



Monitoring the social dimension: progress made and challenges ahead

David Crosier

SD Working group, online

*European Education and Culture
Executive Agency*

14 November 2022

Planning the 2024 report

- BFUG has approved the structure (chapter outlines) and preliminary indicator proposals
- For the Social Dimension chapter, this means 10 qualitative, scorecard indicators
- Questionnaire will be developed on basis of the SD WG proposals
- Overall, everything is on track...

Qualitative indicators on the implementation of the P&Gs

Which indicators?

- Eurydice project, « Towards equity and inclusion in higher education » developed 10 scoreboard indicators (49 sub indicators)
- These indicators follow P&Gs as closely as possible...
- Amendments/improvements to indicators have been proposed by SD WG
- Accepted in principle (and we have to test how to manage in practice)

State of knowledge about SD indicators

- It is possible to have composite indicators that will monitor progress at system level in this complex field
- Indicators can only capture main system level policy measures
- No direct focus on how successful the policy measures are...
- Implementation at the level of higher education institutions – which is also extremely important to track – is beyond the scope of this reporting

Some thoughts about European monitoring

- Comparative qualitative reporting is never simple, and never fully reliable
- Scorecard indicators create a desire (in some) to bias answers...
- Countries generally wish to see themselves in the best light possible
- This can lead to « optimistic answers » / exaggeration of scale of national actions etc

How to anticipate & react to these issues?

- Eurydice approach: Keep questions clear and simple
- Focus questions on the general situation, rather than inviting exceptions
- Ask as few questions as possible (more questions -> less quality)
- Require evidence -> references to legislation, policy documents etc
- Where previous data exists, remind countries of their situation - and ask if anything has changed...

Using the pilot project (Eurydice)

- Previous answers already in place – for many countries
- However , some new elements added
- So there will be a mix of old and new questions, as well as a mix of countries that have previous data and those that do not
- Situation quite complex and creates some risk..

Risks

- This will be a complex data collection and countries should use a variety of experts to help..
- SD questions will be integrated into a questionnaire including all the other Bologna topics
- 12 countries will be answering all questions from scratch..
- **Risk of insufficient attention and superficial answers**
- **Capacity from Eurydice for careful checking of data will be limited given the scale of the project**

But reasons to be cheerful

- Indicators will also be discussed/used in the context of the European Education Area
- Over time they will become established..
- Explanatory sub indicators will help guide national implementation
- Development of monitoring system/toolbox takes time – but progress so far has been rapid
- Social Dimension challenges need attention
- Even if results will be imperfect they will be a big step forward