Kristina Hauschildt (Ed.), Christoph Gwosć,
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Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe

EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of Indicators 2021–2024

DZHW
German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies

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Funded with the support of all participating countries.
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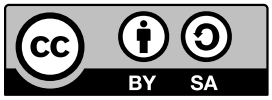

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Members of the project consortium

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German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW)
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Confederaziun svizra

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Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Statistical Office FSO

Swiss Federal Statistical Office
Yassin Boughaba, Véronique Meffre, Philipp Fischer

Country abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in all figures and tables to refer to the EUROSTUDENT countries.

AT	Austria	IE	Ireland
AZ	Azerbaijan	IS	Iceland
CH	Switzerland	LT	Lithuania
CZ	Czech Republic	LV	Latvia
DE	Germany	MT	Malta
DK	Denmark	NL	The Netherlands
EE	Estonia	NO	Norway
ES	Spain	PL	Poland
FI	Finland	PT	Portugal
FR	France	RO	Romania
GE	Georgia	SE	Sweden
HR	Croatia	SK	Slovakia
HU	Hungary		

Contents

Background

Part A

A 1

Chapter A1
Foreword

Mag. Elmar Pichl

In Tirana 2024, Ministers of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reconfirmed the importance of "building an inclusive EHEA by 2030" and committed to "the improvement of data collection, through participation in related initiatives, such as EUROSTUDENT" in the Tirana Communiqué.

This shows the importance of the EUROSTUDENT project and its comparative report 'Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe' as a data source.

To strengthen the social dimension, the 'Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA' were adopted in the Rome Communiqué 2020, an important step towards an inclusive EHEA by 2030. In order to support the implementation of social dimension strategies and measures the EHEA Ministers, at the Conference in Tirana in May 2024, also endorsed the document 'Indicators and Descriptors for the Principles of the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA', a toolbox approach for countries. This is the first comprehensive and consolidated framework for the social dimension in the EHEA.

The social dimension of higher education is an important driving force in terms of high-quality education, science, and research and has been so for the last two decades. While the Prague Communiqué (2001) already mentioned the social dimension, the London Communiqué (2007) was first to clearly state that "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations". EUROSTUDENT has helped to establish a complete picture of the European higher education landscape concerning social and economic conditions for students all over Europe, with a total of 25 countries of the EHEA participating in the eighth round of the survey. Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe may differ in many ways due to differences in higher education systems, but, as the results show, there are a lot of common challenges across countries.

Equal access to (higher) education is key to overcoming the challenges of our time, and EUROSTUDENT promotes social and economic fairness by offering a database of students' living conditions, as well as their socio-economic characteristics. EUROSTUDENT has come a long way from eight countries in the first edition to now 25 countries who share a core questionnaire to deliver comparable data. EUROSTUDENT not only developed the questionnaire and the survey data but has induced improvement in administrative data in many countries as well. Additionally, EUROSTUDENT piloted the collection of micro data in the sixth round and can now offer a EUROSTUDENT Scientific Use File for more than 20 countries stored in the research data centre at the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW). Austria

has explored micro data, looking further into motives of students with delayed entrance into higher education. The comparison resulted in a *report* for Austria, Lithuania, and Romania.

Austria has joined EUROSTUDENT from the very beginning, has been in the Steering Board for a few rounds now as well, and is looking forward to having the final conference held in Vienna on July 10th and 11th 2024. International comparison is an important step in the development of national policies for the social dimension, as it can be a starting point and a source of good practices.

After Yerevan 2015, when EHEA Ministers committed to developing national strategies, access plans, or other measures promoting the social dimension, Austria developed the 'National Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education', which uses the national student social survey as a database for its quantitative targets and refers to EUROSTUDENT data for international comparison. The 'National Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education', published and launched with higher education stakeholders, has been followed up with annual networking conferences, addressing the most pressing topics for the social dimension, e.g. 'Studyability', 'Transition from school to higher education', 'COVID-effects on vulnerable student groups', 'Results of the interim evaluation', and 'Social Dimension and SDGs' (Sustainable Development Goals). The interim evaluation showed that quantitative progress is slow, but that there are qualitative developments at higher education institutions (HEIs). Generally, mainstreaming the social dimension is a slow process, which needs a broad basis of stakeholders to promote its further progress. Before possibly relaunching the 'National Strategy on the Social Dimension' up to 2035, we have to find out more about the factors supporting the implementation of measures improving the social dimension and also about the hindrances.

Complementary to the implementation of the 'National Strategy on the Social Dimension', Austria promotes social dimension mainstreaming through different measures on the policy level. The social dimension is part of the steering documents, such as the 'Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2025–2030', the 'Higher Education Plan 2030' and the 'Development and Financing Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences'. The 'Development Plan for University Colleges of Teacher Education' refers specifically to diversity and student-centred learning. The social dimension is also central to the 'National Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education 2020–2030', where financial support for under-represented student groups as well as improved statistical data are addressed. The promotion of the social dimension is furthermore incentivised by retaining 0.5 % of the public universities' global budgets in case the universities do not implement measures to support the social dimension of higher education.

Despite all the references in steering documents and the financial incentive, there is still a so-called 'implementation gap', meaning that very often there are no real systemic changes because they are normally the result of a very resource-intensive process. Instead, there is a large number of small-scale measures without a strategic framework overarching them.

A 1

We will take the results of EUROSTUDENT 8 as depicted in the Synopsis of Indicators as a basis for renewed efforts towards the implementation of our existing strategy, having in mind the 'Principles and Guidelines'. For the evaluation and most likely relaunch of the Strategy, we hope to make full use of the data shown here, in the national report, and in the 'Indicators and Descriptors'. In order to close the 'implementation gap' with regard to the social dimension, Austria will continue to take part in international peer learning initiatives and will, of course, be part of EUROSTUDENT 9.

The policy considerations at the end of each chapter of the Synopsis will be a starting point for evaluating existing measures and possibly re-developing policy measures.

I wish the readers of the Synopsis many interesting insights into student life throughout Europe, and I do hope there are many policy considerations we can take on board as policymakers.

EUROSTUDENT 8 provides us with four very relevant topical modules, to be considered immediately when deriving higher education policy measures and I am already looking forward to the next round of EUROSTUDENT in which Austria will certainly take part.

Mag. Elmar Pichl
Director General Higher Education
Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
May 2024

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Chapter A2
Introduction

Context of the Synopsis: Monitoring the social dimension of higher education and student mobility in Europe

The EUROSTUDENT Synopsis of Indicators presents key indicators on the social and economic conditions of students in Europe, based on data collected in the context of the eighth round of the project. National research teams conducted student surveys in 25 countries in order to provide a comprehensive overview of students' living and study conditions.

The social dimension of higher education (HE) has played an important role in the Bologna Process of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) since it was chosen as a central theme in the Prague Communiqué (2001) at the beginning of this millennium. With the Rome Communiqué (2020), the ministers responsible for higher education in the EHEA have reinforced the importance of the social dimension by adopting principles and guidelines which should guide member states on how to define and implement policy for improving the social dimension of the EHEA (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020). According to this document, the main objective of the social dimension is "that the composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should correspond to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large in the EHEA countries". Furthermore, "the social dimension encompasses creation of inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity, diversity, and is responsive to the needs of local communities" (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020). In its Modernisation Agenda for Higher Education, the European Commission also defined "building inclusive and connected higher education systems" as a priority for action (European Commission, 2017).

By collecting data on the social and economic conditions of student life in Europe, the EUROSTUDENT project ensures that important indicators on the current state of the social dimension in many EHEA countries are available and thus provides a data basis for monitoring and evaluation. The current situation of students is the result of many influencing factors from the national and European levels (Figure A2.1). These include the school system, the economic and political system, cultural norms and values, as well as the higher education system. Current and past experiences of students, in turn, influence their future success.

The EUROSTUDENT topics cover all aspects of current student life: 1) their background (demographic characteristics and social background), 2) study conditions and experiences (access to and transition within higher education, study conditions and quality, time budget and mobility), and 3) their living conditions (employment, resources, expenses and housing situation). With regard to international student mobility (ISM),

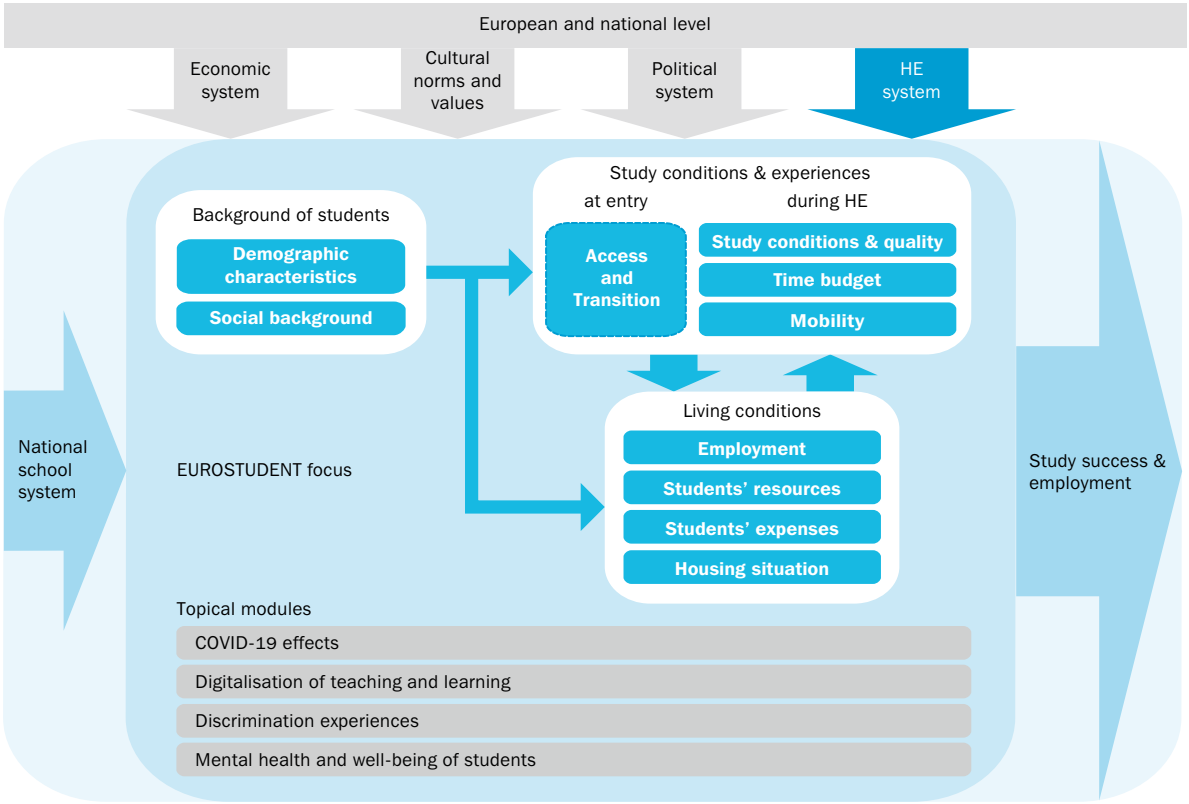
EUROSTUDENT not only offers insights into students' activities abroad and their recognition by higher education institutions (HEIs) in the home country, but also into obstacles to mobility for students who have not been mobile themselves.

To achieve greater analytical depth, EUROSTUDENT differentiates the student population into a variety of focus groups based on their socio-demographic characteristics, living and study conditions, as well as study-related background. In this way, the study experience can be presented in all its diversity. An overview of the EUROSTUDENT focus groups is provided in Table A2.1.

Besides the core questionnaire focusing on the key aspects of relevance for the social dimension, EUROSTUDENT includes 'topical modules'. These modules delve into specific subjects selected by the involved policymakers, aiming to offer insights on current and pressing issues. In the eighth round, the topical modules covered 'The effects of COVID-19 on students in higher education', 'Digitalisation of teaching and learning', 'Discrimination experiences of students in higher education' and 'Mental health and well-being of students in higher education'. Elements of these modules will be drawn on in the reporting throughout the Synopsis of Indicators but are more thoroughly reported in four separate publications (Cuppen et al., 2024; Haugas & Kendrali, 2024; Menz & Mandl, 2024; Schirmer, 2024).

Figure A2.1

EUROSTUDENT 8 topics



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EUROSTUDENT is based on students' self-reported data. Due to the nature of these data, the EUROSTUDENT dataset contains a lot of information that is not available from other sources, e.g. from official statistics. The EUROSTUDENT dataset, therefore, serves an important monitoring function to describe, explain, and assess the state of the social dimension in the EHEA. In addition to Eurostat and Eurydice, EUROSTUDENT data is included in Bologna Process Implementation Reports (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2015; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2012; Eurostat & HIS, 2009).

The following sections include some notes on the Synopsis and the EUROSTUDENT dataset that are important for the use of this report, as well as general information about the EUROSTUDENT project. Detailed methodological information on the EUROSTUDENT survey is provided in > *Chapter A3*.

Concept and structure

Scope

The Synopsis is a compendium of indicators on the social and economic conditions of student life in the EUROSTUDENT countries; in this way, the social dimension of higher education is taken into account. The report is designed to adopt a broad, comparative perspective to allow for simple but meaningful international comparison. It mostly presents analyses on an aggregate level.

Reporting infrastructure

The Synopsis is embedded into a reporting infrastructure consisting of different elements, such as the EUROSTUDENT database, Thematic Reviews, or Intelligence Briefs. In the text, references are made to the other elements of the reporting infrastructure, which is indicated by an arrow and colour highlighting (e.g. > *Database*).

Additional information

Each chapter in part B concludes with a table appendix providing additional data on topics covered in the respective chapter. This report further includes a glossary (> *Chapter C1*), methodological notes on figures (> *Chapter C2*), metadata on the national surveys and key background data on the higher education systems covered in this report (> *Chapter C3*), and a list of the national contributors to EUROSTUDENT 8 (> *Chapter C4*).

Glossary

To relieve the flow text of definitions and certain concept descriptions, an overview of terms and key concepts is provided in > *Chapter C1*.

Box A2.1

Methodological note: Reading the Synopsis

- **Watch out for deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions:** The basis for data comparisons across countries are the EUROSTUDENT conventions. Inter alia, they define the standard target group of the national surveys (> *Chapter A3*). Not all countries manage to fully comply with the conventions (> *Chapter A3*). This is indicated in the respective figures, with detailed explanations of the deviations found in > *Chapter C3*. Cases which should only be directly compared to other countries with extreme caution are marked with an asterisk beneath or next to the country abbreviation in figures and tables.
- **Focus groups are not mutually exclusive:** Many indicators further differentiate the figures for all students by so-called focus groups. These are groups of students considered to be particularly relevant (Table A2.1). The various focus groups may overlap, for instance, a student can be a Master student, a delayed transition student, and 30 years or older at the same time.
- **The EUROSTUDENT average refers to unweighted cross-country means/median:** Unweighted mean and median values of all EUROSTUDENT countries with available data on the respective indicator are used in the charts and text as a first orientation. They should be read with caution because they may conceal differences between countries in terms of the size of the national student and sample populations.
- **Comparisons over time are possible only for selected indicators:** For selected indicators, the Synopsis of Indicators undertakes a comparison between indicators from different project rounds. However, such comparisons are not possible for all countries as changes in a target group or in a survey question may have taken place despite the EUROSTUDENT conventions having stayed the same. It should be noted that the indicators for a comparison over time have been carefully selected. Not all EUROSTUDENT indicators can be directly compared over time due to changes in the core questionnaire. Starting with EUROSTUDENT 8, it is planned to leave the core questionnaire unchanged until EUROSTUDENT 10 in order to allow more comparisons over time.

EUROSTUDENT focus groups

The EUROSTUDENT focus groups allow the identification of certain groups of students, based on their socio-demographic characteristics, past and current educational situations, and current living situations throughout the report (Table A2.1). These groups of students are considered particularly relevant for analysing different aspects of the social dimension of higher education as they represent, in many countries, underrepresented, vulnerable, or disadvantaged groups (see also Annex II to the Rome Communiqué).

In addition, for the first time, EUROSTUDENT indicators can be differentiated according to several variables containing information on the higher education insitution, drawn from the European Tertiary Education Register (ETER).

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Table A2.1

EUROSTUDENT 8 focus groups

Name of variable	Values	Further explanation
Socio-demographic characteristics of students		
Age group	up to 21 years 22 to <25 years 25 to <30 years 30 years and over	–
Educational background	with tertiary educational background without tertiary educational background	Students are grouped according to the highest educational attainment of at least one of their parents. In EUROSTUDENT, students 'with tertiary educational background' have parents of which at least one has attained a tertiary education degree. In terms of ISCED 2011, this means that at least one of the students' parents has successfully completed a short-cycle tertiary degree (level 5), a Bachelor's (level 6) or Master's degree (level 7), or a doctorate (level 8) or their national equivalent. Students 'without tertiary educational background' have parents whose highest educational degree is no higher than ISCED 2011 level 4 (post-secondary non-tertiary education).
Disability	students with disability limiting them in their studies students without disability limiting them in their studies	This focus group distinguishes between students with and without disabilities in their studies. 'With disability' refers to students self-reporting to be severely limited or limited, but not severely, based on a disability. 'Students without disability' either do not have any disability, or any disability they have does not limit them in their studies. Disabilities include physical chronical diseases, longstanding health problems, functional limitations, mental health problems, sensory, vision or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, and mobility impairments.
Migration background	students without migration background, domestically educated second-generation migration background, domestically educated	EUROSTUDENT categorises students according to their migration background based on their own and their parents' place of birth. In addition, in order to be able to distinguish international students, EUROSTUDENT considers the place of attainment of the higher education entry qualification, or, in absence of this, the place of last attending the regular school system (> *Chapter B1*). 'Students without migration background, domestically educated' are students who were born in the country of survey, as were their parents, and who attended/completed the national school system. 'Second-generation migration background, domestically educated' refers to students with at least one parent born abroad, who were born in the country of survey, and who attended/completed the national school system.
Sex/gender	male female	The EUROSTUDENT questionnaire is based on the definitions used in national registers of the country of survey, i.e. sex or gender. This report distinguishes only between male and female students; more detailed information on gender is available in the EUROSTUDENT > *Database*.
Living conditions		
Dependency on income source	dependent on family support dependent on self-earned income dependent on national public student support	A student is considered dependent on an income source if one of the three sources 'support from family/partner' (including transfers in kind), 'self-earned income' or 'national public student support' provides more than 50 % of the student's total income (total income includes transfers in kind). Students with a mixed budget (i.e. no source providing more than 50 % of total income) are not assigned to a group.
Financial difficulties	students with financial difficulties students without financial difficulties	This focus group distinguishes between the two groups based on students' self-assessment.
Housing situation	living with parents not living with parents	–
Working students	students without paid job(s) during the semester students working in paid job(s) up to 20 hrs./week students working in paid job(s) >20 hrs./week	The groups are differentiated based on the extent of their regular paid employment or employment from time to time during term time, not taking into account paid jobs during the holidays.

Name of variable	Values	Further explanation
Study conditions		
Field of study	○ Education (incl. Teacher Training) Arts and Humanities □ Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction Social Sciences, Journalism and Information Business, Administration and Law Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics △ Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishery and Veterinary Health and Welfare Services	This focus group distinguishes students based on their field of study (according to ISCED-F2013).
Study intensity	⊗ low intensity ○ medium intensity ⊕ high intensity	This indicator groups students according to their weekly workload in a typical week for study-related activities (taught and personal study time). Low-intensity students spend between 0 and 20 hours a week on study- related activities. Medium-intensity students spend more than 20 but no more than 40 hours a week on study-related activities. High-intensity students spend more than 40 hours a week on study-related activities.
Type of higher education institution (HEI)	■ university ■ non-university	Types of HEIs are distinguished based on national legislation and understanding. If a distinction between types of HEIs exists within a country, institutions classified as 'universities' are typically allowed to award doctoral degrees. Other types of HEIs, depending on national legislations, may include universities of applied sciences, polytechnics, professional HEIs and similar institutions which offer higher education programmes covered in the EUROSTUDENT standard target group. These are included in the EUROSTUDENT focus group 'non-university'.
Type of study programme	◌ short-cycle programmes ◌ short national degrees ● Bachelor ● Master ▭ long national degrees other	Within the EUROSTUDENT standard target group, which covers all types of higher education study programmes, students currently enrolled in a Bachelor degree programme and students currently enrolled in a Master degree programme are two special focus groups often used throughout the report.
Study experience	◈ first-year students	Students currently enrolled in their first year of higher education (i.e. not current study programme).
Study-related background		
Access route	↺ alternative access route ⊙ standard access route	This focus group distinguishes students based on their entry qualification into higher education. Students are classified as having used the 'standard access route' if they possess an upper secondary qualification obtained in direct relation to leaving school for the first time (e.g. Matura, Abitur, Baccalauréat), either in the country of survey or abroad. The 'alternative access route' has been used by students who either do not possess such a qualification or obtained it later in life, e.g. via evening classes or adult learning.
Educational origin	★ international students ❀ domestic students	Educational origin of the students is determined based on the origin of the higher education entrance qualification or – in the absence of such a qualification – the place of leaving the school system for the first time. 'International students' are studying in the country of the survey and have left the school system for the first time outside of the country of the survey. That means the status as international student is not related to place of birth, nationality or citizenship. 'Domestic students' hold a higher education entry qualification from the country of survey or have left the school system for the first time there.
Transition duration	▮ delayed transition ▬ direct transition	This focus group distinguishes students according to the duration between leaving the school system for the first time and entering higher education. Direct-transition students have a delay of no more than 24 months between leaving school and entering higher education. Delayed-transition students have entered higher education for the first time more than 24 months after leaving the school system for the first time.
Pre-COVID	◐ enrolled before COVID-19 outbreak ◑ enrolled after COVID-19 outbreak	–

Access to EUROSTUDENT data and figures
The present Synopsis of Indicators presents only a small selection of EUROSTUDENT data. A wider range of data are available online in the EUROSTUDENT *> Database* www.eurostudent.eu/database

Any corrections possibly made to the data after the publication of the Synopsis will be updated in the EUROSTUDENT database.

The data used for the figures in the Synopsis, as well as high-resolution pdf files of the figures, can be directly downloaded by clicking on the download symbol in the top left-hand corner of each figure: ⭳

All EUROSTUDENT data, as well as this Synopsis of Indicators, including its figures and tables, are available under an Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-SA 4.0 DE).

Data from EUROSTUDENT rounds VII and 8 are available at the Research Data Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies in the form of a Scientific Use File based on national-level micro data on application (coverage varies).

About the Eurostudent project

Project organisation

EUROSTUDENT is a network of researchers, 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 eighth round of the project took place from September 2021 to August 2024.

Responsibilities in EUROSTUDENT

EUROSTUDENT combines a central coordination approach with a strong network of national partners in each participant country. The EUROSTUDENT consortium provides a core questionnaire and extensive instructions for data cleaning and the calculation of indicators. The implementation and analysis of the national student surveys in line with the central conventions lies within the area of responsibility of the contributing countries. Throughout the project, the EUROSTUDENT consortium collaborates closely with the participating countries to ensure a common understanding of and compliance with the data conventions. More information on the methodology behind EUROSTUDENT can be found in *> Chapter A3*.

The network aspect of the project allows bringing the knowledge of experts from different countries together. This enriches not only the project, but also ensures that its design is suitable for international comparative analyses and that country-specific context information is taken into account.

EUROSTUDENT participant countries

EUROSTUDENT 8 data cover a large part of the EHEA: The participants reach from Iceland in the north all the way to Malta in the south and from Portugal in the west to

Azerbaijan in the east. The EUROSTUDENT 8 indicators presented in this report are based on survey responses collected of more than 290,000 students (> *Chapter C3*).

