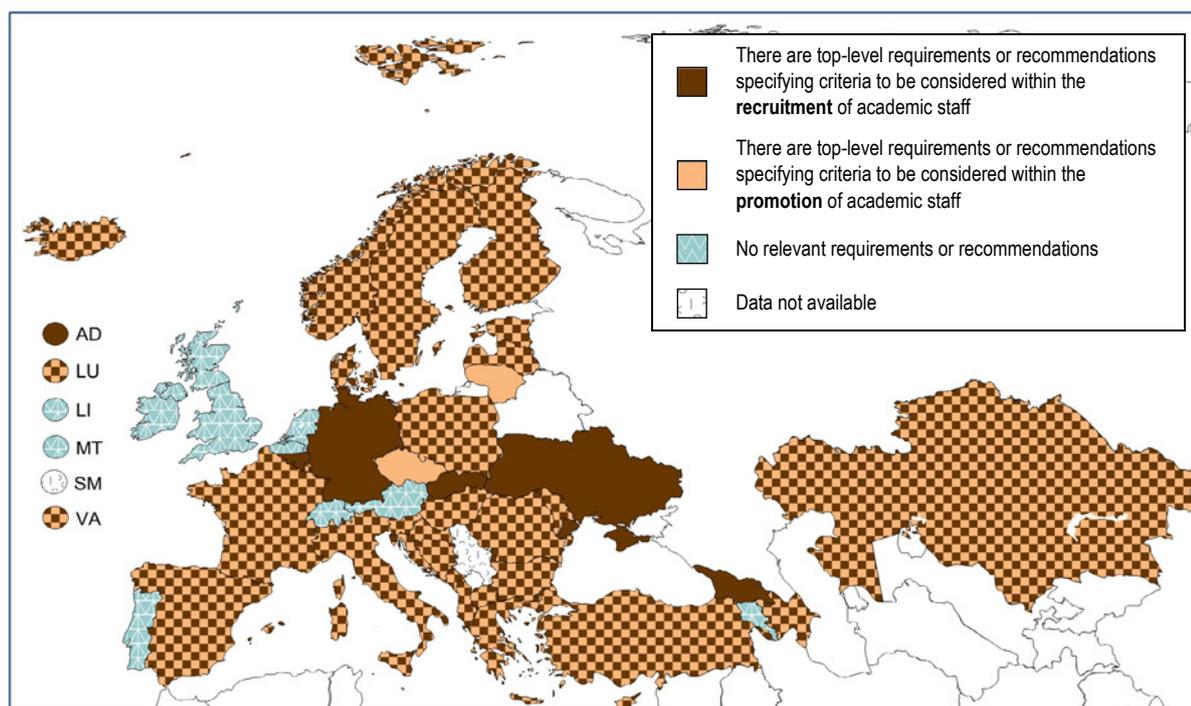
Source: BFUG data collection.

Requirements or recommendations referring to the recruitment and promotion of academic staff may include different specifications. For example, they may specify criteria to be considered in the evaluation process such as research outputs, teaching performance, leadership roles, etc. They may also comprise specifications related to the composition of recruitment or promotion committees, the documentation required, the evaluation and decision-making processes, and the appeal procedures. Moreover, they may explicitly prohibit discrimination based on factors such as gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or age.

Figure 5.17 considers those higher education systems that have in place top-level requirements or recommendations specifying (at least) some criteria to be considered within the recruitment and promotion of academic staff (see Figure 5.16). The figure depicts four criteria that may potentially be referred to in regulations or recommendations covering the recruitment and promotion of academic staff, namely research performance, teaching performance, international collaboration and experience, and professional experience acquired outside academia.

The figure shows that among the four criteria listed, research performance is the most frequently specified. This means that top-level policy documents commonly include some indications regarding the necessity for those who want to pursue academic careers to demonstrate their research capabilities, for example, by displaying the quantity, quality, and impact of their research. Teaching performance, while slightly less prominent than research performance, is also commonly referred to in top-level policy documents. In this context, regulations may, for instance, specify the necessity to present proofs of pedagogical experience when applying for different positions. Compared to the research and teaching performance, international collaboration and experience is less commonly specified in top-level policy documents. Even less common are explicit references to professional experience acquired outside academia.

Figure 5.17: Criteria that should be considered within the recruitment and promotion of academic staff as specified in top-level requirements or recommendations (number of higher education systems), 2022/2023
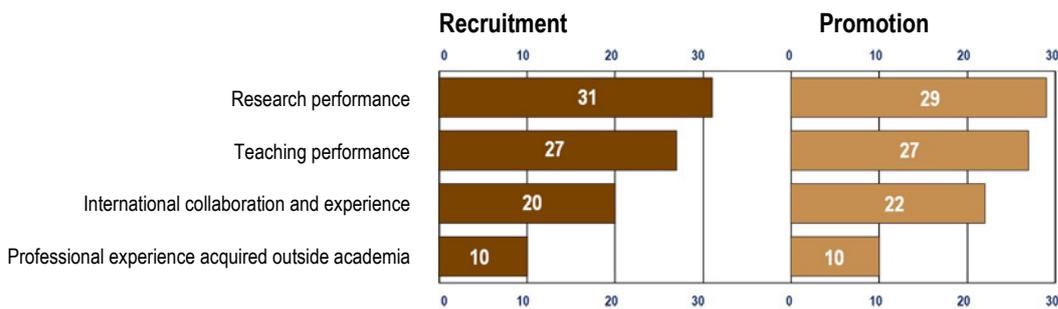
Source: BFUG data collection.

Note:

The figure is based on data supplied by those higher education systems that have in place top-level requirements or recommendations specifying (at least) some criteria to be considered within the recruitment and promotion of academic staff. These higher education systems can be identified in Figure 5.16.

Figure 5.18 looks at the above data from a country perspective and focuses on the criterion 'teaching performance'. It demonstrates that in almost all higher education systems with top-level policy documents covering the recruitment and/or promotion of academic staff, teaching performance is referred to among the criteria (to be) considered. Only five higher education systems with relevant policy documents do not specify teaching performance among various criteria included (Andorra, the French Community of Belgium, Iceland, Italy and Lithuania). Moreover, as discussed previously (see Figure 5.16 and the related analysis), 11 higher education systems do not have in place top-level policy documents specifying criteria that should be considered within the recruitment and promotion of academic staff.

Figure 5.18: Teaching performance as a criterion specified in top-level requirements or recommendations related to the recruitment and promotion of academic staff, 2022/2023
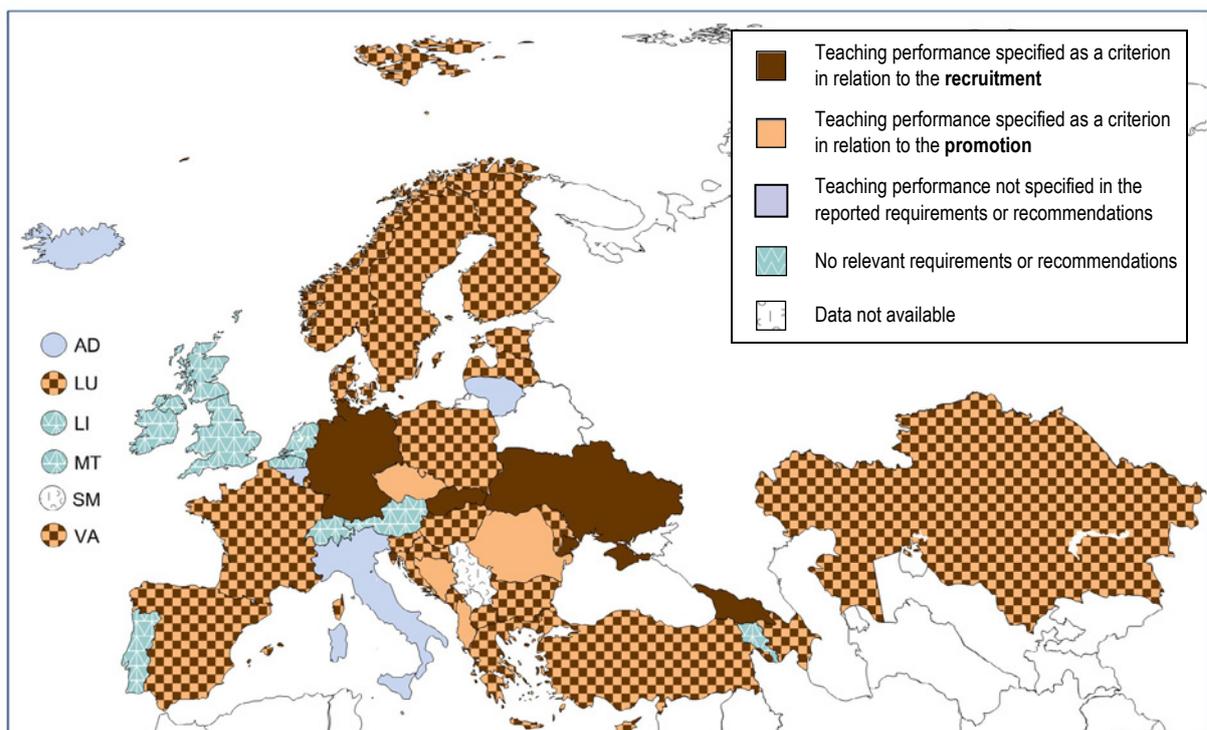
Source: BFUG data collection.

Overall, the analysis of top-level frameworks suggests that while research performance remains the main criterion valued in academic careers, teaching performance – alongside research – plays a role, albeit a lesser one, in the recruitment and promotion of higher education staff. However, it must be noted that top-level regulations or recommendations often provide only a broad framework regarding the recruitment and promotion of academic staff. This means that higher education institutions can commonly complement national rules and guidelines by their own policies and, potentially, prioritise (or not) certain criteria within their recruitment and promotion processes. In other words, this area cannot be fully comprehended through the analysis of top-level policy documents and the analysis needs to be complemented by the exploration of institutional practices.

The EUA Trends 2024 survey provides some insight into institutional practices by surveying directly higher education institutions across Europe. Within the survey, the institutions were asked to specify the role of teaching performance evaluations in the promotion and career progression of teaching staff (Figure 5.19). Half of the institutions surveyed (50%) indicated that these evaluations play an important role and, in contrast, only 9% reported no role. The remaining institutions (41%) recognised that teaching performance evaluations play some role in the promotion and career progression of teaching staff; however, a minor role compared to other criteria.

Figure 5.19: Role of teaching performance evaluations in the promotion and career progression of teaching staff (% of institutions reporting different roles), 2023
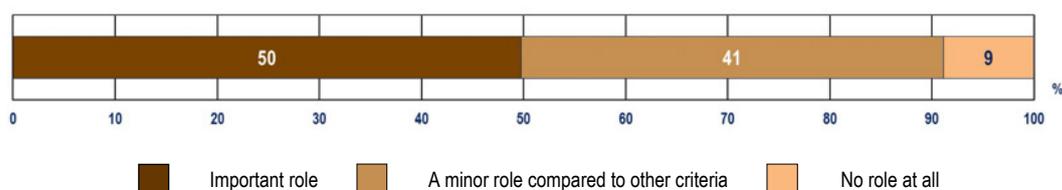
Source: EUA.

N o t e s :

Data refer to Question 34 in the EUA Trends 2024 survey: 'Do teaching performance evaluations play an important role in the promotion and career progression of teaching staff?'. The survey proposed the following answers: 'Yes', 'A minor role compared to other criteria' and 'No role at all'. The figure displays the answer 'Yes' under the category 'Important role'.

The figure is based on data supplied by 484 higher education institutions.

The comparison of the above data with the previous edition of the Trends survey suggests that teaching performance evaluations play a more important role nowadays than some years ago. More specifically, within the previous survey round, only 39% of participating institutions indicated that teaching performance evaluations play an important role in the promotion and career development of teaching staff, 48% indicated some role and 12% no role (Gaebel et al., 2018, p. 69).

5.6. Conclusions

Building on the Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA ([62]) adopted within the 2020 Rome Communiqué ([63]), this chapter examined whether and how higher education systems across the EHEA support quality and innovation in higher education learning and teaching. Following the content of the recommendations, the chapter investigated three interconnected thematic areas: system-level policies and measures, student-centred learning and initiatives fostering continuous enhancement of teaching.

Starting with system-level policies and measures, the BFUG data collection shows that slightly more than half the EHEA systems have in place an ongoing system-level strategy with major references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education. Alongside the strategies, there are other system-level policy measures promoting learning and teaching in higher education. For example, several countries have been conducting national projects concentrating on areas such as digitalization of higher education and/or higher education pedagogy. There have also been regulatory changes in some EHEA countries that intend to boost learning and teaching innovations, and three countries (Germany, Ireland and Kazakhstan) have recently established national bodies to support learning and teaching in higher education institutions.

The development of national policies and measures related to learning and teaching in higher education most commonly involves the national ministry responsible for higher education and higher education institutions (through their associations and networks). Alongside these most frequently cited stakeholders, other commonly involved parties are student associations and unions, quality assurance agencies, labour market and employment organisations, and higher education staff associations and unions. Although they may be strongly affected by the outcomes of policies and measures, it is less common for ministries responsible for matters other than higher education and for the wider community and civil society organisations to be involved in policy development consultations related to higher education learning and teaching.

Looking more precisely at quality assurance agencies, data show that their most common role regarding learning and teaching in higher education is to conduct quality assessment reviews. Within this central role, in around two thirds of the EHEA systems, quality assurance agencies verify that higher education institutions have a coherent institutional learning and teaching strategy in place. In around half of the EHEA systems, quality assurance agencies develop reference points and guidance on learning and teaching for higher education institutions. A slightly less common role for quality assurance agencies is to conduct or commission research on learning and teaching in higher education.

Moving to the concept of student-centred learning, the analysis has shown that this term is not always specified in national policy documents and, even when specified, it is rarely defined at national level. Nevertheless, the few national definitions captured within the BFUG data collection suggest a general alignment of national interpretations of student-centred learning with the Bologna Process conceptualisation.

The BFUG data also demonstrate that learning outcomes, which are acknowledged to support student-centred learning, have become a common feature of higher education programmes across the EHEA. Indeed, in almost all EHEA systems, top-level policy documents specify that higher education programmes should include explicit intended learning outcomes, and in around two thirds of the systems, documents accompanying higher education qualifications must specify achieved learning

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([62]) Recommendations to National Authorities for the Enhancement of Higher Education Learning and Teaching in the EHEA,
        Annex III of the Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.
([63]) Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

outcomes. The EUA Trends survey, which surveys higher education institutions directly, confirms a high degree of implementation of learning outcomes.

Alongside learning outcomes, student-centred learning has been closely associated with flexible learning. Building on the analysis provided in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2), this chapter looked at regulatory requirements and restrictions that may limit flexible study arrangements in higher education. Such requirements and restrictions have been identified in most EHEA systems. Commonly, higher education systems have in place restrictions related to the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, requirements regarding obligatory assessment methods and/or limitations concerning online, blended and distance learning, or part-time studies. These restrictions are often motivated by quality assurance concerns. However, policy makers need to find the right balance between these concerns and the provision of adequate learning opportunities for all learners, including non-traditional and self-directed learners.

In its final sections, the chapter concentrated on policy measures to foster high-quality teaching. It has shown that, contrary to teachers at lower education levels, higher education teachers are rarely systematically required to follow training in teaching. Indeed, the BFUG data collection has identified only a few systems with top-level regulations imposing training in teaching to (at least some categories of) higher education staff. However, data provided directly by higher education institutions within the EUA Trends survey suggest that higher education institutions often make training in pedagogy and didactics compulsory for their teaching staff. In other words, requirements set at institutional level regarding training in teaching for academics commonly go beyond those specified at national level.

Apart from compulsory courses, other measures are in place across the EHEA to stimulate the provision of teacher training for academic staff and their participation in it. For example, some countries have been using national resources to systematise the provision of relevant training across the higher education sector and some other countries have invested in the development of competence frameworks for academic positions, which can in turn support the development of adequate training provision.

Closely related to the provision of teacher training for academic staff is the question of how satisfied students are with the quality of their teachers (lecturers). The Eurostudent survey shows that, on average, around half of the students in the countries surveyed agree or strongly agree that their lecturers are extremely good at explaining things, providing feedback or motivating them. This can be seen as a relatively satisfactory result. However, in every country surveyed, there is some room for improvement.

Finally, regulatory information provided within the BFUG data collection suggests that while research performance remains the main criterion valued in academic careers, teaching performance – alongside research – also plays a role, albeit a lesser one, in the recruitment and promotion of higher education staff. The EUA Trends survey complements the regulatory analysis by showing that higher education institutions commonly see teaching evaluations as an important element influencing careers of higher education teaching staff. Moreover, the comparison between different EUA Trends survey rounds suggests that teaching performance evaluations play a more important role nowadays than some years ago.

CHAPTER 6: INTERNATIONALISATION

The 2020 Rome Communiqué

The 2020 Rome Communiqué, adopted by ministers of higher education of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in the Rome Ministerial Conference in November 2020 ([1]), puts emphasis on a shared commitment to mobility. This is part of the key concept of an interconnected EHEA, where 'our shared frameworks and tools will continue to facilitate and enhance international cooperation and reform, exchange of knowledge and mobility of staff and students.'

The Communiqué reaffirms the commitment that at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have experienced a study or training period abroad. In addition to this recognition of the importance of physical mobility, ministers 'further commit to enabling all learners to acquire international and intercultural competences through internationalisation of the curricula or participation in innovative international environments in their home institutions, and to experience some form of mobility, whether in physical, digitally enhanced (virtual) or blended formats.'

Ministers also acknowledge the role of European programmes in supporting mobility, noting in particular the importance of the Erasmus programme.

Chapter outline

This chapter combines both statistical analysis and more qualitative information. The first section (6.1) focuses on recent mobility trends and considers the 2020 target, set by ministers in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009, that at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a period of higher education-related study or training period abroad. This is followed by a section on qualitative data addressing the issues of portability of grants and loans, which is a long-term commitment first made by ministers in the Berlin Communiqué, 2003. Finally, section 6.3 deals with a specific issue where internationalisation and solidarity intersect: the response of EHEA countries in supporting Ukrainian higher education following the invasion by Russia in February 2022.

6.1. Assessing student mobility flows

This section provides data and analysis on student mobility flows, building on indicators previously published in the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation Report. Specific terms are used to describe the different forms of student mobility. Firstly, **degree mobility** is the physical crossing of a national border to enrol in a tertiary level degree programme in the country of destination. **Credit mobility** is a short-term form of mobility – usually a maximum of one year – aiming at the acquisition of credits in a foreign institution in the framework of on-going studies at the home institution. The minimum length of stay should be at least three consecutive months, or 15 ECTS credits.

There is also a distinction to be drawn regarding the direction of mobility flows. **Inward mobility** takes the perspective of the country of destination – the country to which the student moves to study. The inward mobility rate may therefore be considered as an indicator of the country's attractiveness, relative to the size of its tertiary education system. **Outward mobility** takes the perspective of the country of origin – the country from which the student moves. The outward mobility rate may be considered as an indicator of a pro-active policy for students to acquire international experience (particularly for credit mobility). However, it may also be an indicator of insufficiencies or lack of capacity in the education system of the country of origin (particularly for degree mobility).

([1])   Rome Ministerial Communiqué, 19 November 2020.

Before 2013, the UNESCO OECD Eurostat (UOE) joint data collection defined 'mobile students' as foreign students (non-citizens of the country in which they study) who have crossed a national border and moved to another country to study. Starting from 2013, the UOE definition is based on the country of origin understood as the country where the upper secondary diploma was awarded and not the country of citizenship. However, 14 countries in the EHEA still use citizenship/nationality as the criterion to define mobile students. While for many students the country of origin will be identical to the country of the student's citizenship, this is not the case for all students. It is therefore more accurate to consider the country of permanent/prior residence or prior education rather than citizenship/nationality for data collection purposes. Citizenship/nationality provides a reliable estimation of the foreign student population but is not an accurate indicator of inward learning mobility and introduces bias to the data.

This section looks at three aspects of student mobility flows: outgoing (outward) mobility, incoming (inward) mobility and mobility balance. The report presents the total rates, and then takes a closer look at the differences in levels of student mobility between degree and credit mobility in the different cycles of higher education. Throughout the analysis, degree and/or credit mobility flows are examined separately. The number of incoming degree-seeking students is utilised as a proxy for assessing the attractiveness of the EHEA countries and the level of internationalisation achieved. For outward mobility towards countries outside the EHEA, only Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Japan, New Zealand and the United States have been included due to issues with data availability and quality. For more information on the EHEA country coverage, see the 'Glossary and methodological Notes'.

The analysis presents data from 2020/2021. It should be acknowledged that, although this is the most recent dataset available for this report, it is not representative regarding longer-term trends. This is because the Covid-19 pandemic was at its height at this time and undoubtedly had a significant impact on students' choices or capacity to study abroad – whether for credit or degree mobility. For this reason, comparing data between different time points could result in misleading results. Therefore, comparisons with 2016/2017, which was the reference year for the data presented in the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation Report, are limited and should be read with caution.

6.1.1. Outward mobility

The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve ministerial conference in 2009 set a target to be achieved by 2020 ([2]), that at least 20% of those graduating in the EHEA should have had a period of higher education-related study or training period abroad. This section of the report discusses outward mobility flows in EHEA countries in relation to this target by reporting the mobility rates in relation to the total student populations, and by identifying the type and level of mobility.

The degree and credit outward mobility rate of a country for tertiary graduates shows the number of students who graduated abroad or spent a study-related period abroad, as a percentage of the total number of graduates from that country. For a given country (of origin), the compilation of outward degree-mobile students/graduates relies on the records of all other countries in the world. Indeed, only each hosting country can collect data on students/graduates from this country of origin in its own tertiary education system. Unlike for degree mobility, data on credit mobility are collected from the country of origin, defined as the country where the graduates are regularly enrolled/obtain their diploma. Where graduates are degree mobile and have also previously been credit mobile (dual mobility status) to avoid double counting, degree mobility takes precedence over any credit mobility. Therefore, throughout the analysis credit mobility data concerns students who were only credit and not degree mobile.

([2])   Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué: the Bologna Process 2020 – The European Highed Education Area in the new decade. Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April, p. 4.

Figure 6.1 presents the outward (degree and credit) mobility rate of graduates originating from the EHEA. It highlights the different incidence of the two mobility components across the EHEA countries. The figure shows the state of mobility in the EHEA in relation to the 20% target set in the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué.

Figure 6.1: Outward (degree and credit) mobility rate of graduates (ISCED level 5-8) by country of origin, 2020/2021 (%)
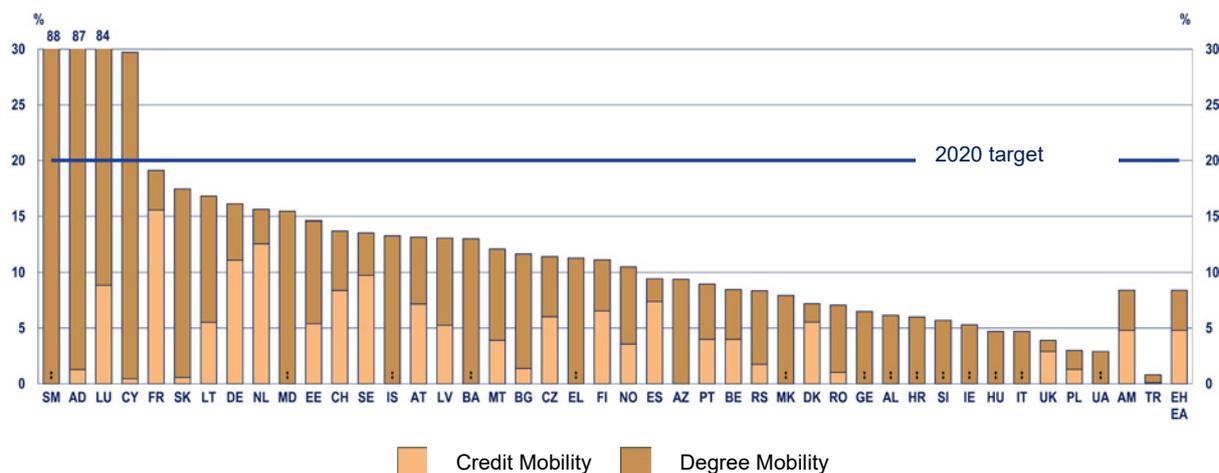
2020/2021	SM	AD	LU	CY	FR	SK	LT	DE	NL	MD	EE	CH	SE	IS	AT	LV	BA	MT	BG	CZ	EL	FI
A. Credit Mobility	:	1.3	8.9	0.5	15.6	0.6	5.5	11.1	12.6	:	5.4	8.4	9.7	:	7.2	5.3	:	3.9	1.4	6.0	:	6.6
B. Degree Mobility	87.5	85.4	74.9	29.3	3.6	16.9	11.3	5.0	3.1	15.4	9.2	5.3	3.8	13.3	6.0	7.8	13.0	8.2	10.3	5.4	11.3	4.6
A and B	87.5	86.7	83.8	29.8	19.2	17.5	16.8	16.1	15.7	15.4	14.6	13.7	13.5	13.3	13.2	13.1	13	12.1	11.7	11.4	11.3	11.2

2021	NO	ES	AZ	PT	BE	RS	MK	DK	RO	GE	AL	HR	SI	IE	HU	IT	UK	PL	UA	AM	TR	EHEA
A. Credit Mobility	3.6	7.4	:	4.0	4.0	1.7	:	5.5	1.0	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	2.9	1.3	:	:	0.1	4.8
B. Degree Mobility	6.9	2.1	9.4	5.0	4.5	6.6	7.9	1.7	6.1	6.5	6.1	6.0	5.7	5.3	4.7	4.7	1.0	1.7	2.9	2.4	0.7	3.6
A and B	10.5	9.5	9.4	9	8.5	8.3	7.9	7.2	7.1	6.5	6.1	6.0	5.7	5.3	4.7	4.7	3.9	3	2.9	2.4	0.8	8.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries, OECD.

Notes:

Data are sorted in descending order according to the total outward (degree and credit) mobility rate.

