

EUROSTUDENT report

Comparison of student life in 28 European countries: Study and living conditions vary according to students' socio-economic background

Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe depend on the educational attainment of students' parents. On average, students without higher education background spend more time on paid work, and more often are reliant on their earnings to finance their studies. They also less often plan to study abroad. These are some findings of the EUROSTUDENT report, published today at an international conference in Berlin.

Berlin, 6th March 2018: "The educational attainment of students' parents is one of the best predictors we have for how students organise their studies and their living conditions", states Kristina Hauschildt, project coordinator for the sixth round of the EUROSTUDENT VI project. Generally, first-generation students tend to enter higher education later, are more often found at higher education institutions other than universities, and they are more likely to study part-time. Students without higher education background also spend more time on paid work, and are more often reliant on paid employment to finance their studies. Furthermore, these students whose parents did not attain higher education degrees are more likely to experience financial difficulties, which may lead to study interruptions and prevent mobility during studies.

Indeed, the EUROSTUDENT report reveals that cross-national student mobility continues to be socially selective: students with higher education background are more likely to have been enrolled abroad than their peers without higher education background. The main hurdle for studying abroad is the additional financial burden. Around 60 % of all students who abstain from enrolment abroad indicate this to be a reason deterring them from studying abroad, and even larger shares of students without higher education background perceive this to be an obstacle. "In comparison to enrolment abroad, internships abroad appear to be more attractive for first generation students", Eva Maria Vögtle, a member of the author team, adds. "Possibly the financial burden is less of an issue in these cases, as students may actually earn money while interning abroad".



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Despite these common patterns that hold across most, if not all, countries, EUROSTUDENT data show that being a student can mean completely different things to a person from one country to the next. This starts with students' age: while in Georgia, Albania, France, Serbia, or Slovakia the average age of students is under 24, the mean age of students in Iceland, Finland, Sweden, and Norway lies between 28 and almost 30 years. Accordingly, students' living situations are also quite different: in some countries, more than two thirds of students live with their parents (Malta and Italy), while in Norway, Denmark, and Finland, this does not apply even to every tenth student. "Among older age groups, more students live away from the parental home, and together with their own partner and perhaps even children instead", explains Christoph Gwośc, one of the report's authors. While untypical in most countries, in about one third of the analysed countries more than 10 % and up to 33 % of students have children, particularly in those countries with older student populations.

The EUROSTUDENT report enables policy-makers and researchers alike to better understand the social dimension of higher education in order to move towards increased inclusivity and widened participation – important goals outlined in the latest ministerial communiqué of the Bologna Process (Yerevan Communiqué 2015) as well as in the Social Dimension Strategy of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

The EUROSTUDENT final conference, taking place in Berlin on March 6th and 7th, brings together more than 140 international participants from ministries, statistical offices, higher education institutions, and research institutes. The conference will provide first insights into the comparative project results. Besides the EUROSTUDENT Synopsis of Indicators report, an additional report investigates how students combine their studies with paid work. Furthermore, the comprehensive EUROSTUDENT database will be launched. In addition, more than 30 presentations by researchers will focus on different aspects of student lives.

About EUROSTUDENT

EUROSTUDENT is a network of researchers as well as data collectors, representatives of national ministries, and other stakeholders who have joined forces to examine the social and economic conditions of student life in higher education systems in Europe. The beginning of EUROSTUDENT goes back to the 1990s. In 2016, the sixth round of the EUROSTUDENT project started with 28 participating countries from a broad geographical spectrum. The participants reach from Iceland in the north all the way to Turkey in the south and from Portugal in the west to Georgia in the east. Adopting a broad, comparative perspective, the EUROSTUDENT project provides information on topic areas such as access to higher education, study conditions, as well as international student mobility, assessment of studies, and future plans with the aim of inspiring policy debates and laying the ground for further research. EUROSTUDENT often provides a unique perspective, as comparable indicators are not available through other data sources.

The project is carried out by a consortium led by the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW). Further members are the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS), Austria; Praxis Centre for Policy Studies (Praxis), Estonia; ResearchNed, the Netherlands; MOSTA Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre, Lithuania; National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE), Malta; and the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), Switzerland.

Additional information and download

[EUROSTUDENT VI Synopsis of Indicators](#)

[EUROSTUDENT VI Thematic review: Combining Studies and Paid Jobs](#)

[EUROSTUDENT project website](#)

[Twitter @Eurostudenttw](#)

[EUROSTUDENT VI database](#)

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