Figure A2.2 and Table A2.2 provide an overview of the 25 countries participating in EUROSTUDENT 8. More information on the contributing network members can be found in > *Chapter C4*.

The eighth round of the project was funded with the support of all EUROSTUDENT countries and co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MinOCW).

Figure A2.2

The EUROSTUDENT 8 network

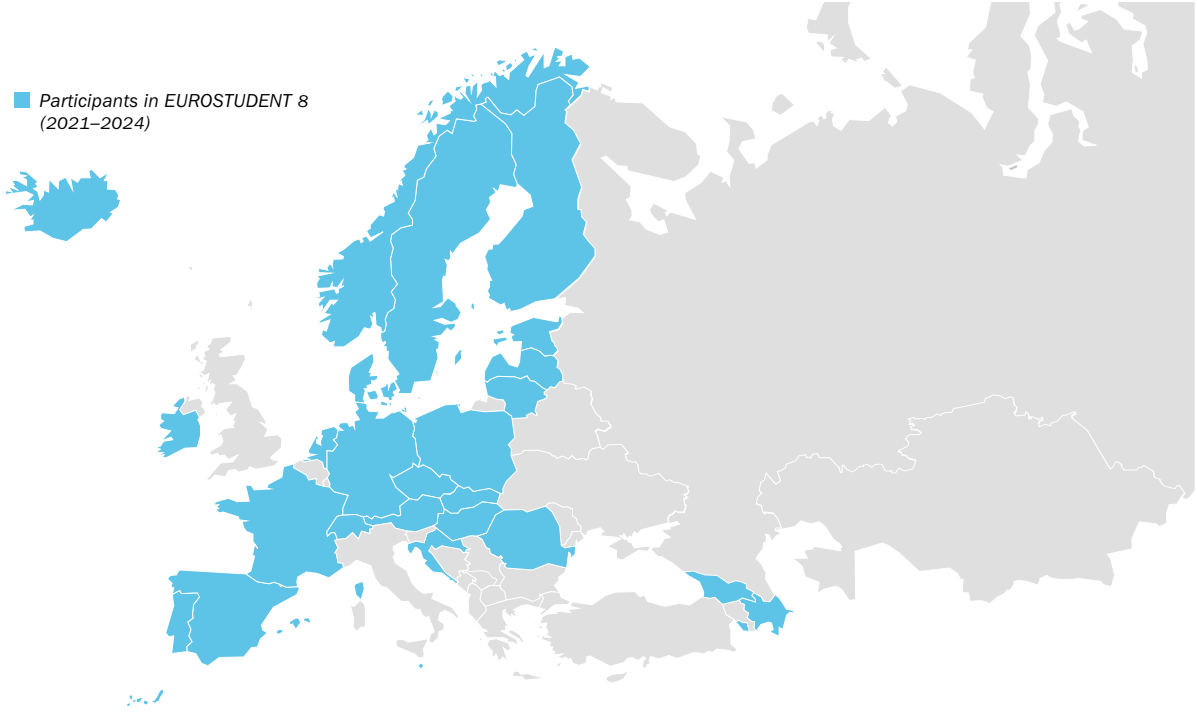

Table A2.2

EUROSTUDENT 8 participant countries

Participating countries in EUROSTUDENT 8		
Austria	Germany	Poland
Azerbaijan	Hungary	Portugal
Croatia	Iceland	Romania
Czech Republic	Ireland	Slovakia
Denmark	Latvia	Spain
Estonia	Lithuania	Sweden
Finland	Malta	Switzerland
France	Norway	The Netherlands
Georgia		

A 2

EUROSTUDENT consortium

The central coordination of the EUROSTUDENT project is directed by the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW), which is based in Hanover, Germany. In its function as the central coordinator, DZHW heads the EUROSTUDENT consortium consisting of six international partners:

- German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW, Germany)
- Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS, Austria)
- ResearchNed (the Netherlands)
- Think Tank Praxis (Praxis, Estonia)
- Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA, Malta)
- The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO, Switzerland)

EUROSTUDENT steering board

The steering board guides the EUROSTUDENT consortium in the development of a reliable, contextually sensitive and policy relevant comparative study of the social dimension in European higher education. On the basis of the assigned tasks, the steering board actively contributes especially to the middle- and long-term development of the project. The EUROSTUDENT 8 steering board was composed of representatives from the European Commission (EC), the European Students' Union (ESU), the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG), the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MinOCW), as well as three country representatives of the fee-paying countries from France (L'Observatoire national de la vie étudiante, OVE), Sweden (Swedish Council for Higher Education) and Austria (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research).

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A 2

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A 3

Chapter A3
General methodological notes

Data collection

EUROSTUDENT couples a central coordination approach with a strong network of national partners in each EUROSTUDENT country (> *Chapter C4*). The EUROSTUDENT consortium (> *Chapter A2*) provides national contributors with the EUROSTUDENT questionnaire, as well as extensive instructions for conducting the field phase at 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. They are responsible for implementing a national student survey and delivering the data to the EUROSTUDENT 8 data team in accordance with EUROSTUDENT conventions. 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.

In the eighth round of the EUROSTUDENT project, the process of data collection and delivery was headed by the consortium partner Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) in Vienna, Austria.

EUROSTUDENT conventions are the instruments used to ensure the comparability and quality of the data collected. Since the first round of EUROSTUDENT, these conventions have been continuously developed further and are the result of productive discussions during several project meetings, intensive seminars, and workshops which were organised by the EUROSTUDENT consortium. They are documented in several handbooks which are provided to all EUROSTUDENT partners.

EUROSTUDENT questionnaire

The EUROSTUDENT questionnaire details the items, responses, and instructions to be used in the national surveys. The questionnaire handbook provides in-depth explanations of the purpose of each question and instructions on adapting it, if necessary, to the national context. EUROSTUDENT employs hashtags (#) to mark instances where the national teams need to go beyond simple translation of the question by making adaptations to the particular national context. For example, '#common language(s)' would, in Germany, mean German, in Switzerland it would be German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic. This method is used to ensure that the resulting national questionnaires will be understandable and applicable to the students being surveyed in each country.

Survey execution

The questionnaire handbook also provides guidelines for the preparation and execution of the survey at national level. It provides information on the EUROSTUDENT standard target group, sampling guidelines, as well as information on the survey organisation and method. Mandatory preparatory seminars for all national teams additionally provided the opportunity to present and discuss the plans for national implementation with other national teams and the EUROSTUDENT data team.

Box A3.1

Methodological note: EUROSTUDENT target group

The EUROSTUDENT target group includes all students who are – at the time of observation (usually: semester) – 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:

- **Nationality** – National and foreign students should be included, as long as they are studying for a full degree in the country of observation (and are not only obtaining a limited number of credits, e.g. as an Erasmus student).
- **Full-time/part-time status** – Full-time, part-time, correspondence, and distance students (including those in fully online degrees) should be included, as long as they live in the country of survey during the current lecture period. This represents a change from previous rounds of EUROSTUDENT, in which distance learning students in fully online degrees were excluded from the sample.
- **Character of the higher education institution (HEI) or study programme** – General as well as professional orientations of HEIs and study programmes should be included, as long as the programmes and institutions are considered to be higher education in the national context.
- **Legal character of the HEI** – Public and private institutions should be included, as long as private institutions are considered to be a regular part of the higher education system in the national context.

Excluded from the EUROSTUDENT target group are:

- **Students on (temporary) leave**, i.e. students who have officially or non-officially interrupted their studies at the time of observation for whatever reason.
- **Students on credit mobility**, short-term mobile students (e.g. Erasmus students), i.e. students who are currently studying in the country of observation (incoming) or who have currently left the country of observation (outgoing) for a short time period (e.g. one or two semesters) with the purpose of gaining only a relatively small number of credits.
- **Students in ISCED 8 study programmes (PhD and doctoral programmes).**
- **Students in distance learning study programmes** (only virtual classes) who do not live in the country of survey during the current lecture period.
- **Students at very specialised HEIs**, e.g. military or police academies, or HEIs directly affiliated with one company. This might also include programmes providing training only for public administration.
- **Students in programmes classified as ISCED (2011) levels 5 or 6 which are not regarded to be higher education in the national context**. This could encompass,

for example, further vocational training programmes for Master crafts(wo)men, or upper secondary schools or post-secondary programmes not regarded as higher education.

- **Students enrolled in higher education but not entitled to finish a common programme.** This might be students with an 'extra-ordinary' or 'guest' status or students only enrolled in single courses if they are not allowed to graduate from an entire, ordinary programme (i.e. their achievements will not be recognised for a common title like Bachelor or Master).

Box A3.2

Methodological note: Notes on national samples and deviations from the EUROSTUDENT standard target group

Not all countries were able to fully comply with the standard target groups. The following countries indicated deviations from the EUROSTUDENT conventions:

- **Netherlands:** Private institutions (covering around 7 % of students) are not included in the sample. This constitutes a deviation from the EUROSTUDENT target group.
- **Ireland:** No private institutions are included in the sample. This constitutes a deviation from the EUROSTUDENT target group.

Survey mode

EUROSTUDENT encourages the use of online surveys. Most national contributors have followed this recommendation, while others have chosen other methods based on the national context or employed multiple survey modes (see > *Chapter C3* for details).

Data cleaning and analysis

After the data collection, national contributors clean the data and prepare the calculation of national indicators. Detailed cleaning and coding instructions are given for each variable, so that a national dataset adhering to EUROSTUDENT standards is created. SPSS syntax supporting this process is also provided.

EUROSTUDENT recommends weighting the raw data using population data on sex, ISCED level, fields of study, types of HEIs, enrolment status, and age. Additional weighting variables (e.g. region of HEIs, citizenship, place of birth, number of international students) are encouraged if deemed relevant. > *Chapter C3* provides an overview of the implemented weighting schemes at the national level.

The EUROSTUDENT data team supports the national research teams during the data cleaning and delivery process. Furthermore, each national team is required to attend a seminar at which the process is explained in detail and the steps are discussed between the national teams and the EUROSTUDENT data team.

The calculation of the indicators in EUROSTUDENT 8 is done using a (semi-)automatic SPSS syntax. The results of these calculations are uploaded into the EUROSTUDENT database, where they are checked and commented on by the national teams. Delivered data were checked by the EUROSTUDENT data team before being validated for publication by the national researchers. Small deviations between the Synopsis of Indicators and the *> Database* may occur due to rounding.

Any deviations from the EUROSTUDENT conventions in national questionnaires or calculations are noted beneath each figure/table and explained in more detail in *> Chapter C2*.

Empirical findings and interpretation

B

Part B

Chapter B1
Characteristics of national student populations

B 1

Key

Kristina Hauschildt
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Students' age

Students' age presents a diverse picture across the EHEA, with a 10.5-year span between the two countries with the youngest (Azerbaijan) and oldest (Iceland) population according to mean age.

Women in higher education

Women represent the majority of higher education students in almost all EUROSTUDENT countries, with between 50 % and 66 % of students being female. Despite being the overall majority, gender representation is severely skewed across subjects and institutions.

Student parents

Currently, an average of 12 % of students report being parents, with an average number of children of 1.9. Student parents spend significant time on childcare, especially if their children are young. Correspondingly, student parents in almost all countries are more often studying at a low intensity, spending less than 20 hours per week on their studies.

Hauschildt, K. (2024). Characteristics of national student populations. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024.* wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew001

findings

B 1

Migration background

Every fourth student (24 %) across EUROSTUDENT countries has an international background through their family or education. 14 % of domestically educated students were born abroad or have at least one parent born abroad; and 10 % of students possess an international entry qualification into higher education, i.e. went to school abroad. On average, 78 % of international students hold a foreign citizenship.

Students with disabilities

19 % of students report limitations to their studies by a disability, functional limitation, or health problem. Most commonly, students indicate experiencing mental health issues (13 % of students across countries), followed by physical chronical diseases and other long-standing health problems / functional limitations / impairments. Compared to the population, in almost all countries students in higher education more often indicate a disability than their counterparts in the population, with only Denmark showing the reverse pattern.

Discrimination experiences

On average, 22 % of students report having felt discriminated against in the context of their studies. In Spain, Portugal, and Austria, around a third of students indicate having experienced discriminatory behaviour. On average, the most common grounds for discrimination, as perceived by the students themselves, are gender and age, with 8 and 6 %, respectively, attributing experienced mistreatment to this characteristic.

B 1

Main issues

The adoption of the Rome Communiqué and the 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension' (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020) marks a significant reaffirmation by the countries within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) of the fundamental importance of the Social Dimension in higher education strategies at every level. With their adoption, the EHEA ministers have committed to "strengthening the social dimension of higher education and fostering equity and inclusion to reflect the diversity of society" (p. 4), an endeavour that involves creating higher education systems that are inclusive and supportive of the access, participation, progress, and completion of all students, with a special emphasis on those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, or underrepresented. The categories that often define these students include individuals with low socio-economic backgrounds, identifiable by either low income or the educational background of their parents, as well as factors such as gender, disability, immigrant or minority status, and age, particularly for mature students (Crosier & Haj, 2020, Social Dimension Strategy). It is crucial to note that these categories are not isolated; they intersect and influence each other (Gross et al., 2016), and would ideally be investigated in a holistic and integrated manner to gain a comprehensive understanding of their interconnected impacts.

The EUROSTUDENT survey covers many aspects of student diversity, including gender, age, students with children, migration background, and disability. This chapter presents data on these aspects, as well as students' experiences of discrimination based on various aspects of diversity. Parental socio-economic background is analysed in > *Chapter B2*, and aspects of accessibility of higher education systems are covered in > *Chapter B3*.

Students' age

Students' age is a key characteristic distinguishing higher education systems in Europe (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2021). This age diversity is largely due to variances in access policies, educational traditions, and the flexibility of the higher education system (> *Chapter B3*). Age distribution within the student body serves as a gauge of an education system's inclusivity and its capacity to facilitate lifelong learning. Additionally, students' age can provide initial insights into their specific needs concerning their higher education studies. With increasing age, students tend to live in more settled circumstances (Hauschildt et al., 2021), so that mature students have different requirements for balancing their studies with work and/or family. Age may also play a role in determining eligibility for financial student support, health insurance, or alternative access routes into higher education.

Gender balance

Gender balance among students in higher education, once significantly skewed towards men, has tipped towards women in recent history, with female students now constituting the majority in tertiary education in almost three quarters of countries globally (UNESCO & UNESCO IEASALC, 2021). Nevertheless, gender imbalances still exist with regard to subject choice, with women remaining significantly underrepresented in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction and ICT degrees (ibid.). In contrast, men less often choose Humanities, Social Sciences, and Teacher Training.

Such differences do not appear to correlate with differences in skills or abilities (Barone & Assirelli, 2020; Declercq et al., 2018). Rather, cultural influences, social norms, and prevailing gender stereotypes perpetuate educational and professional segregation across fields of study (Anagnostou, 2022). The concept of a 'chilly climate' characterising the institutional context (Hall & Sandler, 1982) has also been posited to act as a deterrent for women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields. Additionally, gender variations in expectations of earnings, risk aversion, confidence, and preferences are acknowledged as contributing factors to these gender differences (Declercq et al., 2018). The European Commission (2022) has pledged to address underrepresentation of women in STEM fields in its Strategy for Universities.

EUROSTUDENT data provide a lens to examine the experiences of students by gender across a broad spectrum of indicators. This chapter concentrates on the gender balance in STEM-intensive institutions, with the remaining chapters often drawing on sex as a characteristic to analyse differences between male and female students across a wide range of student life.

Students with children

Student parents need to balance their academic responsibilities with the demands of parenting. The challenge of juggling multiple roles – as students, parents, and often also as employees – can lead to significant role conflict and time poverty, particularly for parents of younger children (Ajayi et al., 2022; Brooks, 2012a; Conway et al., 2021). Variations in support services offered by different institutions and discrepancies in national policies across Europe result in diverse experiences for student parents (Brooks, 2012b), with a lack of adequate childcare facilities on campus and inflexible academic paths and schedules adding to the challenges faced by students with children (Ajayi et al., 2022; Brooks, 2012b; Conway et al., 2021). The resulting stress, as well as general feelings of isolation and not-belonging within the academic setting, can also negatively impact studying mothers' and fathers' mental health and well-being (Ajayi et al., 2022; Bogossian, 2021; Brooks, 2012a; Conway et al., 2021) and may result in lower academic performance and increased dropout risks (Ajayi et al., 2022; Conway et al., 2021). This chapter therefore analyses the share of students with children in Europe as well as the time they spend on childcare.

Migration background

Students with a migration background – i.e. born abroad themselves or with at least one parent born abroad – are often disadvantaged, compared to the native-born population (Giudici et al., 2021; Hadjar & Gross, 2016; Krempkow, 2022). Mishra and Müller (2022) contrast two theories on immigrant students' academic outcomes: on the one hand, 'social background and ethnic disadvantage' highlights structural and socio-economic challenges that can impede their educational success. The socio-economic background of immigrant families significantly impacts educational outcomes, with lower parental education and income levels frequently correlating with diminished opportunities for academic success (Oberdabernig & Schneebaum, 2017). Factors such as language proficiency, acculturation processes, and the legal status of both students and their families may also impact negatively migrant students' educational trajectories (Griga, 2013).

On the other hand, 'immigration optimism' emphasises the positive impact of migrant-specific resources and resilience (Mishra & Müller, 2022). In fact, they showed that for a German sample, high norms and aspirations prevalent in networks of migrant students serve a shielding role for dropout from higher education (Mishra & Müller, 2022). Similarly, for pupils in schools, empirical findings show that self-efficacy beliefs, positive home environment, and language attitudes increase resilience against socio-economic disadvantages (Gabrielli et al., 2022). Hadjar and Scharf (2019) report a higher value assigned to education by immigrants.

EUROSTUDENT analyses focus on students with a second-generation migration background – that is, domestically educated students with at least one parent born in another country. From one perspective, this provides a clear distinction to 'international students', who have (temporarily) migrated for the purpose of degree completion. Conversely, a comparison between these students and native-born students is best suited to uncover systemic differences, as these students, especially those with only one foreign parent (Camilleri et al., 2013), are less likely to face language-related barriers and problems related to their legal status.

Students with disabilities

The inclusion of persons with disabilities has been a stated goal at both European and international levels since the Salamanca Declaration reaffirmed that education, including higher education, should be accessible to all (Pavone et al., 2019; UNESCO, 1994). Students with disabilities encounter additional challenges in higher education and face barriers to their academic success. A recent systematic review (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022) highlights that obstacles pertain to access, as well as academic progress and success, categorising barriers for students with disabilities into three types: architectural and infrastructural barriers, such as outdated, non-accessible buildings; challenges within the teaching-learning process, including unprepared teaching staff and a lack of access to supportive technology and resources; and insufficient financial and counselling support at the institutional level.

Investigating success factors for students with disabilities, Moriña and Biagiotti (2022) revealed that both personal and external factors play a crucial role in the access to and progress in higher education. Key personal characteristics include self-advocacy, self-awareness, self-determination, self-esteem, and executive functioning, while external factors such as support from family, disability offices, staff, faculty members, and peers are instrumental in academic success.

Students with disabilities are by no means a homogeneous group. The spectrum of conditions, including physical disabilities, chronic diseases, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, and mental health issues, can significantly affect a student's ability to achieve academic success and social integration. Indeed, student mental health has received increased attention in recent years, not least due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Cuppen et al., 2024; European Students' Union, 2022). Mental health as well as other conditions are usually not visible (Hauschildt et al., 2021; Moriña, 2022), which poses a risk of students not receiving the necessary support and jeopardising their academic success (Newman et al., 2021).

Discrimination

Discrimination in higher education institutions (HEIs) has garnered significant attention in recent research. Notably, the European Education Area's Working Group has contributed to this discourse with an issue paper based on the Working Group's discussions and insights on how to tackle discrimination in education based on ethnic or racial origin, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, and social and territorial inequalities (European Commission et al., 2023). Discrimination, defined as unfavourable treatment based on identity aspects (Devakumar et al., 2022), spans various attributes like gender, sexuality, and nationality, affecting students in myriad ways (Billingsley & Hurd, 2019; Mason et al., 2021; Puhl et al., 2008; Thornicroft et al., 2022; Vargas et al., 2020). Investigations reveal that experiencing discrimination adversely affects college satisfaction (Del Toro & Hughes, 2020), sense of belonging (Hussain & Jones, 2019), learning outcomes (Karuppan & Barari, 2011), and educational aspirations (Chykina, 2024). Furthermore, detrimental impacts on mental (Jochmann et al., 2019), physical (Williams et al., 2019), and general health (Devakumar et al., 2022) have been reported. Despite its prevalence, comparative insights into discrimination within HEIs remain limited, highlighting a critical area for further exploration. This chapter therefore investigates to which extent students feel discriminated against based on a variety of socio-demographic aspects.

Data and interpretation

Students' age

Students' age varies by more than 10 years across countries. On average, around two thirds are up to 25 years old.

Students' age presents a diverse picture across the EHEA, with a 10.5-year span between the two countries with the youngest (Azerbaijan) and oldest (Iceland) population according to mean age (Table B1.1).

- In Iceland, a notable 43 % of the student population are aged 30 or over, indicating a substantial proportion of mature students in higher education (Figure B1.1.). Likewise, in Finland and Norway, mature students form a significant demographic, with 34 % and 30 %, respectively, in the 30 and over age bracket. In these countries, as well as in Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland, students up to 21 years constitute only a minor segment, at most 19 %.
- Contrarily, in Portugal, France, and Azerbaijan, the younger demographic dominates, with between 53 and 77 % of students falling into the youngest age bracket.

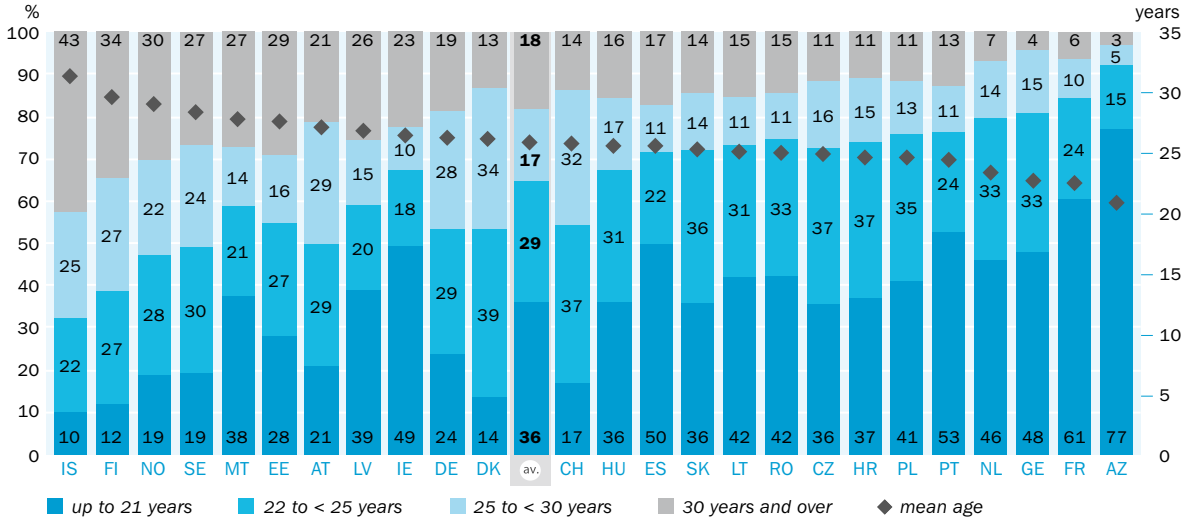
Due to the fact that students' age is often clearly linked to various study and living conditions, it presents a simple yet informative indicator. The variation in student age can be linked to different educational trajectories, such as delayed entry into higher education or alternative access paths which accommodate those who enter university after gaining work experience or other qualifications (see Table B1.2; also > *Chapter B3*). In particular, students with a non-tertiary educational background, who often enter higher education later in life or via alternative routes, are typically older than their peers. Additionally, students who are engaged in substantial part-time work, over 20 hours per week, tend to be older across the board. This older student demographic is also more likely to be independent of their parental home, relying on personal income rather than family or public financial support. This aspect of student life is also linked with policies on state financial support, which can influence the age profile of the student body (> *Chapter B7*).