EHEA refers to the EHEA weighted average. It includes all countries for which at least one of the components (credit or degree mobility) is available. Countries for which credit mobile data are not available are considered as having zero credit mobile graduates (degree mobile numbers are included for total graduates in the nominator) and the total graduate population originating from EHEA is used as denominator. Countries with no distinction for graduates with dual mobility are presented with data on degree mobility only (details available in the Glossary and methodological note). As data for credit mobility are not available for some countries, the value of the EHEA average for credit mobility and the total EHEA average for credit and degree mobility could be underestimated.

Total outward mobility rates for country X are calculated as (outward degree-mobile graduates from country X + outward credit-mobile graduates who were not degree mobile from country X)/graduates originating in country X. Graduates originating in country X are calculated as (total graduates in country X – inward mobile graduates from any other country to country X + outward mobile graduates from country X to any other country).

No information is available on EHEA-origin degree mobile graduates who graduated in the US, which implies potential underestimation for some countries.

When it comes to outward mobility data show a total of 569 860 graduates who had an international mobility experience in 2020/2021 either in the framework of a study period abroad (credit mobility) or in the form of a full degree. This corresponds to an 8.4% share of outward mobile graduates in the total EHEA graduates' population (all ISCED levels combined) for countries with available data. It falls a long way short of the ambition of 20% set in 2009.

The share of graduates in tertiary education (all ISCED levels considered), who had a temporary experience abroad (credit mobility) was 4.8%, while 3.6% graduated abroad (degree mobility). The total credit mobility graduates' population (328 669) accounted for 57.7% of the EHEA total mobile graduates' population in 2020/2021, demonstrating stronger outward credit mobility flows across EHEA countries compared to degree mobility.

Figure 6.1 shows that for all education levels considered, 10 of 43 countries with available data ([3]) registered a share of mobile graduates above 15%. Among these countries with substantial total outward mobility flows, France (credit mobility rate 15.6%), the Netherlands (credit mobility rate 12.6%) and Germany (credit mobility rate 11.1%) registered a larger share of credit mobile than degree mobile graduates. Conversely, Slovakia (17.5%), Lithuania (16.8%) and several small education systems had larger degree mobility flows. San Marino, Andorra, Luxembourg, and Cyprus surpassed the learning mobility benchmark of 20%. Nevertheless, the size of the outward mobility flows in these four countries accounted for just 0.1% of total EHEA outward mobility. In all four countries, the small size of the higher education system clearly operated as a factor inciting many students to study abroad. 13 countries registered mobility flows ranging between 10% and 15% with Norway at the lower (10.5%) and Estonia the upper end (14.6%). A share of less than 10% was found in 20 countries ([4]) – close to half of the countries with available data. The lowest share (less than 5%) of outgoing students ranged between 0.8% in Türkiye and 3.9% in the United Kingdom, with Armenia, Poland and Ukraine also registering mobility rates within this range. The share of the outward mobility population in these countries accounted for 2.2% of the total EHEA outward mobility population.

Compared to the 2016/2017 data reported in the 2020 Bologna Process Implementation Report, most countries maintained the same proportions of credit and degree mobility. The trend of higher outward credit mobility activity across the EHEA was also apparent in 2016/2017. However, in Norway the balanced shares of credit and degree mobility have changed and in 2020/2021 the country registered a higher rate of degree mobility. In Portugal, Belgium, and Italy degree mobility rates were higher than credit mobility in 2020/2021 while in 2016/2017 credit mobility was the preferred option.

Figure 6.2 shows the outward degree and credit mobility rate of graduates originating from the EHEA in 2020/2021. The mobility rates are shown per ISCED level and with the ISCED 5-8 average. The figure provides a comparative and more differentiated view of overall mobility from EHEA countries.

Figure 6.2: Outward degree and credit mobility of graduates, by country of origin and level of educational attainment, 2020/2021, (%)

ISCED 6   ISCED 7   ISCED 8 – ISCED 5-8
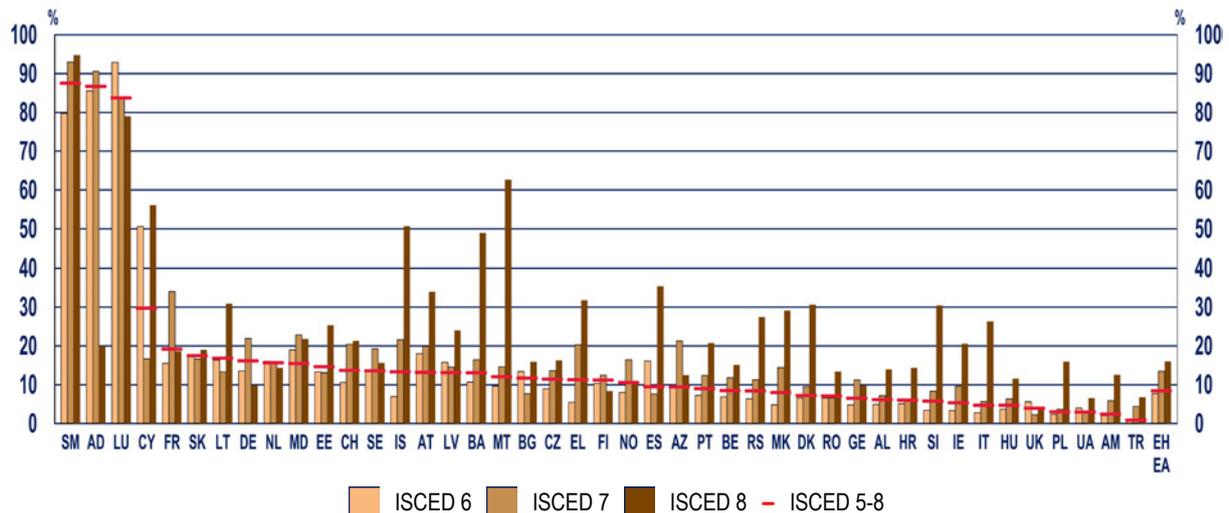
([3])   Moldova and San Marino: no data on credit mobility.

([4])   No data on credit mobility is available for AL, AM, AZ, BA, GE, IE, IS, MK, UA. Degree mobile numbers are included for total number of graduates.

%	SM	AD	LU	CY	FR	SK	LT	DE	NL	MD	EE	CH	SE	IS	AT	LV	BA	MT	BG	CZ	EL	FI
ISCED 5	:	75.0	10.5	9.6	4.4	31.0	:	10.4	1.7	0.7	:	46.4	2.0	35.7	0.3	4.5	:	9.1	:	43.9	:	:
ISCED 6	79.8	85.6	92.9	50.6	15.5	17.4	16.4	13.5	16.0	19.0	13.3	10.6	13.4	6.9	18.0	15.8	10.7	9.6	13.4	9.0	5.4	10.3
ISCED 7	93.0	90.6	83.4	16.7	34.0	16.6	13.3	21.9	16.0	22.9	13.1	20.4	19.3	21.6	19.9	14.6	16.4	14.6	7.7	13.6	20.3	12.4
ISCED 8	94.7	20.0	79.0	56.2	18.6	19.0	30.9	9.8	14.3	21.8	25.4	21.3	15.6	50.7	34.0	24.0	49.0	62.7	15.9	16.3	31.8	8.3
ISCED 5-8	87.5	86.7	83.8	29.7	19.1	17.5	16.8	16.1	15.6	15.4	14.6	13.7	13.6	13.3	13.2	13.1	13.0	12.1	11.7	11.4	11.3	11.1

%	NO	ES	AZ	PT	BE	RS	MK	DK	RO	GE	AL	HR	SI	IE	IT	HU	UK	PL	UA	AM	TR	EHEA
ISCED 5	4.2	1.7	:	6.3	3.1	:	:	1.7	:	:	9.0	:	3.9	2.6	15.6	5.6	0.8	44.5	:	0.2	0.1	1.8
ISCED 6	8.0	16.1	9.5	7.2	6.9	6.4	4.9	6.6	6.6	4.8	4.9	5.1	3.4	3.4	2.8	3.7	5.6	2.3	3.9	1.9	0.7	7.7
ISCED 7	16.5	7.6	21.3	12.4	11.9	11.3	14.4	9.5	6.6	11.2	7.2	6.0	8.3	9.6	5.6	6.4	2.3	3.6	3.2	5.8	4.4	13.5
ISCED 8	10.6	35.3	12.5	20.8	15.2	27.4	29.1	30.6	13.4	9.8	14.0	14.3	30.4	20.6	26.3	11.5	4.4	16	6.6	12.5	6.8	16.0
ISCED 5-8	10.5	9.4	9.4	9.0	8.5	8.4	7.9	7.2	7.1	6.5	6.1	6.0	5.7	5.3	4.7	4.7	3.9	2.9	2.9	2.4	0.8	8.4

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries, OECD.

Notes:

Data are sorted in descending order according to the total outward (degree and credit) mobility rate.

Total outward mobility rates for country X are calculated as (outward degree-mobile graduates from country X + outward credit-mobile graduates who were not degree mobile from country X)/graduates originating in country X. Graduates originating in country X are calculated as (total graduates in country X – inward mobile graduates from any other country to country X + outward mobile graduates from country X to any other country).

EHEA refers to the EHEA weighted average for credit and degree mobility compared to the total EHEA graduate population. It is based on available data for all countries for which at least one of the components (credit or degree mobility) is available.

The weighted averages per ISCED level are calculated based on the total graduates' population at the respective education level.

For countries with partial data (see Glossary and methodological notes), the available data are included in the presentation and in the calculated EHEA averages. Countries with no distinction for graduates with dual mobility are presented with data on degree mobility only (details available in the Glossary and methodological note). Since data for credit mobility are not available for some countries, the value of the EHEA averages could be underestimated.

ISCED 5 data is limited and included only in the table.

No information is available on EHEA-origin degree mobile graduates who graduated in the US, which implies a potential underestimation for some countries.

Data show that the greatest interest in outward mobility studies occurred at doctoral level (ISCED 8), with a decreasing rate of participation at master's (ISCED 7) and bachelor's (ISCED 6) levels. However, the total number of graduates at ISCED 6 was almost twice the number of ISCED 7 graduates, while the number of ISCED 8 graduates was equivalent to just 3.5% of the ISCED 6 graduate population. The difference between the actual number of outward mobile graduates at ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 was small, and this is explained by the higher mobility rate at ISCED 7. The preferred type of outward mobility at ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 levels was credit mobility, while at ISCED 8 most of the mobile graduates chose to follow outward degree studies.

In 23 of 41 countries with data available for ISCED 6-8 education levels, the share of outward mobility graduates increased as ISCED levels raised. The number of countries reaching the 20% target also increased from ISCED 6 to ISCED 8, registering a jump from 4 countries ISCED 6, 10 at ISCED 7 and 22 countries at ISCED 8. Conversely, the number of countries registering lower outward mobility rates (below 10%) decreased with the increase of education level.

The mobility flows in large and small systems followed different trends. Small education systems showed very high outward mobility rates at all education levels with preference for degree mobility studies. Large education systems (above 500 000 graduates) showed diverse mobility rates at the different education levels. Graduates in France and Germany showed greater interest for studies abroad at master's level.

Credit mobility was the preferred type at bachelor's and master's level, while at doctoral level the degree outward mobility was more popular. Graduates from Türkiye preferred degree to credit mobility in all education levels, with the highest interest in outward doctoral degree studies. Conversely graduates from Spain showed a preference for credit mobility at all education levels with the highest share at doctoral level. Graduates from the United Kingdom were more mobile at bachelor's level, with a preference for credit mobility. Lower levels of mobility were registered in the second and third cycles, where degree mobility was the preferred form.

The EHEA total mobility rate in the first cycle (ISCED°6) was 7.7%. Mobility rates of 20% or higher were registered in four countries – all small education systems. Credit mobility, accounting for 61% of the total mobility flows, considerably outnumbered degree mobility. 12 (⁵) of 43 systems registered a rate above 15%. Among these, four (⁶) countries registered a higher rate of credit than degree mobility (see also Figure 6.1 for reference). In 24 systems, the mobility rate at this level did not exceed 10%. In 11 countries within this group, the total mobility rate was below 5%.

At ISCED 7, the EHEA average mobility rate was 13.5% − considerably higher than at ISCED 6. As in the first cycle, credit mobility accounted for nearly 60% of the total mobility flows at this level. In 10 of 43 countries, the share of outward mobility reached or exceeded 20%. San Marino, Andorra, and Luxembourg registered the highest mobility rates (above 80%), followed by France (34%) and Moldova (22.9%). France and Germany, the systems with the largest number of outward mobile graduates in this group, had a significantly higher share of credit mobile graduates. Fifteen countries had mobility rates below 10%. The United Kingdom, Poland and Ukraine were among the countries with the largest total graduates' populations (above 100 000) at this education level but registered outward mobility rates below 5%.

At doctoral level (ISCED 8), the EHEA average mobility rate was 16%, higher than the rates at both ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 levels. However, the size of the graduates' and mobile graduates' populations was much smaller compared to the other education cycles. Contrary to the trends at ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 levels, degree mobility outstripped credit mobility. In 22 of 43 countries the share of outward mobility graduates was 20% or higher. Seven countries had a mobility rate between 15% and 20%. Only six countries had a rate lower than 10%. Two of the countries with a large total graduate population (above 10 000) at this education level − Germany and Spain − registered mobility participation rates of respectively 9.8% and 35.3%. In Spain the mobile graduates preferred by far to follow credit mobility activities. The United Kingdom, while having the second largest graduate population at this level, was the only country among the 43 with a mobility rate below 5%.

When observing the differences between ISCED 6 and ISCED 7, 31 out of 43 countries had higher mobility rates at ISCED 7 level. Very large gaps between the mobility rates at ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 (more than 10 percentage points) were observed in six countries, with France registering an ISCED 7 mobility rate 18.5 percentage points higher than at ISCED 6. Conversely, Cyprus registered a significantly lower mobility rate at ISCED 7 level (33.9 percentage points difference compared to ISCED 6).

32 out of 43 countries had a higher mobility rate at ISCED°8 level compared to ISCED°7. 19 countries registered large differences (more than 10 percentage points) between the mobility rates at ISCED 7 and ISCED 8. Andorra (70.6 percentage points), France (15 percentage points) and Germany (12 percentage points) showed higher outward mobility rates at ISCED 7 compared to ISCED 8 level.

The EHEA total mobility rate in the first cycle dropped from 9.6% in 2016/2017 to 7.7% in 2020/2021. Overall, the levels of outward mobility for second-cycle students across EHEA countries in 2020/2021 marked a decrease from 16.1% in 2016/2017 to 13.5% in 2020/2021. At doctoral level, the outward mobility in 2020/2021 showed a slight decrease from 17% to 16%. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic should be considered in contextualising this drop.

Data reported in 2016/2017 indicated that in 18 out of 33 (54%) of the countries with available data, the interest in engaging in outward mobility activities was higher at the second and third cycles compared to the first cycle. This trend was confirmed for 2020/2021, where in 23 out of 41 countries with available

(⁵)   Moldova and San Marino: data available for degree mobility only.

(⁶)   Austria, Spain, France, the Netherlands.

data, the outward mobility rates at ISCED 7 and ISCED 8 registered higher share of mobile participants compared to ISCED 6.

25 of 43 countries with available data achieved the 20% target in at least one of the education levels. However, the share of graduates (all ISCED levels considered in all EHEA countries with available data) who had at least one study experience abroad was still far from the 20% target.

Figure 6.3 presents the percentages of outward credit mobility graduates by ISCED level. It looks at credit mobility in particular to show the differences between ISCED levels across EHEA countries for this type of mobility. The figure depicts 27 countries with available data.

Figure 6.3: Outward credit mobility rate – tertiary mobile graduates from the EHEA as a percentage of the total number of graduates from the country, by country of origin and level of educational attainment, 2020/2021 (%)
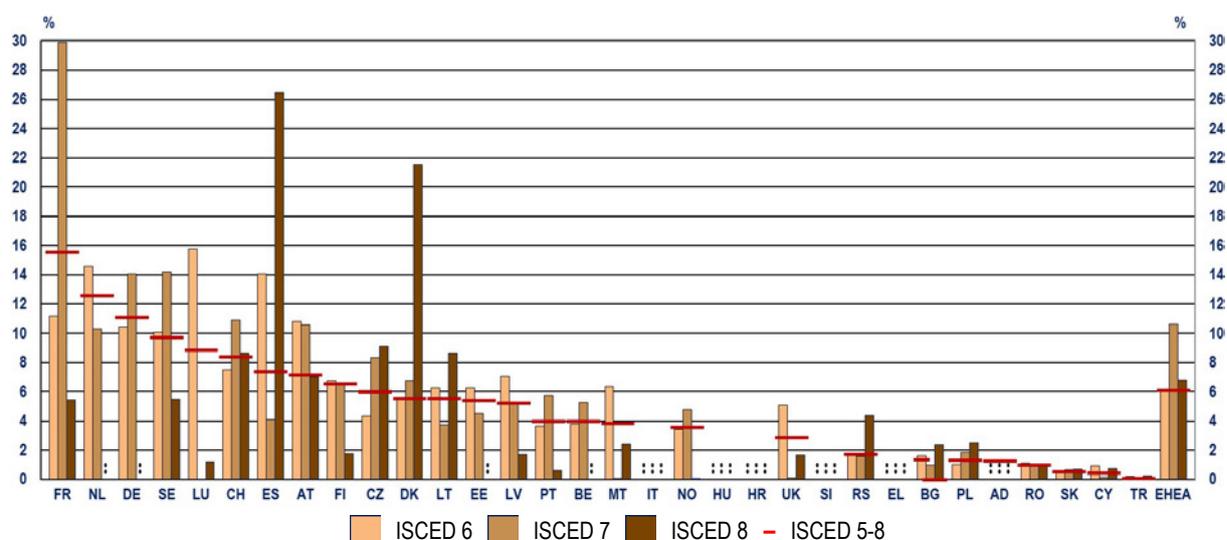
Source: Eurostat, OECD.

%	FR	NL	DE	SE	LU	CH	ES	AT	FI	CZ	DK	LT	EE	LV	PT	BE	MT
ISCED 6	11.2	14.6	10.4	10.1	15.8	7.5	14.1	10.8	6.8	4.3	5.4	6.3	6.3	7.1	3.7	3.8	6.4
ISCED 7	29.9	10.3	14.1	14.2	:	10.9	4.1	10.6	6.5	8.3	6.8	3.7	4.5	5.1	5.8	5.3	0.1
ISCED 8	5.4	:	:	5.5	1.2	8.7	26.5	7.0	1.8	9.1	21.6	8.6	:	1.7	0.6	:	2.4
ISCED 5-8	15.6	12.6	11.1	9.7	8.9	8.4	7.4	7.2	6.6	6.0	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.3	4.0	4.0	3.9
	IT	NO	HU	HR	UK	SI	RS	EL	BG	PL	AD	RO	SK	CY	TR		EHEA
ISCED 6	:	3.4	:	:	5.1	:	1.7	:	1.6	1.0	:	1.1	0.5	0.9	0.2		6.0
ISCED 7	:	4.8	:	:	0.1	:	1.6	:	1.0	1.9	:	0.9	0.7	0.2	0.1		10.6
ISCED 8	:	0.1	:	:	1.7	:	4.4	:	2.3	2.5	:	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.3		6.8
ISCED 5-8	:	3.6	:	:	2.9	:	1.7	:	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.0	0.6	0.5	0.1		6.1

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries, OECD.

Notes:

EHEA weighted average includes countries for which credit mobility data are available.

Total outward mobility rates for country X are calculated as (outward credit mobile graduates who were not degree mobile from country X)/graduates originating in country X.

Credit mobility is calculated considering only one component at the numerator. Data on countries with no distinction for graduates with dual mobility are not presented (details available in the Glossary and methodological note). Since data for credit mobility is not available for all education levels in some countries and for countries with dual mobility counting, the value of the EHEA averages for credit mobility could be underestimated.

Data are sorted in descending order based on the ISCED 5-8 values reported.

The total number of credit mobility graduates in 2020/2021 was 328 669 corresponding to a share of outward credit mobility across EHEA countries of 6.1%. The education level with the largest graduates' population was ISCED 6 and was almost the double of the graduates' population at ISCED 7. Despite the larger number of outward credit mobility graduates at bachelor's level (165 105), the difference in the number of outward credit graduates between bachelor's and master's level was of only 15 150, hence the higher outward credit mobility rate at ISCED 7 level. Indeed, in nearly half of the countries with available data the outward credit mobility rate at ISCED 7 was higher compared to ISCED 6 indicating that the graduates at master's level were more interested to engage in credit mobility studies

abroad compared to their counterparts at bachelor's level. The total number of graduates at ISCED 8 was considerably lower corresponding to respectively 2.8% of the total graduates' population at ISCED 6 and 3.1% of the total graduates' population at ISCED 7 level. 11 of 26 countries with data available for both education levels, registered higher credit mobility rate at master's compared to doctoral level. Conversely, 15 countries registered higher outward credit mobility rates at ISCED 8 compared to ISCED 7. Large education systems (more than 500 000 graduates) registered different outward credit mobility activity (all ISCED levels considered). France had the largest number of outward credit mobility graduates, followed by Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, while Türkiye had a very limited number of credit mobile graduates, despite being the country with the largest total graduates' population. In the United Kingdom 97% of the total outward credit mobility occurred at bachelor's level. France had considerably larger shares of outward credit mobility at master's level, compared to bachelor's and doctoral levels.

Data for all ISCED levels combined (ISCED 5-8) ([7]), show that France had the highest outward credit mobility rate (15.6%), followed by the Netherlands and Germany with respectively 12.6% and 11.1%. France, Spain, and Denmark reached the 20% threshold in at least one of the education levels. All ISCED levels considered, France had the second largest total graduates' population (826 823 graduates) and registered the highest number of outward credit mobility graduates (128 638 graduates) for 2020/2021. Very large number of countries (24 of 27 with available data for all education levels) registered rates below 10% while 13 of those had mobility rates below 5%. Türkiye having the largest graduate's population (1 157 630) had a very low level of mobility participation (1 041 outward credit mobility graduates) which was also below the median for the EHEA countries with available data (3 474 graduates) and registered a credit mobility rate of 0.1%. Interestingly, the Netherlands, with significantly less numerous total graduates' population (150 556) registered total credit mobility rate slightly lower than France and higher than all the other large education systems. Small education systems had limited total credit outward mobility.

At ISCED 6, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Austria, Germany, and Sweden showed the highest credit mobility rates (above 10%). The combined credit outward graduates' population of these countries accounted for 74 of the total outward credit degree population at ISCED 6 level. 19 out of 26 countries with available data registered credit mobility rates below 10%, while 11 of these countries had credit mobility rate below 5%.

At ISCED 7, France reached the highest outward credit mobility rate of 29.9% and was the only country reaching the threshold of 20%. Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands registered rates between 10% and 15%. The number of outward credit graduates of the countries reaching rates of above 10% accounted for 87% of the total outward credit graduate's population at this level. 19 out of 25 countries with available data had credit mobility rate of less than 10%, while 13 countries in this group didn't reach 5%.

At doctoral level, Spain (26.5%) and Denmark (21.6%) achieved a rate above 20%. The remaining countries with available data didn't reach 10% and 14 of these had rates below 5%. The total number of outward credit mobility graduates registered at ISCED 8 level was significantly lower at this level compared to ISCED 6 and ISCED 7.

([7])   BG, DE, EE, EL, IT,LT, LU, HU, AT, RO, SK, FI, NO, CH: total excludes ISCED 5.

Figure 6.4 focuses only on outward degree mobility graduates, i.e., the number of graduates originating from EHEA countries who have received a degree in a country within or outside EHEA compared to the total graduates' population of the country of origin.

Figure 6.4: Outward degree mobility of graduates by country of origin and level of educational attainment, 2020/2021, (%)
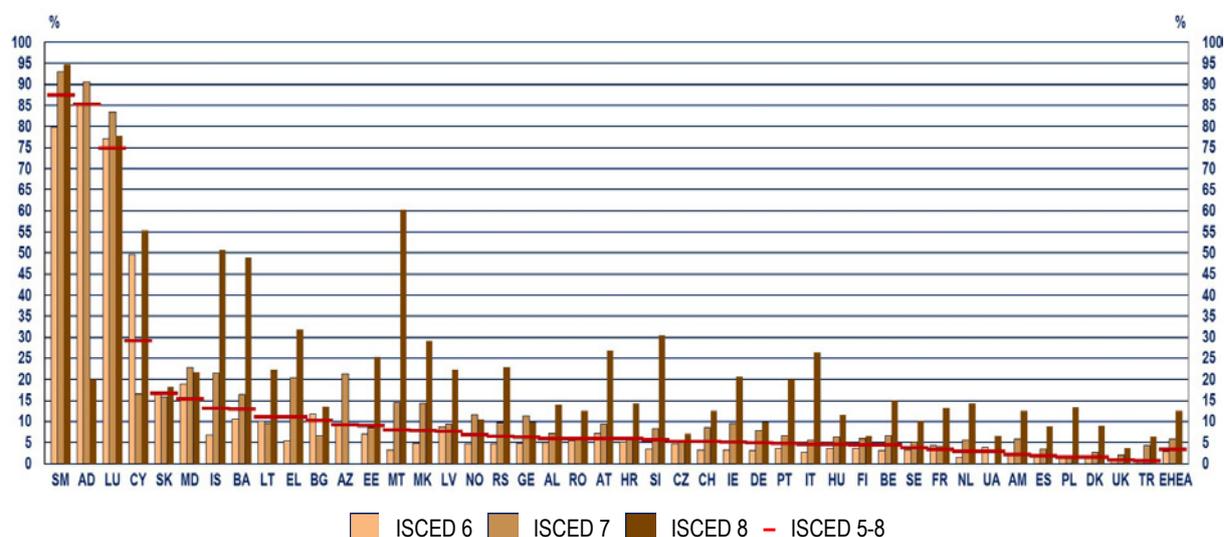
Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries, OECD.

Notes:

Data are sorted in descending order according to the total outward degree mobility rate.

Total outward mobility rates for country X are calculated as (outward degree-mobile graduates from country X to any other country within and outside the EHEA)/graduates originating in country X. Graduates originating in country X are calculated as (total graduates in country X – inward mobile graduates from any other country to country X + outward mobile graduates from country X to any other country).

