

The Social Dimension in European Higher Education

Joint conference of



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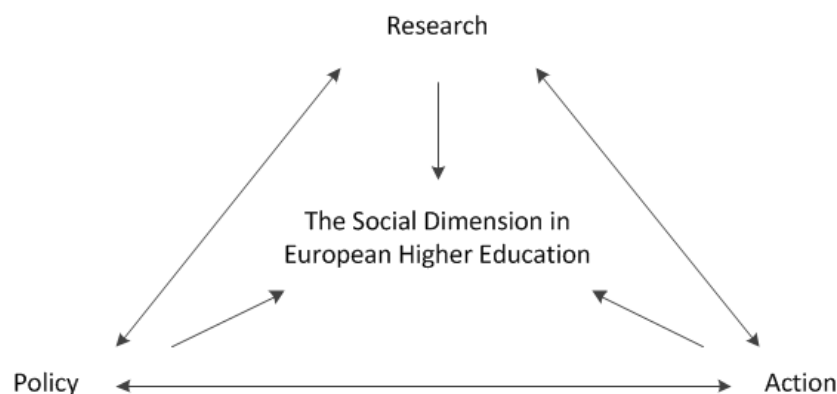


February 25-27, 2015

Vienna University of Economics and Business

The concept of the social dimension of higher education (HE) was first developed within the Bologna Process and refers to the goal of removing inequalities in access to, retention in and graduation from higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Now, almost a decade after the first clear formulation of this goal within the Bologna Process,¹ the two project teams of Peer Learning for the Social Dimension (PL4SD) and EUROSTUDENT are organising a major conference on the social dimension of higher education with 500 delegates, designed as a platform for disseminating policy-relevant data, stimulating peer learning and the exchange of experiences. Especially showcasing the newest insights from EUROSTUDENT and PL4SD, it will also provide an overview of available data on students in the EHEA and on the political and practical framework of national efforts to enhance the social dimension in HE. In this way, the conference will provide important input for the upcoming Bologna Ministerial Conference in Yerevan in 2015.

The conference addresses the three most relevant spheres of the social dimension in HE. The aim is to bring together the levels of **Research & Action & Policy**, which are strongly interrelated when it comes to improvement of the social dimension, in order to foster collaboration, coordination and the development of joint strategies of all stakeholders in the field of the social dimension.



Research monitors the social dimension and evaluates actions and policies; **Actions** for the social dimension can be a stimulus for or indeed a result of both policy and research on national and European level and **Policy** is highly important in terms of stimulating and reflecting both action and research and formulating goals and strategies.

¹ The goal of the social dimension was most clearly defined in the London Communiqué of 2007. http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/Declarations/London_Communique18May2007.pdf

Call for Contribution

We invite researchers, policy makers and stakeholders in higher education to submit proposals, making the conference a discursive forum and a fruitful basis for prosperous future developments for the social dimension. We call for contributions which reflect any of the three levels of [Research & Action & Policy](#) - **empirical research, reports on actions undertaken to foster the social situation of students and policy papers**. All contributors should particularly emphasise the added value/transferability of the findings to other countries and contexts and outline what lessons may be learnt by others.

Research: Scientific Papers

EUROSTUDENT is a major data provider for the European Higher Education Area and provides a comprehensive analysis of students' life and socio-economic situation on the basis of student survey data in nearly 30 countries. Therefore, as one of the foci at this conference, contributions of empirical research dealing with the social dimension of HE in Europe are highly welcome. Analyses of national situations (with reference to a broader context) as well as international comparisons or views from a transnational perspective can be submitted. Following the approach of the conference, papers with attempts to embed empirical evidence in a broader context of policy and/or action are explicitly welcome.

Action: Measures/ initiatives/ practice for the Social Dimension

All Bologna Signatory Countries undertake steering activities in the higher education sector. Some of them have the explicit goal of enhancing students' social situation in higher education. Several of those have already been reported to the PL4SD database on www.pl4sd.eu. The conference strives to make these measures visible especially in terms of what lessons can be learned from them, what worked well or had a positive impact and what did not. We encourage all stakeholders initiating or hosting measures and initiatives for students' social situation (rectors' conferences, student unions, HEIs, (N)GOs, (N)POs and ministries) to present their measure to a wide audience of interested delegates. Reflections on and evaluations of measures in place are especially welcome. Sharing experiences with different measures to overcome the challenges of the social dimension in HE will provide significant information for the development for further initiatives in the field. Transferrable to other systems or not, different examples of measures can stimulate new ideas and approaches for others and lead to an overall improvement of the social dimension in HE in all Bologna countries.