B 1

Figure B1.1

Age profile of students

Share of students in different age groups (in %) and mean age (in years)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.1.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *When were you born?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, DK, NO, IS.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Gender balance

While women represent the majority of students in most countries, gender imbalances at subject and institutional level persist.

Women represent the majority of higher education students in almost all EUROSTUDENT countries (Table B1.3), with between 50 % and 66 % of students being female. Despite being the overall majority, gender representation is severely skewed across subjects (Table B1.3). Education and Health and Welfare are subject areas in which on average 78 and 72 % of students are women. This pattern is almost reversed in the more technically oriented fields Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, where on average across countries at most a third of students are women.

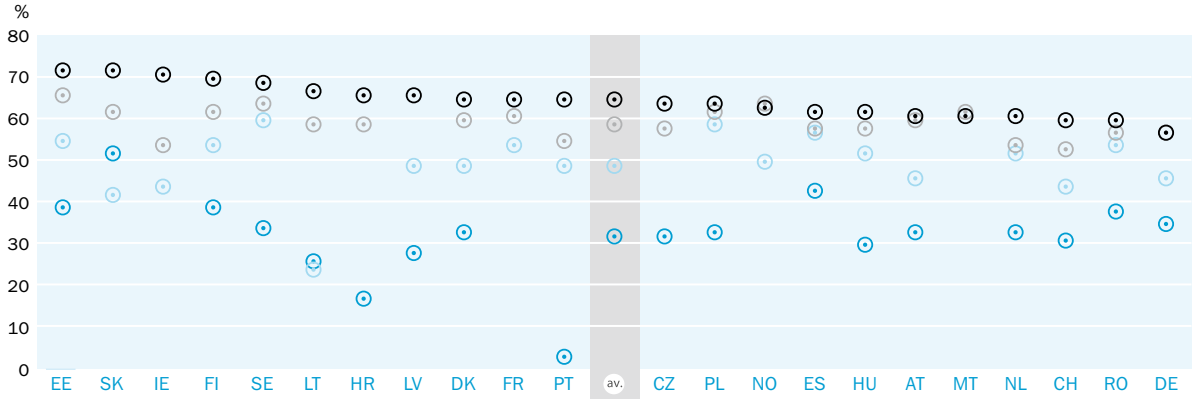
- In Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Sweden, the gender distribution in ICTs study programmes is comparatively balanced, with between 39 and 49 % of students being women. In Iceland and Malta, at least 41 % of students in Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction programmes are women.
- Education is less female-dominated in Georgia and the Netherlands, with a third of male students in these programmes. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, the same holds true for Health and Welfare, where shares of female students are comparatively low (54 and 47 %, respectively).

These patterns show that subject choice is largely still unequal by gender, a fact also reflected at the institutional level (Figure B1.2). When analysing the share of women depending on a higher education institution's specialisation in STEM, it becomes evident that the gender balance is very uneven at both ends of the spectrum. At HEIs with a very low STEM programme offering, women make up at least 57 % of students. Conversely, at highly specialised HEIs, men are the majority in all but one country (Slovakia), representing on average around two thirds of students.

Figure B1.2

Share of female students by degree of STEM-specialisation of HEI

Share of women (in %)



- *high STEM specialisation (≥ 60 % of students enrolled in STEM subjects)*
- *medium-high STEM specialisation (35–< 60 % of students enrolled in STEM subjects)*
- *medium-low STEM specialisation (15–< 35 % of students enrolled in STEM subjects)*
- *very low STEM specialisation (< 15 % of students enrolled in STEM subjects)*

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.3.* ***No data:*** *AZ, GE, IS; medium-low STEM specialisation: LV; medium-high STEM specialisation: HR, CZ, MT; high STEM specialisation: IE, FR, NO, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.2 What is your #sex?*

Note(s): *An institution's STEM specialisation is measured as the ratio of students enrolled in ISCED levels 5 to 7 within fields 05 (Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics), 06 (Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)), and 07 (Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction) to the total number of students at ISCED levels 5 to 7 based on the European Tertiary Education Register.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DK, NO, RO, GE, HU, LV, PL.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

The degree of STEM-specialisation of the HEI provides a clearer picture than the type of HEI (university vs. non-university): while there are large differences between the two types with regard to the share of women enrolled in some countries, no clear pattern emerges that would indicate women generally favoring one or the other (Table B1.4).

- In most countries, the share of women at non-universities is slightly higher, however, in the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Croatia, Ireland, and Malta, the pattern points, often strongly, in the opposite direction with women more often enrolled at universities.

Differences between Bachelor and Master programmes are also not consistent across countries (Table B1.4). Large discrepancies between the genders relating to enrolment at the different levels of higher education could signal inequalities with regard to progression but can also be due to different course offerings at the different educational levels (which could be interpreted as inequality in its own right). In around a third of the EUROSTUDENT countries, the gender distribution in Bachelor and Master programmes is roughly the same. In another third, women represent the majority of Master students, and in the final group, men dominate Master programmes.

- A difference of at least 5 percentage points between Bachelor and Master programmes exists in Estonia, Georgia, Croatia, Latvia, Poland, and Romania, where women are more often enrolled in Master than in Bachelor programmes, and in Denmark, Hungary, and Sweden, where women are more often enrolled in first-cycle programmes.

Except in Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, and Malta, women are more often represented among students without tertiary educational background than men. In accessing higher education, some differences between men and women become apparent (Table B1.4). In Switzerland, the Czech Republic, France, Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, and Sweden, women tend to enter higher education with a delay of at least 2 years after leaving the regular school system rather than directly (with differences of at least three percentage points). In Austria, Germany, Spain, Georgia, Ireland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, and Romania, larger shares of women chose the direct route. A standard entry path is at least slightly more often used by women than an alternative access route in all countries except Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Malta, and Sweden.

The share of females by migration background does not vary on average across countries (Table B1.4). On country level, however, marked differences become apparent with either clearly higher or lower shares of women found among second-generation migrant students. Except for Austria, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Malta, and Portugal, women are more likely to be living in separate accommodation than with their parents (Table B1.4).

Students with children

12 % of students are parents, mainly among older age groups.

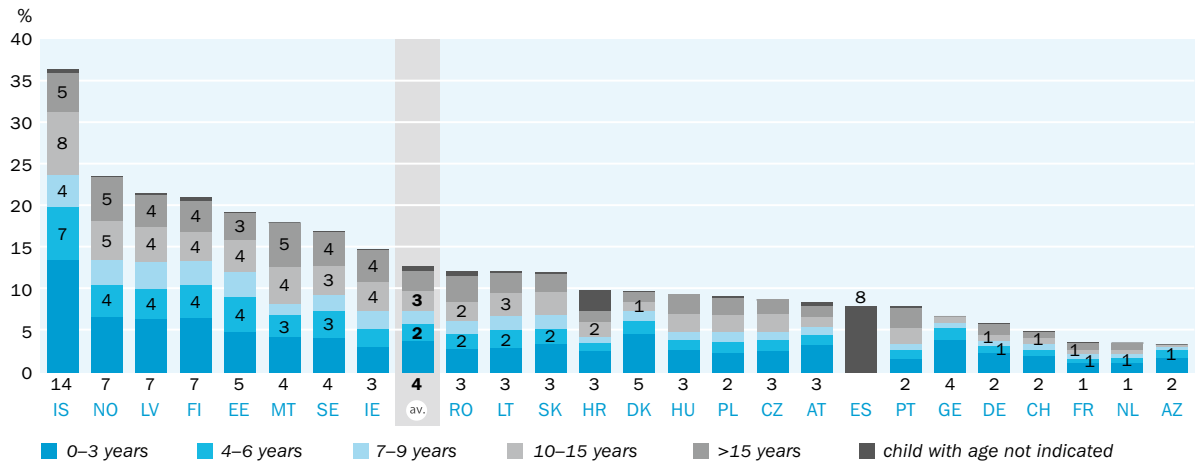
Across EUROSTUDENT countries, the prevalence of parenting students shows considerable variation (Figure B1.3). Currently, an average of 12 % of students report being parents, with an average number of children of 1.9 (Table B1.5).

- In Iceland, Norway, Latvia, and Finland, at least 21 % of students have children, showing a significant population of student parents. Conversely, in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, and Azerbaijan, no more than 5 % of students have a child.

Figure B1.3

Students with children by age of youngest child

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.18.* ***No data****: for children's age: ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.9 Do you have children? 6.10 How old is your youngest child?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Student parents tend to be among the older demographic of students. On average, in the age group of 30 years and over, more than half of students report having children (Table B1.6). Among first-year students, the proportion who are parents averages 8 % across the surveyed countries (Table B1.6).

- Among first-year students, the highest percentages of those who are parents are observed in Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Malta, and Slovakia, where 12 % to 23 % have entered higher education as expectant or actual parents (Table B1.6).

There are more mothers than fathers typically found among students (Table B1.6). In line with the older age of students, student parents are usually more often found in Master vs. Bachelor programmes. Additionally, student parents have more often made use of non-traditional access routes and are more often found at non-universities than universities in almost all countries.

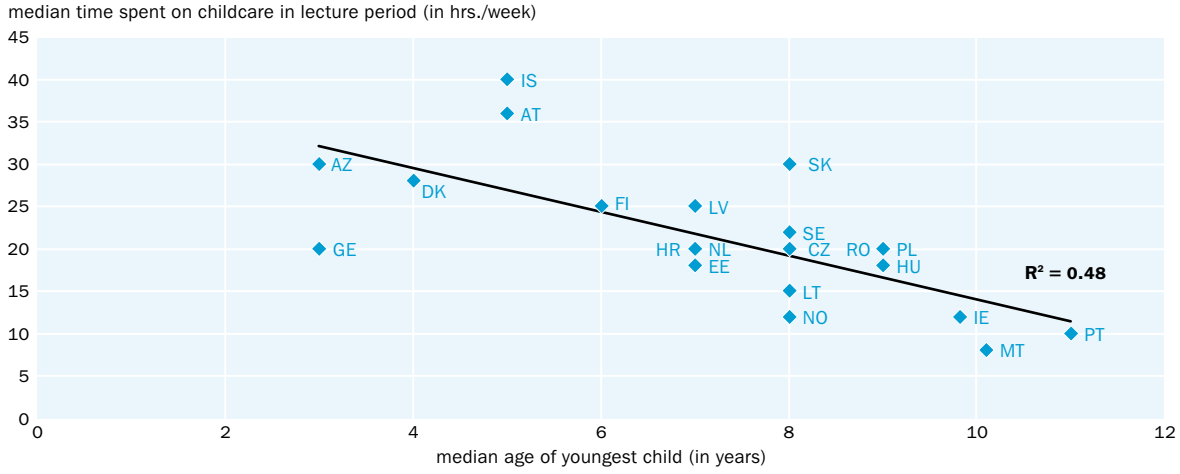
Approximately half of the student parents have a youngest child under the age of six, indicating significant childcare requirements alongside their academic responsibilities (Table B1.5).

- This is particularly notable in Austria, Azerbaijan, Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, and Iceland, where over half of the student-parents' youngest children fall into this age category.
- Remarkably, Ireland, Malta, and Portugal report a different trend with at least 60 % of student-parents' children being older than 6 years.

Figure B1.4

Time spent on childcare in relation to age of youngest child

Median time (in hrs./week) and age of youngest child (in years)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.19.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE, ES, FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.11 [Only students who have children] How many hours do you spend on childcare in a typical week in the current lecture period? Childcare refers to active care given to your child(ren) (e.g. feeding or playing).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Student parents spend an average of 21 hours per week on childcare.

As depicted on the vertical axis in Figure B1.4, student parents spend a significant amount of time on childcare. On average, mothers and fathers spend 21 hours per week caring for their child(ren). However, there is a notable variation across countries.

- Parents in Lithuania, Norway, Ireland, Malta, and Portugal are spending less than 15 hours per week taking care of their offspring, whereas students in Iceland, Austria, Slovakia, and Azerbaijan are involved in childcare at least 30 hours.

Correspondingly, student parents in almost all countries are more often studying at a low intensity, spending less than 20 hours per week on their studies (Table B1.6).

This large span in time spent on childcare can be explained by the age of the students' youngest child (Figure B1.4). There is a very clear relationship between the median time spent on childcare and the youngest family member's age, with childcare hours decreasing the higher the average age of children in a country is.

14 % of domestically educated students were born abroad or have at least one parent born abroad. 10 % of students possess an international entry qualification into higher education.

Migration background

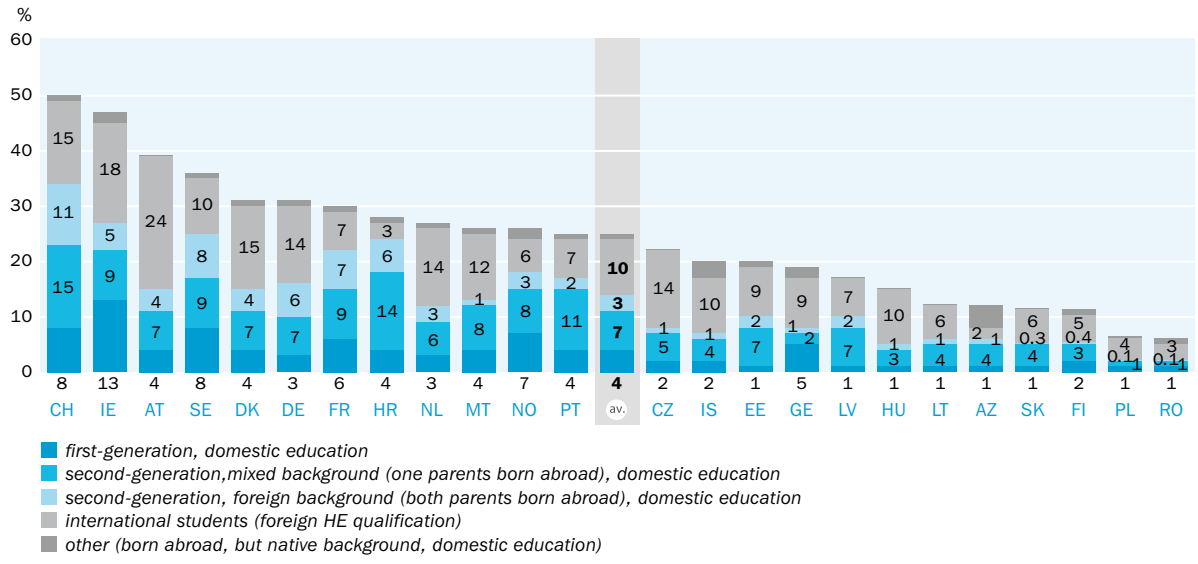
Every fourth student (24 %) across EUROSTUDENT countries has an international background through their family or education (Figure B1.5). 14 % of domestically educated students were born abroad or have at least one parent born abroad; and 10 % of students possess an international entry qualification, i.e. attended school abroad.

- Particularly high shares of students with an international background are found in Switzerland, Ireland, Austria, and Sweden. In these countries, between a third and a half of students either have a migration background or are international students.

Figure B1.5

Migration and educational background of students

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.20.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.4 In which country were you and your parents (or those who raised you) born?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- On the other hand, this is the case for less than 15 % of students in Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Slovakia, Finland, Poland, and Romania.
- More than 5 % of students enrolled in Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, France, and Norway were born abroad (first-generation migrants), whereas comparatively many students with a second-generation migration background, i.e. at least one parent born abroad, can be found in Switzerland and Croatia (26 % and 20 %, respectively).
- Switzerland, Ireland, Austria, and Denmark register the highest shares of international students with at least 15 % holding a foreign entry qualification.

It is important to recognise that not all international students with foreign educational qualifications also possess foreign citizenship, which suggests a possible familial connection to the country for those international students with national citizenship who attended school abroad. On average, 78 % of international students hold a foreign citizenship (Table B1.7).

Box B1.1

Methodological note: Measuring migration background

The EUROSTUDENT focus group distinction categorises students according to their migration background, based on their own and their parents' place of birth. In addition, to be able to distinguish international students, EUROSTUDENT considers the place of attainment of the higher education entry qualification, or, in the absence of this, the place of last attending the regular school system.
Application of this scheme results in the following categories:

- students without a migration background, domestically educated: students who were born in the country of survey, as were their parents, and who attended/completed the school system in the country of the survey
- first-generation migrants, domestically educated: students born abroad who attended/completed the national school system
- international students: students who attended/completed a foreign school system
- students with a second-generation migration background, domestically educated: students with at least one parent born abroad, who were born in the country of survey, and who attended/completed the national school system
- other students, domestically educated: students born abroad, with parents born in the country of survey, who attended/completed the national school system

This categorisation is employed in Figure B1.5 and throughout the report when 'migration background' is used as a focus group. Figure B1.6 depicts students with a second-generation migration background regardless of their place of education for the sake of comparison with population statistics.

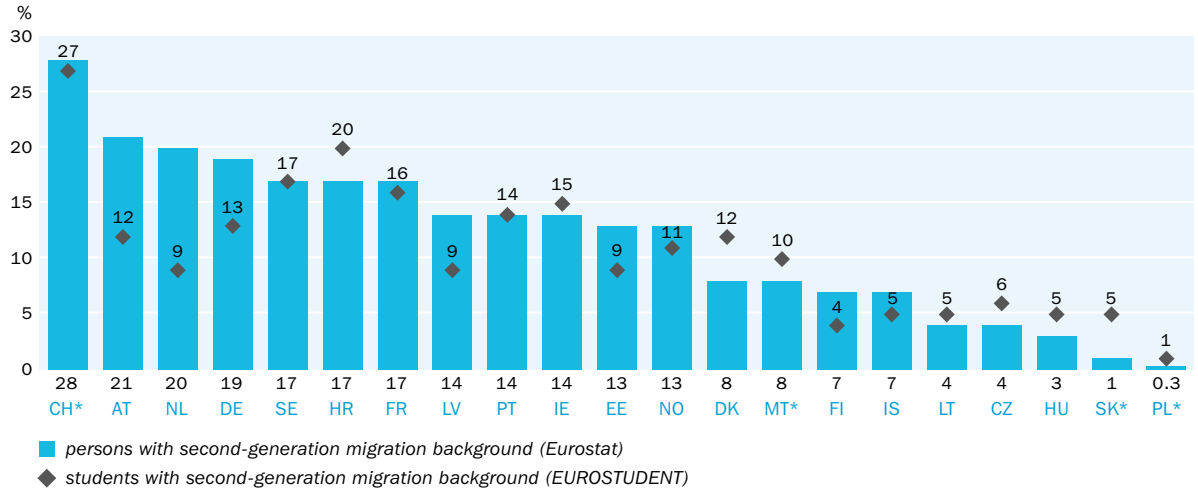
Students with at least one foreign-born parent are relatively well-represented compared to the population.

Compared to the population of a similar age (Figure B1.6), on average students with at least one foreign-born parent are relatively well-represented in higher education. However, notable discrepancies can be found.

Figure B1.6

Students' migration background compared to the population (in %)

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.20. Population data: Eurostat Labour Force Survey 2022 (lfsa_pganedm) except CH (European Social Survey 2018). Population values refer to the population aged 15–29.* ***No data****: ES. No Eurostat data: AZ, GE, RO; second-generation mixed migration background: MT, PL, SK.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.4 In which country were you and your parents (or those who raised you) born?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- In Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, and Iceland second-generation migrants are underrepresented compared to the general population: only 50 %–75 % as many students as would be expected, based on the representation of second-generation in the general population aged 15–29, are enrolled in higher education.
- In contrast, in Denmark, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland, the representation of such students exceeds the anticipated level – based on the share of second-generation migrants in the population – by at least 33 %.

Students with disabilities

Almost every fifth student reports limitations to their studies by a disability.

On average, 21 % of students in EUROSTUDENT countries indicate being at least somewhat limited by a disability in their daily life (Figure B1.7), and 19 % report limitations to their studies by a disability (Table B1.8).

- At least a quarter of students indicate a disability limiting to daily life in Finland, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark.
- Low shares of students with disabilities are found in Croatia, Portugal, Hungary, and Romania, where no more than 15 % of students report a limitation in their daily life.

Mental health problems are the most common type of disability, whereas mobility impairments are least frequent

Among the different types of impairments, mental health problems are the most commonly reported type, indicated by 13 % of students across countries, and are also the most widespread in most countries (Table B1.8). Exceptions are Austria, France, Georgia, Croatia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia, where mental health issues take second or third place. Next to mental health problems, on aggregate, physical chronical diseases and other long-standing health problems / functional limitations / impairments are the most common types of impairment across countries. Least often named on average and in most countries are mobility impairments.

Box B1.2

Methodological note: Students with disabilities in EUROSTUDENT

In the EUROSTUDENT context, the term 'disability' is used to refer to any self-perceived disability, impairment, long-standing health problem, or functional limitation. The EUROSTUDENT focus group takes into account only those students who report some limitations in their studies due to such a disability or impairment. This focus on limitations represents an adaptation of the Global Activity Limitation Indicator (GALI), a measure that is also used in official European statistics (Bogaert et al., 2018). It should also be noted that, compared to the GALI, the EUROSTUDENT survey likely underestimates the share of students with limitations, as only students indicating a disability, impairment, long-standing health problem, functional limitation or learning disability are asked to indicate the extent of their limitation to their studies and in their daily life.

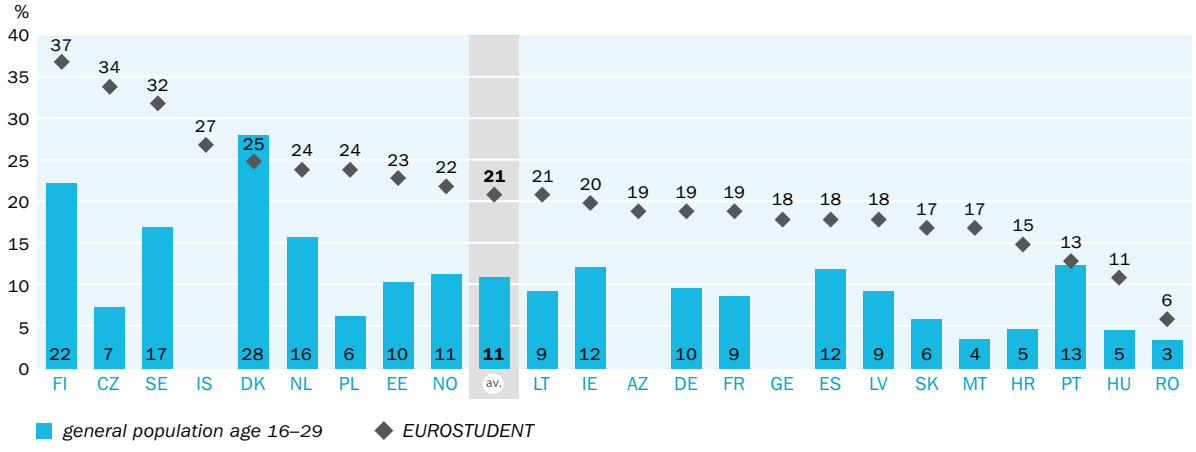
It should be noted that measuring impairments and activity limitations in a cross-national comparison is challenging. Previous studies have confirmed the relevance of the GALI for measuring activity limitations in Europe, but caution against direct comparisons between two countries (Berger et al., 2015). Instead, the authors advise focusing on patterns and trends.