No information on EHEA-origin degree mobile graduates who graduated in the US, which implies potential underestimation for some countries.

%	SM	AD	LU	CY	SK	MD	IS	BA	LT	EL	BG	AZ	EE	MT	MK	LV	NO	RS	GE	AL	RO	AT
ISCED 6	79.8	85.6	77.1	49.7	16.9	19.0	6.9	10.7	10.2	5.5	11.8	9.5	7.0	3.3	4.9	8.7	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.4	7.2
ISCED 7	93.0	90.6	83.4	16.5	15.9	22.9	21.6	16.4	9.6	20.3	6.7	21.3	8.6	14.5	14.4	9.5	11.6	9.7	11.2	7.2	5.7	9.4
ISCED 8	94.7	20.0	77.8	55.4	18.3	21.8	50.7	49.0	22.3	31.8	13.6	:	25.4	60.2	29.1	22.3	10.5	23.0	9.8	14.0	12.5	27.0
ISCED 5-8	87.5	85.4	74.9	29.3	16.9	15.4	13.3	13.0	11.3	11.3	10.3	9.4	9.2	8.2	7.9	7.8	6.9	6.6	6.5	6.1	6.1	6.0
	HR	SI	CZ	CH	IE	DE	PT	IT	HU	FI	BE	SE	FR	NL	UA	AM	ES	PL	DK	UK	TR	EHEA
ISCED 6	5.1	3.4	4.6	3.2	3.4	3.1	3.6	2.8	3.7	3.5	3.1	3.3	4.3	1.5	4.0	2.0	2.1	1.3	1.2	0.5	0.6	3.0
ISCED 7	6.0	8.3	5.3	8.6	9.6	7.8	6.6	5.7	6.4	6.0	6.6	5.1	4.0	5.7	3.2	5.9	3.5	1.8	2.8	2.1	4.4	5.8
ISCED 8	14.3	30.4	7.2	12.5	20.6	9.8	20.1	26.3	11.6	6.6	15.2	10.1	13.2	14.3	6.6	12.5	8.9	13.5	9.1	3.6	6.5	12.5
ISCED 5-8	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.5	3.8	3.6	3.1	2.9	2.4	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.0	0.7	3.5

The EHEA total outward degree mobility population was smaller compared to the outward credit degree flows, hence the lower outward degree mobility rate of 3.5% compared to the 6.1% outward credit mobility rate for 2020/2021. 19 of 42 countries with available data registered increase of the mobility rates with moving to a higher education level. Similarly, to the trends reported for the outward credit mobility flows, the total graduates' population at ISCED 6 was twice larger compared to ISCED 7. The number of graduates pursuing a degree programme abroad however was almost the same at both levels, explaining the higher EHEA outward degree mobility rate at ISCED 7 level (5.8%) compared to ISCED 6 (3%). Nearly half of the countries (20 of 42) registered rates of 20% in at least one of the education levels, seven reached the threshold in two education cycles and another three countries reached the threshold in all education levels. The education level with highest number of countries (19 of 42) reaching the 20% benchmark was ISCED 8. For comparison, only four countries reached the 20% threshold in at least one education level observing the outward credit mobility flows. Data for all ISCED levels combined (ISCED 5-8), show that most of the graduates in small education systems chose to study abroad reaching and largely overpassing the 20% threshold in all three education cycles. Data in Figure 6.4 shows also that five countries had rates between 10% and 20% while 32 of 43 countries with

available data noted outward degree mobility rates below 10%. Within this group, 14 countries registered rate of below 5%. All ISCED levels considered, in the countries with the largest graduates' populations (above 500 000) the level of outward mobility varied considerably. Germany, France, and Spain, despite having the largest outward degree mobility populations as well, registered mobility rates of 5% and below. These countries, however registered large shares of outward credit mobility flows (see Figure 6.3). The United Kingdom and Türkiye, with outward degree mobility population below 10 000 registered the lowest outward degree mobility rates of 1% and below. Considering the total outward mobility rates (see Figure 6.2), the finding may also indicate that a considerable number of graduates (all education levels considered) in the United Kingdom and Türkiye preferred to obtain a degree in their country of origin.

At ISCED 6, in four countries, more than half of the graduates engaged in outward degree studies and in most of the countries (34 of 43), less than 10% of the graduates decided to follow degree studies abroad. Türkiye was the country with the largest graduates' population but only 0.6% of the graduates chose to study abroad. The countries with the large total graduates' population (above 100 000) at this level registered very low outward mobility rates of 5% and below. France registered almost the same outward mobility rates at both ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 levels, while the graduates in Germany, Italy and Poland registered a higher rate of participation at master's level. In the Netherlands the total number of graduates at ISCED 6 was more than the double compared to ISCED 7, while the outward degree graduates' rate at ISCED 7 (5.7%) was nearly four times bigger than ISCED 6 rate, indicating enhanced interest of graduates at master's level to engage in degree studies abroad. At ISCED 6 more than 70% of the graduate's population in small education systems chose to study abroad for obtention of a degree. In 19 of 32 countries with available data for both outward credit and degree mobility, at this level the interest in outward degree mobility was lower compared to credit mobility.

At master's level, seven countries reached rates of above 20%. Similarly, to bachelor's level, small education systems registered the highest outward degree mobility rates, while in education systems with large graduates' populations at this level, the share of graduates interested to follow degree studies abroad was of less than 10% (Germany and Italy) or even less than 5% (France, Spain, Poland, and the United Kingdom). More than half of the countries (37 of 42) with available data registered higher shares of outward degree mobile graduates at master's level compared to bachelor's level. In terms of total number of outward degree graduates, comparing with the credit mobility flows at this level, the degree mobility shares were less important.

At ISCED 8, the EHEA outward degree mobility rate was 12.5%, largely overpassing the ISCED 6 and ISCED 7 levels. The total number of graduates at this level was significantly lower compared to the other two education cycles and so was the total number of outward degree mobility graduates. However, the outward degree mobility rates indicate that, compared to bachelor and master levels, at doctoral level larger shares of the graduates followed degree studies abroad. Indeed, the level of achievement of the 20% target at this level concerned much higher number of countries – 19 of 42 compared to the other two education levels. Smaller education systems except Andorra, registered the highest participation rates in this education level as well. Large education systems (more than 10 000 graduates) at this level registered different outward mobility rates. Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain didn't reach 10%, while Italy reached 26.3%. About half of the doctoral level graduates in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Iceland chose to study abroad which was a considerably higher share compared to bachelor's and master's level. In 15 countries, between 10% and 20% of the graduates studied abroad for obtention of a doctoral degree.

6.1.2. Inward degree mobility

Figure 6.5 presents the percentage of mobile students coming from inside the EHEA to individual EHEA countries. It compares the share of mobile students with the total student population in the EHEA destination country per education level. The purpose of this indicator is to provide an estimation of the attractiveness of each EHEA country for degree-mobile students who originate from another EHEA country and their distribution across the education levels.

Figure 6.5: Inward degree mobility rate per level of educational attainment within the EHEA, 2020/2021
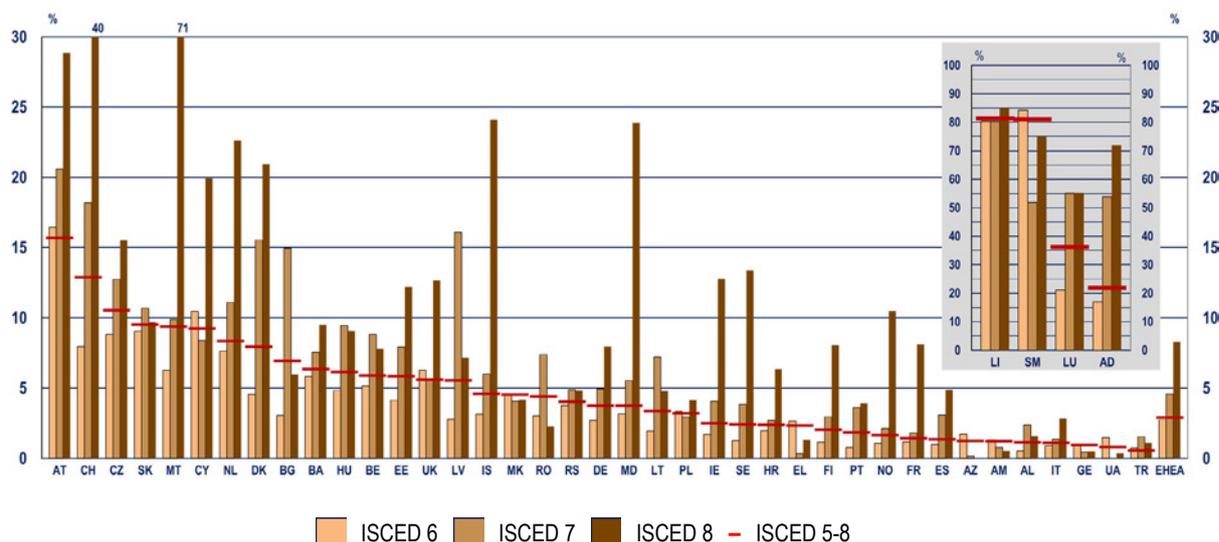
	LI	SM	LU	AD	AT	CH	CZ	SK	MT	CY	NL	DK	BG	BA	HU	BE	EE	UK	LV	IS	MK	RO
ISCED 6	80.4	84.2	21.1	17.0	16.4	8.0	8.8	9.1	6.3	10.5	7.6	4.6	3.1	5.8	4.8	5.2	4.1	6.3	2.8	3.1	4.6	3.0
ISCED 7	80.3	51.8	55.2	53.9	20.6	18.2	12.7	10.7	9.9	8.4	11.1	15.5	14.9	7.5	9.4	8.8	7.9	5.6	16.1	6.0	4.1	7.4
ISCED 8	85.0	75.0	55.3	72.0	28.9	39.6	15.5	9.7	70.7	19.9	22.6	21.0	6.0	9.5	9.1	7.8	12.2	12.7	7.2	24.1	4.2	2.2
ISCED 5-8	81.4	81.0	36.2	21.9	15.7	12.9	10.5	9.5	9.4	9.2	8.4	8.0	6.9	6.4	6.2	5.9	5.8	5.6	5.5	4.6	4.5	4.4

	RS	DE	MD	LT	PL	IE	SE	HR	EL	FI	PT	NO	FR	ES	AZ	AM	AL	IT	GE	UA	TR	EHEA
ISCED 6	3.8	2.7	3.2	1.9	3.3	1.7	1.2	2.0	2.7	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.7	1.3	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.5	0.8	2.7
ISCED 7	4.9	4.9	5.6	7.2	2.9	4.1	3.8	2.7	0.3	3.0	3.6	2.1	1.8	3.1	0.2	0.8	2.4	1.4	0.4	:	1.6	4.6
ISCED 8	4.8	8.0	23.9	4.8	4.1	12.8	13.4	6.4	1.3	8.0	3.9	10.5	8.1	4.9	0.0	0.5	1.6	2.8	0.5	0.4	1.1	8.3
ISCED 5-8	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.4	3.2	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.6	2.9

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

Notes:

EHEA = EHEA weighted average.

Data are sorted in descending order according to the total incoming mobility rate.

In 2020/2021, the inward degree mobility across EHEA countries all ISCED levels considered rated 2.9%. Compared to 2016/2017 rates reported in the Bologna Process Implementation Report, 2020, the attractiveness of ISCED 6 education level remained the same while for all the other education levels, the incoming mobility flows registered for 2020/2021 increased. In 2021, the largest number of incoming students was registered at bachelor's level. However, the total number of students at this level considerably outnumbered the students at the other education levels and therefore the inward mobility rate at ISCED 6 was much lower compared to the other education cycles. Similarly, to outward degree mobility flows, the inward mobility flows increased with the education level indicating ISCED 7 (4.6%) and ISCED 8 (8.3%) as more attractive education cycles for inward mobility students compared to ISCED 6 (2.7%). The number of countries with rate above 10% increased with the education level, doubling between first (ISCED 6) and second (ISCED 7) cycle and reaching at third cycle (ISCED 8) 18 of 43 countries. All education levels considered, Austria, Switzerland, and Czechia (rates above 10%), together with small education systems (rates above 80%) showed high shares of degree-seeking students. 11 out of 43 countries had the lowest rate of incoming degree students (less than 2%). Small education systems like Liechtenstein and San Marino registered very high inward mobility rates of above 80%, followed by Luxembourg and Andorra with 36.2% and 21.9% respectively. However, the total

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number of inward students for this group of countries represent 0.5% of the total inward mobility population in EHEA.

All education levels considered, the country with the largest number of inward degree mobility students was the United Kingdom (167 382) and was third as regards the total graduates' population (2 993 903 students). However, with an inward mobility rate of 5.6%, the United Kingdom ranked 18th among the 43 countries with available data. On the other side, Liechtenstein, despite the highest rate of inward degree mobility (81.4%), with 790 inward degree students was among the three countries with the lowest number of inward mobility population (less than 800 students) and had a total number of student population of 971 students.

At ISCED 6 the EHEA inward mobility rate was 2.7%. The largest inward degree graduates' population was registered in the United Kingdom (115 740) registering rate of 6.3% The highest-ranking countries in terms of inward mobility rate were Liechtenstein and San Marino with rates above 80%. However, Liechtenstein and San Marino, had inward degree population of respectively 348 and 680 and were among the five countries with the lowest number of total student population (below 1 000). On the other side Albania, Italy, Ukraine, and Türkiye registered a rate below 1%. 29 of 43 (67% of the countries with available data) registered rates of below 5%, indicating that at this education level, in most of the countries the share of inward degree mobility students in the total student population was low.

At ISCED 7 level, the EHEA average rate for inward degree mobility (4.6%) was higher compared to ISCED 6 rate. The total inward mobility population at this level was 235 823 and was smaller compared to ISCED 6 inward mobility population as was the total student population, hence the difference in the inward mobility rates. Only Liechtenstein registered a rate of above 80%, while San Marino, Luxembourg and Andorra had rates of above 50%. In much smaller number of countries (19 of 42 − 45% of the countries with available data), compared to ISCED 6, the rate of inward degree mobility was below 5%, indicating a higher share of inward degree mobility students in the total student population at ISCED 7 compared to ISCED 6 level. Germany was among the countries which registered low inward mobility rate (4.9%). However, Germany had the largest student population both in terms of inward degree mobility (55 027 students) and total student population (1 115 918).

At doctoral level, the total inward mobility population and the total student population were significantly lower compared to ISCED 7, thus explaining the larger rate. Switzerland (39.6%), Austria (28.9%) and the Netherlands (22.6%) registering rates above 20% and being among the 20 countries with large total students' population (above 10 000), hosted more than a third of the total inward mobile students at this education level. The Scandinavian countries, except Finland also reached high rates (above 10%) of inward student mobility, with Iceland reaching 24% and Denmark achieving 21%. Estonia registered 12.2% inward mobility rate while the other Baltic countries remained with rates below 10%. Czechia, among the Central European countries, showed higher rates of degree-seeking incoming mobile students of above 10%. Inward mobile graduates in Ireland, Sweden and Norway were more interested to follow doctoral studies, indicated by the higher mobility rate at ISCED 8 (10%) compared to the other education levels. Austria Iceland, Moldova, the Netherlands, and Denmark, registered a rate above 20% at ISCED 8 level. However, while Austria registered rather balanced distribution of incoming degree students among the three education levels, this was not the case in the other countries. At ISCED 6 and ISCED 7, rates of incoming students in Moldova and Iceland were rather low, and not exceeding 6%, while in Denmark and the Netherlands the rates at ISCED 6 level were respectively 4.6% and 7.6%. Similarly, to ISCED 7, at ISCED 8 level, Liechtenstein registered the highest rate of 85%. In 15 of 43 (34% of the countries with available data), the rate was below 5%. The largest number of incoming degree students was registered in Germany (15 284), followed by the United Kingdom (14 418) and Switzerland (10 549). Germany had the largest student population at this level (192 270), the United Kingdom was the third largest (113 877). Switzerland had a much smaller total number of students

(26 656) but had the highest inward degree mobility rate (39.6%) among the three countries. The EHEA average inward degree mobility rate for this level (8.3%) was higher compared to ISCED 6 and ISCED 7.

10 out of 42 countries with available data had a lower share of incoming degree mobility students at ISCED 7 compared to ISCED 6 level while 12 registered lower shares at ISCED 8 compared to ISCED 7 level. A lower number of countries (8 of 42) registered a decrease between ISCED 6 and ISCED 8 level.

6.1.3. Mobility balance

The concept of balanced mobility was formulated as a desirable objective in the 2012 Bucharest ministerial communiqué, but increasingly acknowledged as a complex issue for policymaking and comprising various aspects in which balance may not be the only consideration. For example, assuming that mobility is desirable, balanced mobility at low levels of mobility (low inward and low outward mobility rates) may be perceived as less positive than balanced mobility at high levels (high inward and high outward mobility rates).

Figure 6.6 provides information on the degree mobility balance of students in 2021. It does not factor in credit mobility. Whereas the X axis indicates the mobility balance, it does so with reference to the outward degree mobility rate of the respective country depicted in the Y Axis. Hence, the figure shows how balanced the mobility flow of the respective country is with regards to its outward flows.

The figure shows the relationship between inward and outward degree mobility. Both axes include mobility flows within and outside the EHEA. Positive balance indicates higher flows of incoming students (attractive education systems), while negative balance indicates higher flows of outgoing students. Countries placed near the X axis are called "open systems" with balanced inward and outward flows.

Figure 6.6: Extent of balance in degree mobility flows within and outside the EHEA, ISCED 5-8, 2020/2021
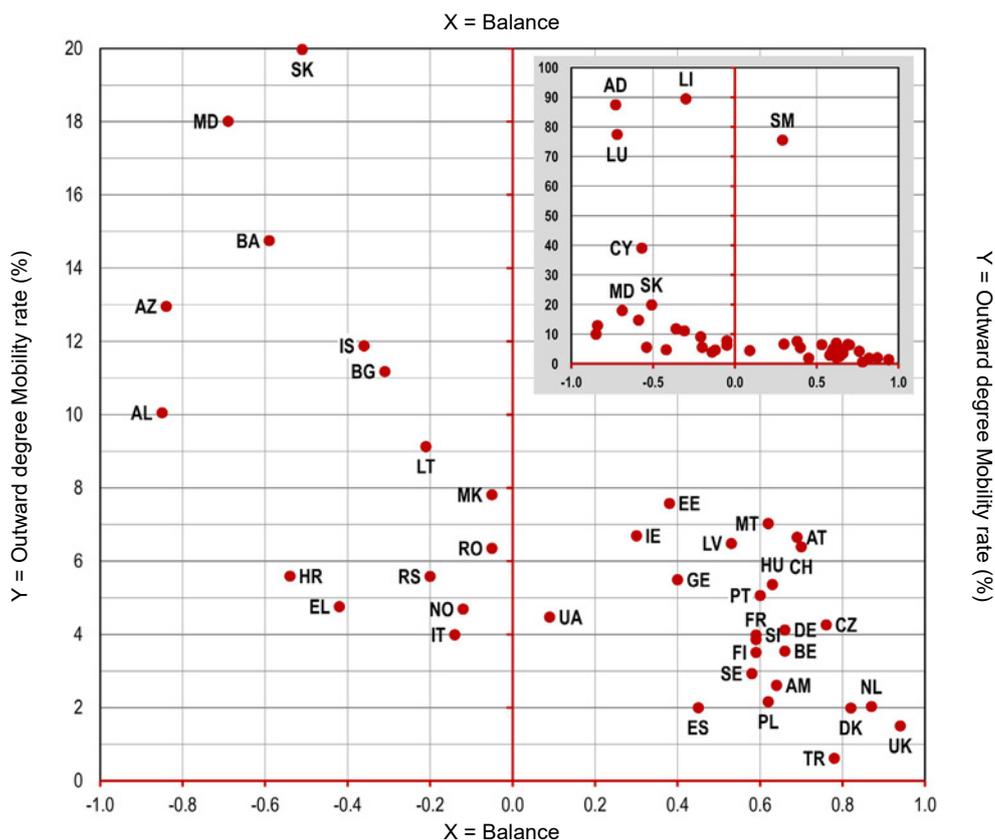
%	LI	AD	LU	SM	CY	SK	MD	BA	AZ	IS	BG	AL	LT	MK	EE
Balance	-0.30	-0.73	-0.72	0.29	-0.57	-0.51	-0.69	-0.59	-0.84	-0.36	-0.31	-0.85	-0.21	-0.05	0.38
Outward rate	89.51	87.49	77.47	75.55	39.12	19.97	18.01	14.75	12.96	11.88	11.18	10.05	9.13	7.81	7.58

	MT	IE	AT	LV	CH	RO	HR	RS	GE	HU	PT	EL	NO	UA	CZ
Balance	0.62	0.30	0.69	0.53	0.70	-0.05	-0.54	-0.20	0.40	0.63	0.60	-0.42	-0.12	0.09	0.76
Outward rate	7.03	6.69	6.65	6.48	6.39	6.35	5.59	5.58	5.49	5.36	5.06	4.76	4.69	4.47	4.26

	DE	IT	SI	FR	BE	FI	SE	AM	PL	NL	ES	DK	UK	TR	
Balance	0.66	-0.14	0.59	0.59	0.66	0.59	0.58	0.64	0.62	0.87	0.45	0.82	0.94	0.78	
Outward rate	4.12	3.99	3.98	3.86	3.54	3.51	2.93	2.61	2.16	2.03	2.00	1.99	1.50	0.62	

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

Notes:

For presentation purposes, the scale has been adjusted to 20%.
For graphical readability purpose, balance is computed as the absolute difference (incoming – outgoing students). The results are more readable when plotted than taking the ratio (incoming/outgoing) which is below 1 for most countries.
Balance is computed as the absolute difference (incoming – outgoing students) divided by the total number of incoming students (when the balance is positive) or by the total number of outgoing students (in case of negative balance).

In the left quadrant of the graph 19 of 44 countries with available data show higher share of outgoing students resulting in a negative balance between outward and inward mobility flows. On the other side, in the right quadrant of the graph, 25 countries show the inverse trend, with higher share of inward mobility flows demonstrating a positive balance.

Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom are situated on the right side of the X-axis and show positive balance extending towards 100% (respectively 82%, 87% and 94%) determined by the significantly larger inward mobility shares (8%, 8.4% and 5.6% respectively per country) compared to the outward mobility rates (1.7%, 3.1% and 1% respectively). 19 out of 44 countries with available data registered a positive balance above 50%.

Among the countries with negative balance, on the left side of the graph, there are two countries (Azerbaijan and Albania) with significant difference between the outward and inward flows (above

10 percentage points), showing considerably higher outward mobility rates compared to inward mobility. 9 out of 44 countries, registered negative rates of above 50%.

The distribution of the countries with positive and negative balance indicates that there are slightly more countries registering higher inward mobility flows.

In 2020/2021, the countries considered "open systems" were minority within the EHEA. Romania and North Macedonia (-0.05% balance), show rather balanced inward and outward mobility shares, with a slightly larger share of the outward mobility flows, while Ukraine with a positive (0.09%) balance shows a slightly larger number of inward mobility graduates.

Figure 6.7 denotes the number of incoming tertiary students enrolled in a given country from the top three countries of origin inside and outside EHEA, as a percentage of all incoming students enrolled in the country. Just like Figures 6.5 and 6.6, this indicator covers only degree mobility. The purpose of this indicator is to provide an estimation of the diversity in the origin of mobile students who may come from different parts of the world. The percentage indicates the share of students originating from the top inward mobility countries among the total inward mobility of the receiving country.

