

# **BOLOGNA PROCESS**

## **Social Dimension**

### **National Action Plans**

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# Outline

- The issue of Social Dimension in the Bologna Process
- The Report of the Working Group on Social Dimension (May 2007)
- The Coordinating Group on Social Dimension
- The National Action Plans on Social Dimension



# The issue of Social Dimension in the Bologna Process

- Sorbonne Declaration 1998: Opportunities for all citizens in accordance to their aspirations should be improved.
- Prague Communiqué 2001: Higher Education is a public good and a public responsibility and the students are full members of and partners in the higher education community.
- Berlin Communiqué 2003: Governments should take measures to help students, especially from socially disadvantaged groups, in financial and economic aspects with a view to widening access.



# The issue of Social Dimension in the Bologna Process (ctd)

- Berlin Communiqué 2005: Students should have appropriate studying and living conditions, so that they can complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background.
- London Ministerial Conference 2007:
  - We reaffirm the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background. We therefore continue our efforts to provide adequate student services, create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education, and to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.
  - Similarly, we will report on our national strategies and policies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to evaluate their effectiveness. We will invite all stakeholders to participate in, and support this work, at the national level.

# The Report of the Working Group on Social Dimension (May 2007)

- We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.
- Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education
  - Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
  - Flexible delivery of higher education
  - Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
  - Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
  - Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation



# Reporting on the National Action Plans

- A template has been prepared by the Social Dimension Coordination group and agreed after discussion in the BFUG.
- The aim is to identify the trends and the best practices among members and not to lead into a stocktaking exercise.
- The reports will be analysed by appointed researchers





# National Action Plans

- Existing situation:
  - Underrepresented groups and obstacles to participative equity
  - Measures taken for access
  - Measures taken for completion of HE
  - Possible statistical data and research



# National Action Plans (ctd)

- Strategy for a more inclusive HE system:
  - Goals to be achieved (2008-2010)
  - Action planned for each group
  - Budget availability
  - Timeline for the actions?
  - Arrangements to monitor progress





# National Action Plans (ctd)

- Identification of the National Authority responsible for the drafting and implementation of the strategy for equity in access
- APPENDICES with:
  - Actions mentioned in the stocktaking Of 2007
  - Possible actions identified by the WG in 2007
  - Suggested approach on National Strategies



## Actions mentioned by the Bologna countries in the 2007 national reports

### Financial

- scholarships - means tested
- scholarships - merit based
- research grants
- grants for studying abroad
- grants or loans for (nearly) every student
- unspecified social support system
- free education (at least 1st cycle)
- reimbursement of tuition fees for certain groups
- financial assistance for certain groups/areas
- improved funding systems

### Structural

- new /expanded routes of access
- broader teaching or learning strategies
- information and preparation at secondary schools
- increase student places
- indirect aid schemes (tax relief, family allowance)
- subsidised residences/meals/transport/books
- provision of student welfare services (health care, day care centres)
- counselling/guidance services

### Certain groups

- measures for ethnic minorities (not financial)
- measures for disabled (not financial)
- measures for disadvantaged groups (not financial)
- allocation of study places to certain groups
- promote access from all national areas

## **Possible actions and tools identified by the 2007 Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility**

Measures to promote equal opportunities for access, participation and completion

- Anti-discrimination legislation covering higher education
- Admission rules that are simple, fair and transparent

Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education

- Outreach programs for underrepresented groups as defined nationally
- Flexible delivery of higher education
- Flexible learning paths into and within higher education
- Transparency of qualifications and recognition of prior learning
- Incentives for higher education institutions to take action to widen access and participation

Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

- Guidance (academic and careers) and tutoring
- Retention measures (modification of curricula, flexibility of delivery, tracking academic success etc.)
- Working tools and environment (well functioning libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms, internet access, access to scientific data bases etc.)

B, Provision of social services

- Counselling
- Targeted support for students with special needs and students with children
- Appropriate housing conditions for all students
- Provision of healthcare

## **uggested approach to the work on national strategies on the social dimension**

In time for the next ministerial meeting in 2009 the Working Group suggests that the countries should report to the BFUG on their national strategies for the social dimension, including action plans and measures to show their impact. All stakeholders concerned should actively participate in and support this work at the national level.

The development of a strategy should be followed by a national action plan that includes monitoring mechanisms. Ideally, the strategy and action plan will be based on a national debate on the social dimension and the future priorities of that country depending on the current situation. In order to facilitate a national debate on the social dimension the Working Group proposes the following structure and topics for such a debate:

- Measures to promote equal opportunities

What obstacles are there to equal opportunities within higher education? What protection is there if a student is discriminated when applying for, being admitted to or carrying out studies? Is there a framework for appeal? What action would be the most effective to achieve equal opportunities in higher education?

- Measures to widen access to and participation in higher education for underrepresented groups (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic status and background, disability, geography etc.)

What groups are under represented in your national higher education system today? Is there data to show access to higher education by gender, socio-economic background, disabilities, prior immigration, region etc? What obstacles to widened access and participation are there within your higher education system? At other education levels? What actions would be appropriate for the different groups to achieve widened access? Are targeted outreach activities needed?

- Study environment that enhances the quality of the student experience

A, Provision of academic services

B, Provision of social services

What kind of academic or career guidance is provided for the students in your country? What is the student – staff ratio? Are there retention measures adapted to different groups or individuals with different needs? Is the academic success of student tracked? What would be/has proven to be the most efficient retention measures? What kind of study environment is there at the higher education institutions? Do student have access to information, electronically or by other means? What is the condition of libraries, lecture halls and seminar rooms? How do students in your country live? Is housing available, of acceptable standard and affordable? Is targeted support provided or needed for specific student groups? Is counselling available if students run in to personal difficulties?

- Measures to increase formal and actual student influence on and participation in higher education governance and other higher education issues

Are there formal provisions for student influence and participation at all governance levels, in consultative as well as decision-making bodies? Are there formal provisions for student evaluation of the education? Are the formal regulations followed-up with actual practices? Are there informal ways of student influence and participation as well? Do students have an influence on all issues related to higher education? Are students aware of their rights? Do students have organisations that



**Thank you**