- Compared to the population, in almost all countries students in higher education more often indicate a disability than their counterparts in the population, with only Denmark showing the reverse pattern.

Figure B1.7

Students with disabilities in EUROSTUDENT and the general population

Share of respondents indicating severe or somewhat severe limitations in their daily life due to a disability (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.11. Eurostat: EU-SILC 2022 [hlth_silc_07], age group 16–29.* ***No data:*** *AT, CH. No EU SILC data: IS, AZ, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except ES, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.12 Due to your impairment(s), to what extent are you limited in activities people usually do? Adapted from Global Activity Limitation Indicator (Eurostat).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, RO, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 1

Discrimination experiences

22 % of students report discrimination experiences during their studies, most often due to gender and age.

How welcome do students with different backgrounds and characteristics feel in higher education? The EUROSTUDENT 8 survey investigated students' experiences of discrimination with an in-depth module in its questionnaire. Figure B1.8 shows the reported discrimination students have experienced in the context of their studies and the perceived reason for it.

Figure B1.8

Reported incidences and perceived reasons for discrimination in academic context

Share of students having experienced discrimination by students, teaching staff, or other HEI staff and perceived reason for the discrimination (in %)

	Any discrimination experience	Perceived reason: Gender	Age	Ancestry/Nationality	Weight	Income	Mental health	Sexuality	Religion	Disability	Skin colour	Parents' education
ES	33	11	8	7	9	8	8	6	3	2	2	3
PT	31	8	7	7	8	7	6	5	3	4	4	3
AT	30	13	7	9	3	6	5	3	3	2	2	4
RO	26	7	6	5	9	9	4	4	3	3	1	3
DK	26	11	8	7	5	5	6	3	3	5	4	3
PL	25	12	6	3	6	6	5	4	5	2	1	3
IE	25	9	7	6	5	7	5	4	3	3	4	3
MT	24	9	4	7	6	5	5	3	2	3	1	3
NL	24	6	6	7	3	4	6	3	3	3	3	2
SE	23	9	7	6	3	2	4	2	3	3	3	2
CZ	23	9	5	5	5	4	3	2	2	1	1	1
LT	22	8	4	4	5	5	4	5	2	1	2	1
IS	21	8	9	4	3	2	4	1	1	3	2	1
HR	20	7	5	3	5	3	4	3	4	1	1	2
LV	20	8	6	7	3	4	2	3	2	1	2	1
EE	20	8	6	6	4	4	3	2	1	2	2	0
HU	19	4	6	4	6	4	4	3	3	2	3	2
SK	19	6	4	4	4	3	2	3	2	2	1	1
FI	16	5	6	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	1
GE	16	9	6	8	8	7	6	6	7	5	6	4
FR	15	5	4	6	2	2	n.d.	1	2	2	4	n.d.
AZ	15	3	2	1	6	2	2	0	3	1	1	0
NO	12	4	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
av.	**22**	**8**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**2**

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, TM.92, TM.76, TM.80, TM.72, TM.82, TM.89, TM.87, TM.78, TM.74, TM.84, TM.70, TM.91.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE; mental health and parents' education: FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *M4.2 Have you ever felt discriminated against in the context of your studies due to your …[reason]. Adapted and expanded from the European Social Survey (2018).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR, PL, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

On average, 22 % of students report having felt discriminated against in the context of their studies.

- In Spain, Portugal, and Austria, around a third of students indicate having experienced discriminatory behaviour.

- Students in Hungary, Slovakia, Finland, Georgia, France, Azerbaijan, and Norway indicate relatively less often that they have been mistreated due to one of 11 personal characteristics (see Figure B1.8) – between 12 and 19 % of students have felt discriminated against in the context of their studies.

On average, the most common grounds for discrimination, as perceived by the students themselves, are gender and age, with 8 and 6 %, respectively, attributing experienced mistreatment to this characteristic. These two characteristics also fall among the top three reasons for discrimination in most countries.

Exceptions are found in Malta and Georgia, where 'weight', 'income', 'ancestry/nationality', 'mental health', or 'religion' are more common reasons than age. Overall, 'sexuality', 'religion', 'disability', 'skin colour' and 'parents' education' are the least often named categories.

While the data indicate a higher incidence of reported discrimination based on age or gender compared to nationality, disability, or weight, this trend aligns with expectations. This is because age and gender are universal attributes that apply to everyone, whereas not everyone identifies with a specific nationality, has a disability, or considers their weight a distinguishing factor. Among the groups in question, rates of reported discrimination are much higher: For example, while 10 % of women have experienced gender-based discrimination, this is only true of 4 % of men (Menz & Mandl, 2024). Among students with a disability, almost every tenth student (9 %) reports to have been discriminated against because of it.

Discussion and policy considerations

The data presented in this chapter underscore that student populations across Europe vary significantly, as already highlighted in previous EUROSTUDENT reports (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2021), indicating a large variety of living situations and study needs. Average student age spans more than a decade from Azerbaijan to Iceland. While women are the majority in higher education across EUROSTUDENT countries, they remain underrepresented in STEM fields, with notable variations in gender distribution by field of study, institution type, and degree level. In many countries, a considerable portion of students are parents, which requires them to reconcile the needs of their family with study and possibly work requirements, especially in the case of young children. Approximately one in four students across EUROSTUDENT countries has an international background, either through being born abroad, having parents born abroad, or having obtained their entry qualification for higher education abroad. Around every seventh student reports being limited in their daily life or studies by a disability, and circa every tenth student reports a limiting mental health issue.

It must be noted that the present analysis is only able to investigate one characteristic at a time. It is important to acknowledge and further investigate the intersectionality at play in shaping students' distinct experiences in higher education (European Commission et al., 2023). This nuanced understanding is key in designing measures to support the entry, participation, and successful completion of higher education for

all students, as pledged by the ministers responsible for higher education in the EHEA in the Rome Communiqué (2020). The data in this chapter show that discrimination is not an uncommon occurrence for students in higher education, and even a numerical majority, such as female students, may be subject to discrimination. As Mishra (2020) notes, it is "important to bring discussion surrounding discrimination and segregation to the forefront" (p. 13) in order to ensure that students from all backgrounds are integrated into the higher education system.

To foster an inclusive higher education system, policymakers should strive to understand the different potentially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups' living and study situations in order to adequately develop targeted measures of support in national social dimension strategies. In addition to the dimensions analysed in this chapter, students' parental education and financial status are very relevant (> *Chapter B2*). At the national level, it may be important to also consider other characteristics which may make students potentially vulnerable to discrimination and place other barriers in their way to successful completion of higher education. This may be the case, for example, for specific national ethnic minority groups, students in other difficult personal situations, such as caregivers to elders (Knopf et al., 2022), or other minority groups at risk, e.g. non-binary or trans students (Dau, 2023; Stern, 2019).

At the level of HEIs, different support measures can be and are offered, e.g. guidance and counselling, professional development for HEI staff, or outreach activities (U-Multirank, 2022). The approach should be strategic and comprehensive, and its implementation should be monitored subject to evaluation, as not all measures reach the intended goals (Römhild & Hollederer, 2024). In this, the tools developed in the European SMILE project[1] could serve as a guiderail for institutions – it offers an audit model which allows institutions to set up activities to progress in the further development and/or implementation of inclusive strategies, continuing professional development courses for HEI staff on specific areas or one of the identified areas of inequality and disadvantage in higher education, as well as policy recommendations and action plans that provide further guidance on implementation. Measures taken by HEIs may need to begin before higher education, as supporting the transition from secondary to higher education have been pointed out to be particularly promising (Fernández-Batanero et al., 2022; Erdmann et al., 2023).

Researchers can support and accompany these processes at the societal and institutional level through detailed studies based on micro data as well as qualitative data to inform and refine educational policies and intervention with a particular focus on intersectional effects of students' (socio-)demographic characteristics on their higher education experiences from a comparative perspective. In addition to identifying and addressing the challenges faced by diverse student populations, a strength-based perspective can focus on investigating which strategies and measures have proven effective (Mishra & Müller, 2022). Further research on the positive outcomes of diversity for the individual students, academic excellence and societal benefits can also contribute to an appreciation of the promise an inclusive, diverse higher education system holds (Smith, 2020).

1 https://smile.eucen.eu

Tables

Table B1.1

Age profile of students and mean age by time in higher education, sex, type of HEI, and study programme

Share of students in different age groups (in %) and mean age (in years)

	Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years and over	Mean	SD	Median	Mean age						
								First-year students	Sex		Type of HEI		Study programme	
									Female	Male	University	Non-university	Bachelor	Master
AT	21	29	29	21	27.1	7.6	25.0	22.7	26.5	27.9	27.2	26.9	25.9	29.2
AZ	77	15	5	3	20.9	3.2	20.1	18.7	20.8	20.9	20.9	n/a	20.5	24.1
CH	17	37	32	14	25.8	5.7	24.3	23.5	25.8	25.8	25.0	26.8	24.8	28.3
CZ	36	37	16	11	24.9	6.4	22.9	23.0	25.2	24.5	24.6	28.1	24.3	27.2
DE	24	29	28	19	26.3	6.6	24.6	22.9	26.2	26.5	26.3	26.4	25.4	28.4
DK	14	39	34	13	26.2	5.8	24.8	23.5	26.3	26.0	25.6	26.8	25.6	27.2
EE	28	27	16	29	27.6	8.2	24.2	23.1	28.1	26.8	27.3	28.6	26.3	32.4
ES	50	22	11	17	25.6	9.0	22.8	23.5	25.0	26.5	23.5	29.8	24.6	31.3
FI	12	27	27	34	29.6	8.7	26.4	26.1	29.9	29.4	28.0	31.0	28.5	33.0
FR	61	24	10	6	22.5	5.4	21.1	20.1	22.7	22.3	23.0	21.4	21.4	25.7
GE	48	33	15	4	22.7	3.6	22.0	21.4	22.7	22.7	22.5	24.0	22.2	25.2
HR	37	37	15	11	24.6	6.0	22.9	21.2	24.6	24.6	24.0	27.6	23.8	27.5
HU	36	31	17	16	25.6	7.4	23.0	21.9	25.7	25.5	25.1	28.3	25.1	29.3
IE	49	18	10	23	26.5	9.9	22.0	22.0	26.4	26.7	25.5	27.9	23.2	32.4
IS	10	22	25	43	31.4	9.9	28.2	26.5	31.5	31.2	31.4	n/a	28.7	35.7
LT	42	31	11	15	25.1	7.2	22.4	21.9	25.2	24.9	24.4	26.5	24.3	29.2
LV	39	20	15	26	26.9	8.5	23.3	23.6	27.4	26.1	26.0	31.5	24.6	31.1
MT	38	21	14	27	27.8	10.1	23.3	24.9	26.8	29.4	24.8	33.8	24.2	32.5
NL	46	33	14	7	23.4	5.4	22.3	20.6	23.2	23.5	23.3	23.5	22.5	26.3
NO	19	28	22	30	28.9	9.2	25.3	23.3	29.3	28.3	28.5	29.7	26.1	32.6
PL	41	35	13	11	24.6	6.5	22.5	21.7	24.7	24.4	23.4	28.8	23.5	27.8
PT	53	24	11	13	24.4	7.8	21.8	21.1	23.7	25.1	23.9	25.0	23.2	28.3
RO	42	33	11	15	25.0	7.3	22.5	21.6	24.7	25.4	25.0	n/a	24.2	28.6
SE	19	30	24	27	28.4	9.2	25.1	24.3	29.0	27.6	28.4	n/a	26.5	29.7
SK	36	36	14	14	25.3	6.7	22.9	23.3	25.3	25.4	24.0	34.1	24.7	27.4
av.	**36**	**29**	**18**	**18**	**25.9**	**7.3**	**23.4**	**22.7**	**25.9**	**25.9**	**25.3**	**27.9**	**24.6**	**29.2**

n/a: not applicable

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.1*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.1 When were you born?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, DK, NO, IS.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 1

Table B1.2

Students' mean age by study intensity, educational background, transition duration, dependency on income source, extent of paid employment, entry qualification, and housing situation

Mean age (in years)

	Study intensity		Educational background		Transition route		Dependency on income source			Extent of paid employment		Entry qualification		Housing situation	
	Low intensity	High intensity	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Direct	Delayed	Dependent on family	Dependent on self-earned income	Dependent on public student support	No paid employment during semester	Employed during semester > 20 hrs./week	Alternative access route	Standard access route	Living with parents	Not living with parents
AT	30.1	25.1	28.1	26.3	25.8	31.5	23.8	29.5	26.7	25.3	31.5	30.8	25.8	23.5	28.0
AZ	21.8	21.0	20.6	21.0	20.2	26.0	20.3	23.5	20.0	20.2	22.9	t.f.c.	20.8	20.5	21.7
CH	28.1	24.5	26.4	25.2	24.9	32.3	24.1	28.2	26.1	24.5	29.6	28.8	25.3	23.8	27.5
CZ	27.6	23.0	25.8	24.0	23.6	36.2	22.6	27.8	22.7	22.6	30.0	34.2	24.8	22.9	25.9
DE	29.0	25.3	26.9	25.8	25.2	30.7	24.6	29.3	25.6	24.8	32.5	30.0	25.6	23.2	27.4
DK	25.9	26.6	27.1	25.9	25.2	29.2	28.3	26.1	25.2	27.0	28.4	30.1	25.8	23.3	26.4
EE	28.1	28.0	29.0	27.1	26.0	34.8	24.0	30.1	23.9	24.3	31.1	32.9	27.3	23.1	28.8
ES	32.6	23.1	24.8	23.5	23.9	34.9	23.0	33.6	21.9	23.1	n.d.	31.0	22.3	22.4	29.0
FI	31.3	29.2	32.2	28.4	27.7	33.5	29.7	32.1	25.7	27.6	34.4	34.9	29.3	24.9	29.8
FR	23.2	22.2	23.3	22.2	22.2	29.8	21.5	25.7	22.1	21.3	25.8	31.5	22.4	20.8	23.5
GE	22.9	22.3	22.2	22.8	22.5	25.9	22.4	24.0	23.3	22.2	23.7	24.4	22.6	22.3	23.2
HR	26.1	23.5	25.0	24.1	23.7	31.6	25.1	30.3	22.0	22.5	28.5	31.4	24.2	23.5	25.6
HU	27.9	23.7	27.1	24.6	24.3	34.9	23.0	28.9	23.2	22.9	30.3	36.3	25.2	23.2	26.8
IE	32.9	24.4	30.2	24.8	24.7	37.9	23.1	30.6	23.3	24.9	33.5	31.9	25.9	22.1	30.4
IS	34.3	29.6	35.2	28.8	28.7	36.7	29.8	31.2	29.4	30.5	36.0	36.5	29.5	24.3	33.9
LT	26.0	25.0	26.1	24.3	23.8	33.3	22.7	27.6	23.5	22.9	27.5	29.2	24.9	22.7	26.1
LV	29.2	25.3	29.6	25.6	24.6	35.0	23.2	28.5	t.f.c.	23.4	30.1	32.9	26.4	22.5	28.8
MT	33.6	23.5	27.5	25.4	25.3	38.3	23.2	32.3	t.f.c.	24.0	35.1	31.5	26.9	22.7	35.2
NL	25.4	23.0	24.6	22.8	22.6	27.4	22.1	26.9	23.1	23.0	27.2	27.7	22.9	21.3	25.0
NO	32.2	26.7	31.7	28.0	27.3	33.9	29.9	32.6	24.6	25.8	36.4	33.5	28.2	23.5	29.4
PL	24.7	23.5	25.8	23.3	23.2	34.7	22.4	26.7	23.3	22.3	27.1	30.5	24.1	22.8	25.7
PT	28.7	23.0	24.9	23.2	23.0	34.2	22.2	30.8	21.7	21.8	33.2	33.2	23.7	22.3	26.3
RO	26.9	24.1	26.5	24.5	23.9	35.7	23.6	28.0	24.3	22.5	30.0	30.9	24.9	23.4	26.5
SE	31.1	27.5	30.0	27.3	26.5	32.3	28.4	35.6	25.7	27.0	37.6	34.8	27.8	23.5	29.4
SK	28.0	23.6	26.4	23.9	23.4	36.4	23.7	27.5	24.3	22.8	31.0	31.3	24.8	23.4	27.1
av.	**28.3**	**24.7**	**27.1**	**24.9**	**24.5**	**33.1**	**24.3**	**29.1**	**24**	**24**	**30.6**	**31.7**	**25.3**	**22.9**	**27.5**

t.f.c: too few cases. n.d.: no data

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.1.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.1 When were you born?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, DK, NO, IS.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B1.3

Share of female students by field of study

Share of students (in %)

	Field of study										
	Female students	Education	Arts and Humanities	Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	Business, Administration and Law	Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	ICTs	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services
AT	56	72	66	65	55	52	22	33	63	68	53
AZ	51	72	65	55	45	67	49	30	26	54	25
CH	53	72	62	67	46	45	13	23	70	71	67
CZ	57	78	65	63	58	55	18	27	74	73	47
DE	50	76	64	62	53	48	23	26	61	73	43
DK	58	72	64	63	54	55	26	31	60	77	56
EE	61	89	68	64	64	58	31	37	72	86	53
ES	57	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	58	84	71	70	59	59	27	28	66	83	65
FR	56	77	69	68	59	48	32	27	50	73	41
GE	53	66	71	71	57	48	42	24	37	47	46
HR	59	72	64	70	68	48	26	36	61	74	52
HU	55	79	64	63	58	41	16	30	50	67	56
IE	53	81	61	64	53	53	22	25	66	73	48
IS	66	80	64	74	59	57	27	41	79	82	t.f.c.
LT	58	80	65	69	64	39	18	23	t.f.c.	75	t.f.c.
LV	58	85	69	67	67	62	22	25	55	75	48
MT	59	73	62	74	58	54	23	46	n/a	66	t.f.c.
NL	54	66	57	71	48	46	19	25	58	74	52
NO	61	72	65	68	54	49	27	31	62	80	46
PL	59	85	68	65	64	62	16	35	60	73	60
PT	54	79	54	62	57	53	16	29	59	77	43
RO	56	95	63	73	65	58	31	34	52	67	53
SE	61	79	64	63	62	55	39	34	66	76	42
SK	59	78	64	68	62	65	21	24	68	72	42
av.	**57**	**78**	**65**	**67**	**58**	**53**	**25**	**30**	**60**	**72**	**49**

t.f.c: too few cases. n.d.: no data

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.3.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.2 What is your #sex?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DK, NO, RO, GE, HU, LV, PL.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 1

Table B1.4

Share of female students by type of HEI, educational background, transition duration, migration background, entry qualification, and housing situation

Share of students (in %)

		Type of HEI		Study programme		Educational background		Transition route		Migration background		Access route		Housing situation	
	Female students	University	Non-university	Bachelor	Master	Non-tertiary educational background	Tertiary educational background	Direct transition	Delayed transition	Second-generation migrant, domestically educated	Without migration background, domestically educated	Alternative access	Standard access route	Living with parents	Not living with parents
AT	56	55	59	56	54	57	55	58	48	56	56	45	57	57	55
AZ	51	51	n/a	51	50	49	52	51	52	51	52	t.f.c.	51	54	45
CH	53	52	54	53	53	55	52	53	57	54	53	53	53	52	54
CZ	57	57	56	56	55	60	54	56	69	58	58	55	57	54	59
DE	50	52	47	50	47	50	51	51	45	55	51	42	52	45	52
DK	58	55	61	60	55	59	59	58	58	59	60	52	58	53	60
EE	61	60	65	59	65	64	60	61	62	58	64	67	61	55	63
ES	57	55	60	56	55	59	54	58	52	n.d.	n.d.	56	57	54	60
FI	58	58	58	57	61	63	56	58	58	57	59	67	58	49	58
FR	56	61	44	59	59	59	55	56	60	57	56	54	56	55	57
GE	53	53	55	55	60	58	53	54	47	52	55	42	54	56	51
HR	59	60	51	56	61	64	53	58	61	60	58	53	59	56	61
HU	55	54	58	55	49	58	52	54	57	56	56	51	55	53	55
IE	53	59	46	53	55	53	53	54	49	54	53	48	54	51	54
IS	66	66	n/a	64	67	68	65	66	65	63	66	65	66	62	68
LT	58	58	59	58	57	64	55	58	58	66	60	25	59	50	62
LV	58	57	63	54	63	64	56	57	61	56	61	59	58	55	60
MT	59	62	52	62	58	60	61	61	50	67	58	68	58	61	55
NL	54	53	55	55	54	58	53	54	55	55	54	52	55	51	57
NO	61	60	63	60	58	66	60	62	56	59	61	59	61	55	61
PL	59	58	64	53	66	65	53	59	62	62	60	56	59	56	61
PT	54	53	56	55	55	58	49	56	43	54	55	48	55	54	54
RO	56	56	n/a	53	59	58	48	56	51	40	50	43	57	51	55
SE	61	61	n/a	62	52	68	57	60	64	59	61	62	61	54	62
SK	59	59	64	60	57	62	53	59	60	62	58	59	59	55	60
av.	**57**	**57**	**57**	**56**	**57**	**60**	**55**	**57**	**56**	**57**	**57**	**53**	**57**	**54**	**58**

t.f.c: too few cases. n/a: not applicable. n.d.: no data

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.3.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.2 What is your #sex?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DK, NO, RO, GE, HU, LV, PL.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B1.5

Students with children, number of children, and age of youngest child

Share of students (in %), mean, median, and SD

		Number of children			Age of youngest child – share of students with children (in %)				
	Share of students with children (in %)	Mean	Median	SD	0–3 years	4–6 years	7–9 years	10–15 years	> 15 years
AT	9	1.8	2.0	0.9	41	17	11	15	17
AZ	3	1.6	1.0	0.7	54	27	11	6	2
CH	5	1.8	2.0	0.9	41	16	14	14	15
CZ	9	1.9	2.0	0.8	29	15	12	26	19
DE	6	1.7	2.0	0.9	40	15	10	14	21
DK	10	1.8	2.0	0.9	47	16	12	12	12
EE	19	2.0	2.0	1.0	26	22	16	20	17
ES	8	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	21	2.1	2.0	1.1	32	19	14	17	18
FR	4	2.0	2.0	1.0	32	17	13	18	21
GE	7	1.5	1.0	0.9	58	22	9	10	1
HR	10	1.8	2.0	0.9	36	13	9	24	18
HU	9	1.9	2.0	0.9	29	14	10	24	24
IE	15	2.2	2.0	1.0	21	15	14	24	26
IS	37	2.0	2.0	1.0	37	18	11	21	13
LT	12	1.8	2.0	0.9	24	18	14	24	20
LV	22	2.0	2.0	1.2	30	16	15	20	18
MT	18	1.8	2.0	0.7	24	14	8	24	30
NL	4	2.2	2.0	1.0	32	15	13	15	25
NO	23	2.1	2.0	1.0	29	17	12	20	22
PL	9	1.7	2.0	0.7	26	16	13	23	23
PT	8	1.8	2.0	1.1	21	14	10	25	31
RO	12	1.5	1.0	0.7	24	16	13	21	27
SE	17	2.0	2.0	0.9	24	20	12	20	25
SK	12	1.8	2.0	0.7	28	16	14	23	19
av.	**12**	**1.9**	**2**	**1**	**33**	**17**	**12**	**19**	**19**

n.d.: no data

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.14., A. 15., A.17.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.9 Do you have children? 6.10 How old is your youngest child?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 1