Figure 6.7: Student mobility flows: Top three countries of ORIGIN (INWARD) in %, 2020/2021
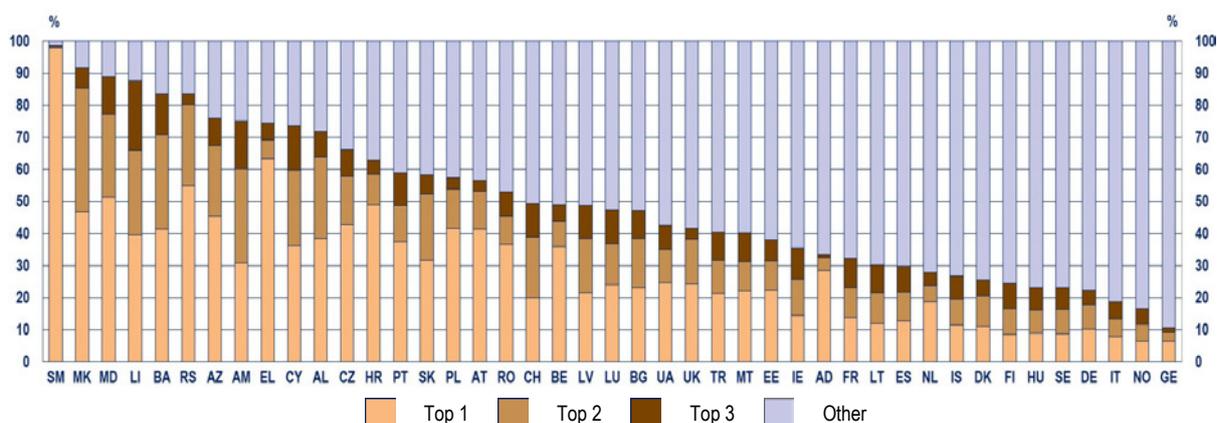
%	SM	MK	MD	LI	BA	RS	AZ	AM	EL	CY	AL	CZ	HR	PT	SK	PL	AT	RO	CH	BE	LV	LU
Top 1 %	97.8	46.9	51.3	39.6	41.4	54.9	45.3	30.9	63.3	36.1	38.4	42.8	48.9	37.5	31.8	41.8	41.6	36.6	20.0	35.9	21.5	24.0
Top 2 %	0.5	38.5	26.1	26.5	29.4	25.3	22.1	29.4	5.9	23.8	25.3	15.1	9.7	11.4	20.7	12.2	11.7	8.8	19.0	7.9	17.1	12.9
Top 3 %	0.4	6.2	11.6	21.5	12.8	3.3	8.6	14.8	5.3	13.8	8.3	8.3	4.3	10.1	5.9	3.6	3.3	7.6	10.4	5.1	10.3	10.5
Other %	1.2	8.3	11.1	12.4	16.4	16.5	24.0	24.9	25.4	26.3	28.0	33.9	37.1	41.1	41.7	42.5	43.4	47.0	50.6	51.2	51.2	52.6

%	BG	UA	UK	TR	MT	EE	IE	AD	FR	LT	ES	NL	IS	DK	FI	HU	SE	DE	IT	NO	GE
Top 1 %	23.1	24.6	24.3	21.2	22.1	22.3	14.5	28.5	13.8	12.0	12.8	18.7	11.6	11.0	8.5	9.0	8.8	10.2	7.9	6.4	6.5
Top 2 %	15.4	10.5	14.0	10.6	9.2	9.3	11.2	3.9	9.3	9.5	8.9	5.0	8.1	9.6	8.1	7.2	7.6	7.7	5.5	5.3	2.6
Top 3 %	8.7	7.4	3.5	8.7	9.0	6.6	9.9	0.9	9.2	8.8	8.1	4.2	7.1	5.0	7.9	7.0	6.8	4.4	5.4	4.9	1.5
Other %	52.8	57.5	58.2	59.6	59.7	61.9	64.4	66.6	67.7	69.8	70.2	72.0	73.3	74.4	75.5	76.8	76.9	77.7	81.3	83.4	89.4

	SM	MK	MD	LI	BA	RS	AZ	AM	EL	CY	AL	CZ	HR	PT	SK	PL	AT	RO	CH	BE	LV	LU
Top 1 country	IT	TR	RO	AT	HR	BA	TR	IN	CY	EL	IT	SK	BA	BR	UA	UA	DE	MD	FR	FR	IN	FR
Top 2 country	UA	XK	IL	DE	RS	ME	IR	RU	AL	IN	XK	RU	DE	CV	CZ	BY	IT	FR	DE	NL	UZ	DE
Top 3 country	MK	RS	IN	CH	ME	HR	GE	GE	DE	NP	EL	UA	FR	GW	DE	IN	BA	IL	IT	CM	DE	BE

	BG	UA	UK	TR	MT	EE	IE	AD	FR	LT	ES	NL	IS	DK	FI	HU	SE	DE	IT	NO	GE
Top 1 country	EL	IN	CN	SY	IT	FI	CN	ES	MA	BY	FR	DE	US	DE	VN	DE	CN	CN	CN	CN	AZ
Top 2 country	UK	MA	IN	AZ	IN	RU	IN	FR	CN	UA	CO	IT	DE	NO	RU	CN	IN	IN	IR	SE	RU
Top 3 country	DE	TM	NG	TM	UK	NG	US	PT, CA	IN	DZ	IN	IT	CN	PH	SE	CN	RO	DE	SY	IN	UK

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

Notes:
Data are sorted in decreasing order by the rate for the 'other' category.

The rate of diversity of inward mobility was above 50% in 25 out of 43 countries, indicating greater diversity in geographical backgrounds of incoming mobile students in more than half of the EHEA countries with available data. In countries with diversity rate above 70% in this group (11 of 25), the top three destination countries' combined shares ranged between 29.8% in Spain (other countries' share of 70.2%) and 10.6% in Georgia (other countries' share of 89.4%).

At the other end of the spectrum, in 18 out of 43 countries, more than 50% of the inward mobility students came from the top 3 countries combined, evidencing limited geographical diversity of the incoming student flows. In this group, 11 countries registered a share of inward mobility from the top 3 countries above 70%. The diversity rate in these 11 countries was below 30% and ranged between 1.2% in San Marino and 28% in Albania. In five countries more than 50% of the inward mobility came from the top 1 country. The diversity rate in these countries ranged from 1.2 in San Marino to 25.4% in Greece.

Large education systems, receiving the highest number of incoming students (above 200 000), all registered diversity rates above 50%, with Germany noting the highest rate of 77.7%. Only 10.2% of the incoming mobility in Germany came from the top 1 country. The United Kingdom with diversity rate of 58.2% was the country with the largest incoming mobility population and had 24.3% of inward mobility originating from the top 1 country. The Netherlands with incoming mobility above 100 000 also registered a very high diversity rate of 72%. The finding indicates that in these countries the origin of the inward mobility had a very diverse geographical background.

Small education systems like Liechtenstein, San Marino, Luxembourg, Andorra, Malta, and Cyprus presented very diverse patterns of mobility flows. There were large disparities in the total incoming degree mobility rates (all ISCED level considered) in this group ranging between more than 80% (Liechtenstein and San Marino) and around 9% in Malta and Cyprus (see Figure 6.5). Liechtenstein, San Marino, and Cyprus showed limited diversity receiving incoming students mostly from the top 1 country (Austria, Italy, and Greece respectively), eventually indicating interest determined by language or geographical proximity. Conversely, more than half of the inward student population in Luxembourg (52.6%), Malta (59.7%) and Andorra (66.6%) had diverse origin.

Geographical proximity as well as a common language of instruction or cultural and historical legacies are factors influencing the origin and the size of the incoming student population from distinct countries. For instance, such factors may explain the pattern of students received in Serbia (from Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), Portugal (from Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Brazil) and Switzerland (from France, Germany, and Italy).

EHEA countries attract large number of students from outside EHEA countries. Indian students have registered high interest in following graduate studies in EHEA countries. Indian students formed the highest share of incoming students in Latvia (21.5%), Armenia (30.9%) and Ukraine (24.6%), while for six EHEA recipient countries it was the second largest inward mobility flow accounting for 23.8% of the inward mobility in Cyprus, 7.7% in Germany, 9.2% in Malta, 7.6% in Sweden, 14% in the United Kingdom and 11.2% in Ireland. For Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Moldova, India was the third ranking country of origin for inward mobility students. Inward student mobility originating from China represented the largest share of inward mobility for the United Kingdom (24.3%) and Ireland (14.5%). China was the first country of origin also for the inward student flows in Sweden, Germany, Italy, and Norway. Chinese students were the second ranking inward mobility share in France (9.3%) and Hungary (7.2%). For Finland (7.9%) and the Netherlands (4.2%), Chinese students were third important flow of the total inward mobility. Students from the United States were the highest share of inward mobility for Iceland (11.5%) and the third ranking flow for Ireland (9.9%). Most incoming students in Ukraine originated from India (24.6% of the total incoming mobility). For Ireland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Portugal the greatest shares of incoming mobility originated outside the EHEA. These countries however, also registered considerably high rate of incoming student diversity.

Figure 6.8 shows the top three countries of destination, computing the number of mobile tertiary students of a given country of origin enrolled in the top three destination countries, as a percentage of all mobile tertiary students of that country. Again, this indicator considers degree mobility only. The variety of destinations is impacted by certain restrictions in the data collection of mobility beyond the EHEA. Only Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States are covered in the collection of data when it comes to outward degree mobility outside the EHEA. At national level, the various measures aimed at fostering student mobility also have an impact on the extent of diversity, since they usually prioritise specific geographical regions, sub-geographical areas, or countries for privileged cooperation.

Figure 6.8: Student mobility flows: Top three countries of DESTINATION (OUTWARD) in %, 2020/2021
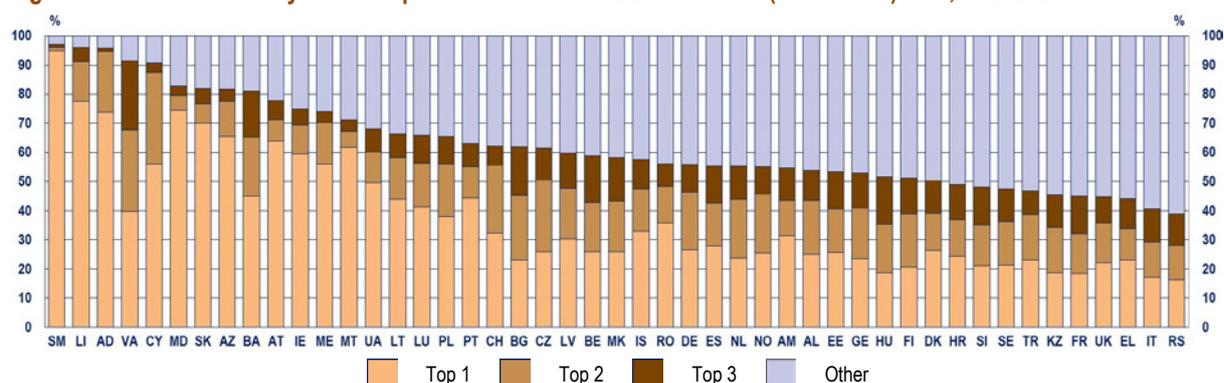
%	SM	LI	AD	VA	CY	MD	SK	AZ	BA	AT	IE	ME	MT	UA	LT	LU	PL	PT	CH	BG	CZ	LV	BE	MK
Top 1 %	95.0	77.5	73.7	39.8	56.1	74.5	69.9	65.6	44.9	63.9	59.5	56.1	61.8	49.6	44.0	41.4	38.1	44.4	32.4	23.2	25.9	30.4	25.9	25.9
Top 2 %	1.1	13.7	21.0	27.8	31.5	5.0	6.7	12.1	20.5	7.4	9.8	14.3	5.4	10.6	14.2	15.0	18.1	10.7	23.1	22.0	24.5	17.3	17.1	17.5
Top 3 %	1.0	4.9	1.1	23.9	3.3	3.3	5.4	4.1	15.7	6.4	5.5	3.6	4.0	7.9	8.4	9.7	9.3	8.0	6.7	16.9	11.1	12.1	15.9	14.9
Other %	2.9	4.0	4.2	8.6	9.2	17.2	18.0	18.3	18.9	22.3	25.2	26.0	28.7	32.0	33.5	34.0	34.5	36.9	37.7	37.9	38.5	40.3	41.2	41.8
%	IS	RO	DE	ES	NL	NO	AM	AL	EE	GE	HU	FI	DK	HR	SI	SE	TR	KZ	FR	UK	EL	IT	RS	
Top 1 %	33.0	35.9	26.7	27.9	23.7	25.5	31.5	25.1	25.6	23.5	18.7	20.6	26.5	24.5	21.3	21.4	23.1	18.8	18.6	22.2	23.2	17.2	16.4	
Top 2 %	14.4	12.4	19.9	14.8	20.3	20.1	12.1	18.4	15.1	17.4	16.5	18.3	12.5	12.6	13.9	15.0	15.6	15.5	13.7	13.8	10.6	12.0	11.8	
Top 3 %	10.1	7.9	9.4	12.7	11.3	9.5	11.1	10.4	12.8	12.0	16.4	12.5	11.4	12.0	13.0	11.1	8.2	11.3	12.8	8.7	10.3	11.4	10.7	
Other %	42.5	43.8	44.1	44.6	44.7	44.9	45.3	46.2	46.6	47.1	48.4	48.7	49.6	51.0	51.8	52.5	53.1	54.5	55.0	55.3	55.9	59.5	61.2	
Country	SM	LI	AD	VA	CY	MD	SK	AZ	BA	AT	IE	ME	MT	UA	LT	LU	PL	PT	CH	BG	CZ	LV	BE	MK
Top 1	IT	CH	ES	DE	EL	RO	CZ	TR	RS	DE	UK	RS	UK	PL	UK	DE	UK	UK	DE	DE	SK	UK	NL	BG
Top 2	CA	AT	FR	AT	UK	DE	UK	UA	AT	UK	NL	BA	NL	DE	NL	BE	DE	ES	UK	UK	UK	NL	UK	TR
Top 3	UK	DE	UK	IT	DE	IT	HU	DE	HR	CH	US	TR	US	SK	DE	AT	NL	NL	IT	TR	DE	DE	DE	DE
	IS	RO	DE	ES	NL	NO	AM	AL	EE	GE	HU	FI	DK	HR	SI	SE	TR	KZ	FR	UK	EL	IT	RS	
Top 1	DK	UK	AT	UK	BE	UK	DE	IT	UK	DE	UK	SE	UK	BA	AT	UK	DE	TR	BE	US	UK	UK	HU	
Top 2	US	NL	NL	DE	UK	DK	US	DE	NL	UA	DE	UK	DE	UK	DE	US	US	CZ	UK	DE	DE	DE	BA	
Top 3	UK	DE	UK	US	DE	US	FR	EL	FI	AM	AT	NL	US	DE	UK	DK	UK	US	CA	NL	CY	AT	AT	

Source: Eurostat, UOE and additional collection for the other EHEA countries.

Notes:

Data are arranged by the sum of top three destination countries out of the total outgoing students.

There was a great diversity in the outward mobility flows across EHEA in 2020/2021. 10 out of 47 countries with available data, registered diversified outward mobility with more than half of the students choosing other than the first three high-ranking destinations. Conversely, in half of the countries with available data, the three most preferred countries of destination attracted the majority of the outward mobility students.

The United Kingdom was the preferred destination of a fourth of the mobility students in EHEA countries with available data, while 18% of all mobile students (first three destination countries considered) chose Germany for their studies abroad.

The United Kingdom was the most preferred outward mobility destination for outward mobile students across EHEA countries (outward students from 32 countries chose the United Kingdom as one of the three most preferred destinations). For 15 out of 47 EHEA countries (nearly 33% of EHEA countries) the United Kingdom was the first destination country, while for 11 countries it was the second most preferred destination. For the outward mobility students in 6 of 47 countries it was the third most chosen country of destination. The outward mobility rate of the United Kingdom was 1% (all ISCED levels considered) indicating that the country was mostly mobility flows receiver. The outward mobility destination diversity was 55.3%, indicating that most of the UK outward students targeted a variety of destination countries. The preferred study destination of UK students was the United States of America (22.2% of outward mobility students), followed by Germany (13.8%) and the Netherlands (8.7%).

Germany was the preferred study destination for the students of 8 out of 47 countries (17%), and the second most chosen destination country for the outward students in 11 countries, and a third option for outward studies of the students in another 11 countries. The outward mobility of German students was less diversified (44% diversity rate) compared to the United Kingdom. Most of the German outward students preferred to study in Austria (26.7%), and the Netherlands (19.9%), while the United Kingdom was the third preferred destination for 9.4% of the students originating from Germany.

Certain level of reciprocity was observed in the mobile students' exchanges among Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In each of these three countries, the other two were second or third preferred destination.

The preferred destination of outward students from the Netherlands was Belgium (23.7%), while the United Kingdom was the second preferred destination (20.3%), and Germany was the third choice of 11.3% of the outward students in the country.

Among the countries with available data, small education systems which registered the highest rates of outward mobility (above 80%) and had the most limited diversity of the outward mobility flows (San Marino and Andorra with diversity rate below 5%), the preferred destination seemed to be determined by language and/or geographical proximity. Most students from Montenegro and Liechtenstein chose as preferred outward study destination neighbouring countries. Luxembourg also registered a very high outward mobility (above 70°%) but evidenced a more balanced diversity of destination (more than a third of the outward mobility was directed towards other than the 3 top destination countries). Germany, despite being a large education system registered diversity rate below 50% and the most preferred destination (Austria) seemed to be determined by language and/or geographical vicinity. Conversely, other large education systems like the United Kingdom, Italy, and France registered diversity rates of above 50%, indicating that the choice of mobility destination for the larger share of mobile students was influenced by factors other than language and/or geographical proximity. In terms of reciprocity, there were divergencies among the observed countries. For example, Cyprus (diversity rate below 10%) sent nearly 56% of its mobile students to Greece (top 1 destination), while 10% of the Greek mobile students (diversity rate above 50%) chose to study in Cyprus (third-raking choice for Greek students), indicating that a very small proportion of the Greek outward students undertook studies in Cyprus. In Slovakia (diversity rate 18%), the majority of the outgoing students choose Czechia as first destination for their studies abroad. Conversely, Slovakia was the preferred choice for 25.9% of the Czech (diversity rate 38.5%) outgoing students. Germany was the top destination for the outward students in Austria (63.9%), Luxembourg (41.4%) and Switzerland (32.4%). However, while Austria was the top destination for German outward students as well (26.7%), Luxembourg and Switzerland were not among the top 3 destinations for German outward mobility students. Language and geographical proximity seemed to determine the choice for outward mobility of students from Moldova where 74.5% of the outgoing degree mobility students went to Romania. This was, however, not the case for Romanian outward students, the majority of which chose the United Kingdom as study destination.

6.2. Qualitative Data

6.2.1. Portability of public grants and publicly-subsidised loans

One important aspect of mobility funding is the possibility for students to take domestic grants and/or loans to another EHEA system. This possibility – that is referred to as 'portability' – should ideally apply to both short-term study visits in the framework of a home-country programme (credit mobility) and entire-degree courses (degree mobility).

The commitment to portability was first made by ministers in the Berlin Communiqué, 2003. The text stated:

'With a view to promoting student mobility, Ministers will take the necessary steps to enable the portability of national loans and grants.'

Previous editions of the Bologna Process Implementation Report have shown that during the two decades following this commitment, very few countries have actually taken those 'necessary steps'.

The indicators that follow start by examining portability of domestic public grants and publicly subsidised loans (see Figures 6.9 and 6.10). These two aspects are then brought together in Scorecard indicator n°12 on portability (see Figure 6.11).

Figure 6.9 shows the main characteristics of portability in the case of grants. It distinguishes between portability for short-term study visits which lead to credits in the framework of a home country programme (credit mobility) and portability for an entire degree course (degree mobility).

Figure 6.9: Portability of public grants, first and second cycle, 2022/2023
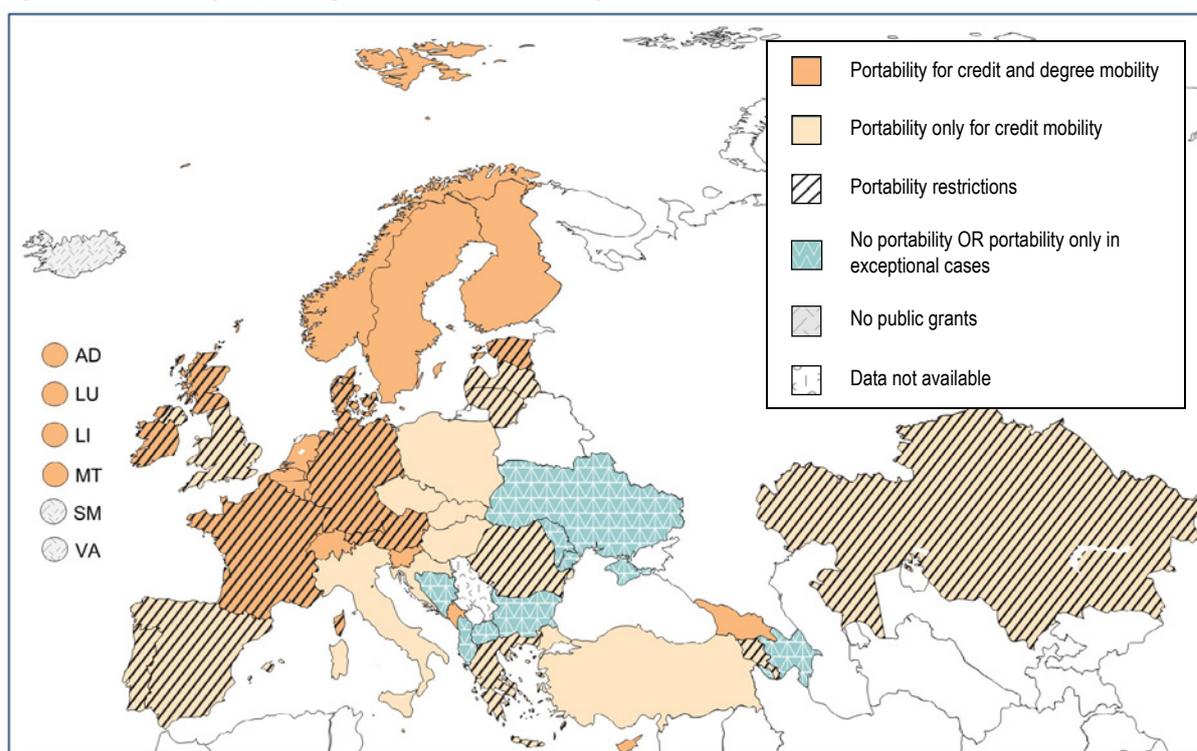
Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes:

The figure covers domestic public grants, i.e., different types of grants issued by public authorities in the home country. It excludes public grants dedicated specifically to mobility.

The figure focuses on the portability of grants within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

When the category 'portability for credit and degree mobility' is combined with 'portability restrictions', it means that there are restrictions related either to both types of portability (i.e., credit **and** degree) or to one type only (i.e., credit **or** degree).

Moreover, the figure provides details on portability restrictions, which means additional requirements that students and/or the chosen study programme abroad need to fulfil for the grant to be portable. These include, for example, specifying the countries to which students can take their grants (e.g., portability within the European Economic Area only) or placing limits on the time spent abroad. The most severe restriction is when students can only take their grants abroad to study if no equivalent programme is available in the home country. Since this means that portability is allowed only in exceptional cases, countries applying this condition are depicted in the same way as those having 'no portability'.

In 22 EHEA systems, grants are portable for both credit and degree mobility purposes. Seven of these systems apply portability restrictions (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom – Scotland). For example, Germany limits degree portability to EU countries and to Switzerland, whereas the United Kingdom (Scotland) applies even stricter criteria, limiting portability to a small number of selected higher education institutions. Ireland provides a further example of portability restrictions, limiting credit portability to mobility explicitly required by home country programmes, and portability for degree purposes to EU countries only. In Estonia, two grant schemes (need-based study allowance and scholarships for students with special needs) are fully portable, but the portability of other grants is limited to credit mobility.

The figure indicates that the most restrictive policies in terms of grant portability are found in Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Georgia, Serbia, and Ukraine. Students from these countries cannot use their domestic grants when studying abroad, whether for a short period of time (credit mobility) or for a longer period (degree mobility).

The French Community of Belgium used to be among this group of restrictive countries. However, it reformed its legislation and practice in 2021. Contrary to the previous system where grants were portable only if there were no equivalent programme in the home system, this condition of not having similar programmes is no longer applied.

For around one third of all higher education systems considered, grant portability is limited to credit mobility, i.e., when students move abroad for a short period of time (e.g., a semester or an academic year) in the framework of their home-country programme. Some of these systems apply portability restrictions (Armenia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom – England, Wales, and Northern Ireland), limiting, in particular, the portability of grants to programme exchanges within recognised schemes such as Erasmus+ (e.g., Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, and Spain.)

Figure 6.10 examines whether publicly subsidised loans are portable and, if so, whether there are any specific restrictions on portability. As with information on grants, the figure distinguishes between portability for credit and degree mobility and identifies countries with portability restrictions.

Figure 6.10: Portability of publicly-subsidised loans, first and second cycle, 2022/2023

Source: BFUG data collection.

Notes:

The figure covers publicly subsidised loans, i.e., different types of loans subsidised by public authorities in the home country. It excludes publicly subsidised loans dedicated specifically to mobility.

The figure focuses on portability within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

When the category 'portability for credit and degree mobility' is combined with 'portability restrictions', it means that there are restrictions related either to both types of portability (i.e., credit **and** degree) or to one type only (i.e., credit **or** degree).

The figure shows that no publicly subsidised loans are offered in 17 EHEA systems. This form of support is therefore less widespread than public grants. Moreover, among the higher education systems that offer loans, only a negligible proportion of students take up the offer. For example, fewer than 1% of students take out a publicly subsidised loan in the French Community of Belgium, France, Italy, Slovakia, and Switzerland. In these systems loans cannot be regarded as a major element of national student support and their portability is not considered in Scorecard indicator n°x – Figure 6.11).

In general, countries that offer publicly subsidised loans allow at least a certain level of portability. Exceptions to this pattern are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, San Marino, and Ukraine, where students cannot benefit from their loans if they study abroad, whether for credit or degree purposes.

Among systems where loans are portable, nine limit portability to credit mobility (France, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. In some of these systems (e.g., Lithuania and the United Kingdom) loans are only portable if the mobility experience takes place within a recognised exchange scheme.

Most systems that offer publicly subsidised loans allow portability for both credit and degree mobility (with or without restrictions). While the overall geographical pattern is very similar to the portability of grants, some countries with limited grant portability – in particular Hungary, Slovakia, and Türkiye – are more flexible when it comes to the portability of publicly-subsidised loans (i.e., loans are portable – with or without restrictions – for credit as well as degree mobility, whereas grants are only portable for credit mobility). Iceland is another noteworthy case, as although there is no standard grant package, publicly subsidised loans are portable with no restrictions.

Scorecard indicator n°18 (Figure 6.11) brings together the elements presented in the two previous figures and puts countries' existing schemes into pre-defined categories.

The indicator is based on a five-category colour-coded scheme where dark green represents full portability of all available domestic student support (this means that equivalent conditions apply to the awarding of public grants and/or provision of loans regardless of whether students intend to study in the home country or abroad). At the other end of the scale, the red category signifies no portability, or portability that is only permitted if no equivalent programme is available in the home country, i.e., domestic support is only portable in exceptional circumstances. There are three transitional categories between dark green and red. The first of them – light green – refers to systems where domestic support can be taken abroad for credit and degree mobility. However, some restrictions apply, e.g., portability only applies to certain defined countries or there are limits on the time spent abroad. The two other categories – yellow and orange – cover systems that limit the portability of all or most forms of domestic support to credit mobility, the distinguishing feature between the two categories being the presence or absence of portability restrictions.