Policy: Papers on national action plans/ strategies for the social dimension

Besides the database, PL4SD has implemented three Country Reviews, looking how the social dimension is tackled on a national level from a structural point of view. Many countries not only undertake steering measures, but formulate strategic goals for the higher education sector in steering documents (e.g. in HE financing, quality assurance, equity in higher education, support of underrepresented groups, facing the challenges of demographic change etc.). Some countries in turn follow a coherent approach in tackling the challenges within the social dimension and have developed national strategies. We invite policy-makers to present national approaches to the social dimension of HE in order to explicate the impact of political steering instruments on the practical level for the single student or institution. Thus, the conference equally welcomes contributions about targeted strategies in certain fields of the HE sector and action plans/ strategies as holistic

approaches to challenges in the social dimension in order to illuminate the opportunities of governing structures for improvement of student's situation and for a better goal achievement.

Topic tags for contributions on Research & Action & Policy

The conference will comprise a wide range of topics that are all crucial for the social dimension. Designing the conference programme in order to bring together researchers, policy-makers and stakeholders, we ask you to assign your contribution to one or more of the following topics. These topics below will be used to organise parallel tracks, which will provide the structure for the whole conference. The thematic sessions will be supplemented by input speeches that mark the cornerstones of this conference: experiences will be presented from practice and current work, insights from research and shaping policy approaches.



Submission

Please submit an abstract of around 500 words to info@pl4sd.eu until **October 1st, 2014** presenting your contribution and the relevance of the topic to the conference. The selection of papers and final confirmation of participation of the contributors will be undertaken by the project consortia of PL4SD and EUROSTUDENT and will be decided upon until October 15, 2014. Selected contributors will be kindly asked to confirm their participation and contribution to the conference until November 1, 2014. Abstracts and presentations will be made available to the public on the conference website after the conference.

Organisational Framework

Participants of the conference will be charged a fee of € 300. There will be an early bird rate of € 250 from September 1, 2014 (beginning of the registration) to November 15, 2014, which will also be offered to all contributors. These fees will cover organisational costs, coffee breaks, lunch and dinner events during the conference as well as a welcome package including a hardcopy of the freshly released EUROSTUDENT V report. For students, special conditions will apply regarding conference fees.

Regular updates will be provided at www.socialdimension-he.eu.

Preliminary schedule of the conference:

Wednesday 25.2.		Thursday 26.2.	Friday 27.2.
9.00-10.30		Spot on - Research: <i>Ministries' and organisations</i>	Parallel thematic sessions
10.30-11.15		Discourse café	Discourse café
11.15-12.45	Wrap-up EUROSTUDENT:V (internal meeting)	Parallel thematic sessions	Spot on - Policy: <i>Visionary debate and conference closing</i>
12.45-14.30		Lunch	
14.30-16.00	Welcome	Parallel thematic sessions	Kick-off EUROSTUDENT:VI (internal meeting)
16.00-16.45	Discourse café	Discourse café	
16.45h-18.15	Key results from EUROSTUDENT:V & PL4SD	Parallel thematic sessions	
18.15-21.00	Discourse cocktail & snacks Spot on - Action: <i>Students and counsellors'</i>	Dinner & evening event	

For more information please visit www.pl4sd.eu or www.eurostudent.eu.

The project teams of PL4SD and EUROSTUDENT are looking forward to sharing experience and knowledge with you!

Conference Venue: University of Economics and Business, Vienna



The University of Economics and Business is located in the 2nd district of Vienna, surrounded by grasslands and chestnut trees. The University was relocated to this campus, which is a marvellous example of modern architecture, in 2013. In the central building, the Library & Learning Center, designed by Zaha Hadid, the joint lectures of the conference will take place. The campus can be reached via metro stations "Kriau" and "Messe Prater".

<http://www.e-architect.co.uk/vienna/university-economics-business-vienna>



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With the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union