Table B1.6

Students with children by age, sex, type of HEI, study programme, study intensity, entry qualification, and study progress

Share of students (in %)

		Age groups				Sex		Type of HEI		Study programme		Study intensity		Access route		Study progress	
	Students with children	Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years and over	Female	Male	University	Non-university	Bachelor	Master	Low intensity (<20 hrs./week)	High intensity (>40 hrs./week)	Alternative access route	Standard access route	First-year students	Students in second year or higher
AT	9	0.4	1	4	34	9	8	8	11	8	10	16	4	17	6	5	9
AZ	3	0.4	2	16	64	4	3	3	n/a	3	10	4	4	t.f.c.	3	1	4
CH	5	0.0	0.2	2	32	6	4	3	7	4	8	11	2	11	4	3	5
CZ	9	0.1	1	6	66	11	6	8	21	9	10	18	2	41	8	8	9
DE	6	0.1	0.1	2	29	7	5	5	8	5	8	11	3	15	4	5	4
DK	10	0.0	1	7	56	11	8	6	16	10	9	8	11	29	8	6	10
EE	19	0.4	1	10	60	23	13	17	28	17	31	20	21	50	18	10	22
ES	8	0.2	0.0	2	45	8	9	3	18	7	15	22	3	18	2	7	8
FI	21	0.2	2	7	54	23	18	12	29	19	28	27	18	43	20	16	22
FR	4	0.1	1	4	51	5	3	5	1	3	7	6	3	30	3	3	4
GE	7	3	6	14	29	8	6	6	11	6	14	9	3	11	7	4	7
HR	10	3	4	7	60	11	9	8	20	9	16	13	7	34	8	7	10
HU	9	0.1	1	4	54	11	8	8	18	9	16	16	4	39	8	4	10
IE	15	0.1	1	6	59	15	15	11	20	7	24	33	7	34	13	7	17
IS	37	1	4	23	68	40	29	37	n/a	28	52	46	29	60	28	23	38
LT	12	1	1	10	69	15	8	8	21	11	22	17	12	27	12	6	13
LV	22	0.3	4	14	73	27	14	17	46	13	31	32	14	47	19	17	23
MT	18	0.1	1	3	64	17	20	8	38	9	30	38	4	28	16	13	19
NL	4	0.0	1	1	50	4	3	1	6	3	5	10	1	13	3	4	4
NO	24	0.3	2	8	69	28	17	21	29	15	33	38	14	42	21	9	26
PL	9	0.5	2	9	64	11	6	4	27	7	15	8	6	30	7	6	10
PT	8	0.4	1	3	55	7	10	6	10	7	13	19	5	34	6	5	9
RO	12	0.4	1	9	63	13	12	12	n/a	12	20	17	7	32	11	6	14
SE	17	0.1	0.2	6	58	22	10	17	n/a	10	14	25	14	38	15	9	19
SK	12	0.0	1	10	69	14	9	6	54	13	14	22	4	41	10	12	12
av.	**12**	**1**	**2**	**8**	**56**	**14**	**10**	**10**	**21**	**10**	**18**	**19**	**8**	**32**	**10**	**8**	**13**

t.f.c: too few cases. n/a: not applicable. Decimal points shown for values <.5

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.14.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.9 Do you have children?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B1.7

Students with foreign citizenship by migration background

Share of students (in %)

	All students	Second-generation, domestically educated	First-generation, domestically educated	Students without migrant background, national ed. background	International students (foreign HE qualification)	Other (born abroad, but native background, national ed. background)
AT	26	9	53	0.0	95	1
AZ	2	1	t.f.c.	0.1	t.f.c.	1
CH	20	9	46	1	86	1
CZ	14	1	49	0.2	95	t.f.c.
DE	15	5	28	1	85	t.f.c.
DK	16	4	55	0.3	86	0.3
EE	10	9	40	1	88	t.f.c.
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	7	2	47	0.3	87	5
FR	12	1	67	0.0	93	11
GE	12	6	71	1	80	4
HR	1	0.1	5	0.2	18	0.0
HU	9	1	20	0.1	79	t.f.c.
IE	19	1	41	0.2	82	1
IS	8	0	26	0.1	70	0.0
LT	5	3	t.f.c.	0.2	82	t.f.c.
LV	11	7	t.f.c.	3	85	t.f.c.
MT	14	3	t.f.c.	0.0	89	t.f.c.
NL	14	1	37	0.3	86	0.0
NO	6	3	27	0.1	68	n.d.
PL	5	1	78	0.1	88	0.0
PT	6	0.1	36	0.2	69	1
RO	2	0	40	1	33	0.0
SE	9	2	14	0.0	69	0
SK	6	0	44	0.1	87	t.f.c.
av.	**10**	**3**	**41**	**0.4**	**78**	**2**

t.f.c: too few cases. n.d.: no data. Decimal points shown for values <.5

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.21.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.5 Do you and your parents (or those who raised you) have the #country citizenship?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B1.8

Share of students indicating any type of impairment, disability or other long-standing health problem / functional limitation, and type of disability

Share of all students (in %)

	Disabilities limiting in their studies	Physical chronical disease	Mental health problem	Mobility impairment	Sensory impairment (vision or hearing)	Learning disability (ADHD, Dyslexia)	Another long-standing health problem / functional limitation/ impairment/ etc.
AT	21	15	12	2	3	2	4
AZ	16	3	13	1	12	3	5
CH	16	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
CZ	25	11	15	4	9	7	14
DE	18	8	13	2	4	2	3
DK	24	8	16	3	5	9	7
EE	20	10	16	1	3	2	10
ES	18	5	14	1	4	4	6
FI	31	13	23	2	2	8	13
FR	22	8	8	1	4	7	10
GE	17	9	7	2	6	2	5
HR	14	5	7	1	6	2	7
HU	10	4	7	1	3	4	11
IE	21	6	16	1	5	7	7
IS	30	8	19	2	5	15	8
LT	16	12	11	1	8	2	10
LV	15	10	8	1	6	4	6
MT	15	6	11	1	2	5	6
NL	25	9	14	2	2	10	6
NO	21	10	11	5	5	6	4
PL	21	12	15	1	9	6	8
PT	12	8	9	1	12	3	5
RO	5	3	3	1	6	1	4
SE	30	7	29	2	2	10	10
SK	14	7	9	1	5	4	11
av.	**19**	**8**	**13**	**2**	**5**	**5**	**8**

n.d.: no data.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, A.6, A.7.* ***No data:*** *AT, DE, FR. No EU-SILC data: AZ, GE, IS.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.13 Please indicate if you have a disability, impairment, long-standing health problem, functional limitation or learning disability. 6.14 [only students who have indicated an impairment in 6.13] For at least the past 6 months, to what extent have you been limited [in your studies] because of your health problem(s)? Adapted from Global Activity Limitation Indicator (Eurostat).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, RO, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B2
Socio-economic background of students

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Key

B 2

Parental education of students

Students with tertiary educated parents are in the majority across countries. 52 % of students have at least one parent with a Bachelor's, Master's, or doctoral degree; and 7 % have parents whose highest degree is at ISCED level 5 (short-cycle). Students whose parents did not complete tertiary education are in the minority (41 %).

Students without tertiary educational background

Across countries, non-tertiary educational background is more common among women, older students, students having entered with a delay or alternative access pathways, and domestically educated students. Students without tertiary educational background more often rely on their own income from jobs or public support, rather than family support, and more often pursue their studies with lower intensity and part-time. With regard to study choices, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are predominantly found in non-university settings and short-cycle programmes, if these are offered.

Underrepresentation of students from non-tertiary educational background

Based on fathers' education, on average, the enrolment of students from non-tertiary backgrounds is 16 % lower than expected based on the educational levels within the general population. Austria, Iceland, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden present exceptions to this pattern, with student representation of at least 90 % of the expected level based on their fathers' educational attainment.

Hauschildt, K. (2024). Socio-economic background of students. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024.* wbv Publikation. DOI:10.3278/6001920ew002

findings

B 2

Parental financial status of students

In the majority of countries, students typically categorise their family's financial status as 'average', with nearly half expressing this view. About one third of students perceive their families as very or somewhat well-off, while approximately one in five considers their family to be not well-off. Parental education is clearly associated with parental financial status.

Availability of study resources by educational background

Overall, a majority of students has access to the resources they need for their studies (electronic devices, desk, internet, quiet place to study). Distinct differences emerge across all four resources when comparing students from low and high educational backgrounds. Computer access, a desk, and a quiet place to study are less commonly available to students from lower educational backgrounds. Internet availability shows a mixed pattern of results.

Main issues

A key determinant of students' educational experiences is their socio-economic background, defined primarily by parental education levels and occupational/financial status. Research has consistently demonstrated that these factors show significant associations with educational inequality across Europe (Palmisano et al., 2022), predicting outcomes from the school level (European Commission et al., 2020) to higher education (European Commission et al., 2022). After leaving higher education, graduates without an academic background are at a higher risk to have a job below the level of their education (Mühleck et al., forthcoming). Given the pervasive patterns, this chapter delves into the relationship between students' parental socio-economic conditions and their educational experiences in higher education, analysing how these factors contribute to ongoing disparities.

Equity policies in higher education

Students lacking a tertiary educational background – those from families without parental tertiary educational attainment of higher education – form a critical demographic in the diversity and inclusion efforts within higher education policy. The term varies – 'first-generation students', 'students from non-academic backgrounds', 'students without higher educational backgrounds' – yet consistently points to challenges of underrepresentation and disadvantage (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020).

The European Commission's Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 recognises that "Education is failing to reduce inequalities linked to socio-economic status [...]" and highlights "[...] that the highest performing education systems are those that put a premium on equity" (European Commission, 2020, p. 6). The goal of the European Education Area is to decouple educational attainment and achievement from social, economic, and cultural status, thereby ensuring that educational systems enhance the capabilities of every individual and facilitate upward social mobility. In the realm of higher education, the Bologna Process initially outlined the social dimension as the representation of the broader population's diversity within the student body, i.e. participative equity (Mühleck & Griga, 2010) from entry through to completion, as described in the London Communiqué (2007). Building on this foundation, which has been reinforced through subsequent ministerial communiqués, more recently, the 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA' (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020) have broadened the definition. They emphasise a higher education environment that is not only inclusive, but also actively promotes equity and diversity while meeting the needs of local communities by supporting the interest and well-being of disadvantaged, vulnerable and underrepresented students (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022). These European efforts align with global objectives, notably the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2019). At the country level, nearly all European nations have at least one strategy or major policy focused on equity in higher education, though only a few exclusively target the social dimension (European Commission et al., 2022).

Socio-economic disparities

Research has consistently shown that the socio-economic status of students, particularly parental education levels and financial background of their families, plays a crucial role in determining educational outcomes from early education to after graduation from higher education. Students from more affluent and educated families are more likely to enter and complete higher education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020; OECD, 2018).

Within higher education, it has repeatedly been demonstrated that there are disparities in educational choices depending on students' socio-economic background (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2021; U-Multirank, 2022), especially in the context of widened access to higher education. Students tend to cluster in specific types of educational institutions, disciplines, and degree types, creating a horizontally stratified system (Marginson, 2016; Shavit et al., 2007; see also > *Chapter B4*). The resulting differences in outcomes can exacerbate inequalities tied to students' socio-economic backgrounds within the system (Marginson, 2016; Triventi, 2014).

Explanatory approaches to these differences between students depending on the education of their parents typically view students' experiences through either an analytical lens which highlights rational decision-making, or through a focus on group-specific resources and integration within the educational system (Hadjar et al., 2022). Boudon's (1974) framework underscores how students and their families make educational choices based on rational assessments of costs and benefits, considering their socio-economic constraints. This rational choice model explains why students from less privileged backgrounds might opt for shorter, less demanding educational paths, despite equal academic performance (Becker & Hecken, 2008; Boudon, 1974; Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997; Callender & Dougherty, 2018; Thompson, 2017). In contrast, Bourdieu's analysis focuses on how cultural, social, and economic capital influences integration into the educational system, positing that it is the 'habitus' of actors in higher education (teachers, students) and the culture and practices within higher education systems which, due to their unfamiliarity and foreignness, prevent students from non-academic backgrounds from successfully integrating (Bourdieu, 1984).

Besides study-related differences, previous EUROSTUDENT reports have already highlighted clear differences to be found in students' living conditions and life situations (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2021). The relevance of students' socio-economic background for the financing of studies in many countries has also been consistently pointed out as a concern by the European Students' Union (ESU, 2020).

In light of these findings, this chapter aims to investigate how students from different educational backgrounds are represented in European higher education and how their study and living situations as well as study experiences can be described.

Data and interpretation

Educational background of students

The majority of students in the EHEA have parents with a tertiary degree.

The majority of students in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have parents with a tertiary degree (Figure B2.1, Table B2.1). 52 % of students have at least one parent with a Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree; and 7 % have parents whose highest

degree is at ISCED level 5 (short-cycle). Students whose parents did not complete tertiary education are in the minority (41 %).

- In Latvia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, and Denmark, at most 35 % of students' parents did not attend (short-cycle) tertiary education.
- In Portugal, Croatia, Slovakia, and Romania, the pattern is reversed – here, students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds are in the majority, representing at least 50 % of students.

Box B2.1

Methodological note: Parental educational background in EUROSTUDENT

ISCED 2011	Notes	Labour Force Survey	EUROSTUDENT focus groups	
ISCED 01: Early childhood educational development		Non-tertiary education ISCED (0-4)	Without tertiary educational background	Low educational background
ISCED 02: Pre-Primary education				
ISCED level 1: Primary education				
ISCED level 2: Lower secondary education				
ISCED level 3: Upper secondary education				Medium educational background
ISCED level 4: Post-secondary non-tertiary education				
ISCED level 5: Short-cycle tertiary education	Not implemented in all countries. Not considered to be higher education in all countries. May include vocationally oriented programmes typically not considered to be higher education within a country.	Tertiary education (ISCED 5-8)	With tertiary educational background	Not assigned due to different understanding across countries
ISCED level 6: Bachelor's or equivalent level	May include vocationally oriented programmes typically not considered to be higher education within a country.			High educational background
ISCED level 7: Master's or equivalent level				
ISCED level 8: Doctoral or equivalent level				

EUROSTUDENT uses the highest educational degree attained by either of students' parents, as reported by the students, to classify students according to their educational background based on the International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012). Detailed information on the exact national qualifications behind each ISCED level can be found in the ISCED mappings: http://uis.unesco.org/en/isced-mappings.

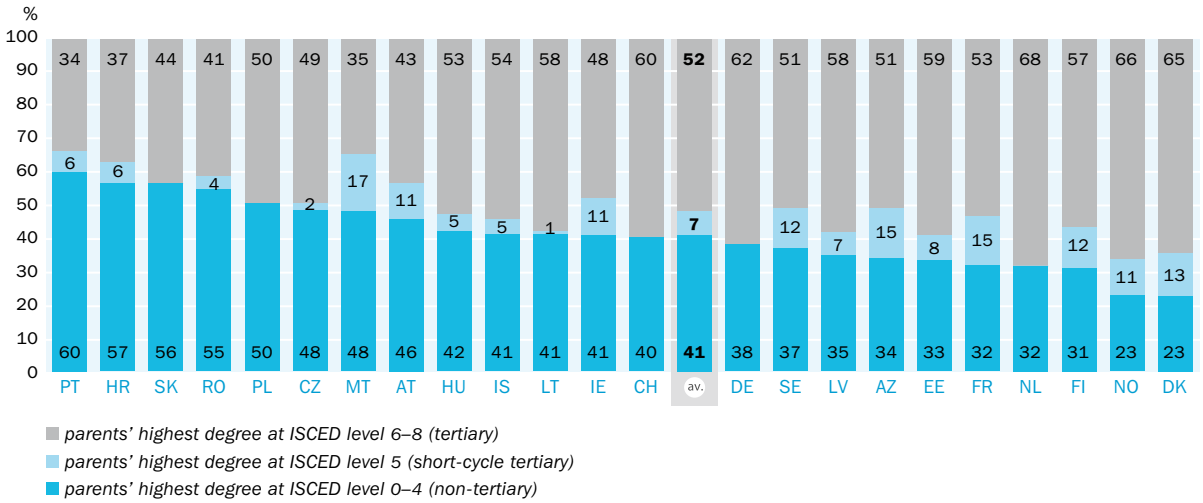
Students with non-tertiary educational background tend to be older, have entered HE later and more often work.

Tables B2.2 and B2.3 provide further information on students' educational background. Women are more likely than men to come from non-tertiary educated families in all countries except Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Ireland, and Malta (Table B2.2). Older students more often than younger ones lack a tertiary educational background, often due to their higher use of delayed or alternative entry pathways into higher education – this is more prevalent among students from non-tertiary backgrounds in almost all EUROSTUDENT countries. Domestic students more often come from non-tertiary educated families than international students in all EUROSTUDENT countries except Denmark, France, and Norway. Migration background does not present a consistent pattern in relation to educational attainment, with variations observed across different countries. In all but one country, students without tertiary educational background rely on their own income or public support, rather than family support (Table B2.3). Accordingly, students from non-tertiary backgrounds tend to study with lower intensity

Figure B2.1

Education attainment of students' parents

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.* ***No data:*** *ES, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]*

Note(s): *Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.*

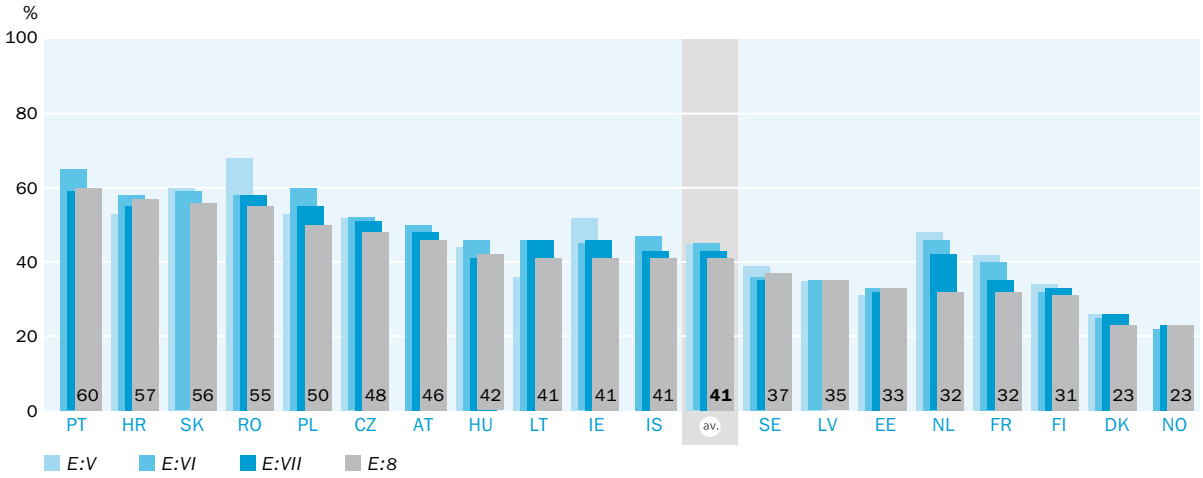
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Figure B2.2

Students without tertiary educational background in EUROSTUDENT V, VI, VII and 8

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.* ***No (comparable) data:*** *AZ, CH, ES, GE, MT. AT, DE, IS, NO (E:V). DE, LV, SK (E:VII).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]*

Note(s): *Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, FR, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

and as part-time students more often, and in all but two countries, they can be found more often among students working a lot alongside their studies than those without a job (Table B2.3). Regarding their choice of educational institution, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are predominantly found in non-university settings, where available. Among various study programmes, those without tertiary backgrounds are most commonly enrolled in short-cycle programmes (ISCED level 5) if these are offered.

B 2

The proportion of students without a tertiary education background has generally decreased.

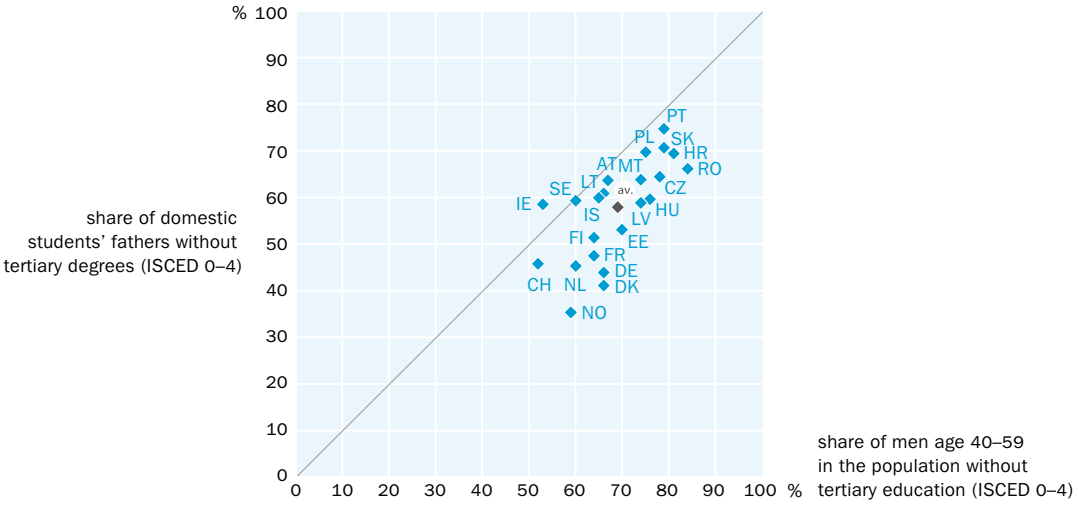
In most countries, the proportion of students without a tertiary education background has generally decreased over time (Figure B2.2). In the current round EUROSTUDENT 8, three quarters (74 %) of the 19 countries with at least 3 time points of data available report lower shares than in the earliest round (EUROSTUDENT V or VI), with an average decrease between EUROSTUDENT V and EUROSTUDENT 8 of 4 percentage points. However, this downward trend has not been uniform across all countries, with some experiencing intermittent increases.

- Exceptions to this overall decreasing trend are Croatia, Lithuania, and Estonia, where the shares of students without tertiary education background are 2 to 5 percentage points higher than a decade ago.
- In Latvia and Norway, changes in the proportion of students without tertiary education backgrounds have been nonexistent or minimal, showing fluctuations of at most 1 percentage point across different survey rounds.

Figure B2.3 ⬇

Representation of domestic students with fathers not holding a tertiary degree

Share of students (in %)



***Data source**: EUROSTUDENT 8, D.1. Percentage of men age 40–59 in population: EU-LFS (reference period: 2022 except CH (2020), DE (2021)) [lfsa_pgaed].*
No data: *ES. No EU-LFS data: AZ, GE.*

***Data collection**: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

***EUROSTUDENT question(s):** 6.5 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]*

***Note(s):** Per student, the highest educational attainment of the father is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded. The graph compares the share of students' fathers who have not attained tertiary education (ISCED 5–8) with the corresponding share of 40–59-year-old men in the population. Shares of equal size result in a position on the diagonal, indicating that there are exactly as many students from non-higher education backgrounds as would be expected based on the distribution of educational attainment in the population. Values indicating overrepresentation of this group lie above the diagonal, values below the diagonal indicate underrepresentation. Comparisons to LFS data can be influenced by several factors, e.g. the age distribution of students' parents, reproductive patterns.*

***Deviation from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions:** AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.*

***Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group:** IE, NL.*

Compared to the general population, students whose fathers do not have a tertiary education degree are underrepresented in most EUROSTUDENT countries (Figure B2.3). On average, the enrolment of students from non-tertiary backgrounds is 16 % lower than expected based on the educational levels within the general population.