Figure 6.11: Scorecard indicator n°18: Portability of public grants and publicly-subsidised loans, 2022/2023
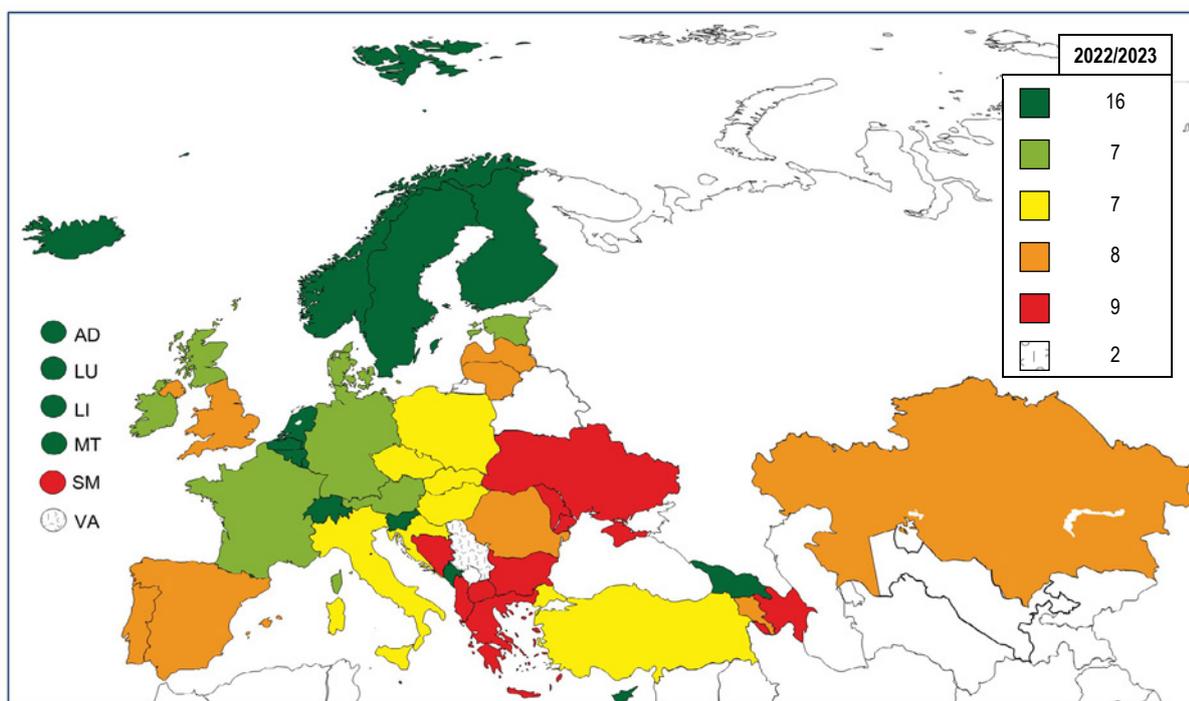
Source: BFUG data collection.

Scorecard categories

■ (dark green)	Full portability across the EHEA of all available domestic student support measures – grants and/or loans – for credit and degree mobility. Equivalent requirements for public grants and/or loans if students' study in the home country or abroad.
■ (light green)	Portability of available domestic student support measures – grants and/or loans – for credit and degree mobility, but with some restrictions related to geography (country limitations), and/or types of programmes, and/or field of study or time.
■ (yellow)	Portability for credit mobility, without restrictions. No portability for degree mobility OR not all major support measures are portable for degree mobility.
■ (orange)	Portability for credit mobility but with some restrictions related to geography (country limitations), and/or types of programmes, and/or field of study or time. No portability for degree mobility OR not all major support measures are portable for degree mobility.
■ (red)	No portability: public grants and/or loans are only provided if students study in the home country or in exceptional cases (no equivalent programme is available in the home country).
□	Data not available

In accordance with the above criteria, the indicator shows that unrestricted portability of all domestic support for credit as well as degree mobility ('dark green') exists only in 16 EHEA systems. The majority of these systems offer their student population both grants and loans. However, Andorra, the Flemish Community of Belgium, Malta, and Slovenia offer grants exclusively while Iceland has no grants but a system of publicly subsidised loans.

In seven higher education systems (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom – Scotland), all major support schemes are portable for credit as well as degree mobility; yet there are various portability restrictions ('light green'). As discussed previously, these are mainly related to geography (i.e., mobility only towards certain countries).

A further seven systems (Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, and Türkiye) limit the portability of their domestic grant schemes to credit mobility only, generally with no restrictions ('yellow').

Eight countries (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom – England, Wales, and Northern Ireland) apply various conditions to support for credit mobility. ('orange'). Among them, Latvia and Kazakhstan offer fully portable loans, but limit grant portability to credit mobility with restrictions.

Finally, nine higher education systems (Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Moldova, San Marino, and Ukraine) provide domestic support with no portability or allow portability only under exceptional circumstances, such as when there is no equivalent programme in the home system. ('red').

Overall, the analysis suggests that this is a neglected EHEA policy commitment.

6.3. European solidarity with Ukrainian higher education

Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russia began a war of aggression by invading Ukraine. This was the biggest attack on a European country since the end of World War II and, in addition to over 8 million people being internally displaced in Ukraine, has led to a similar number fleeing the country and seeking refuge – mostly in Europe. Host countries have all taken their responsibility by providing various support measures to facilitate the successful, temporary integration of citizens fleeing from Ukraine.

On 4 March 2022, the European Council unanimously adopted an implementing decision introducing temporary protection for people fleeing Ukraine as a consequence of Russia's invasion. Temporary protection status and conditions of applications are defined by Council Directive 2001/55/EC of 20 July 2001, whereas the Council Decision 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 introduces temporary protection for displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC. Temporary protection is an exceptional measure to provide immediate and temporary protection to displaced persons from non-EU countries and those unable to return to their country of origin. It applies when there is a risk that the standard asylum system will struggle to cope with demands stemming from a mass inflow, risking a negative impact on the processing of claims. Access to education was recognised as an immediate priority for the integration and well-being of Ukrainian children and young people.

The Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) responded to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by suspending Russia and Belarus. It also encouraged the coordination of support to Ukrainian higher education during this period of conflict and called for monitoring of support from higher education systems as a form of international solidarity. This section reports on that action.

6.3.1. Top-level monitoring of participation of Ukrainian refugees in higher education

Monitoring the integration of Ukrainian nationals in higher education can serve a number of purposes. Firstly, it is important to know where best to focus support measures, and information on students and academics from Ukraine is essential for that purpose. Monitoring also provides regular feedback on the implementation of support measures, thus helping to identify areas where improvements can be made. It is therefore desirable for national authorities to collect information on Ukrainian students and academics in order to be able to focus action where it is most needed.

While monitoring should involve purposeful data gathering and analysis to assess the impact of policy action, for this report national authorities were only asked about very basic information on enrolments. Figure 6.12 below shows a distinction between countries where top level authorities are directly collecting enrolment data that enable them to identify Ukrainian students and staff, and those that do not collect such data.

Figure 6.12: Top-level monitoring of participation of refugee students and/or academics from Ukraine in higher education, 2022/2023
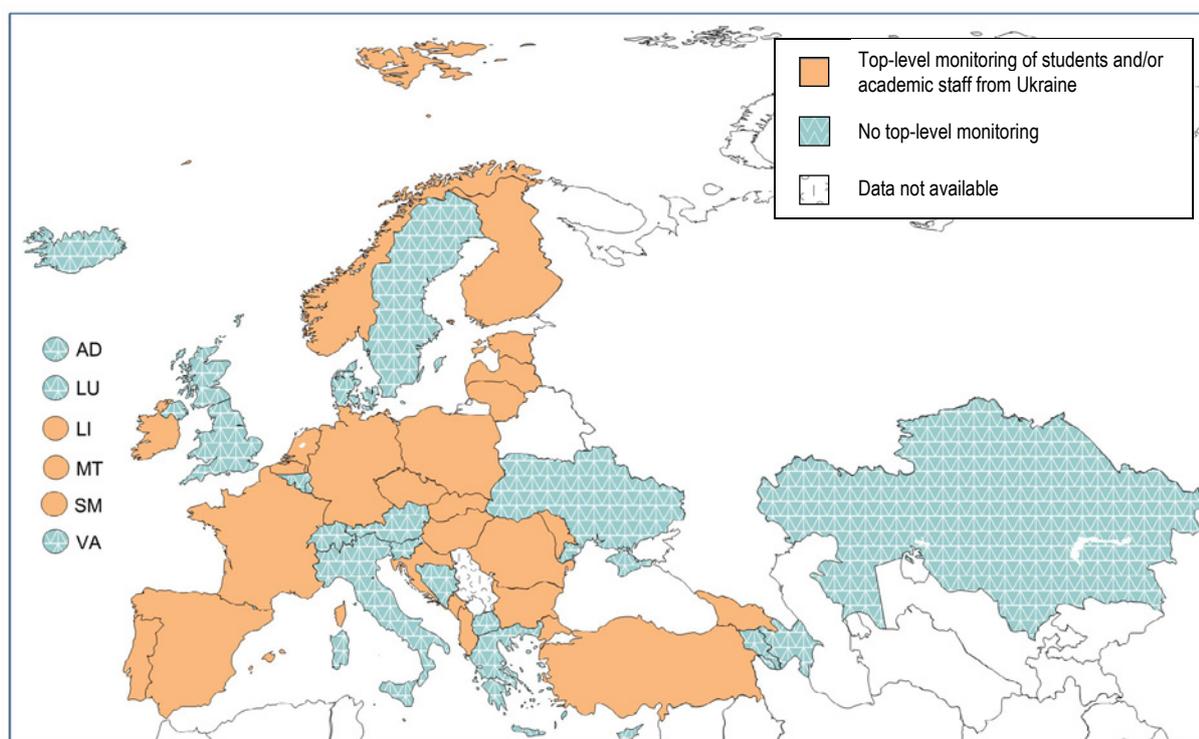
Source: BFUG data collection.

More than half of the systems (26) collect enrolment data at the top level. With 26 308 Ukrainian students enrolled, Poland is the country with the largest share. Slovakia has 10 169 and Czechia 8 250 Ukrainian students enrolled. Finland (2 357) and Lithuania (2 250) have also enrolled large numbers, while France and Spain also have around 2000 Ukrainian students in their systems. Germany provides a figure of 6 359, but the data are for 2021/2022. The Netherlands and Bulgaria are the other countries with over 1 000 Ukrainian students. For all other systems the numbers are below 1 000, with 3 738 Ukrainian students distributed among 16 higher education systems.

6.3.2. Large-scale measures supporting the integration in higher education of students and academic staff from Ukraine.

This section focuses on large-scale measures to support learners and academic staff from Ukraine. Large-scale refers to measures that are implemented throughout the entire system, or at least throughout a significant geographical area. They are also measures that receive public funding. Initiatives taken by individual higher education institutions are not considered.

Figure 6.13 shows the EHEA systems where some large-scale measures have been established to help with the integration of refugees in higher education.

Figure 6.13: Presence of large-scale measures supporting the integration of students and academic staff from Ukraine, 2022/2023
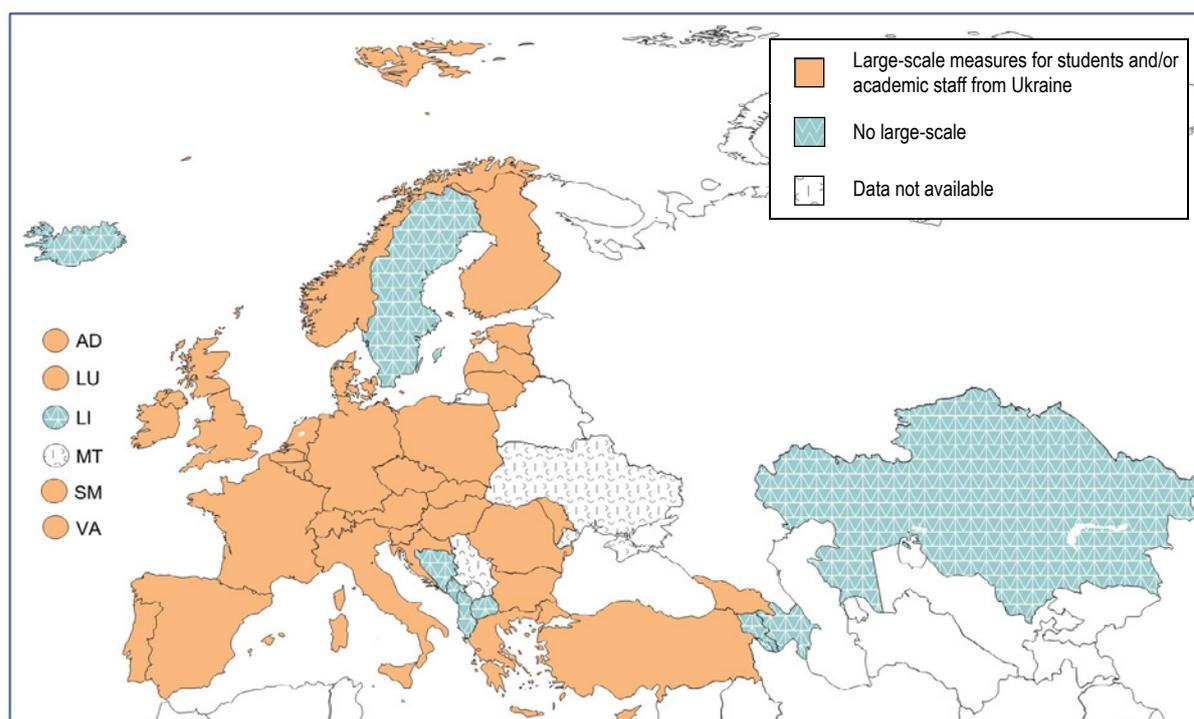
Source: BFUG data collection.

Most European systems (36) have developed large-scale support measures. The most widespread form of support is through the provision of grants to students from Ukraine. Such grants or scholarships are provided in 26 EHEA systems. Some countries have also extended such financial support to academic and research staff.

In a further 21 systems, language learning support has been put in place for Ukrainian students, and in a further ten countries preparatory courses have been set up as a bridge into the national higher education system for Ukrainian students. Finally, targeted academic or psychological counselling services have been established in six systems. (see annex, table 6.1)

6.4. Conclusions

Stimulating mobility and internationalisation within the European Higher Education Area has always been a core objective of the Bologna Process. Indeed, many of the structural reforms and commitments have been designed with this purpose in mind. Mobility flows have always been problematic to measure, and current measurements still remain partial and incomplete. Nevertheless, despite problems in measuring the different forms of student mobility, it is clear from the data collected for this report that during the period from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021, the pace of development of international student mobility was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that significant differences are evident among EHEA countries.

In 2009, a target was set by ministers that 20% of graduates in the EHEA should experience mobility by 2020. It is clear that this target has not been met, as the overall weighted average for the EHEA stands at 8.8%. The rate of increase in mobility numbers has slowed down and a clear negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is apparent. However, despite the limitations for mobility opportunities during the pandemic, numbers of mobile students at ISCED 7 and ISCED 8 education levels have continued to grow.

Even though it is impossible to prove direct causality, and other societal factors are in play, the focus throughout the Bologna Process on improving recognition, ECTS, Diploma Supplement and portability of student support are likely to have facilitated both credit and degree mobility. The introduction of a common three cycle degree system has made it much easier to study one cycle in one country and another in a different country. Nowadays the majority of degree-mobile students in the EHEA ─ both from outside and from within the EHEA ─ are studying at master level. The Bologna three-cycle system also underpins the success of joint international master programmes as developed within the Erasmus Mundus programme and more recently in the European University Alliances.

This chapter has also reported on portability of student support − a long-standing commitment of European ministers taken initially in 2003. Overall, the analysis suggests that this is a neglected policy commitment, although one system – Belgium French Community – has taken action to remove restrictions to portability of student support.

Finally, this chapter reported on the action taken by EHEA countries to support Ukrainian higher education following the invasion by Russia. There has been considerable supportive action from both governments, higher education institutions and European citizens, and everyone involved should feel satisfaction for having provided the response required and merited by the Ukrainian higher education community. There are also lessons to be learned to ensure that Ukrainian higher education continues to be fully supported and regenerated on sound foundations in the future.

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GLOSSARY AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

I. Codes, abbreviations and acronyms

I.1. Country codes
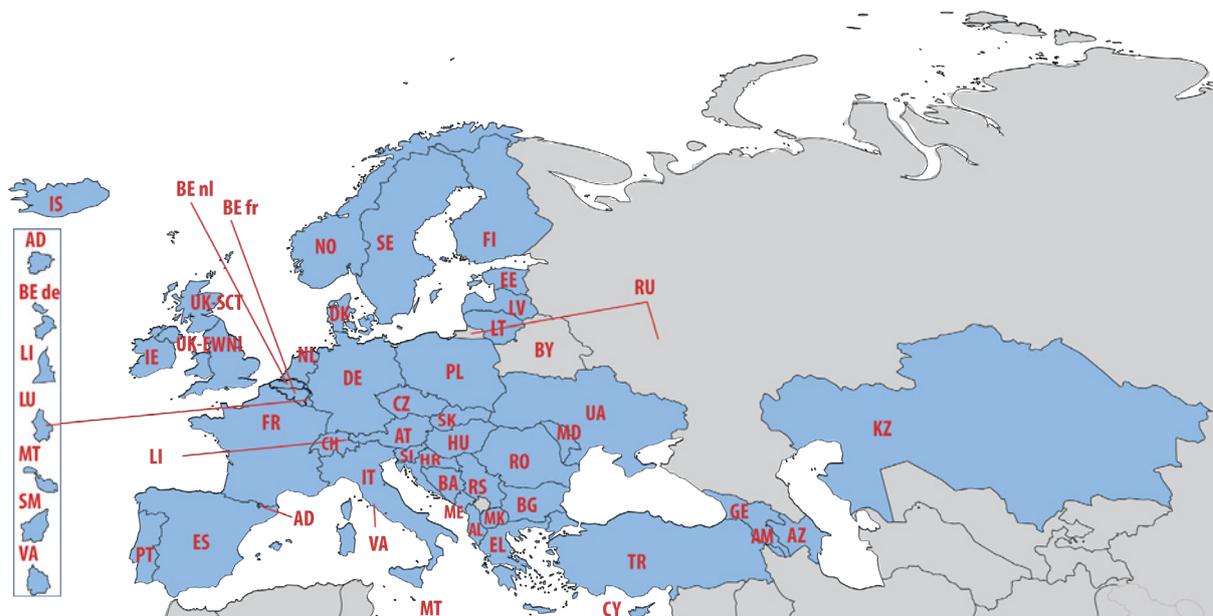
Code	Country	Code	Country	Code	Country
AD	Andorra	**EL**	Greece	**MT**	Malta
AL	Albania	**ES**	Spain	**NL**	Netherlands
AM	Armenia	**FI**	Finland	**NO**	Norway
AT	Austria	**FR**	France	**PL**	Poland
AZ	Azerbaijan	**GE**	Georgia	**PT**	Portugal
BA	Bosnia and Herzegovina	**HR**	Croatia	**RO**	Romania
BE fr	Belgium – French Community	**HU**	Hungary	**RS**	Serbia
BE nl	Belgium – Flemish Community	**IE**	Ireland	**RU**	Russia
BG	Bulgaria	**IS**	Iceland	**SI**	Slovenia
BY	Belarus	**IT**	Italy	**SK**	Slovakia
CH	Switzerland	**KZ**	Kazakhstan	**SE**	Sweden
CY	Cyprus	**LI**	Liechtenstein	**SM**	San Marino
CZ	Czechia	**LT**	Lithuania	**TR**	Türkiye
DE	Germany	**LU**	Luxembourg	**UA**	Ukraine
DK	Denmark	**LV**	Latvia	**UK-EWNI**	United Kingdom – England, Wales and Northern Ireland
EE	Estonia	**MD**	Moldova	**UK-SCT**	United Kingdom – Scotland
		ME	Montenegro	**VA**	Holy See
		MK	North Macedonia		

I.2. Codes and abbreviations

:	Data not available
BFUG	Bologna Follow-Up Group
CPD	continuing professional development
EEA	European Economic Area
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR	The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EU	European Union
EUA	European University Association
FTE	Full-time equivalent
HE	higher education
HEI	higher education institution
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ITE	initial teacher education
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centres
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPS	Purchasing Power Standard
QA-FIT	Quality Assurance fit for the future (project)
QF-EHEA	Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area
R&D	Research and Development
RPL	recognition of prior (non-formal and informal) learning
UNESCO-UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UOE	UNESCO-UIS/OECD/Eurostat

II. General terms

Academic fraud

Generic term covering plagiarism, dishonesty and cheating, fabrication or falsification in the academic context.

Academic guidance

Information services, special sessions or courses designed to support students' individual academic learning path.

Academic misconduct

Any action which gains, attempts to gain or assists others in gaining or attempting to gain unfair academic advantage. It includes plagiarism, contract cheating, being in possession of unauthorised materials or devices during examinations; fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation of data; personation; breach of research ethics, and the failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations.

Administrative data

Refers to data collected primarily for administrative (not research) purposes. This type of data is collected by top-level authorities and other organisations (e.g. higher education institutions) for the purposes of registration, transaction and record keeping, usually during the delivery of a service.

Administrative staff

Refers to staff working in the management, maintenance and supervision of higher education institutions and their constituent structures, as well as in the provision of services supporting the institution, its staff and students.

Automatic recognition of degrees

Refers to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access) (EHEA Pathfinder Group on Automatic Recognition, 2015). Automatic recognition does not imply automatic admission to any specific programme, but rather that holders of a qualification giving access to a programme of study at the next level have the right to be considered for entry.

Blended learning

A mode of learning that combines online teaching with classroom-based learning.

Blended learning mobility

Refers to the combination of a period of physical mobility and a period of online learning.

Career guidance

Information services, special courses and/or contacts with potential employers designed for (higher education) students.

Community engagement (of higher education institutions)

Involvement and participation in action for the welfare of the local or regional community. Includes volunteer action, humanitarian activities, and is generally motivated by values and ideals of social justice.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

CPD refers to formal in-service training undertaken by teachers or higher education staff throughout their career that allows them to broaden, develop and update their knowledge, skills and attitudes. It includes both subject-based training and pedagogical training. Different formats are offered such as courses, seminars, peer observation and support from networks of practitioners. In certain cases, CPD activities may lead to supplementary qualifications.

Contract cheating

The practice of engaging a third party to complete assignments. It may apply to students or staff and may operate through businesses that allow customers to purchase work on a particular topic.

Credit (ECTS)

ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent, which normally comprises a number of educational components to which credits (on the basis of the learning outcomes and workload) are allocated. ECTS credits are generally expressed in whole numbers (European Commission, 2015, p. 68).

Credit accumulation/Accumulation of credits

The process of collecting credits awarded for achieving the learning outcomes of educational components in formal contexts and for other learning activities carried out in informal and non-formal contexts. A student can accumulate credits to obtain qualifications, as required by the degree-awarding institution, or to document personal achievements for lifelong learning purposes (European Commission, 2015, p. 66).

Credit mobility

Credit mobility is a short-term form of mobility – usually a maximum of one year – aiming at the acquisition of credits in a foreign institution in the framework of on-going studies at the home institution.

Credit transfer/Transfer of credits

Is the process of having credits awarded in one context (programme, institution) recognised in another formal context for the purpose of obtaining a qualification. Credits awarded to students in one programme may be transferred from an institution to be accumulated in another programme offered by the same or another institution. Credit transfer is the key to successful study mobility. Institutions, faculties, departments may make agreements which guarantee automatic recognition and transfer of credits (European Commission, 2015, p. 68).

Cycle

One of the objectives in the Bologna Declaration in 1999 was the 'adoption of a system based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate'. In 2003, doctoral studies were included in the Bologna structure and referred to as the third cycle. The EHEA thus defined three higher education cycles (first cycle, second cycle and third cycle). In 2018 Paris Communiqué short-cycle qualifications were added as a stand-alone cycle to the overarching qualifications framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). All higher education qualifications in the European Higher Education Area are located within these cycles.

Degree mobility

Degree mobility is a long-term form of mobility which aims at the acquisition of a whole degree or certificate in the country of destination.

Delayed transition students

The term delayed transition students refers to students who enter higher education with a delay of more than 24 months after leaving school for the first time (Hauschildt et al., 2021, p. 82).

Diploma Supplement (DS)

Is a document accompanying a higher education diploma, providing a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies completed by its holder. It is produced by the higher education institutions according to standards agreed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The Diploma Supplement is also part of the Europass framework transparency tools. It has the following eight sections of information: the holder of the qualification; the qualification; its level and function; the contents and results gained; certification of the supplement; details of the national higher education system concerned (provided by the National Academic Recognition Information Centres – NARICs); any additional relevant information. Graduates in all the countries taking part in the Bologna Process have the right to receive the Diploma Supplement automatically, free and in a major European language (European Commission, 2015, p. 69).

Disability

Any long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full or effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Distance learning

Education of students who are not present at an institution. This may be through online education or correspondence courses.

Equity (in higher education)

A principle of social justice that reflects the notion of fairness. In the context of this report, fairness refers to equal opportunity for all in terms of accessing higher education and progressing towards the completion of studies. A broad definition of equity refers not only to nominally equal access and progression rights (i.e. same rights for all), but also to targeted measures and rights that enhance the access and progression of individuals who tend to be underrepresented in higher education institutions (HEIs), even if they appear to contradict the nominal equality principle (i.e. allowing for special rights reserved to certain categories of people only).

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

The association of quality assurance agencies in the European Higher Education Area was set up in 2000. It aims to disseminate information, experiences, and good practices in the field of quality assurance in higher education. Membership of the association is open to quality assurance agencies in the EHEA member states. Membership of ENQA represents recognition that an agency complies with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)

ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the principle of transparency of the learning, teaching and assessment processes. Its objective is to facilitate the planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes and student mobility by recognising learning achievements and qualifications and periods of learning (European Commission, 2015, p. 69).

European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF)

The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning is a common European reference framework which aims to increase the transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications systems and all types and levels of qualifications in Europe. The EQF uses eight common European reference levels based on learning outcomes that are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. The EQF is implemented by referencing levels of national qualifications frameworks to the levels of the EQF. The EQF was adopted by the Council of Ministers in the EU in 2008 and revised in 2017.

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

The Register ([1]) aims at increasing transparency of quality assurance in higher education across Europe. It has been founded in 2008 by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). EQAR publishes and manages a list of quality assurance agencies that substantially comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to provide clear and reliable information on quality assurance agencies operating in Europe.

External quality assurance

External quality assurance refers to the process of evaluation or audit of a higher education programme or institution undertaken by a specialised body outside the institution. Typically, the body may be a quality assurance or accreditation agency, or an ad hoc panel of experts and peers constituted by the responsible ministry. The evaluation will involve the collection of data, information and evidence for assessment against agreed standards.