Students with non-tertiary educated fathers are underrepresented in most countries.

- In Ireland and Sweden, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are either exactly or even overrepresented.
- Austria, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, and Slovakia also demonstrate a comparatively high degree of alignment, with student representation of at least 90 % of the expected level based on their fathers' educational attainment.
- The lowest levels of representation are observed in Denmark, France, Germany, and Norway – here, the enrolment of students whose fathers do not have a tertiary education is less than 75 % of the expected figure.

Box B2.2

Methodological note: Calculating representation

As an indicator for the representation of students from different education backgrounds, the actual shares of students from a particular group are set against the share of students from this group in the general population. The comparison used in this chapter – as in previous rounds of EUROSTUDENT (DZHW, 2018; Hauschildt et al., 2015, 2021) – is based on characteristics of students' fathers, as the population statistics needed in the calculations regarding students' parents as a unit are not available. The share of students with fathers with a certain education background, e.g. without higher education, is set against the share of 40–59-year-old men with the same educational attainment in the population. This comparison group is chosen to represent the parent generation of students. In order to avoid different shares of international students in the national student populations biasing the index, only domestic students (i.e. students educated in the country of survey) are drawn on for the analyses.

If the shares are equal, e.g. if the share of 40–59-year-olds that attended higher education equals that of the fathers of the students who attained a tertiary degree, perfect participative equity with regard to the group in question is achieved. Values above the diagonal indicate that students with the educational background in question are more common than expected based on the population (overrepresentation); values below the diagonal indicate underrepresentation.

Parental financial status

In the majority of countries, students typically categorise their family's financial status as 'average', with nearly half (47 %) expressing this view. About one-third (34 %) of students perceives their families as very or somewhat well-off, while approximately one in five (19 %) considers their family to be not (at all) well-off, as detailed in Figure B2.4.

A third of students indicate their families are not well-off.

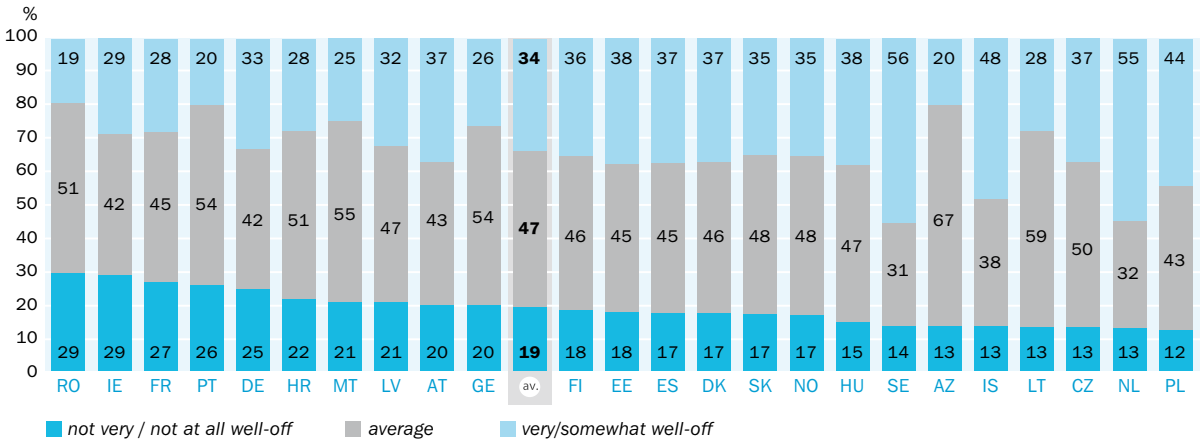
- The largest shares of students indicating that their family is not very or not at all well-off can be found in Romania, Ireland, France, Portugal, and Germany, where this is the case for at least a quarter of students.

- In Sweden, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Poland, in contrast, the largest shares of very or somewhat well-off families can be found, with at least 44 % of students placing their families in this category.

Figure B2.4

Students' assessment of parents' financial status

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.4.* ***No data:*** *CH.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.8 How well-off financially do you think your parents (or #guardians) are compared with other families? Source: PIRLS 2006.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *GE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Box B2.3

Methodological note: Financial status of students' parents

An item adapted from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which was carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), was used to assess the financial status of students' parents. Students were asked to rate the financial well-being of their parents in comparison to other families using the five categories: (1) not at all well-off, (2) not very well-off, (3) average, (4) somewhat well-off, and (5) very well-off (Caro & Cortes, 2012).

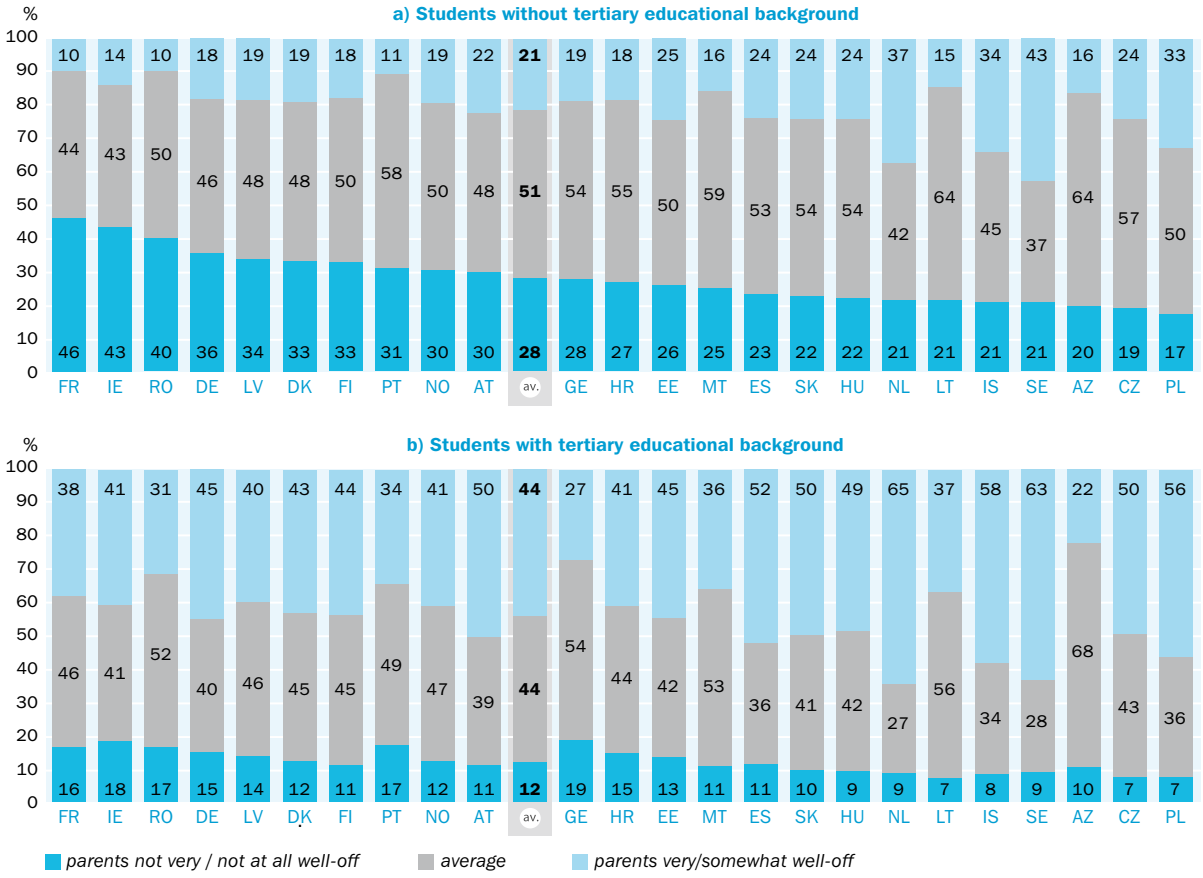
Parental education and financial status are strongly related.

The financial status of students' parents, as perceived by students, correlates strongly with their parents' education level (Figure B2.5). Students whose parents have completed tertiary education are more than twice as likely to report being from well-off families (44 %) compared to those from non-tertiary educated families (21 %). Additionally, only 12 % of students from tertiary educated backgrounds consider their families not well-off, compared to 28 % of those from non-tertiary backgrounds.

Figure B2.5

Students' assessment of parents' financial status by educational background

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.4.* ***No data:*** *CH.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.8 How well-off financially do you think your parents (or #guardians) are compared with other families? Source: PIRLS 2006. Copyright © 2005 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Publisher: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *GE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Availability of study resources

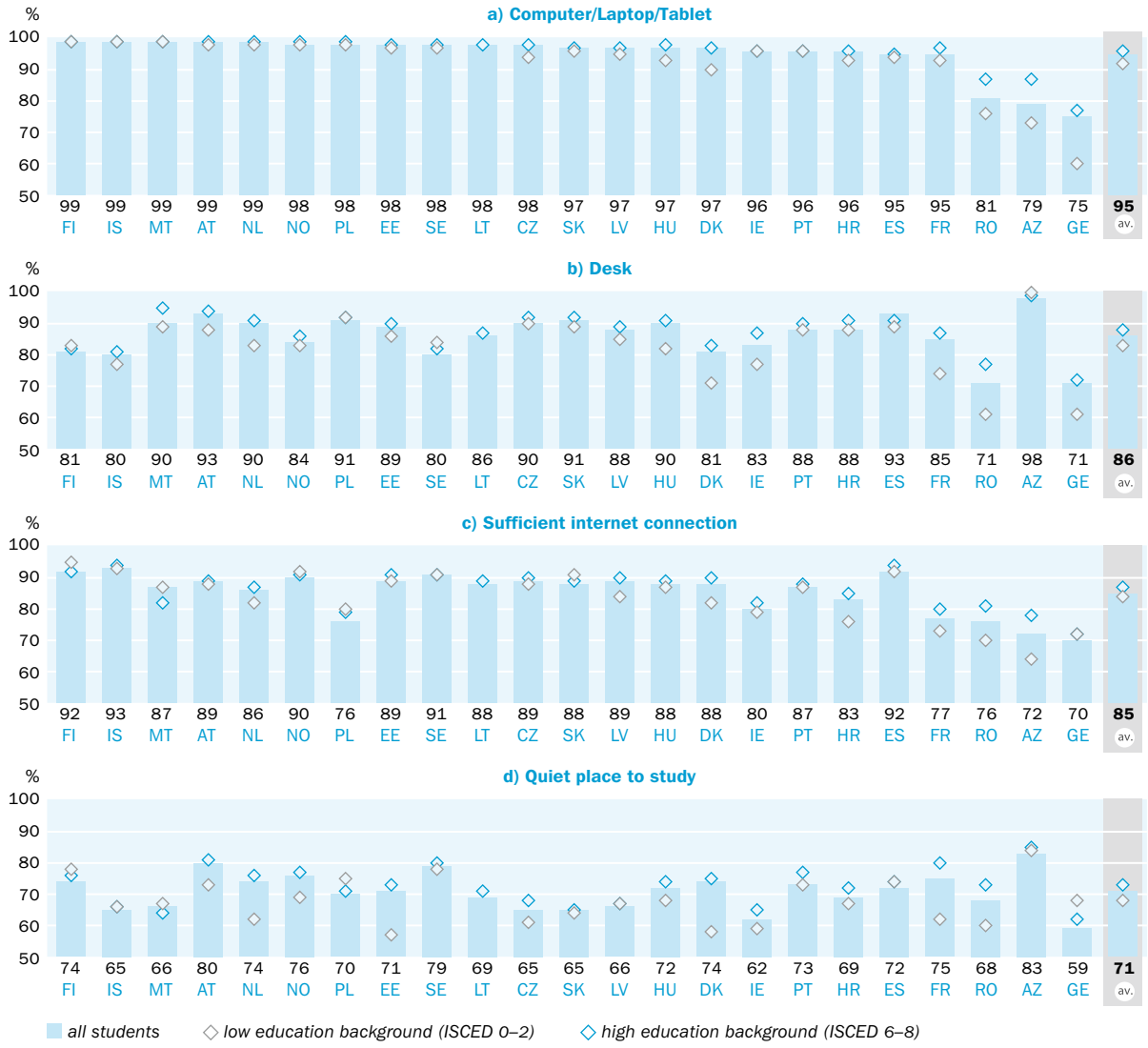
Do students from lower educational backgrounds possess adequate resources for studying? Figure B2.6 provides an overview to what extent students report (almost) always having access to a computer, a desk, a quiet place to study, and a stable internet connection when needed for their studies.

Overall, the vast majority of students (95 %) has access to the electronic devices they need for their studies (computer, laptop, etc.). 86 % of students can use a desk when needed, and 85 % have a sufficient internet connection. A quiet place to study is least available to students across EUROSTUDENT countries, with an average of only 71 % indicating that they have this.

Figure B2.6

Availability of study materials by educational background

Share of students indicating material is always or almost always available when needed (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, TM 53–56.* ***No data:*** *DE, CH.* ***Too few cases:*** *LT (low educational background).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *M3.2 In your home, when you need it for your studies, do you have access to…? [indicated separately]. Adapted from Doolan et al. (2021).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

The availability of study resources such as computers, internet, desk, and a quiet place to study can depend on educational background.

Distinct differences emerge across all four resources when comparing students from low (ISCED 0–2) and high (ISCED 6–8) educational backgrounds. While an average 92 % of students from low educational backgrounds have computer access, this figure is 4 percentage points lower than that for students from higher educational backgrounds, although differences are not found in all countries.

- In Romania, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the availability is comparatively low, with only 75 % to 81 % of all students having access to a computer when they need it.

Relatively large differences between students from low and high educational backgrounds are also apparent.

With regard to a desk, students from low educational backgrounds indicate less often that they can use one compared to their counterparts with highly educated parents (83 % vs. 88 %).

- A difference of at least 3 percentage points is found in all countries except Finland, Poland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Portugal, Spain, and Azerbaijan, where in some cases the availability of a desk is even rated slightly higher by students from low educational backgrounds.
- In Hungary, Denmark, Ireland, France, Romania, and Georgia, the disparity in desk availability reaches or exceeds 10 percentage points

85 % of all students report (almost) always having a sufficient internet connection for their studies. Differences based on educational background can also be identified – on average, students from low educational backgrounds report this to be slightly less often the case (84 %) than students from high educational backgrounds (87 %), but the reverse pattern is also found.

- In the Netherlands, Latvia, Denmark, Croatia, France, Romania, and Azerbaijan, the shares of students from low educational backgrounds reporting sufficient internet access are at least 5 percentage points lower.
- In Finland, Malta, and marginally also in Norway and Poland, the pattern is reversed, with students from low educational backgrounds reporting better internet availability than students from high educational backgrounds.

Finally, a quiet place to study is more easily found by students from high educational backgrounds (73 % vs. 68 %).

- Particularly in the Netherlands, Estonia, Denmark, France, and Romania, large differences between the groups exist, with students from high educational backgrounds much more often indicating that such a place is available to them.
- In Finland, Malta, Poland, and Georgia, a peaceful study environment seems to be more easily found by students from low educational backgrounds.

Subjective assessment and experiences

Students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds report lower original study intentions, lower sense of belonging, and slightly higher drop-out intentions.

Exploring the subjective experiences of students depending on their educational backgrounds reveals significant differences in their original intentions to pursue higher education (Table B2.4). On average, about three-quarters (75 %) of all students report having always known they would study one day. However, this certainty drops to 68 % among students whose parents have low educational attainment and rises to 81 % for those with highly educated parents. This disparity is consistent across all countries, with 4 to 25 percentage points more students from tertiary educational backgrounds having a definite intention to study compared to their peers from less educated families.

Even once having entered higher education, students whose parents are highly educated often feel a greater sense of belonging in higher education (Table B2.4). On average, 20 % of students without tertiary educational backgrounds occasionally question their enrolment in higher education. This percentage is slightly lower (17 %) for students from tertiary educated backgrounds.

- These differences, if slight, can be found in all countries except Finland, Hungary, and Poland, with the largest differences found in the Czech Republic, Spain, and Norway (5–6 percentage points).

Students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds also show a slightly higher tendency to consider dropping out of higher education, with 10 % expressing such intentions compared to 8 % of their peers from tertiary educated families. This difference of at least 1 percentage point is noted in 80 % of countries, indicating a noticeable pattern across EUROSTUDENT countries.

- Only in Finland, Croatia, Iceland, Lithuania, and Poland, no difference is found in dropout intention based on educational background of students or even a slightly reversed trend.

Discussion and policy considerations

The findings in this chapter underscore that students' educational backgrounds continue to play a crucial role in access to and experiences within higher education across most EUROSTUDENT countries. In many countries, students from non-tertiary backgrounds remain underrepresented, highlighting a persistent educational divide. Furthermore, a strong link between parental education and financial situation emerges: students from non-tertiary backgrounds are twice as likely to report their families as not well-off compared to their counterparts from tertiary educated families. This economic disparity often necessitates that students without a tertiary educational background rely more on their own income or public support, rather than family support. These students, typically older, also more frequently opt for part-time and lower-intensity study modes (see also > *Chapter B4*). Additionally, disparities extend to resources, with students from lower educational backgrounds often having worse access to computers, the internet, desks, and quiet study areas. Experiences in higher education clearly vary by educational background; this variation is apparent not only in different choices of institutions and programmes but also in subjective factors. Students from lower educational backgrounds exhibit lower initial study intention, and in many countries experience a lesser sense of belonging and exhibit higher dropout intentions compared to their peers from more advantaged backgrounds. This analysis highlights the complex interdependencies between socio-economic factors and higher education experiences, suggesting a pressing need for policies to not only broaden access but also address the comprehensive needs of students from diverse backgrounds to foster true educational equity.

Addressing the inequalities described in this chapter is complex, as they are not merely snapshots of disadvantage based on individual characteristics; they emerge from a complex interplay of factors at various levels – macro, meso, and micro – and evolve over time (Hadjar et al., 2022; Wanti et al., 2022). Higher education equity depends to a large part on the openness and performance of primary and secondary education (Tavares et al., 2022), which sets the stage for the challenges faced in higher education. Therefore, the circumstances of students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds are influenced by preceding educational factors as well as by policies beyond the immediate scope of higher education policymakers.

Efforts to overcome these challenges are well-aligned with the 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA' (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020), which offer a comprehensive approach to removing systemic barriers and promoting equity in higher education. These guidelines emphasise the support of potential students in their preparation and transition into higher education, the creation of synergies across policy areas like finance, health, and housing to foster a supportive ecosystem for these students, and flexibility in programme design and delivery. Effective counselling and guidance, as well as addressing the cost of study materials, ensure all students have access to necessary resources. This shows that policies and measures can and should range from overarching national social dimension strategies to concrete and local ones addressing practical issues faced on the ground by students from low socio-economic backgrounds, such as access to study materials, balancing work and studies (> *Chapter B5*), organising internships (> *Chapter B6*), financial difficulties (> *Chapters B7* and *B8*), affordable housing (> *Chapter B9*), or planning mobility during studies (> *Chapter B10*).

While socio-economic background is a pivotal indicator, intersectionalities with other aspects of diversity and potentially vulnerability, disadvantage and underrepresentation (> *Chapter B1*) should be investigated and taken into account in the development of successful support measures and policies (Hadjar et al., 2022).

Tables

B 2

Table B2.1

Educational attainment of students' parents

Share of students according to either parent's highest degree (in %)

	Highest degree of either parent			
	Low educational background (ISCED 0–2)	Medium educational background (ISCED 3–4)	Short-cycle educational background (ISCED 5)	High educational background (ISCED 6–8)
AT	4	42	11	43
AZ	2	32	15	51
CH	7	34	n.d.	60
CZ	1	48	2	49
DE	8	30	0	62
DK	5	18	13	65
EE	5	28	8	59
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	5	26	12	57
FR	6	25	15	53
GE	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
HR	2	54	6	37
HU	2	40	5	53
IE	15	26	11	48
IS	11	30	5	54
LT	1	40	1	58
LV	7	27	7	58
MT	27	21	17	35
NL	9	23	0	68
NO	5	17	11	66
PL	2	48	0	50
PT	25	35	6	34
RO	6	49	4	41
SE	6	31	12	51
SK	11	46	0	44
av.	**7**	**34**	**7**	**52**

n.d.: no data.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]*

Note(s): *Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B2.2

Students without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4) by sex, age group, educational origin, migration background, access route, and transition duration

Share of students (in %)

		Sex		Age groups		Educational origin		Migration background		Access route		Transition route	
	All students	Female	Male	Up to 21 years	30 years and over	Domestic student	International student	Second-generation migration background, domestic education	Without migration background, domestic educational background	Alternative	Standard	Direct	Delayed
AT	46	47	44	39	56	49	35	52	49	69	47	45	63
AZ	34	33	35	35	19	34	t.f.c.	32	34	t.f.c.	34	34	36
CH	40	42	39	33	52	41	32	46	41	48	39	39	50
CZ	48	51	44	44	69	52	25	46	53	57	48	46	70
DE	38	38	38	32	46	39	31	49	38	47	37	35	49
DK	23	23	23	23	34	23	23	25	22	36	22	22	24
EE	33	35	31	30	40	35	23	33	35	53	32	29	51
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	31	33	28	20	43	31	25	35	31	42	30	26	41
FR	32	34	30	30	46	32	35	39	29	51	32	31	49
GE	n.d.	15	13	14	10	15	5	13	15	13	14	14	20
HR	57	61	50	56	70	57	49	58	56	71	56	55	67
HU	42	45	39	37	60	43	30	36	44	65	41	39	65
IE	41	41	41	33	61	43	30	35	47	47	40	37	63
IS	41	42	39	17	58	42	34	36	43	59	35	34	56
LT	41	45	36	39	56	43	14	43	43	26	42	38	61
LV	35	38	30	28	54	36	18	35	36	49	34	29	53
MT	48	48	48	44	57	52	21	43	55	45	49	45	68
NL	32	34	29	30	57	33	21	34	34	42	31	28	50
NO	23	24	20	18	33	22	30	26	21	34	21	20	30
PL	50	55	43	43	73	52	26	41	52	63	49	47	74
PT	60	64	56	56	73	62	38	45	65	70	59	58	75
RO	55	59	50	52	68	55	33	22	56	71	54	51	78
SE	37	41	31	29	49	38	28	40	37	51	36	32	47
SK	56	60	51	51	77	58	32	57	58	71	55	53	77
av.	**41**	**42**	**37**	**35**	**53**	**41**	**28**	**38**	**41**	**51**	**39**	**37**	**55**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]*

Note(s): *Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B2.3

Students without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4) by type of HEI, study programme, study intensity, extent of paid work, dependency on income source, and official status

Share of students (in %)