([1]) http://www.eqar.eu/

Fee

All costs charged to students in higher education, including for tuition, registration, admission and certification, but excluding payments to student unions.

Formal learning

Formal learning means learning that takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma. It includes systems of general education, initial vocational training and higher education ([2]).

Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area/Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)

Refers to the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, which comprises three cycles (including, within national contexts, the possibility of intermediate qualifications), generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. In order to prove the compatibility of national qualifications frameworks for higher education with the QF-EHEA, NQFs need to be self-certified to the QF-EHEA ([3]).

Governing body

Body with responsibility for overseeing the institutions' activities, including the effective and efficient use of resources, determining future direction and fostering an environment in which the institutional mission is achieved. In some systems a governing body may involve external members (e.g. Governing Board) while in others it may be composed entirely of members of the academic community (e.g. Senate).

Grant/Public grant

Refers to domestic public financial support that does not need to be paid back.

Higher education institution

Any institution providing services in the field of higher and/or tertiary education, as defined by national law. This report focuses on 'Public higher education institutions' (see the related term).

([2]) Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, O.J. 2012/C 398/01.
([3]) Appendix III of the Paris Communiqué.

Higher education qualification

Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme (4). Inclusion/Social inclusion

The process of improving the ability, opportunity and worthiness of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, to take part in society (World Bank, 2013).

Incoming (inward) mobility

Incoming mobility refers to students that moved (i.e., crossed a national border) to a specified country to study.

Informal learning

Informal learning means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner's perspective; examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child) (5).

Initial teacher education (ITE)

Period of study and training during which prospective teachers attend academic subject-based courses and undertake professional training (either concurrently or consecutively) to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be a teacher. This period ends when prospective teachers qualify as teachers.

Integrated/long programmes

Programmes including both the first and the second cycle and leading to a second-cycle qualification.

Internal quality assurance

Internal quality assurance refers to the processes involved in assuring and/or improving the quality of defined areas of activity within higher education institutions. Typically, it involves the systematic collection and analysis of administrative data, as well as the feedback of students, lecturers, other staff and external stakeholders.

Internal steering body

Refers to the highest-level internal structure responsible for the organisation and management of a higher education institution. Often in universities this will be the Senate.

Internationalisation at home

A set of instruments and activities 'at home' that aim to develop international and intercultural competences of students. A variety of instruments can be used to internationalise teaching and learning, including guest lectures, international case studies or, increasingly, digital learning and online collaboration (Beelen and Jones, 2015).

Joint degree

A joint degree is a single document officially recognised by the appropriate (national or, if applicable, regional) authorities of at least two countries.

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(4)   Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, p. 3.
(5)   Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, O.J. 2012/C 398/01.

Joint programme

A joint programme is a programme organised and delivered by a partnership of two or more higher education institutions, and leading to a double, multiple or joint degree. Certified learning undertaken by students at partner institutions should be recognised automatically within the consortium.

Large-scale measures

Are the measures that operate throughout the whole country or a significant geographical area rather than a particular higher education institution or geographical location. Typically, they receive funding from national or regional bodies.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what the individual knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process. The achievement of learning outcomes has to be assessed through procedures based on clear and transparent criteria. Learning outcomes are attributed to individual educational components and to programmes at a whole. They are also used in European and national qualifications frameworks to describe the level of the individual qualification (European Commission, 2015, p. 72).

Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region ([6]) was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and adopted in 1997 in Lisbon. It aims to ensure that holders of a qualification from one European country have that qualification recognised through appropriate and fair procedures in another.

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 student 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 by the government against the risk of default and loss (Salmi and Hauptman, 2006, p. 43).

Measurable targets

Quantitative/numerical objectives. They are commonly expressed as a percentage or a number to be reached.

Migrants or from a migrant background

People who move from one country to another, or whose parents or grandparents have moved from one country to another. In the European Union, citizens moving to another Member State are not considered migrants but EU mobile. Consequently, only people born in a non-EU country are considered migrants in the EU.

National qualifications frameworks (for higher education)

National qualifications frameworks describe qualifications in terms of level, workload, learning outcomes and profile. They relate qualifications and other learning achievements in higher education coherently and are internationally understood.

([6])   Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships); it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers; very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target group or the general public ([7]).

Outgoing (outward) mobility

Outward mobility refers to students that left their country of residence (i.e., crossed a national border) to study elsewhere (in which they are counted as inwardly mobile students).

Part-time study

In opposition to full-time study, part-time study is based on taking fewer course credits, for example fewer than 60 ECTS per year.

Plagiarism

Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent. Applies to published or unpublished work.

Portability

The possibility to take abroad the support available to students in their home country (within EHEA) for credit mobility (credit portability) or degree mobility (degree portability).

Preparatory courses for refugees

Courses designed to address the academic potential of refugees, leading to their integration into regular higher education programmes.

Private higher education institutions

Licensed higher education institutions that receive less than 50% of their core funding from public sources.

Psychological counselling services

Psychological support structures which aim to improve interpersonal relations, and hence the academic performance of students. This may include a variety of professional services aimed to increase students' capacity to overcome personal and social problems that hinder their attainment of academic success.

Public higher education institutions

Higher education institutions directly or indirectly administered by a public education authority. Public higher education institutions thus include two categories of institution: '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.

([7]) Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, O.J. 2012/C 398/01.

Quality assurance agency

A body established by national authorities or private entities with responsibility for external quality assurance. Agencies are intended to play a strong role in ensuring accountability of higher education institutions and may have specific objectives aimed at enhancing quality related to teaching, learning or other higher education missions.

Recognition of prior (non-formal and informal) learning

Validation and formal recognition of learners' non-formal and informal learning experiences in order to: (a) provide higher education access to candidates without an upper secondary school leaving certificate; or (b) within a higher education programme, allocate credits towards a qualification and/or provide exemption from some programme requirements.

Recommendation

A recommendation is understood as a suggestion or proposal. A top-level recommendation is expected to be found in top-level (national) steering documents (e.g. guidelines for all HEIs).

Requirement

A requirement is understood as a compulsory element/condition (a rule that has to be followed). A top-level requirement is expected to be found in in top-level (national) steering document (e.g. national legislation).

Self-certification

A procedure when national authorities, other bodies and stakeholders certify the compatibility of their national qualifications framework for higher education with the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. A set of procedures for the transparent self-certification of compatibility by member states was agreed by higher education ministers in the Bologna Process.

Short cycle

Programmes of less than 180 ECTS (or lasting less than 3 years), leading to a qualification that is recognised at a lower level than a qualification at the end of the first cycle. Short-cycle qualifications are recognised as level 5 in the overarching framework of qualifications for the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area / Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) and also at level 5 in the ISCED classification.

Social dialogue

An organised process of mutual exchanges and communication between policy-makers and defined stakeholders on issues of common interest related to public policy. Often a social dialogue aims to help policy-makers to consult stakeholders, but unlike typical consultation processes, the participants of the social dialogue are specified in advance and are expected to contribute their insights in a dynamic process of exchanges of views. In some cases, social dialogue is a form of negotiation. Normally, a social dialogue involves actual meetings between the participants, although these meetings can be also virtual or disjointed (i.e. there is a flow of exchanges between the participants at different moments). Often a mark of success of a social dialogue process is that any decisions or conclusions have been reached through consensus.

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, level of education, and occupation. Definitions of socio-economic status might differ depending on the national context.

Special educational needs

Can cover a range of needs related to physical or mental disabilities, and cognition or educational impairments.

Staff (in higher education)

Refers to the combination of academic staff and administrative staff. It includes personnel at all stages of their career within all the varieties of the current contractual modalities within higher education systems: full time, part time, contractual and on demand academic staff.

Steering documents

Official documents containing guidelines, obligations and/or recommendations for higher education policy and/or institutions.

Strategy (or other major policy plan)

An official policy document developed by the top-level authorities in an effort to achieve an overall goal. A strategy can comprise a vision, identify objectives and goals (qualitative and quantitative), describe processes, authorities and people in charge, identify funding sources, make recommendations, etc. Depending on the particular education system, a strategy may refer to a specific document bearing the term 'strategy', but it may refer also to a document (or documents) that describe a major policy plan equivalent to a strategy without, however, bearing the title 'strategy'.

Top-level (or top-level authority)

The highest level of authority with responsibility for education in a given country, usually located at national (state) level. However, for Belgium, Germany and Spain, the *Communautés*, *Länder* and *Comunidades Autónomas* respectively are either wholly responsible or share responsibilities with the state level for all or most areas relating to education. Therefore, these administrations are considered as the top-level authority for the areas where they hold the responsibility, while for those areas for which they share the responsibility with the national (state) level, both are considered to be top-level authorities.

Top-level coordination structure (mechanism)

A working group, body or institution which is set up or has a specific mandate to coordinate top-level policies in a well-defined field. Its members typically represent different top-level authorities and stakeholders which are responsible for the development and implementation of top-level policies in a specific field.

Underrepresented students (or staff)

Societal groups that may be considered as not being proportionally represented in higher education in different countries. Examples might include people with disabilities, migrants, ethnic groups, lower socio-economic status groups, women/men, etc.

Workload

An estimation of the time learners typically need to complete all learning activities such as lectures, seminars, projects, practical work, work placements, individual study required to achieve the defined learning outcomes in formal learning environments. The correspondence of the fulltime workload of an academic year to 60 credits is often formalised by national legal provisions. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1 500 to 1 800 hours for an academic year, which means that one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. It should be recognised that this represents the normal workload and that for individual learners the actual time to achieve the learning outcomes will vary (European Commission, 2015, p. 77).

III. Statistical terms

Academic staff (ISCED 5-8)

This category includes:

- Personnel employed at the tertiary level of education whose primary assignment is instruction or research;

- Personnel who hold an academic rank with such titles as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, lecturer or the equivalent of any of these academic rank;

- Personnel with other titles, (e.g. dean, director, associate dean, assistant dean, chair or head of department), if their principal activity is instruction or research.

It excludes student teachers, teachers' aides and paraprofessionals (UNESCO-UIS, OECD and Eurostat, 2020 ([8]), p. 43).

Educational attainment ([9]) (Figures 1.4, 1.7, 1.8)

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education successfully completed. Indicators using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) often distinguish between low, medium and high educational attainment.

([8])   UOE data collection manual, 2020 (https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/uoe-data-collection-manual-2020-en.pdf)

([9])   EU-LFS, Educational attainment, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational_attainment_statistics#Level_of_educational_attainment_by_age

These categories are compiled as follows (in EU LFS):

- Low educational attainment corresponds to completed pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 2011 levels 0, 1 and 2). For figures in Chapter 6, low educational attainment refers to completed lower secondary education (ISCED 2).

- Medium educational attainment corresponds to upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 3 and 4). For figures in Chapter 6, medium educational attainment refers to completed upper secondary education (ISCED 4).

- High educational attainment corresponds to tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 5 to 8)*.*

First-cycle new entrants (Figure 1.4) with high educational background are those whose parents' highest educational level of attainment is at ISCED 5-8; and students without higher education background are those whose parents' highest degree is at ISCED level 0-4.Expenditure on tertiary education (Figures 1.16, 1.17, 1.18, and 1.19)

Within the UOE data collection, education expenditure includes the following financial data:

- Goods and Services of educational institutions: All direct public, private and international expenditure whether educational or non-educational (e.g. ancillary services), but with some exceptions; and;

- Goods and Services purchased outside educational institutions: private expenditure on educational goods and services; plus

- Public subsidies to students for student living costs regardless of where or how the student spends these subsidies (UNESCO-UIS, OECD and Eurostat 2020 ([10]), p. 48).

  Public expenditure refers to spending of public authorities. Expenditure on education by other ministries or equivalent institutions, for example Health and Agriculture is included. It includes subsidies provided to households and other private entities (often in the form of financial aid to students) which can be attributable to educational institutions (e.g. fees) or not (e.g. private living costs outside of institutions). Expenditure that is not directly related to education (e.g., culture, sports, youth activities, etc.) is excluded unless provided as ancillary services. (Ibid, p. 56).

Three main types of government expenditure (at central, regional or local levels) on education are distinguished:

- Direct expenditure on educational institutions,

- Intergovernmental transfers for education, and

- Transfers or other payments from governments to households and other private entities.

Public subsidies to households include:

- Scholarships and other grants (including child allowances contingent to student status, special public subsidies in cash or in kind that are contingent on student status) and

- Student loans (including those not attributable to household payments for educational institutions, such as subsidies for student living costs) (Ibid, p. 58).

Full-time equivalent student (Figures 1.17, 1.18, 1.19)

A full-time equivalent (FTE) is a unit to measure students in a way that makes them comparable although they may study a different number of hours per week. The unit is obtained by comparing a student's average number of hours studied to the average number of hours of a full-time student. A full-time

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([10])   UOE data collection on formal education, 2020, p. 48, https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/uoe-data-collection-manual-2020-en.pdf; Public expenditure in education, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational_expenditure_statistics#Public_expenditure

student is therefore counted as one FTE, while a part-time student gets a score in proportion to the hours he or she studies (Eurostat, 2020[11]).

Incoming (inward) mobility rate (Figures 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7)

Incoming mobility rate refers to mobile students (enrolments or graduates) from abroad studying in the country of destination as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled/graduating in the country.

International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) has been developed to facilitate comparisons of education statistics and indicators across countries on the basis of uniform and internationally agreed definitions. The coverage of ISCED extends to all organised and sustained learning opportunities for children, young people and adults, including those with special educational needs, irrespective of the institutions or organisations providing them or the form in which they are delivered.

The ISCED classification 2011 ([12]) refers to the following levels of education:

ISCED 0: Pre-primary education

Programmes at level 0 (pre-primary), defined as the initial stage of organised instruction, are designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment, i.e. to provide a bridge between the home and a school-based atmosphere. Upon completion of these programmes, children continue their education at level 1 (primary education).

ISCED level 0 programmes are usually school-based or otherwise institutionalised for a group of children (e.g. centre-based, community-based, home-based).

Early childhood educational development (ISCED level 010) has educational content designed for younger children (in the age range of 0 to 2 years). Pre-primary education (ISCED level 020) is designed for children aged at least 3 years.

ISCED 1: Primary education

Primary education provides learning and educational activities typically designed to provide students with fundamental skills in reading, writing and mathematics (i.e. literacy and numeracy). It establishes a sound foundation for learning, a solid understanding of core areas of knowledge and fosters personal development, thus preparing students for lower secondary education. It provides basic learning with little specialisation, if any.

This level begins between 5 and 7 years of age, is compulsory in all countries and generally lasts from four to six years.

ISCED 2: Lower secondary education

Programmes at ISCED level 2, or lower secondary education, typically build upon the fundamental teaching and learning processes which begin at ISCED level 1. Usually, the educational aim is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and personal development that prepares students for further educational opportunities. Programmes at this level are usually

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([11]) Eurostat, Full-time equivalent (FTE), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Full-time_equivalent_(FTE)#:~:text=A%20full-time%20person%20is%20therefore%20counted%20as%20one,of%2040%20hours%2C%20is%20counted%20as%200.5%20FTE (accessed 10/03/2024).

([12]) International Standard Classification of Education, ISCED 2011, https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/isced-2011-en.pdf

organised around a more subject-oriented curriculum, introducing theoretical concepts across a broad range of subjects.

This level typically begins around the age of 11 or 12 and usually ends at age 15 or 16, often coinciding with the end of compulsory education.

ISCED 3: Upper secondary education

Programmes at ISCED level 3, or upper secondary education, are typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary or higher education, or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both. Programmes at this level offer students more subject-based, specialist and in-depth programmes than in lower secondary education (ISCED level 2). They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available.

This level generally begins at the end of compulsory education. The entry age is typically age 15 or 16. Entry qualifications (e.g. completion of compulsory education) or other minimum requirements are usually needed. The duration of ISCED level 3 varies from two to five years.

ISCED 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education

Post-secondary non-tertiary programmes build on secondary education to provide learning and educational activities to prepare students for entry into the labour market and/or tertiary education. It typically targets students who have completed upper secondary (ISCED level 3) but who want to improve their skills and increase the opportunities available to them. Programmes are often not significantly more advanced than those at upper secondary level as they typically serve to broaden rather than deepen knowledge, skills and competencies. They are therefore pitched below the higher level of complexity characteristic of tertiary education.

ISCED 5: Short-cycle tertiary education

Programmes at ISCED level 5 are short-cycle tertiary education, and are often designed to provide participants with professional knowledge, skills and competencies. Typically, they are practice-based and occupation-specific, preparing students to enter the labour market. However, these programmes may also provide a pathway to other tertiary education programmes.

Academic tertiary education programmes below the level of a Bachelor's programme or equivalent are also classified as ISCED level 5.

ISCED 6: Bachelor's or equivalent level

Programmes at ISCED level 6 are at Bachelor's or equivalent level, which are often designed to provide participants with intermediate academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a first degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level are typically theory-based but may include practical elements; they are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice. ISCED 6 programmes are traditionally offered by universities and equivalent tertiary educational institutions.

ISCED 7: Master's or equivalent level

Programmes at ISCED level 7 are at Master's or equivalent level, and are often designed to provide participants with advanced academic and/or professional knowledge, skills and competencies, leading to a second degree or equivalent qualification. Programmes at this level may have a substantial research component but do not lead to the award of a doctoral qualification. Typically, programmes at this level are theory-based but may include practical

components and are informed by state of the art research and/or best professional practice. They are traditionally offered by universities and other tertiary educational institutions.

<u>ISCED 8: Doctoral or equivalent level</u>

Programmes at ISCED level 8 are at doctoral or equivalent level, and are designed primarily to lead to an advanced research qualification. Programmes at this ISCED level are devoted to advanced study and original research and are typically offered only by research-oriented tertiary educational institutions such as universities. Doctoral programmes exist in both academic and professional fields.

Mature students (Figure 1.10)

For the purposes of this report, mature students are defined as students aged 30 or more years old.

Median

The median is the middle value in a group of numbers ranked in order of size, thus dividing the group into two halves. In other words, it is the number in a range of scores that falls exactly in the middle so that 50% of the scores are above and 50 % are below (Eurostat, 2020 ([13])). In this report, the EHEA median refers to the median of values among the EHEA countries where data are available.

New entrants (Figures 1.4, 1.5)

New entrants to a level of education are students who, during the course of the reference school or academic year, enter for the first time any programme in a given level of education, irrespective of whether the students enter the programme at the beginning or at an advanced stage of the programme (e.g. by virtue of credits gained for relevant work experience or courses taken at another level of education) (UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat 2020, p. 38).

Odds ratio (Figure 1.8)

The odds ratio refers to the ratio of the likelihood that an event may occur in one group in comparison to its likelihood ratio in another group. An odds ratio of 1 indicates that the condition or event under study is equally likely to occur in both groups. An odds ratio greater than 1 indicates that the condition or event is more likely to occur in the first group. And an odds ratio less than 1 indicates that the condition or event is less likely to occur in the first group. An odds ratio is calculated in the following way (probabilities of the event in each of the groups are p1 (first group) and p2 (second group): (p1/(1-p1))/(p2/(1-p2).

Outgoing (outward) mobility rate (Figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, and 6.8)

Outward mobility rate refers to students (enrolment or graduates) from a country of origin studying abroad (outwardly mobile students) as a percentage of the total number of students with the same country of origin.

Purchasing power parity (PPP) ([14])

A currency conversion rate which converts economic indicators expressed in a national currency into an artificial common currency that equalises 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) ([15]).

([13]) Eurostat, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Beginners:Statistical_concept_-_Mean_and_median (accessed 10/03/2024)
([14]) Purchasing Power Parity, Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/prc_ppp_esms.htm
([15]) Purchasing Power Standard, Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Purchasing_power_standard_(PPS)

Purchasing power standard (PPS) (16) (Figures 1.18, 1.19)

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 (Purchasing power parity). 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.

Students enrolled as part-timers (Figure 1.9)

Within the UOE data collection, the part-time/full-time classification is regarded as an attribute of student participation rather than as an attribute of the educational programmes or the provision of education in general. A part-time student is one who is enrolled in an education programme whose intended study load is less than 75% of the normal full-time annual study load (UNESCO-UIS, OECD and Eurostat 2020 ([17]), p. 27).

Tertiary education (as defined within the ISCED classification)

Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialised fields of education. It aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialisation. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. It comprises ISCED levels 5, 6, 7 and 8, which are labelled as short-cycle tertiary education, Bachelor's or equivalent level, Master's or equivalent level, and doctoral or equivalent level, respectively. The content of programmes at the tertiary level is more complex and advanced than in lower ISCED levels.

([16])   Purchasing Power Standard, Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Purchasing_power_standard_(PPS)
([17])   UOE data collection on formal education 2020, https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/uoe-data-collection-manual-2020-en.pdf

IV. Data sources

BFUG data collection

This direct data collection was aimed at collecting information for the present report. The reference year was the academic year 2022/2023. The questionnaires primarily focused on qualitative information, and consisted of five sections, namely:

1. Key commitments, portability, higher education institutions;

2. Social dimension;

3. Fundamental values;

4. Learning and teaching;

5. Ukrainian refugees in HE.

When filling in the questionnaires, the Bologna Follow-Up Group representatives were asked to consult all the relevant actors/stakeholders in their respective systems to ensure the highest degree of accuracy possible.

EQAR

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is the EHEA's official register of quality assurance agencies, listing those that substantially comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

EQAR maintains a Knowledge Base with country information, describing the national quality assurance frameworks of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries, and other information on quality assurance in Europe.

EQAR also hosts DEQAR − a database of higher education institutions and programmes that have been subject to external quality assurance providing easy access to the corresponding reports.

EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) ([18])

The EU-LFS is the largest European household sample survey providing quarterly and annual results on labour participation of people aged 15 and over as well as on persons outside the labour force. It covers residents in private households. The EU-LFS is an important source of information about the situation and trends in the EU labour market.

The EU-LFS currently covers thirty-four countries (participating countries) providing Eurostat with data from national labour force surveys: the 28 Member States of the European Union, three EFTA countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland), and four candidate countries, i.e. (Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye). The EU-LFS provides quarterly and annual data; depending on the labour status of the people (employed, unemployed, economically inactive) different variables are collected.

The EU-LFS is conducted by the national statistical institutes in accordance with Council Regulation (EEC) No. 577/98 of 9 March 1998 and the data are centrally processed by Eurostat.

The EU-LFS data collection covers demographic background, labour status, employment characteristics of the main job, hours worked, employment characteristics of the second job, time-related

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([18]) EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS), https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_labour_force_survey

underemployment, search for employment, education and training, previous work experience of persons not in employment, situation one year before the survey, main labour status and income ([19]).

The main statistical objective of the EU-LFS is to divide the resident population of working age (15 years and above) into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups – persons employed, unemployed and economically inactive persons – and to provide descriptive and explanatory data on each of these categories.

Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, in force from 1 January 2021 onwards, provides for a framework that applies to several data collections in the field of social statistics, including the LFS. More details about the new methodology are provided in Eurostat's Statistics Explained.

Between the presented reference years (2016, 2021), comparisons at country level should be made with caution, since series report a break in 2021 due to changes in the EU-LFS methodology.

Data for first cycle new entrants according to the educational attainment of the parents until 2020 are based on the previous regulation of the LFS. Since the information on the level of education of the parents was collected only if the person was in the same household with their parents was incomplete, it has stopped to be collected.

Data for 2021 come from the 2021 EU-LFS adhoc module dedicated on labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, in which the information about the level of education of parents was asked to all respondents.

Eurostudent survey

R e f e r e n c e   y e a r : Eurostudent 8 survey: 2022 for all participating countries except Austria, France, Portugal, Romania, Spain (2023), Germany (2021) and Switzerland (2020); Eurostudent VII survey:2019 for all participating countries except Germany (2016), France, Switzerland (2020), Italy, Portugal, Romania and Türkiye (2020/2021).

C o v e r a g e : Austria, Czechia, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland (both rounds); Albania, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Türkiye (Eurostudent VII only); Azerbaijan, Latvia, Slovakia, Spain (Eurostudent 8 only).

D e s c r i p t i o n :

The Eurostudent project collects and analyses comparable data on the social dimension of European higher education. A wide range of topics related to students' social and economic conditions are covered. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. It does this through coupling a central coordination approach with a strong network of national partners in each participating country. The Eurostudent consortium provides national contributors with the Eurostudent core questionnaire, as well as extensive instructions for conducting the field phase at the national level, data cleaning and weighting, calculation of indicators, and data delivery. The national research teams are chosen and funded by the participating national ministries. The national research teams are responsible for implementing a national student survey, delivering the data to the Eurostudent data team in accordance with Eurostudent conventions, and providing national interpretations of the delivered data. The delivered data are checked in a series of feedback loops for accuracy and comparability and are validated for publication by the national research team.

([19])   For more details on the EU-LFS, see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey [Accessed 10 March 2018].

The Eurostudent target group includes all students who are enrolled in any national study programme regarded to be higher education in a country. Usually that corresponds to ISCED levels 5, 6 and 7. This means all students should be included regardless of their nationality, full-time/part-time status, or character of their higher education institution or study programme. The target group changed from Eurostudent VII to Eurostudent 8 to include distance students (except those not living in the country of survey). Excluded from the Eurostudent target group are: students on (temporary) leave, students on credit mobility (i.e. short-term mobile students), students in ISCED 8 study programmes, students at very specialised higher education institutions, and students in programmes classified as ISCED levels 5 or 6 which are not regarded to be higher education in the national context.

Trends 2024 (European University Association)

Reference year: 2024 (survey conducted in 2023)

Coverage: 490 responses from 46 countries across the EHEA

Description:

The Trends series has been published by the European University Association (EUA) and its predecessor organisation since the signing of the Bologna Declaration in 1999, with Trends 2024 presenting the ninth edition. Trends provides an institutional perspective on higher education policy and institutional developments in Europe. Over the years, the focus of Trends has been evolving. Trends 2024 examines the broader context in which higher education institutions continue to evolve, and hone in on learning and teaching, social inclusion, engagement with society, internationalisation and the situation of staff and students. It also addresses ongoing transformations due to digitalisation, the emergence of new formats, such as micro-credentials, and the consequences from and responses to the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

UOE data collection on education and training systems (UOE)

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS-UNESCO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) jointly provide internationally comparable data on key aspects of education and training systems through the annual UOE data collection.