		Type of HEI		Study programme			Study intensity		Extent of paid work		Dependency on income source			Offical status	
	All students	University	Non-university	Short-cycle	Bachelor	Master	Low intensity	High intensity	0 hrs. paid work / week during semester	> 20 hrs. paid work / week during semester	Dependent on family	Dependent on self-earned income	Dependent on public student support	Full-time	Part-time
AT	46	43	55	n/a	47	46	50	43	40	54	32	52	64	46	n/a
AZ	34	34	n/a	n/a	35	22	27	30	35	31	35	31	38	34	30
CH	40	34	49	n/a	42	36	45	37	36	51	33	48	59	38	54
CZ	48	47	62	n/a	52	48	55	41	41	61	42	57	37	44	66
DE	38	35	44	n.d.	39	39	42	38	36	46	30	44	53	37	48
DK	23	18	29	36	23	18	20	24	24	26	26	24	23	23	n/a
EE	33	31	44	n/a	36	31	31	36	30	38	29	38	25	33	41
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	31	21	40	n/a	32	29	32	34	28	39	25	35	27	27	50
FR	32	33	28	44	33	35	38	26	31	35	22	37	51	n.d.	n.d.
GE	n.d.	14	14	n/a	15	14	15	15	14	14	13	21	17	14	n/a
HR	57	55	66	n/a	60	59	60	53	53	65	59	66	74	54	66
HU	42	40	54	65	44	40	47	36	35	53	35	53	44	37	59
IE	41	34	51	62	38	38	50	34	36	53	27	48	58	35	59
IS	41	41	n/a	t.f.c.	37	46	45	37	36	52	40	43	32	40	51
LT	41	35	55	n/a	43	39	45	38	39	45	38	45	43	39	57
LV	35	32	53	52	34	25	39	31	29	41	28	39	t.f.c.	29	47
MT	48	46	54	49	46	53	54	45	39	61	29	53	t.f.c.	42	64
NL	32	22	41	54	33	24	36	29	24	44	19	40	30	29	60
NO	23	22	25	n/a	24	24	25	21	19	30	19	25	18	21	29
PL	50	45	69	n.d.	51	56	48	45	42	60	40	59	70	43	63
PT	60	54	70	79	61	61	64	58	57	72	53	68	80	59	69
RO	55	55	n.d.	n/a	57	59	54	51	50	62	52	63	70	53	68
SE	37	37	n/a	61	39	30	39	37	35	46	31	42	35	36	42
SK	56	53	78	n/a	58	58	63	51	53	68	52	65	72	53	75
av.	**41**	**37**	**49**	**56**	**41**	**39**	**43**	**37**	**36**	**48**	**34**	**46**	**46**	**38**	**55**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.2.* ***No data:*** *ES, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/guardian and father/guardian have obtained? [indicated separately]*

Note(s): *Per student, the highest educational attainment of either the father or the mother is counted. 'Don't know' responses were excluded.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B2.4

Study intention, sense of lack of belonging, and dropout intention by educational background

Share of students (strongly) agreeing with the respective statement (in %)

	Study intention		Lack of belonging		Dropout intention	
	Without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4)	With tertiary educational background (ISCED 5–8)	Without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4)	With tertiary educational background (ISCED 5–8)	Without tertiary educational background (ISCED 0–4)	With tertiary educational background (ISCED 5–8)
AT	55	76	n.d.	n.d.	10	8
AZ	89	93	8	7	3	2
CH	n.d.	n.d.	13	9	4	3
CZ	55	79	26	21	13	11
DE	54	71	14	13	9	6
DK	55	72	17	16	8	7
EE	75	84	13	11	6	5
ES	75	88	37	31	9	6
FI	53	71	11	11	5	5
FR	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
GE	76	80	20	15	20	13
HR	74	86	15	16	12	12
HU	76	83	22	22	12	11
IE	66	80	24	20	11	9
IS	53	71	20	19	10	11
LT	73	82	21	22	10	11
LV	75	82	21	18	11	10
MT	75	83	17	15	11	9
NL	68	83	16	14	8	6
NO	68	81	24	18	10	9
PL	74	86	24	24	12	12
PT	72	82	24	22	8	7
RO	76	85	16	15	8	7
SE	66	81	19	16	10	8
SK	62	79	27	25	14	11
av.	**68**	**81**	**20**	**17**	**10**	**8**

n.d.: no data.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.12–14.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.1 Generally, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your studies? [indicated separately] [It was always clear I would study in higher education one day.] [I often have the feeling that I don't really belong in higher education.] [I am seriously thinking of completely abandoning my higher education studies. (Item adapted from Trautwein et al. (2007).]*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B3
Transition into and within higher education

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Key

B 3

Diverse paths of higher education access

Standard qualifications and entry routes are predominant in entering higher education, with only minorities utilising alternative pathways. Older students tend to rely more on alternative access routes, facilitating their entry into higher education. These routes consequently contribute to social inclusion and lifelong learning opportunities. Moreover, a non-tertiary educational background and older age frequently go hand in hand with more extensive work experience prior to higher education enrolment.

Impact of alternative access routes on transition time

On cross-country average, around one in six students commence higher education more than 2 years after leaving school, with substantial variation across countries. Students entering higher education through alternative access routes have notably longer transition periods than those entering through standard access routes.

Interplay of access routes, participation, and age diversity

With increasing use of alternative access routes into higher education in a country higher entry ages, greater age heterogeneity, and a higher level of the population's participation in higher education are found. Overall, diversifying access pathways appear to go hand in hand with openness of higher education systems.

Schirmer, H. (2024). Transition into and within higher education. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024.* wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew003

findings

Study interruptions and return patterns

On average, 8 % of students report having previously interrupted their current studies, primarily for short periods (≤ 1 year). Social disparities in interruption duration exist, with students from older age groups indicating longer breaks.

Transition time into Master studies

A considerable portion of Master students experience a delay of at least 2 years between completing their previous studies and starting their Master programme (28 %). Non-tertiary educational background and older age correlate with longer transition periods, highlighting the need for flexible educational pathways to accommodate diverse student circumstances.

Academic success and study progression

Extended study durations (i.e. above the standard period of study) are associated with lower sense of belonging into higher education, lower self-assessed study performance, and higher likelihood of contemplating study dropout. Master students generally exhibit higher integration, higher performance, and lower dropout intentions compared to Bachelor students.

Main issues

Flexible options for higher education (re-)entrance are important measures to foster social justice (Boyadjieva et al., 2024) and lifelong participation (European Commission et al., 2022; OECD, 2021[1]) in (higher) education systems with the aim to ultimately create equitable, diverse, and inclusive systems (Šaukeckienė et al., 2021; United Nations, 2015). This chapter looks at these flexible (re-)entry routes from four perspectives along different phases of the study cycle. Not only is the extent of the use of flexible access and return routes across countries considered, but also their suitability for promoting the participation of socially disadvantaged (here operationalised by educational background; Christoph et al., 2024) and older population groups in higher education.

Diversity and diversification of higher education entry paths

In this context, it is first necessary to take stock of the diversity of higher education entrance paths:

- In which countries is it common to enter studies without a standard qualification, after later acquisition of a standard qualification, and after periods of intensive employment?
- Are non-traditional access routes actually successful in making it easier for socially disadvantaged and older people to start studying?

Current analyses of policy success in relation to the opening of higher education have provided mixed findings regarding the encouragement of disadvantaged groups to enter higher education through alternative access forms (Jackson et al., 2023; Schindler & Bittmann, 2023). In all of these analyses, the larger framework of the respective education system, in particular inequalities that already have their roots in the school system, must always be taken into account (European Commission et al., 2022; Terrin & Triventi, 2023).

Accessibility and representation in the context of lifelong learning

An examination of the access routes to studying inevitably raises questions about the openness of higher education systems and the participation of society as a whole in higher education. While > *Chapter B1* and > *Chapter B2* examine aspects of the representation of certain disadvantaged population groups, the chapter at hand additionally aims to analyse participation in higher education in connection with non-traditional access routes over the life course:

- (How) does the degree of non-traditional access relate to a) the level of representation compared to the population, b) the age at higher education entry, and c) the age structure of student populations?

While previous analyses have produced inconclusive or negative results regarding the effect of alternative access extent and increased participation in higher education (Orr et al., 2008; Schindler & Bittmann, 2023), a repeated evaluation based on current data may yield more encouraging results.

1 *See chapter „Indicator B4. Who is expected to enter tertiary education?".*

Interrupted study-paths and return to higher education

Understanding the prevalence and patterns of re-entering higher education after extended breaks is crucial for policymakers and higher education institutions (HEIs) to tailor support mechanisms effectively (DesJardins et al., 2006). It sheds light on the flexibility and accessibility of educational systems, impacting decisions on programme structures, funding allocation, and outreach strategies (OECD, 2021[2]). Moreover, insights into transition durations between academic stages illuminate the efficacy of pathways within higher education, aiding in the design of smoother progression routes for students, especially those with diverse backgrounds or non-linear educational trajectories. Thus, examining these phenomena enriches comprehension of educational dynamics, contributing to enhanced inclusivity and student success in higher education systems.

- How common is it to re-enter higher education after long(er) breaks from studying and which differences are observable between diverse social and age-related backgrounds?

Study success prospects along the student life-cycle

Key indicators of study success include peer integration, academic performance, and dropout intention (Becker & Brändle, 2022; Weber et al., 2018). These indicators are pivotal as they shed light on the dynamics influencing students' educational trajectories and, as such, they serve as crucial metrics in understanding the transition into and within higher education. An examination of prospects for academic success through the cross-sectional EUROSTUDENT data presents a nuanced perspective because it can contribute to a deeper understanding of retention conditions.

- How do study success conditions and prospects change over the course of studies?

Data and interpretation

Higher education access qualification

Vast majorities access higher education through a standard access qualification.

At 89 % on cross-country average, a vast majority accessed the higher education system through a standard access qualification acquired in the country of their studies (Figure B3.1). An additional 9 % used a standard access qualification from a foreign country (see also ◘ international students, > *Chapter B1*). Remarkably, only 2 % of students entered higher education with an alternative qualification, i.e. alternatives equivalent to or replacing the standard access qualification (Box B3.1). However, there is considerable variation between countries with regard to these alternative qualifications: While in some countries there are no means to access higher education through qualifications other than the standard one (the Czech Republic, Georgia, Estonia, Poland, Azerbaijan, and Romania), 8 to 5 % percent of students in Malta, Iceland, Switzerland, Ireland, and Germany have made use of a non-standard access qualification.

A more in-depth evaluation by age groups also shows that older students are less likely to have a standard entrance qualification and therefore use alternative qualifications more than is the case with younger students (Table B3.2). Higher education access options other than standard qualification certificates can therefore help older population groups to participate in higher education. Differences in terms of educational background are not clearly apparent across countries, but non-standard qualifications are commonly used by students without tertiary educational background in a few countries (e.g. Switzerland, Iceland).

2 *See chapter „Indicator B5. Who is expected to graduate from tertiary education?".*

Box B3.1

Methodological note: What is a #SMAR?

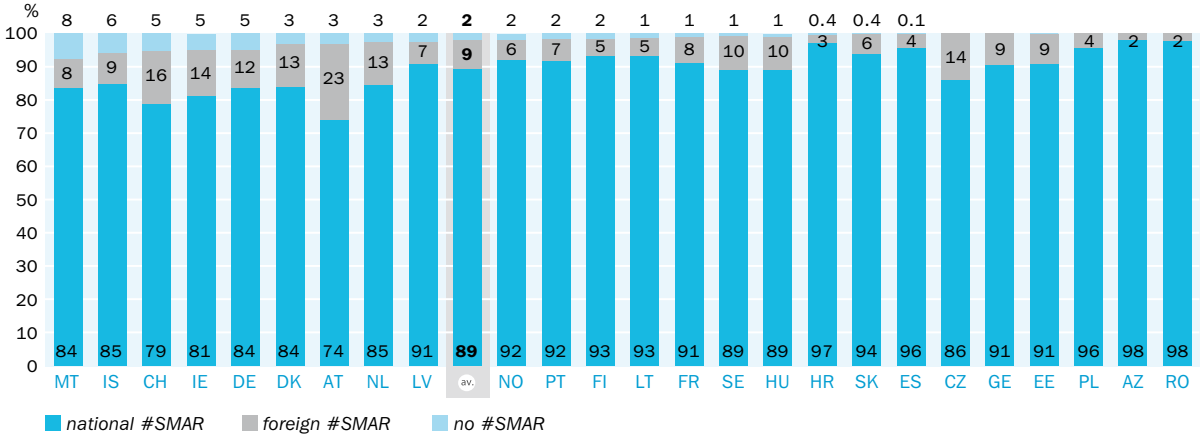
Every country has a Standard Minimum Access Requirement (# SMAR, as EUROSTUDENT names it) for entering higher education. It is 'standard' because there might be alternatives and it is 'minimum' because there might be additional requirements. The SMAR is obtained in different countries in different ways: It can just be the positive passing of the last year in upper secondary school, it can be a specific exam at the end of secondary schooling (matriculation exam, e.g. Matura, Abitur, Baccalaureat), a state exam, or maybe another way. Some countries have different upper secondary school types (usually academic or professional tracks) and sometimes these different schools lead to different types of SMAR (general or specific). While there might be additional requirements (admission exams or specific grades), in any case, one type of SMAR is needed to access higher education. The 'regular/traditional' SMAR is obtained around graduating from upper secondary school, usually at the age of 17 to 20. However, the possibility to obtain the SMAR later in life exists in all countries.

Nevertheless, in some countries other, alternative ways to access higher education also exist. In such countries, there might be alternatives equivalent to or replacing the SMAR. Thus, in some countries, another exam/certificate similar to the SMAR exists, in other countries specific work experience is recognised instead of a SMAR, in a few countries a certain age is enough to access higher education without a SMAR, and again other countries honour certain achievements and allow access to higher education on this basis. All these kinds of alternative SMAR or replacements of the 'regular' SMAR are regarded as alternative access qualifications in the EUROSTUDENT framework.

Figure B3.1

Type of qualification used for access to higher education

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.9.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, GE, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

‘Standard’ and ‘alternative’ higher education access routes

Not only the formal qualification for entrance to higher education, but also the point in time at which such a qualification is acquired in the course of one’s life can be important for the study conditions. Therefore, those students who found their way into higher education either through an alternative qualification or who only acquired their standard entrance qualification at a later point in life (and not when they left the secondary school system) are grouped together as students who entered higher education through ‘alternative access routes’ (Box B3.2). On average across countries, 8 % of students started their studies via such a non-traditional access route (Figure B3.2). In a country comparison, the variation ranges from 25 % in Iceland to only 1 % in the Czech Republic, France, and Azerbaijan.

Box B3.2

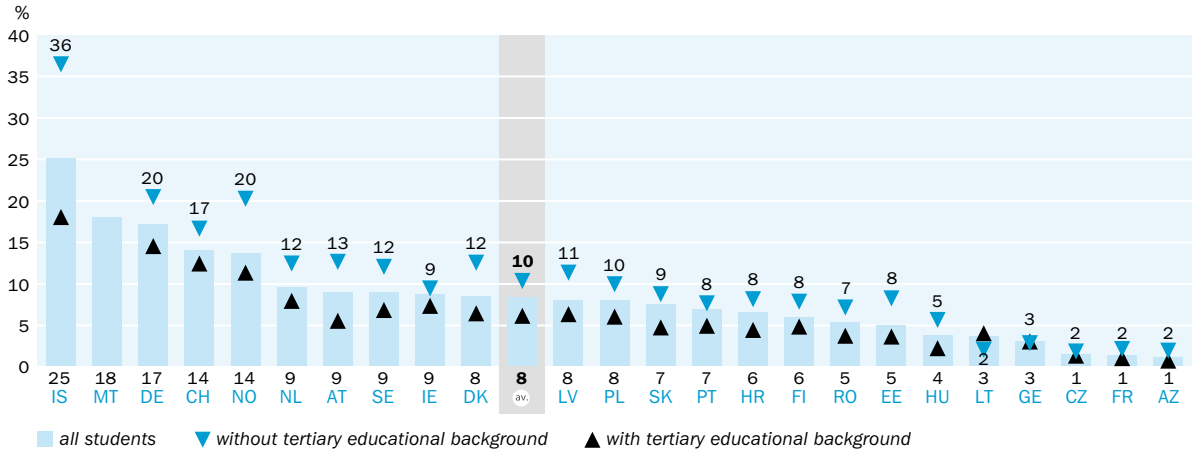
Methodological note: What are standard (‘traditional’) and alternative (‘non-traditional’) higher education access routes?

Students who obtained a (national/foreign) #SMAR in conjunction with/when leaving regular upper secondary school for the first time are categorised as using ‘standard access routes’. Those who did not enter higher education with a #SMAR or obtained their #SMAR (or foreign equivalent) later in life – not directly after/when leaving the regular school system for the first time but at least 6 months later, e. g., via evening classes, adult learning, etc. – are considered as using ‘alternative access routes’. For reasons of easier readability, the terms ‘alternative’ and ‘non-traditional’ as opposed to ‘standard’ and ‘traditional’ are sometimes used synonymously in this chapter.

Figure B3.2

Alternative access route into higher education by educational background

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.16.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent? 2.2 [Only students with #SMAR] When did you obtain your #SMAR? 2.3 [Only students without #SMAR] Where did you last attend the #regular school system?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DK, GE, LV, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Students without tertiary educational background and of older age commonly use alternative access routes.

Despite all the variation between countries regarding extent of alternative access route usage, there is, however, an almost general finding regarding the educational background of students: students with parents without tertiary qualifications use non-traditional access routes more often than students from academic parents. Alternative access routes to studying therefore make a contribution to the social opening of higher education systems. In addition, the age-pattern that has already been identified with regard to entry qualifications is also reflected here, when considering alternative higher education entrance routes (Table B3.2); older students use these more often to enter higher education and are thus given the opportunity to participate in higher education through alternative qualifications or later acquiring a standard entrance qualification.

B 3

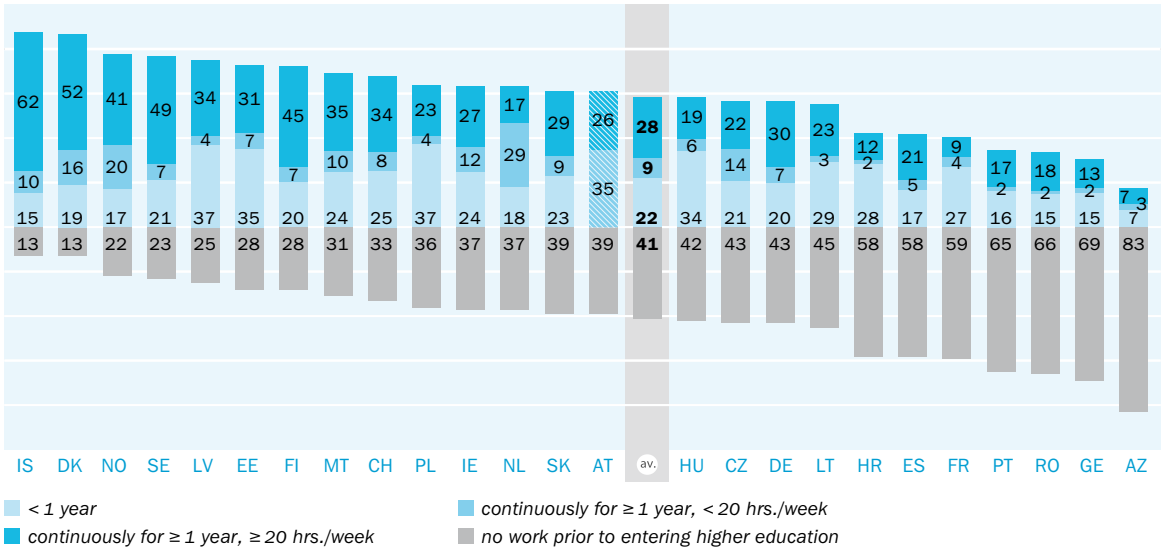
Labour market experience prior to higher education entry

Although in a large number of countries it is very common for a majority of students to gain experience in the labour market before starting studies – only in Croatia, Spain, France, Portugal, Romania, Georgia, and in particular Azerbaijan does a majority of students indicate not having been employed before entering higher education – there are clear differences in the intensity and duration of such periods of employment (Figure B3.3).

Figure B3.3

Work experience prior to entering higher education

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.16b.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.4 Did you have any paid job(s) prior to entering higher education for the first time?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- In Poland (37 %), Latvia (37 %), Estonia (35 %), and Hungary (34 %), for example, a good third of the students said they worked for less than a year before starting their studies. A duration of more than a year but with a small number of hours (less than 20 hours per week) is particularly common in the Netherlands (29 %).

- Students in Iceland (62 %), Denmark (52 %), and Sweden (49 %), on the other hand, commonly gained extensive labour market experience (of at least a year and with more than 20 hours per week) before starting their studies.

Intense labour market experiences before HE entry in Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden.

Across all countries, both students from non-tertiary educated parents and students of older age often have intensive and long-term employment histories before they start studying (Table B3.2).

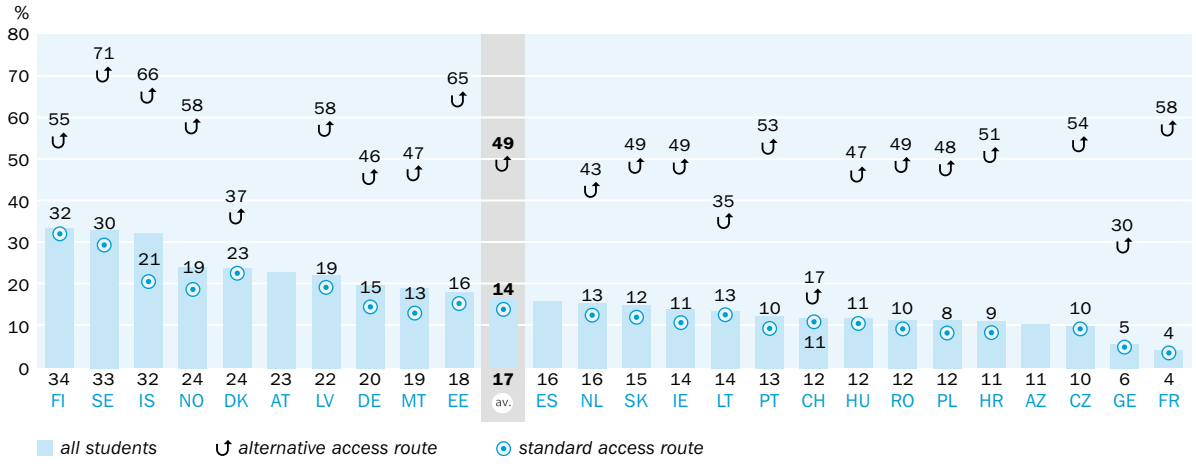
Transition duration from the school system into higher education

How do the different life trajectories – acquiring a standard entrance qualification later or not at all – manifest with regard to the average transition time from the school system into higher education? On cross-country average, one in six students reported starting their studies 'delayed', i.e. more than 2 years after leaving school (17 %; Figure B3.4). The range extends from around one in three in Finland, Sweden, and Iceland to just 6 and 4 % in Georgia and France. Despite all this variation, however, there is a clear cross-national finding: alternative access routes to studying go hand in hand with a longer transition period. While only 14 % of students who entered higher education through the standard access route first enrolled with a delay of at least 2 years after leaving the school system, about half of those with alternative access routes experienced such a delay (49 %).

Figure B3.4

Delayed transition (> 24 months after leaving school) into higher education by access route into higher education

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.14.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.5 How long after leaving the #regular school system for the first time did you enter higher education for the first time?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Connections between access routes, participation of society in higher education, and diversification of student population's age structure

In the analyses of this chapter so far, a clear connection has been established between alternative higher education entrance qualifications and routes (after longer and intensive periods of employment) and students' age: the higher the age, the more likely it is

that students began studying through alternative forms of entry. But how do alternative access routes relate to the degree of participation in higher education within societies on the one hand and the student populations' age structure on the other hand? This question cannot be answered using the cross-sectional data of students from the EUROSTUDENT project alone (as it does not cover persons not currently enrolled in higher education).

The higher the use of alternative access routes, the higher the entry age, the greater the age heterogeneity, and the higher the population's participation in higher education.