For tertiary education the collection covers entrants (input), enrolments (stock) and graduates (output). Data on education expenditure and personnel is also provided. The data are broken down by educational level (using the ISCED classification), as well as by sex, age, sector and field of education. Separate tables provide information on mobile and foreign students and graduates by country of origin (as well as by level, sex and field of education).

Within the UOE data collection, Eurostat collects and disseminates data from the EU Member States, candidate countries and EFTA countries. The OECD collects data from other OECD countries (such as Australia, Canada, Japan and the United States), while the UIS-UNESCO collects data from other participating countries. The validated data are used by the three organisations ([20]).

EHEA countries use multiple definitions to identify and report mobile students. Starting from 2013 reference year the UOE definition is based on the country of origin understood as the country where the upper secondary diploma was awarded (or the best national estimate (upper secondary diploma, vs. residence, vs. citizenship).

([20]) For more details on the UOE data collection, see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=UNESCO_OECD_Eurostat_(UOE)_joint_data_collection_%E2%80%93_methodology#Introduction [Accessed 10 March 2024].

For the incoming (inward) mobility to the EHEA from countries outside the EHEA information from all declaring countries in the world was considered. For the outgoing (outward) mobility from the EHEA towards countries outside the EHEA only Australia, Canada, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the United States, Japan and New Zealand were considered.

V. Country-specific notes

Chapter 1

Figure 1.1: Number of students enrolled in tertiary education by ISCED level, 2020/2021

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, San Marino: ISCED 5 not applicable.

Belgium: data on independent private institutions refer to the Flemish Community only.

Kazakhstan, Holy See: data not available.

Liechtenstein: zero or negligible number of students under ISCED 5 (2021).

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021); enrolments data only include publicly financed institutions, referred to as 'public institutions' in the Dutch national statistical and educational environment.

United Kingdom: short-cycle tertiary level includes a small number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at bachelor's and master's level.

Figure 1.2: Enrolment rates in tertiary education for the 18-34 olds, 2015/2016-2020/2021

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, San Marino: ISCED 5 not applicable.

Belgium: break in time-series in 2020 for ISCED 5 from this year onwards; associate degree programmes of higher vocational education (at ISCED 5) are organised by university colleges; data on the German-speaking Community are not integrated in the enrolments (2016, 2021); data on independent private institutions refer to the Flemish Community only (2016, 2021).

Czechia: break in time series in 2018, the 2016 Higher Education Law introduced new study programmes, new data collection was introduced for bachelor's, master's and equivalent.

Germany: break in time series in 2020 for ISCED 8, change in the data collection method to provide accurate figures, which have been incomplete until 2019; for 2020, data 10% lower than estimated data compared to previous sample survey, while in 2021, data increased by further 5%, thus almost reaching the previous amount.

Kazakhstan, Holy See: data not available

Liechtenstein: ISCED 5 not applicable (2016), Zero or negligible number of students under ISCED 5 (2021).

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021); enrolments data only include publicly financed institutions, referred to as 'public institutions' in the Dutch national statistical and educational environment (2016, 2021).

Poland: between 2020-2021, methodological changes were introduced; a new administrative data source on tertiary education is used.

United Kingdom: short-cycle tertiary level includes a small number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at bachelor's and master's level (2016).

Figure 1.3: Enrolment rates in tertiary education for the 18-34 olds, 2015/2016-2020/2021

Albania: data for 2016 is not available.

Armenia, Kazakhstan, Holy See: data not available.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, San Marino: ISCED 5 not applicable

Belgium: break in time-series in 2020 for ISCED 5; from 2020, associate degree programmes of higher vocational education (at ISCED 5) are organised by university colleges; previously, these courses could be followed at the centres for adult education; data on the German-speaking Community are not integrated in the enrolments (2016, 2021); data on independent private institutions refer to the Flemish Community only (2016, 2021).

Germany: break in time series in 2020 for ISCED 8, change in the data collection method to provide accurate figures, which have been incomplete until 2019; for 2020, data 10% lower than estimated data compared to previous sample survey, while in 2021, data increased by further 5%, thus almost reaching the previous amount.

Liechtenstein: ISCED 5 not applicable (2016); zero or negligible number of students under ISCED 5 (2021).

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021); enrolments data only include publicly financed institutions, referred to as 'public institutions' in the Dutch national statistical and educational environment (2016, 2021).

Poland: between 2020-2021 academic year, methodological changes were introduced; a new administrative data source on tertiary education is used.

Slovenia: definition differs for ISCED 7 (2016).

United Kingdom: definition differs for ISCED 5 (2016); no data available for 2021.

Figure 1.4: Relationship between the educational background of first-cycle new entrants (ISCED 6) and the educational attainment of their parents' cohort (population aged 45-64), 2020/2021

Data come from the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS). Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, which is in force from 1 January 2021 onwards,

provides for a framework that applies to several data collections in the field of social statistics, including the LFS. More details about the new methodology are provided in Eurostat's Statistics Explained articles:

Data for first cycle new entrants according to the educational attainment of the parents until 2020 are based on the previous regulation of the LFS. Since the information on the level of education of the parents was collected only if the person was in the same household with their parents was incomplete, it has stopped to be collected.

Data for 2021 come from the 2021 EU-LFS adhoc module dedicated on labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, in which the information about the level of education of parents was asked to all respondents.

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine, Holy See: data not available.

Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine: data for share of first-cycle new entrants not provided.

Andorra: data on share of population aged 45-64 with high educational attainment refer to 2022.

Croatia, Slovenia: unreliable data for first cycle new entrants with highly educated parents for 2021.

Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, United Kingdom: no data available for 2021.

Figure 1.5: Share of women among new entrants in tertiary education (ISCED 5-8), 2015/2016 and 2020/2021

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Finland Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia: total excludes ISCED 5.

Belgium: under-coverage at ISCED 5, new entrants exclude the Flemish Community of Belgium (2016, 2021); total excludes ISCED 8 (2016); break in time series, introduction of the associate degree programmes which were previously followed at the centres for adult education and for which no data was available (2021).

Bulgaria: estimated data for ISCED 6-7 (2021).

Germany: definition differs for ISCED 8 (2016); break in time series; new source of data based on administrative data instead of sample survey (2021).

Hungary: distribution by sex is estimated because of grade repeaters (2016).

Kazakhstan Moldova, Montenegro, Holy See: no data available.

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021).

Poland: break in time series, since in 2019/2020 academic year, doctoral studies are gradually phased out and for newly enrolled students; doctoral training is provided only in doctoral schools (2021); in 2020-2021, methodological changes were introduced; a new administrative data source on tertiary education is used. Definition differs for ISCED 6-8 (2016).

United Kingdom: definition differs for ISCED 5-7 (2016).

Figure 1.6: Median percentage of women among enrolled students in Bologna structures by field of education and level of Bologna structure (ISCED 6 and 7), 2021

Kazakhstan, Holy See: no data available.

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021)

Poland: between 2020-2021 academic year, methodological changes were introduced; a new administrative data source on tertiary education is used.

Slovenia, Sweden: definition differs (2021).

United Kingdom: no data available for 2021, instead data for 2019 are reported; short-cycle tertiary level includes a small number of students enrolled in vocational programmes at bachelor's and master's level (2019).

ISCED 6 excludes (fields are listed in the order followed in the report and not in alphabetical order:

Education: Liechtenstein, Luxembourg (2021)

Arts and humanities: Liechtenstein

Social sciences, journalism and information: Liechtenstein

Business, administration and law: not applicable

Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics: Liechtenstein

Information and communication technologies: Liechtenstein

Engineering, manufacturing and construction: not applicable

Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary: Liechtenstein, Luxembourg

Health and welfare: Liechtenstein

Services: Luxembourg (2021)

ISCED 7 excludes:

> Education: Liechtenstein
>
> Arts and humanities: Liechtenstein
>
> Social sciences, journalism and information: Liechtenstein
>
> Business, administration and law: not applicable
>
> Natural sciences, mathematics and statistics: Liechtenstein
>
> Information and communication technologies: Liechtenstein
>
> Engineering, manufacturing and construction: not applicable
>
> Agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary: Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Cyprus (2021), Malta
>
> Health and welfare: Liechtenstein
>
> Services: Luxembourg (2016)

Figure 1.7: Participation rates in tertiary education among people aged 18 to 29, foreign-born, native-born and total population, 2016 and 2021

Break in series in 2021 due to revised EU-LFS methodology. Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, which is in force from 1 January 2021 onwards, provides for a framework that applies to several data collections in the field of social statistics, including the LFS. More details about the new methodology are provided in Eurostat's Statistics Explained articles ([21]).

Andorra: data refer to 2017 instead of 2016. Data refer to 2022 instead of 2021.

Armenia, Iceland: data not available for 2016.

Armenia: data refer to 2022 instead of 2021.

Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia: due to low reliability of data, data for foreign-born students in 2016 and 2021 are indicated as not available.

Croatia, Latvia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland: data for migrants are of low reliability (2016).

Croatia, Latvia, Poland: data for migrants are of low reliability (2021).

Germany, Estonia, Iceland: due to low reliability of data, data for foreign-born students in 2016 are indicated as not available.

Germany: changes in the survey methodology have led to a break in German data in 2020. Estimates for 2020 and 2021 can therefore not be compared directly with those of previous years. In addition, data collection in 2020 and 2021 was impacted by technical issues and COVID-19 measures.

Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine: data not available.

Montenegro, North Macedonia, Türkiye, United Kingdom: data not available for 2021.

Figure 1.8: Tertiary education attainment of 25 to 34-year-olds by country of birth: odds ratio of native-born over foreign-born population to complete tertiary education, 2016 and 2021

.Break in series in 2021 due to revised EU-LFS methodology. Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, which is in force from 1 January 2021 onwards, provides for a framework that applies to several data collections in the field of social statistics, including the LFS.

Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine: data not available.

Armenia, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Switzerland: data for 2016 not available.

Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, San Marino: data refer to 2022 instead of 2021.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, San Marino, Slovenia: data refer to 2017 instead of 2016.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia: due to low reliability of data, 2016 and 2021 data is not published.

Croatia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovenia, Türkiye, United Kingdom: data for 2021 not available.

Figure 1.9: Students enrolled as part-timers in tertiary education, by country and age (%), 2016 and 2021

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Finland: ISCED 5 not applicable.

Albania: data considered as not available due to unreliable data for 2021

Armenia, Kazakhstan: data not available (2016, 2021).

Belgium: definition differs (2016); data on 'Independent private institutions' not included, except at ISCED 6 and 7.

Austria, France, Georgia, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom: data for age group 30-34 not available for both reference years.

Czechia: data not available for 2016; data may be underestimated, since breakdown by age for ISCED 5 and 8 is not available (2021).

Czechia: unreliable data for age group 20-24 for 2021 since detailed breakdown per ISCED level is not available.

Denmark: data may be underestimated, since breakdown by age for ISCED 8 is not available (2016, 2021).

Greece: unreliable data for 20-24 age group; data refer to ISCED 7 only (2016, 2021).

Georgia, Serbia: part-time programs are not applicable.

([21])   Eurostat, Statistics explained, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-
explained/index.php?title=EU_labour_force_survey_-
_documentation&stable=0&redirect=no#Explanatory_notes_and_user_guide_for_the_core_variables

Luxembourg: zero or negligible data for ISCED 5 (2016); missing data for ISCED 5 (2021).

Netherlands: data may be underestimated, since breakdown by age for ISCED 8 is not available (2016, 2021).

Poland: insufficient data on the number of students by some age breakdowns (2016); missing data for ISCED 5 (2016, 2021).
San Marino: part-time programs not applicable (2016).

Romania: breakdown of students by age 30-34 not available. Data are presented instead for under 30.

Ukraine: Data not available for 2021

Figure 1.10: Adults (30-64) who attained their tertiary education degree during adulthood (aged 30-64) as a percentage of all adults (30-64), 2016 and 2021.

Break in series in 2021 due to revised EU-LFS methodology. Regulation (EU) 2019/1700, which is in force from 1 January 2021 onwards, provides for a framework that applies to several data collections in the field of social statistics, including the LFS. More details about the new methodology are provided in Eurostat's Statistics Explained articles. References for the concepts and definitions used in the LFS can be found here.

Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova: data for 2017 and 2022 reported instead of 2016 and 2021 as unavailable.

Iceland: data refer to 2022 instead of 2021.

Montenegro, North Macedonia, Türkiye, United Kingdom, Ukraine: data for 2021 is not available.

Ukraine: data for 2017 instead of 2016 is presented.

Figure 1.11: Percentage change in the total number of academic staff in 2016 and 2021

All data cover all types of higher education institutions (i.e. public, private government dependent and private government independent).

Belgium: data on independent private institutions are not included (2016).

Czechia: number of full-time and part-time educational staff (all ISCED levels) − only FTE data are available.

France: ISCED level 5 coverage is partial. ISCED level 6-8 includes ISCED level 4 and a part of ISCED level 5 (2016); under-coverage, at ISCED 5-8 excludes private institutions (2016, 2021).

Iceland, Kazakhstan, Holy See: no data available.

Ireland: data refer to 2015 instead of 2016; partial coverage of enrolments in private non-aided educational institutions − the coverage varies by ISCED level.

Liechtenstein, United Kingdom: data refer to 2019 instead of 2021.

Luxembourg: definition differs (2016); ISCED 5 is included in ISCED 3, thus not reported in total.

Poland: estimated data for ISCED 5 (2021); definition differs (2021), new administrative data source used.

Portugal: definition differs (2016).

Figure 1.12: Percentage of academic staff aged 50 or over, 2016 and 2021

All data covers all types of higher education institutions (i.e. public, private government dependent and private government independent).

Andorra Belgium, Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Moldova, North Macedonia, Austria, San Marino: total excludes academic staff of unknown age.

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine, Holy See: data not available.

Belgium: data on independent private institutions are not included (2016).

Czechia: number of full-time and part-time educational staff (all ISCED levels) - only FTE data are available.

France: ISCED level 5 coverage is partial. ISCED level 6-8 includes ISCED level 4 and a part of ISCED level 5 (2016); under-coverage, at ISCED 5-8 excludes private institutions (2016, 2021).

Liechtenstein: data refer to 2019 instead of 2021.

Luxembourg: definition differs (2016); ISCED 5 is included in ISCED 3.

Poland: estimated data for ISCED 5 (2021); definition differs (2021), new administrative data source used.

Portugal: definition differs (2016); no data available broken down by age for 2021, instead data for 2020 are reported.

Figure 1.13: Percentage of female academic staff, 2016 and 2021

All data covers all types of higher education institutions (i.e. public, private government dependent and private government independent).

Belgium: data on independent private institutions are not included (2016).

Czechia: number of full-time and part-time educational staff (all ISCED levels) − only FTE data are available.

France: ISCED level 5 coverage is partial. ISCED level 6-8 includes ISCED level 4 and a part of ISCED level 5 (2016); under-coverage, at ISCED 5-8 excludes private institutions (2016, 2021).

Iceland, Kazakhstan, Holy See: no data available.

Ireland: data refer to 2015 instead of 2016. Partial coverage of enrolments in private non-aided educational institutions − the coverage varies by ISCED level.

Liechtenstein: data refer to 2019 instead of 2021.

Luxembourg: definition differs (2016); ISCED 5 is included in ISCED 3.

Poland: Estimated data for ISCED 5 (2021). Definition differs (2021), new administrative data source used.

Portugal: definition differs (2016).

Ukraine: data not available for 2016.

Figure 1.14: Number of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the EHEA, 2022

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Holy See: data not available.

Belgium (French Community), Denmark, Greece, Finland: data not available for number of private higher education institutions.

IT: data includes public HEIs and legally recognised non-public HEIs

Figure 1.15: Number of higher education institutions (HEIs), public and total per million population (MP) in the EHEA, 2022/2023

Andorra, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kazakhstan, San Marino, Ukraine, Holy See: data not available.

Denmark: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015.

Greece: definition differs (2015).

Ireland: definition differs (2020).

Croatia: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015. Definition differs (2016).

Portugal: definition differs (2015).

Türkiye: definition differs (2015).

United Kingdom: data refer to 2019 instead of 2020.

Figure 1.16: Annual public expenditure on tertiary education as a % of GDP (including R&D), 2015 and 2020

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Holy See, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia, San Marino, Ukraine: data not available.

Greece, United Kingdom: data refer to 2019 instead of 2020.

Croatia, Denmark: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015.

Figure 1.17: Annual public expenditure on tertiary education per full-time equivalent student in euro, 2015 and 2020

Croatia: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015; definition differs (2016).

Denmark: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015.

Greece: definition differs (2015); Data refer to 2019 instead of 2020.

Ireland: definition differs (2020).

Portugal: definition differs (2015).

Serbia: data for 2020 not available

Türkiye: definition differs (2015).

United Kingdom: data refer to 2019 instead of 2020.

Figure 1.18: Percentage change in the annual public and private expenditure on public and private tertiary education institutions in PPS per full-time equivalent student between 2015 and 2020

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Holy See, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine: data not available.

Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, Croatia, United Kingdom: data refer to 2019 instead of 2020.

Denmark: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015.

Iceland: definition differs (2020).

Portugal: definition differs (2015).

Türkiye: definition differs (2015).

Figure 1.19: Annual public and private expenditure on public and private education institutions on tertiary education per FTE relative to the GDP per capita in PPS

Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Greece, United Kingdom: data refer to 2019 instead of 2020.

Denmark: data refer to 2016 instead of 2015.

Chapter 6

Starting from 2013 reference year the UOE definition is based on the country of origin understood as the country where the upper secondary diploma was awarded (or the best national estimate (upper secondary diploma, vs. residence, vs. citizenship).

For the incoming (inward) mobility to the EHEA from countries outside the EHEA information from all declaring countries in the world was considered. For the outward mobility from the EHEA towards countries outside the EHEA only Australia, Canada, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the United States, Japan and New Zealand were considered.

Figure 6.1: Outgoing/outward (degree and credit) mobility rate of graduates (ISCED level 5-8) by country of origin, 2021, (%)

For 2021 the criteria used to define country of origin are as follows:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia, Türkiye: country of citizenship.

Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Croatia, Iceland Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Finland, Norway, Spain (ISCED 5), Switzerland: country of upper secondary diploma.

Denmark: country of upper secondary diploma is a proxy.

Estonia, Ireland, Spain (for ISCED 6-8), Italy, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Slovenia, United Kingdom: country of usual residence.

France: a mobile student is a foreign student who has obtained his upper secondary diploma abroad. If this country is unknown, so the citizenship is used.

Bulgaria: estimations.

Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Liechtenstein, Holy See: no data available.

Latvia: country of prior education is considered.

Netherlands: for all levels, except ISCED 8, the country of upper secondary diploma has been used; for ISCED 8 an estimation has been made for the number of mobile students, calculated from the number of foreign students.

Poland: ISCED 6 and 7 - country of upper secondary diploma; lack of information on some programmes at ISCED 6 and ISCED 8; as a best national estimate Poland use data on: ISCED 6 (postgraduate studies) and ISCED 8 level − country of prior education (country of Master diploma).

Sweden: international students are defined as students who have a student residence permit or are either non-residents or have moved to Sweden not more than six months before starting their studies; for students at ISCED 8, the time limit is 24 months; students with student residence permit are reported by country of citizenship while other students are reported by country of birth.

<u>Specific notes regarding degree mobility:</u>

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia Finland: ISCED 5 not applicable

Azerbaijan: breakdown for degree mobility for ISCED 8 by country of origin not available.

Belgium: under-coverage, at ISCED 5, mobile students exclude the French Community.

Bulgaria: definition differs for ISCED 6-8 (2016).

Germany: total excludes ISCED 5 (2016, 2021).

Germany, Croatia, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland: degree mobile graduates at ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero.

Greece: definition differs for ISCED 6-8 (2016).

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021).

Poland: mobile graduates at ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero (2016, 2021); break in series in for ISCED 6 and 8 in 2020.

Slovenia: no inward degree mobility data available by country of origin; this implies a potential underestimation of degree mobility for the other countries.

United Kingdom: definition differs for ISCED 5 (2016).

Ukraine: ISCED 6 includes also graduates at ISCED 5 and 7.

Switzerland: mobile graduates at ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero (2021).

No information on EHEA-origin degree mobile graduates who graduated in the US, which implies potential underestimation for some EU Member States.

<u>Specific notes regarding credit mobility:</u>

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, San Marino, Ukraine, Holy See: no information on outward credit mobility available.

Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Netherlands: total for credit mobility excludes ISCED 8.

Belgium: under-coverage, data on credit mobility refer only to the Flemish Community (2021).

Bulgaria: breakdown unavailable for ISCED 6-8 by type of mobility not available (2021).

Czechia: under-coverage at ISCED 5; only programmes conservatories are reported (2021).

Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Norway, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Switzerland: total excludes ISCED 5.

Cyprus, Czechia, Croatia, Poland: zero or negligible value for ISCED 5.

Germany: breakdown unavailable, at ISCED 6 and 7 by countries of destination except for ZA, CA, US, CN, FI, FR, IE, IT, PL, ES, SE, GB, AU. All other countries are included in the category Country of destination not specified. Detail of data, due to sample size all data are rounded to full hundreds (2021). 'Total graduates with credit mobility of at least 3 months or 15 ECTS points' are equal to 'Of which those who were not degree mobile'. Data does not cover graduates that are simultaneously credit and degree mobile (2016). Data for credit mobility for ISCED 6 and 7 could only be provided for the 10 most popular countries of destination. All other countries are included in the category 'Country of destination not specified'. Due to sample size all data are rounded to

full hundreds (2016). Data for credit mobility for ISCED 8 are of insufficient availability, thus numbers for this level cannot be provided (2016). Credit mobility for ISCED 5 only exists in academic programmes, but not in professional programmes (2016).

Greece, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia: data on graduates with credit mobility who were not degree mobile is considered missing due to non-availability of data on graduates with dual mobility; for this reason, the presented EHEA averages could be underestimated.

Denmark: data for credit mobility for ISCED 6 and 7 are included in total (2016).

Estonia: under-coverage; the count of credit mobile graduates might be undervalued (2021).

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 5-7 in 2016.

Austria: break in series for ISCED 6-8 in 2021.

Sweden: 'Total graduates with credit mobility of at least 3 months or 15 ECTS points' are equal to 'Of which those who were not degree mobile'. Data do not cover graduates that are simultaneously credit and degree mobile (2016).

Switzerland: data refer to 2020 instead of 2021.

United Kingdom: data refer to 2020 instead of 2021.

Türkiye: under-coverage, graduates with credit mobility exclude credit mobility under EU programmes (i.e. ERASMUS or other EU programmes) and credit mobility in other programmes (2021).

Figure 6.2: Outward degree and credit mobility of graduates, by country of origin and level of educational attainment, 2021, (%)

As for figure 6.1.

Belgium, Estonia, Netherlands, Germany, Greece: total for credit mobility excludes ISCED 8.

Belgium, Estonia, Netherlands, Germany, Greece: data for ISCED 8 refer only to degree mobile graduates.

Greece, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia: data on graduates with credit mobility who were not degree mobile is considered missing due to non-availability of data on graduates with dual mobility; for this reason, the presented EHEA averages could be underestimated.

Figure 6.3: Outward credit mobility rate, by country of destination and level of educational attainment, 2021 (%)

Andorra: no data available broken down by ISCED level.

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, San Marino, Ukraine, Holy See: no data on outward credit mobility available.

Belgium, Germany, Greece Estonia, Netherlands: total for credit mobility excludes ISCED 8.

Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Slovakia, Finland, Norway, Switzerland: total excludes ISCED 5.

Czechia, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland: zero or negligible value for ISCED 5.

Greece, Croatia, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia: data on graduates with credit mobility who were not degree mobile is considered missing due to non-availability of data on graduates with dual mobility; data is not included in the EHEA averages in order to avoid bias which leads to potential underestimation of the presented figures.

Luxembourg: zero or negligible value for ISCED 7.

Switzerland: data refer to 2020 instead of 2021.

United Kingdom: data refer to 2020 instead of 2021.

Türkiye: under-coverage, graduates with credit mobility exclude credit mobility under EU programmes (i.e. ERASMUS or other EU programmes) and credit mobility in other programmes (2021).

Figure 6.4: Outward degree mobility of graduates within the EHEA, by country of origin and level of educational attainment, 2020/2021, (°%)

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Finland, Serbia: ISCED 5 not applicable

Azerbaijan: breakdown for degree mobility for ISCED 8 by country of origin not available.

Belgium: under-coverage, at ISCED 5, mobile students exclude the French Community.

Bulgaria: definition differs for ISCED 6-8 (2016).

Greece: definition differs for ISCED 6-8 (2016).

Germany: total excludes ISCED 5 (2016, 2021).

Germany, Croatia, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland: degree mobile graduates at ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero.

Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Holy See: no data available.

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021).

Poland: mobile graduates at ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero (2016, 2021). Break in series in for ISCED 6 and 8 in 2020.

Slovenia: no inward degree mobility data available for SI by country of origin. This implies a potential underestimation of degree mobility for the other countries.

United Kingdom: definition differs for ISCED 5 (2016).

Ukraine: ISCED 6 includes also graduates at ISCED 5 and 7.

Switzerland: mobile graduates at ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero (2021).

No information on EU-origin degree mobile graduates who graduated in the US, which implies potential underestimation for some EU Member States.

Figure 6.5: Incoming degree mobility rate per level of educational attainment within the EHEA, 2021

For 2021 the criteria used to define country of origin are as follows:

Bosnia and Herzegovina Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia, Türkiye: country of citizenship.

Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark (country of upper secondary diploma is a proxy), Cyprus, Germany, Greece, France, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Spain (ISCED 5), Switzerland: country of upper secondary diploma.

Latvia: country of prior education.

Estonia, Ireland, Spain (for ISCED 6 – 8), Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia United Kingdom: country of usual residence.

Denmark: country of upper secondary diploma is a proxy.

France: a mobile student is a foreign student who has obtained his upper secondary diploma abroad. If this country is unknown, so the citizenship is used.

Poland: ISCED 6 and 7 - country of upper secondary diploma; Lack of information on some programmes at ISCED 6 and ISCED 8. As a best national estimate Poland use data on: ISCED 6 (postgraduate studies) and ISCED 8 level - country of prior education (country of Master diploma).

Netherlands: the country of upper secondary diploma does only distinguish between Netherlands and 'abroad' The country for 'abroad' is approximately the country of nationality.

Sweden: international students are defined as students who have a student residence permit or are either non-residents or have moved to Sweden not more than six months before starting their studies. For students at ISCED 8, the time limit is 24 months. Students with student residence permit are reported by country of citizenship while other students are reported by country of birth.

Specific notes:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Finland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia: ISCED 5 not applicable.

Belgium: Break in series in 2020. Under-coverage, at ISCED 5, mobile students exclude the French Community.

Germany, Italy, Croatia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland: zero or negligible value for ISCED 5.

Germany: estimated data (2021); break in series in 2020.

Greece: The data refer to 81.3% of the total of academic departments and 63.1% of professional departments that have responded to mobility question (2016).

Ireland: ISCED 5 is included in all programmes (2016).

Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Holy See: data not available.

Malta: break in series 2021.

Netherlands: estimated data for ISCED 8 (2021); total excludes ISCED 5 (2016, 2021).

Poland: definition differs for ISCED 6 and 7 (2016); country of upper secondary diploma; Lack of data on some programmes at ISCED 6 and 8 level. As a best national estimate Poland used data on: ISCED 6 (postgraduate studies) and ISCED 8 level - country of prior education (country of Master diploma); ISCED 6 −postgraduate studies −- country of prior education. Estimated data (2021).

Slovenia: no detailed data available by country of origin (2016, 2021).

Switzerland: mobile new entrants to ISCED 5 are negligible and reported with value zero (2021). Under-coverage, at ISCED 6 and 7, students in universities or universities of applied sciences are included (2021).

Ukraine: data for ISCED 7 not available

Figure 6.6: Extent of balance in degree mobility flows within and outside the EHEA, ISCED 5 - 8, 2020/2021

Same to figure 6.5.

Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Holy See: data not available.

Figure 6.7: Student mobility flows: Top three countries of ORIGIN (INWARD) in %, 2021

Same to figure 6.5.

Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Holy See: data not available.

Figure 6.8: Student mobility flows: Top three countries of DESTINATION (OUTWARD) in %, 2020/2021

Same to figure 6.5.

Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Holy See: data not available.

ANNEX

Table 2.1: Share of first cycle-programmes with a workload of 180, 210, 240 or another number of ECTS credits, 2022/2023 (Figure 2.1)

%	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES
180 ECTS	97.0	99.9	0.0	69.0	0.0	35.0	85.0	96.4	9.0	100.0	2.0	96.0	63.0	44.0	73.0	0.0	1.0
210 ECTS	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	23.0	49.0	8.0	0.0	0.0
240 ECTS	0.0	0.0	98.0	22.0	94.0	65.0	0.5	3.2	91.0	0.0	98.0	3.0	10.0	6.0	18.0	90.0	94.0
Other workload	3.0	0.0	2.0	6.0	6.0	0.0	14.5	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	1.0	1.0	10.0	5.0
%	**FI**	**FR**	**GE**	**HR**	**HU**	**IE**	**IS**	**IT**	**KZ**	**LI**	**LT**	**LU**	**LV**	**MD**	**ME**	**MK**	**MT**
180 ECTS	36.0	100.0	0.1	77.0	70.0	26.0	99.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	36.0	95.0	25.0	54.0	98.0	13.0	85.0
210 ECTS	41.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
240 ECTS	22.0	0.0	79.7	7.0	15.0	41.0	1.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	47.0	5.0	60.0	46.0	0.0	83.0	6.0
Other workload	1.0	0.0	20.2	16.0	0.0	32.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	14.0	0.0	2.0	4.0	9.0
%	**NL**	**NO**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**RS**	**SE**	**SI**	**SK**	**SM**	**TR**	**UA**	**UK-EWN**	**UK-SCT**	**VA**		
180 ECTS	43,6	96,0	66,3	88,0	59,4	:	84.0	92.0	98.0	100.0	0.0	0.5	:	5.0	75.0		
210 ECTS	0,0	0,0	26,1	1,0	0,0	:	14.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	:	0.0	0.0		
240 ECTS	35,0	4,0	3,1	11,4	40,6	:	0.0	8.0	1.5	0.0	100.0	99.4	:	88.0	5.0		
Other workload	21,4	0,0	4,5	0,0	0,0	:	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	:	7.0	20.0		

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 2.2: Share of second-cycle programmes with a workload of 60-75, 90, 120 or another number of ECTS credits, 2022/2023 (Figure 2.2)

%	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES
120 ECTS	100.0	72.0	81.0	98.1	97.0	35.0	54.0	51.6	0.0	49.0	12.0	97.0	76.0	93.0	96.0	34.0	7.6
90 ECTS	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.3	3.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	48.0	82.0	2.0	15.0	0.0	1.0	52.0	13.6
60-75 ECTS	0.0	28.0	6.5	0.0	0.0	65.0	21.0	46.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	3.0	11.0	78.8
Other workload	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.5	0.0	3.0	6.0	1.0	5.0	7.0	0.0	3.0	0.0
%	**FI**	**FR**	**GE**	**HR**	**HU**	**IE**	**IS**	**IT**	**KZ**	**LI**	**LT**	**LU**	**LV**	**MD**	**ME**	**MK**	**MT**
120 ECTS	76.0	100.0	100.0	74.0	66.0	4.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	77.0	59.0	65.0	99.0	25.0	18.8
90 ECTS	18.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	4.0	58.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	64.0	0.0	21.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	54.7
60-75 ECTS	6.0	0.0	0.0	24.0	30.0	22.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	36.0	23.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	73.0	12.6
Other workload	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	16.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	13.9
%	**NL**	**NO**	**PL**	**PT**	**RO**	**RS**	**SE**	**SI**	**SK**	**SM**	**TR**	**UA**	**UK-EWN**	**UK-SCT**	**VA**		
120 ECTS	22.4	86.0	69.4	85.0	94.0	:	70.0	91.0	99.0	100.0	74.0	10.0	:	11.0	90.0		
90 ECTS	6.0	8.0	25.9	12.1	2.0	:	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	90.0	:	76.0	0.0		
60-75 ECTS	68.3	6.0	0.0	1.7	4.0	:	21.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	26.0	0.0	:	8.0	5.0		
Other workload	3.4	0.0	4.7	1.1	0.0	:	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	:	0.0	5.0		

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 3.1: Legal requirements to include employer representatives in HEI governing bodies, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Employer representatives	●	:	●	●	●	●	:	:	●	/	:	●	●	○	:	:	●	○	●	/	:	●	:	○	●

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Employer representatives	○	/	●	●	●	○	:	/	:	/	○	:	●	●	:	○	●		●	○	○	:	●	○

● Legally required ○ Legally not required but usually included : Not available / Not legally required and usually not included

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 3.2: Decision on responsibilities of HEIs governing bodies, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Deciding on responsibilities	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	◇	●○	●	●	●○	●○	●◇	●	●○	●○	●○	●	●○	●	●○	●○	○	●○

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Deciding on responsibilities	●	●○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●○	:	●	●○	●○	●	●○	:	●	●	●○	●	●	:	●	●○◇

● Legislation ○ HEIs ◇ Other : Not **available**

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 3.3: Appointment and dismissal of HEI leaders (Rectors or equivalent), 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
HEI's highest level governing body	●○		●○	●○				○	●		●○		●○	●○	●○	●		●○	●	●○		●○	●○		●○
Government/public authority		○	●○		●○		●○	●	○	●○		●○												○	
Internal HEI steering body						●○				●○		●○	●○	●○			○		●		●○	○	●○	●○	●○
HEI's staff		●																							●○
HEI's students		●																							
Other								●				●○		●		○	●		○						

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
HEI's highest level governing body	●○	●○	●	●○	●		●○	●○			●○		●		:					●○				
Government/public authority	●○	●○			●							○		●	:	●			●	●○				
Internal HEI steering body												●○		●	:			●○	●○				●○	●○
HEI's staff												●○			:		●							●○
HEI's students												●○			:		●							●○
Other					●						●○		●		:						●○			●○

● Appointment ○ Dismissal : Not available

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 3.4: Appointment and dismissal of institutional faculty leaders (Deans or equivalent), 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
HEI's highest level governing body			●○	●○				●○			●○				●	●			●			●○	●○	●○	●○
Government/ public authority		○					●○																		
Internal HEI steering body						●○			●	●○		●○	●○	●					●○		●	●○			●○
HEI's staff		●			●○																				●○
HEI's students		●																							
Other	●					●	○					●○	●○			○	●○	●○		●○					

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
HEI's highest level governing body	●○	●○		●○		●○	●○	●○	:	●○	●○		●		:	●○	●	●○		●○	●○	:		
Government/ public authority									:						:	○					:			
Internal HEI steering body			●			○			:					●○	:			●○	●○		:		●○	●○
HEI's staff									:						:		●				:			●○
HEI's students									:						:		●				:			●○
Other					●				:			●○	●		:					●○	:			●○

● Appointment   ○ Dismissal   : Not available

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.1: Top-level strategies on the social dimension of higher education with the aim of strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion of students and/or staff, 2022/2023

	Name of the strategy, including weblink Adoption year (timeframe)
AL	National Strategy on Education 2021-2026 Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2026)
AM	Law of the Republic of Armenia on the 'Education Development State Programme of Armenia until 2030' Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
AT	National strategy on the social dimension of higher education: Towards more inclusive access and wider participation Adoption year: 2017 (timeframe: 2017-2025)
BE fr	Decree on Inclusive Higher Education for Students with Disabilities Adoption year: 2014 (timeframe: 2014+)
BG	Higher Education Development Strategy Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2030)
CH	Diversity, Inclusion and Equity in Higher Education Development (in French, in German) Adoption year: 2020 (timeframe: 2021-2024) Dispatch on the promotion of Education, Research and Innovation in the years 2021-2024 (in French, in German) Adoption year: 2020 (timeframe: 2021-2024) Strategy on 'Equality 2030' (in French, in German) Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2030)
CZ	Strategic plan of the ministry for higher education for the period from 2021 Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2025)
EE	Education Strategy Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2035)
EL	National Action Plan of the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022)
FI	Towards more accessible higher education and higher education institutions Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2030)

	Name of the strategy, including weblink Adoption year (timeframe)
FR	The Student Plan Adoption year: 2017 (timeframe: 2018+)
GE	Unified National Strategy for Education and Science of Georgia for 2022-2030 Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
HR	Plan of measures for improving the social dimension of higher education for the period 2023-2025 Adoption year: 2023 (timeframe: 2023-2025)
HU	Shifting of Gears in Higher Education: Mid-term Policy Strategy 2016 Adoption year: 2016 (timeframe: 2016-2030)
IE	National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2028)
IT	National Recovery and Resilience Plan Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2026)
KZ	Concept for the development of higher education and science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029 Adoption year: 2023 (timeframe: 2023-2029)
LI	Integration Strategy Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021+)
LT	National progress plan Adoption year: 2020 (timeframe: 2021-2030), social dimension priorities adopted in 2022, for the period 2023-2026.
LV	Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027: Future skills for a future society Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2027)
ME	Strategy on Inclusive Education Adoption year: 2019 (timeframe: 2019-2025)
MT	Malta's National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030 Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
NL	National action plan for diversity and inclusion in academic education and research Adoption year: 2020 (timeframe: 2020-2025)
NO	Policy for gender balance and gender perspectives in research and innovation Adoption year: 2019 (timeframe: 2019+)
PT	National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2025)
RO	Educated Romania Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2030) National Recovery and Resilience Plan Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2026)
SE	Power, goals and authority – feminist politics for an equal future Adoption year: 2016 (timeframe: 2016-2030)
SI	Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education to 2030 Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
TR	11th Development Plan of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Adoption year: 2019 (timeframe: 2019-2023)
UA	National Strategy for the creation of a barrier-free space in Ukraine for the period until 2030 Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2030)
UK-EWN	Access and participation reboot Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021+)
UK-SCT	Scottish Framework for Fair Access Adoption year: 2017 (timeframe: 2017-2030)

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.2: Measurable targets in top-level strategies aiming to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education, 2022/2023

	Targets concerning students
AM	Proportion of higher education institutions offering environments with reasonable physical adaptations for students with special educational needs (ramp, toilet, elevator, literature for students with impaired eyesight, etc.) should be minimum 20% by 2023, 25% by 2024, 30% by 2026, and 50% by 2030. Source document: Law of the Republic of Armenia on the 'Education Development State Programme of Armenia until 2030', Annex 1.
AT	Reducing the recruitment quota/probability factor for admission to higher education of students whose parent have no higher education entrance qualification from 2.38 (2015) to 2.25 (by 2020) and 2.10 (by 2025). Halving the number of degree programmes at each higher education institution where men or women comprise less than 30% by 2025. Increasing the percentage of (educational resident) students admitted to higher education who are second-generation children of immigrants from 22% to 30% by 2025. Source document: Austrian National strategy on the social dimension of higher education: Towards more inclusive access and wider participation, p. 10.
GE	The percentage of students of different categories from the total number of students enrolled in higher education institutions (students representing ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; low socio-economic status, and other groups) should increase to 17% by 2025, and 37% by 2030. The percentage of graduates of different categories from the total number of graduates (students representing ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; low socio-economic status, and other groups) should increase by 10% by 2025, and by 20% by 2030. Source document: 2022-2030 Unified National Strategy of Education and Science of Georgia, Annex II
IE	Proportion of students with disabilities among new entrants should be 16% of by 2028. New mature entrants from socioeconomically disadvantaged areas should increase to 54% from existing 42%. The number of entrants from the Traveller community should increase from 33 to 150 by end of 2028. Source document: Irish National Access Plan: A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028
RO	At least 40% of new and upgraded infrastructure is intended for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, by 2025. Source document: National Recovery and Resilience Plan
UA	The share of students with special educational needs should correspond to their share in society. Source document: Ukrainian National Strategy for the creation of barrier-free space in Ukraine for the period up to 2030
UK-SCT	By 2026, 18% (and by 2030, 20%) of full-time first-degree Scottish domiciled entrants to higher education institutions in Scotland should come from the 20% most deprived communities as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Source document: Scottish Framework for Fair Access
CH	Within the domain of the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH), there shall be a proportion of at least 35% of women of newly appointed professorships by 2024. Within the domain of ETH, there shall be a proportion of at least 25% of women in leading positions by 2024. Source document: 2030 Equality Strategy, point 1.1.2.4.
SE	Half of all newly appointed professors shall be women by 2030. There should be gender parity in the distribution of research grants. Source document: Power, goals and authority – feminist politics for an equal future, Regeringens skrivelse 2016/17:10.

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.3: Flexible study modes in higher education, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Part-time studies	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Blended learning	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Distance learning	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Part-time studies		●	●	●	●	○		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	:	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	na
Blended learning	●	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	:	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Distance learning	●	●	●	●	○		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	:	●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●	●

● Legally possible in all HEIs   ○ Legally possible in some HEIs   : Not available   **na** Not applicable

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.4: Existing requirements for quality assurance agencies to address the recognition of prior non-formal and/or informal learning in higher education in their external evaluation procedures, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Required				●			●			●			●		●			●			●	●	●		●
Not required	●								●			●		●			●		●					●	
Not applicable (no RPL)		●	●		●	●					●		●			●			●						

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Required	●		●	●	●				●			●	●		:	●	●			●	●			
Not required		●								●	●				:	●			●			●		●
Not applicable (no RPL)						●	●	●						●	:								●	

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.5: Top-level measures supporting adult learners (delayed transition students), 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
●			●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
	●		●					●	●	●	●	●		:	●			:	●		●	●	●

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.6: Initial and continuous teacher education: requirements, recommendations and support, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Requirements for ITE		●	●	●	●		●	●		●		●	●	●	●		●		●	●		●	●	●	●
Recommendations for ITE						●			●									●		●					
Support for CPD	●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Requirements for ITE	●		●							●			●		:	●						●	●	na
Recommendations for ITE						●	●		●					●	:					●				na
Support for CPD	●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●		●	●	:	●	●			●	●	●		na

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.7: Eurostudent participatory countries, rounds VII and/or 8, 2019–2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
	●		●	●					●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
		●	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●				

Source: Eurostudent.

Table 4.8: Requirements for quality assurance agencies to consider whether higher education students have access to academic, career and/or psychological counselling services, 2022/2023

QA requirements regarding…	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
academic guidance services		●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●				●	●
careers guidance services		●	●		●	●				●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●
psychological counselling services			●							●	●		●		●		●					●			●

QA requirements regarding…	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
academic guidance services	●	●	●		●		●							●	:	●	●		:	●			●	●
careers guidance services	●	●	●		●	●	●							●	:	●	●		:	●			●	
psychological counselling services	●		●		●									●	:	●	●		:	●				

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.9: Existence of public institutions with formal role in mediating conflicts particularly related to diversity, equity and inclusion in higher education, 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
●	●						●				●		●				●	●			●			

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
●		●	●					●						:	●	●		●		●			●

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.10: Top-level authorities that provide funding to HEIs on the basis of achieving, or making progress towards, targets on widening access, increasing participation or completion rates 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
			●								●	●		●			●							●

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
										●			●	:					:				

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.11: Top-level authorities that provide funding for indirect study costs, including accommodation, transport and meals 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
●		●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	:		●	●	:	●	●	●	●	●

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.12: Top-level authorities that provide support for students studying part-time 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Indirect funding for part-time study costs	●			na				●				●				●	●	●				●			●
Grants for part-time students	●			●						●						●									●

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Indirect funding for part-time study costs		●	●	●									●		:	●	●		:			●	●	
Grants for part-time students		●				●	●					●	●		:	●	●		:		●			

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.13: Guidelines issued by public authorities to quality assurance agencies to address equity, diversity and inclusion in evaluation processes, 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●				●		●	●	●	●	●		●			●

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
	●				●			●					●	:		●		:		●	●	●	●

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.14: Top-level authorities that provide support to HEIs to adapt their buildings and infrastructure to the needs of underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students and staff, 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
●	●							●			●			●	●						●	●		

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
	●				●			●					●	:		●		:				●	

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.15: Measurable targets concerning the mobility participation of vulnerable, disadvantaged or underrepresented groups of students, 2022/2023

	Targets
AT	Increasing participation in overseas study programmes by students whose parents have no university entrance qualifications to at least 18% by 2025. Source document: Austrian National strategy on the social dimension of higher education: Towards more inclusive access and wider participation, p. 10.
BE fr	Minimum 10% of the available Funds for the Assistance to Mobility should be devoted to awarding mobility grants for students with fewer opportunities. Source document: 12/01/2023 - Decree amending the Decree of 19 May 2004 establishing a student mobility fund within the European Higher Education Area and other provisions on student mobility, Article 4.

	Targets
BE nl	33% of mobile students should come from underrepresented groups. Source document: Brains on the move – mobility action plan 2013.
EL	In 2022/2023, 20% of Erasmus+ students should be students with fewer opportunities.
MT	In 2022/2023, the participation of disadvantaged learners in higher education mobility programmes should be at least 5%.
PT	In 2022/2023, 2% of students in higher education mobility programmes should be students with fewer opportunities.

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.16: Monitoring the participation of beneficiaries in all types of international mobility programmes, including their background characteristics (gender, age and at least one other student characteristic), 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
			●			●	●	●	●	●	●						●	●						●

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
●				●						●			●	:	●				●	●			na

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.17: Top-level support provided to higher education institutions to foster blended learning mobility and/or internationalisation at home, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Blended learning	●	●		●			●	●				●	●		●		●	●							
Internat. at home	●	●		●				●					●		●		●			●			●		

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Blended learning															:					●	●	●		na
Internat. at home													●		:					●	●	●		na

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.18: International policy dialogue established on implementation of the Principles and Guidelines, 2022/2023

AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
			●			●	●			●				●				●	●	●				

KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
●		●							●					:	●	●		:	●				

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 4.19: Outcomes of policy dialogue on implementation of the Principles and Guidelines, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Regulatory changes			●														●								
Guidelines to HEIs																●			●	●			●		
Input to strategy			●												●				●		●				

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Regulatory changes			●									●			:				:	●				
Guidelines to HEIs												●			:				:	●	●			
Input to strategy					●										:				:	●				●

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 5.1: Top-level strategies with major references to the enhancement of learning and teaching in higher education, 2022/2023

	Name of the strategy, including weblink Adoption year (timeframe)
AL	National Strategy on Education 2021-2026
	Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2026)
AM	Law of the Republic of Armenia on the 'Education Development State Programme of Armenia until 2030'
	Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
AT	Higher Education Plan
	Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
AZ	State strategy for the development of education in the Republic of Azerbaijan
	Adoption year: 2015 (timeframe: 2015-2025)
BG	Higher Education Development Strategy
	Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2030)
CH	Policy for the promotion of education, research and innovation 2021-2024 (in French, in German)
	Adoption year: 2020 (timeframe: 2021-2024)
CZ	Strategic plan of the ministry for higher education for the period from 2021
	Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2025)
DE	Future Contract for Strengthening Studying and Teaching in Higher Education
	Adoption year: 2019 (timeframe: 2021+)
EE	Education Development Plan 2021-2035
	Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2035)
FI	Teacher Education Development Programme 2022-2026
	Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2026)
FR	The Student Plan
	Adoption year: 2017 (timeframe: 2018+)
GE	Unified National Strategy for Education and Science of Georgia for 2022-2030
	Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
HR	National Plan for the Development of Education until 2027
	Adoption year: 2023 (timeframe: 2023-2027)
HU	Shifting of Gears in Higher Education: Mid-term Policy Strategy 2016
	Adoption year: 2016 (timeframe: 2016-2030)
IE	National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030
	Adoption year: 2011 (timeframe: 2011-2030)
IT	National Recovery and Resilience Plan
	Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2026)
KZ	Concept for the development of higher education and science in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023-2029
	Adoption year: 2023 (timeframe: 2023-2029)
LI	Education Strategy 2025+
	Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2025+)
LT	National progress plan
	Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)

	Name of the strategy, including weblink Adoption year (timeframe)
MD	Strategy 'Education 2023' Adoption year: 2023 (timeframe: 2023-2030)
MT	Malta's National Strategic Action Plan for Further and Higher Education 2022-2030 Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
NO	Long-term plan for research and higher education 2023–2032 Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2023-2032)
PL	State Science Policy Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: not defined, but performance evaluation every five years)
RO	National Recovery and Resilience Plan Adoption year: 2021 (timeframe: 2021-2026)
SI	Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education to 2030 Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2030)
TR	Council of Higher Education 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Adoption year: 2019 (timeframe: 2019-2023)
UA	Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 'On approval of the Strategy for Higher Education Development in Ukraine for 2022-2032' Adoption year: 2022 (timeframe: 2022-2032)

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 5.2: Top-level regulations requiring academic staff with a teaching role to receive training in teaching, 2022/2023

	Content of the regulation Source document, including weblink
BE fr	Those teaching in *Hautes Ecoles* and higher education establishments for social advancement (établissements d'enseignement supérieur de promotion sociale) are expected to obtain, within six years, a teaching aptitude certificate (*Certificat d'Aptitude Pédagogique Approprié à l'Enseignement Supérieur*). This requirement does not apply to those teaching at universities. Source document: Decree defining the Certificate of Pedagogical Aptitude Appropriate for Higher Education (CAPAES) in *Hautes Ecoles* and the conditions for its obtaining.
DK	All those having teaching responsibilities in higher education are expected to complete postgraduate teacher training (*universitetspædagogikum*). Its scope, format and content must be described in each university's plan for pedagogical development. The completion of the teacher training is a pre-requisite for higher academic positions, including a position of professor. Source document: The Ministerial Order on Job Structure of Academic Staff in Universities, Annex 1.
ES	Professors and assistant professors must undertake, in the first year of the contract, an initial teacher training course defined by universities' units responsible for training and innovation. Source document: Organic Law 2/2023 of 22nd March on the University System, Article 78.
FR	Lecturers are appointed as trainees for a period of one year by order of the minister in charge of higher education. During this period, they are requested to follow training aimed at deepening their teaching skills. Source documents: Decree n°84-431 of 6 June 1984 fixing the common statutory provisions applicable to teacher-researchers and establishing the special status of the corps of university professors and the corps of lecturers, Article 32; Order of 8 February 2018 setting the national framework for training aimed at deepening the teaching skills of trainee lecturers.
KZ	Online courses can be delivered only by those who have completed professional development courses related to the methodology of online learning of no less than 72 hours. Source document: Requirements for the provision of distance learning and the rules for organising distance and online learning in higher or postgraduate education.

	Content of the regulation Source document, including weblink
MD	Any higher education staff recruited is required to take the teacher training module that can be followed either during studies or taken additionally as a microcredential, prior to being engaged in the process of teaching. Source document: The Education Code.
NO	Generally, a 200-hour course is required. The requirements increase according to the level of the position. Professors need to document further educational qualifications than the minimum. Source document: Regulations concerning appointment and promotion to teaching and research posts, Chapter 2.

Source: BFUG data collection.

Table 6.1: Large-scale support measures to Ukrainian students and academic staff, 2022/2023

	AD	AL	AM	AT	AZ	BA	BE fr	BE nl	BG	CH	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	GE	HR	HU	IE	IS	IT
Grants for students from UA	●			●					●		○	●	●	●	●		●	●	●			●	●		●
Language training							○	●		○	○	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	○	●		●		●
Preparatory courses										○	○	●	●	●			●	●	○	○					●
Counselling (academic or psychological)									○	○		○	●	●					○			●			●

	KZ	LI	LT	LU	LV	MD	ME	MK	MT	NL	NO	PL	PT	RO	RS	SE	SI	SK	SM	TR	UA	UK-EWN	UK-SCT	VA
Grants for students from UA			●	●	●	●			:	●		●	●	:				●	●			●	●	
Language training			●	●	●	●			:	○	●	○	●	●	:		●		●			○	●	
Preparatory courses									:	○	●	○	●	:			●	○	●			○		
Counselling (Academic or psychological)									:	●			●	:					○	●				

● Publicly funded   ○ Funded by HEIs   : Not available

Source: BFUG data collection.

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