In a first step, the proportion of students who started their studies via non-traditional access routes is related to students' mean age at entering higher education, the standard deviation of this mean age (as a measure of age heterogeneity), and the gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education[3] (Table B3.1). The correlation coefficients show that alternative access is positively correlated with entry age, standard deviation of entry age, and gross enrolment ratio. This means: The higher the use of alternative access routes, the higher the entry age, the greater the age heterogeneity, and the higher the population's participation in higher education. However, since correlation does not imply causation (Aldrich, 1995), one should not hastily conclude from these findings that a high degree of non-traditional access into higher education automatically has a positive influence on the level of participation and a diverse age structure of student bodies.

Table B3.1

Relationship between alternative access route, entry age, variation of entry age, and gross enrolment ratio

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), statistical significance (p)

	Age at entering HE (in log. years)	Standard deviation of age at entering HE (in log. years)	Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education (in log. %)
Alternative access route into HE (in log. %)	$r = 0.682$ ($p \leq 0.001$)	$r = 0.660$ ($p \leq 0.001$)	$r = 0.518$ ($p = 0.009$)

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.16, A.2; UNESCO SDG 4.3.2.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent? 2.2 [Only students with #SMAR] When did you obtain your #SMAR? 2.3 [Only student without #SMAR] Where did you last attend the #regular school system? 2.6 When did you enter higher education for the first time? 6.1 When were you born?*

Note(s): *Gross enrolment rate (UNESCO SDG 4.3.2) corresponding to year of survey, except AT, CZ, HR, HU, IE, IS, LT, NL, PT, RO (all 2021), and FR (2022).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *AT, CH, DK, GE, LV, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

The connection between alternative access routes and population participation in higher education is illustrated in more detail in Figure B3.5, where a high value of the gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education (vertical axis) shows a high degree of participation in tertiary education by students of all ages (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). Most EUROSTUDENT countries are in the lower left quadrant or in the upper right quadrant (or close to both quadrants), which confirms the positive and statistically significant relationship from Table B3.1: The higher the proportion of students who entered the higher education sector via alternative access routes, the higher the gross enrolment ratio (although the explanatory power of this simple linear

3 *The gross enrolment ratio "is defined as the total enrolment of students in tertiary education regardless of age and is expressed as a percentage of the population in the 5-year age group immediately following upper secondary education." (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019, p. 54)*

regression model is not particularly high at $R^2 = 0.15$). Therefore, earlier findings that could not establish such a connection (Orr et al., 2008) can no longer be confirmed. A stronger connection ($R^2 = 0.38$) can be identified between alternative access routes and the structure of the age at which students begin higher education studies (as well as the heterogeneity measure, the standard deviation of the age at which students start studying): The higher the proportion of alternative access students, the higher the mean age at the start of studies and the higher the entry age heterogeneity of a student population.

Box B3.3

Methodological note: Correlation

Correlation in the broadest sense is a measure of a relationship between variables. Correlation coefficients (i.e. Pearson's product-moment coefficient; r) do not indicate causality and are not used to make predictions, but instead show the degree of association between variables. In correlated data, the change in the magnitude of one variable is associated with a change in the magnitude of another variable, either in the same (positive correlation) or in the opposite (negative correlation) direction. The underlying data in Table B3.1 was logarithmised to the natural base e; this transformation helps to stabilise variance and make the relationship between variables more linear, which is a requirement for Pearson correlation. Values of r closer to 1 or -1 indicate stronger relationships, while values closer to 0 indicate weaker relationships. Taking established thresholds as a reference, the resulting correlation coefficients can be classified as moderate (r: 0.40 to 0.69; Schober et al., 2018). Established significance levels such as $p < 0.05$ indicate the probability of observing the correlation coefficient by chance – p-values above 0.05 indicate random findings; all findings in Table B3.1 may consequently be interpreted as statistically significant.

The relationship between access route, HE participation, and student population's age structure is intertwined.

But what connection can be made between alternative access routes, population representation, and age taken together? For the purpose of such an analysis, again, available data from EUROSTUDENT can be supplemented by an additional data source, namely students in tertiary education by age groups as percent of the corresponding age population. Due to the space available, such a detailed examination must necessarily be selective, i.e. limited to a selection of countries (Figure B3.6):

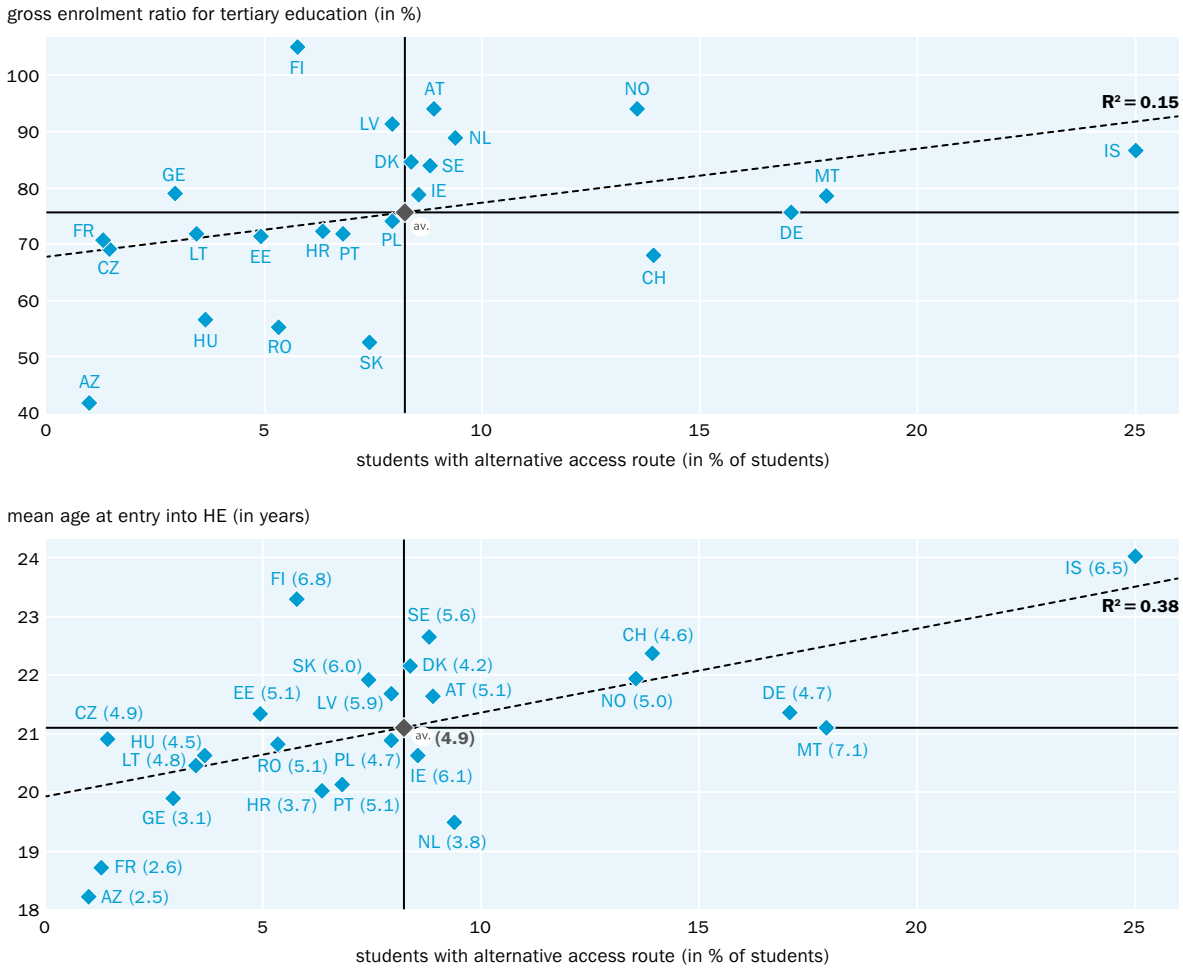
- France succeeds in getting exceptionally large proportions of young age cohorts (up to 20 years of age) into tertiary education, usually through the standard entry route. Even in the older age cohorts, who study comparatively rarely, access to tertiary education seldom takes place via an alternative access route. Although less pronounced, this pattern also occurs in the Czech Republic and Lithuania.
- This is different in Norway, where people rarely study at a young age, but disproportionately often in older cohorts (aged 22 and over) – and very often through non-traditional access routes. Similar patterns of participation and alternative access routes over age groups also occur in Switzerland, Germany, and Iceland.
- In contrast, Hungary has below-average participation in tertiary education over all age cohorts and students rarely use alternative access routes. Similar patterns occur in Estonia, Romania, and Slovakia.

- In Finland (and likewise also in Latvia and Sweden), on the other hand, access is mostly through standard access routes across all age groups, but a comparatively large proportion of older cohorts are still brought into studies.
- In the other countries that can be examined – Austria, Denmark, Croatia, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, and Portugal – there are hybrid forms of the patterns described above or completely separate patterns.

Figure B3.5

Alternative access routes, gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, and entry age structure

Shares of population and students (in %), mean age of students at higher education entry (in years, SD in brackets)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.16, A.2; UNESCO SDG 4.3.2.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent? 2.2 [Only students with #SMAR] When did you obtain your #SMAR? 2.3 [Only students without #SMAR] Where did you last attend the #regular school system? 2.6 When did you enter higher education for the first time? 6.1 When were you born?*

Note(s): *Gross enrolment rate (UNESCO SDG 4.3.2) corresponding to year of survey, except AT, CZ, HR, HU, IE, IS, LT, NL, PT, RO (all 2021), and FR (2022).*

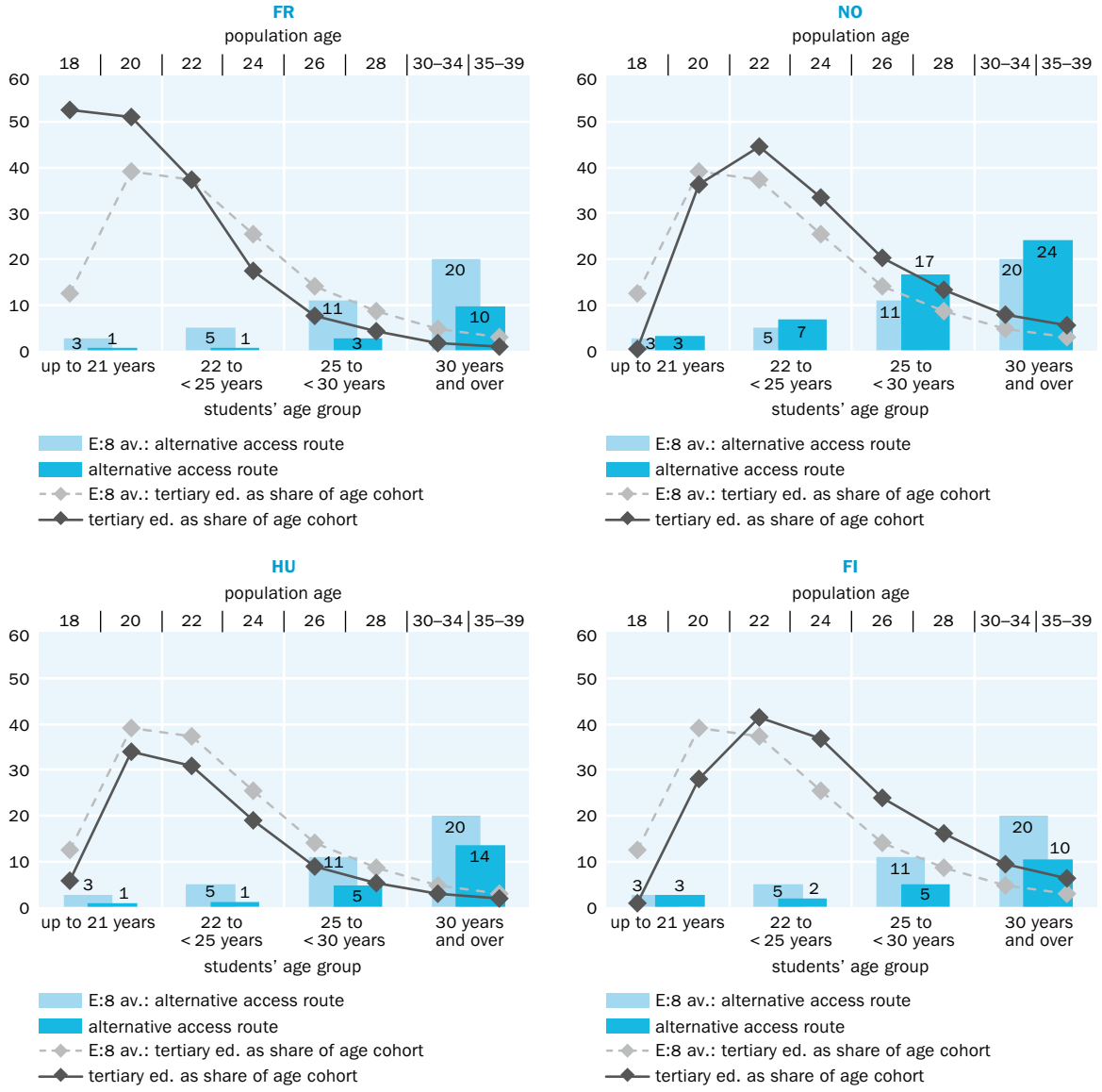
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DK, GE, LV, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Figure B3.6

Representation of population in tertiary education and alternative access routes by age groups (selected countries)

Share of students / in age cohorts (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.16; Eurostat, educ_uoe_enrt07*[4].

Data collection: *FI, HU, NO (spring 2022 – summer 2022), FR (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent? 2.2 [Only students with #SMAR] When did you obtain your #SMAR? 2.3 [Only students without #SMAR] Where did you last attend the #regular school system?*

Note(s): *All Eurostat data referring to 2021. In the figures, the dark grey dotted lines represent the proportion of the respective age cohort (see upper horizontal axis) that is enrolled in tertiary forms of education; the average for the E:8 countries is plotted as a light grey dotted line in each figure for reference purposes. The dark blue columns represent the proportion of the respective age group of students (see lower horizontal axis) who entered higher education via an alternative access route; the light blue columns represent the complementary E:8 average for reference purposes.*

The selection of countries shown (with the associated similar countries described) reflects, at least in many cases, the distribution in the first coordinate system in

4 *https://doi.org/10.2908/EDUC_UOE_ENRT07.*

Figure B3.5. The findings suggest that there is a complex interplay between alternative access routes, age demographics, and tertiary education participation across different countries. Overall, however, it can at least be said that the opening of higher education access to non-traditional pathways commonly goes hand in hand with increased participation in tertiary education in general and increased participation among older population groups in particular (through alternative access routes) as well as a more heterogeneous age structure of student populations, even if causal relationships of these associations require further investigation.

Return into higher education after study interruptions

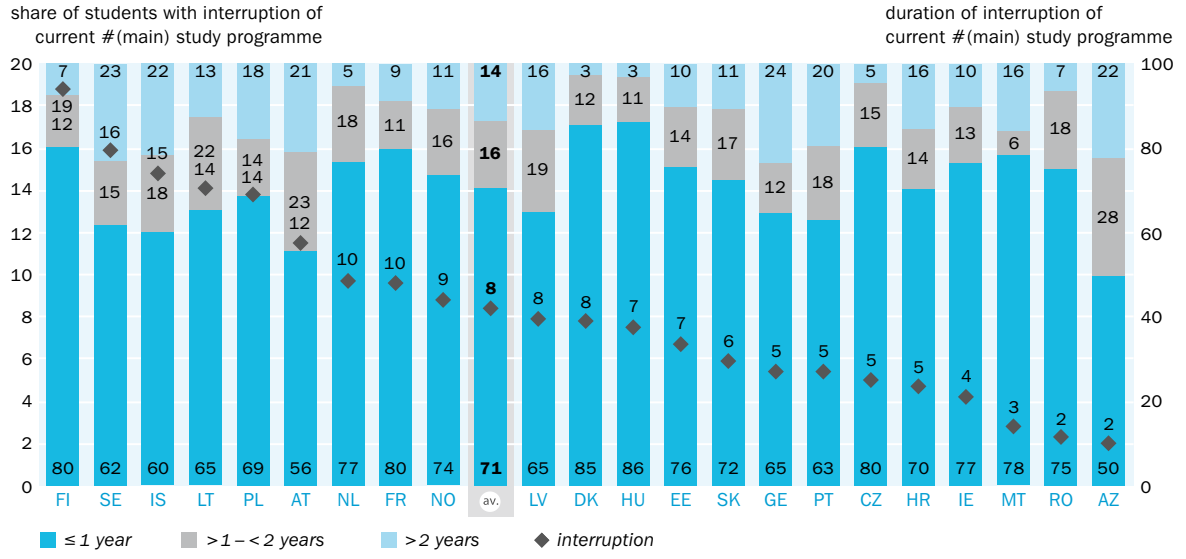
The student surveys as part of EUROSTUDENT naturally cannot provide any information about the proportion of dropouts; there are more suitable data sources and indicators for this (e.g. OECD, 2021[5]). However, a great added value in the EUROSTUDENT data is that we can quantify the proportion of those who interrupted and returned to their studies and can also determine the duration of these interruptions (Figure B3.7). On cross-country average, 8 % of students state that they have already interrupted their studies (officially or unofficially). In the vast majority, these interruptions are only short periods of less than a year (71 %), more rarely 1 to 2 years (16 %) or even longer (14 %).

- In a few countries (Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Lithuania, Poland, and Austria) a comparatively large number of students have interrupted their studies, but in the vast majority this makes up a maximum of 2 to 10 % of students.
- Interruptions of long duration (> 2 years) are particularly mentioned by Georgian, Swedish, Icelandic, Azerbaijani, Austrian, and Portuguese study interrupters (≥ 20 %).

Figure B3.7

(Duration of) interruption of current study programme

Share of students (in %), duration of interruption (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.6b.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE, ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.8 Have you ever officially or unofficially interrupted your current #(main) study programme?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, FI, GE, NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

5 *See chapter „Indicator B5. Who is expected to graduate from tertiary education?".*

Social inequalities (approximated through educational background) in study interruptions of returnees are minor on cross-country average as well as throughout countries with regard to the proportion of interrupters overall. However, they sometimes vary with regard to the duration of interruptions (Table B3.3): Long interruptions of at least 2 years are more common among students without tertiary educational background than among their peers from academic families in e.g. Estonia, France, Ireland, Norway, and Poland; the reversed trend (longer interruptions commonly among students with tertiary educational background) appears e.g. in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Latvia, and Romania.

Among students in the older age groups of 25 to < 30 (15 %) and 30 years and over (13 %), study interruptions are considerably more common on cross-country average than among students aged 21 or younger (3 %) and 22 to < 25 years (8 %). There are also clear differences in the length of interruptions; the proportion of long interruptions increases between age groups from 2 (< 22) and 6 % (22 – < 25) to 13 (25 – < 30) and 26 % (30 years and over).

Older students have interrupted their studies more frequently and for longer periods than their younger peers.

Transition time from previous studies to a Master programme

Not only the return to a course of study from periods of study interruptions, but also the time elapsed between completing a first-cycle degree and taking up a second-cycle degree can provide information about the extent of flexible (further) education options in a country. On cross-country average, 28 % of students in Master programmes have had at least 2 years pass between completing their previous studies and starting the Master programme (Figure B3.8).

A good quarter of Master students started the second cycle with a delay.

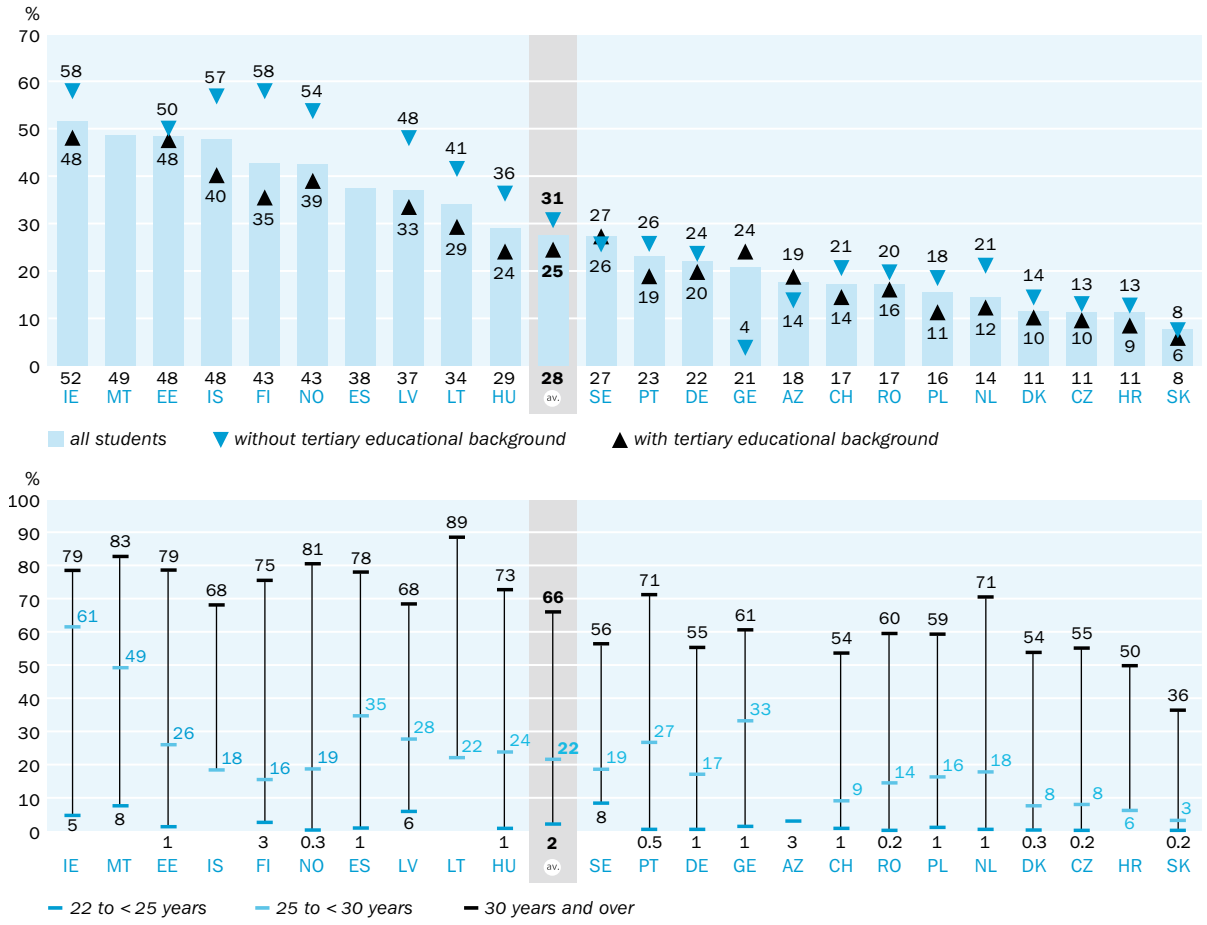
A clear trend towards a longer transition period into a Master degree programme can be identified with regard to student's educational background. On average, a quarter of Master students with tertiary education background report a delayed transition into their Master degree programme (25 %), while for students from a non-tertiary educational background the share is almost a third (31 %). This trend holds true when looking at national data in almost all countries (except Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Sweden). These findings (as already described at the beginning of this chapter with regard to entry into higher education) provide further evidence that students from non-tertiary parents are dependent on flexible options to (re-)enter their studies because they can rely on fewer resources in their family environment (> *Chapter B2*) and therefore more often have to rely on own resources, e.g. through (savings made in periods of) gainful employment (*Chapters* > *B6*, > *B7*).

With regard to age, there is also a clear trend in delayed transitions to a Master degree. While, on cross-country average, only 2 % of 22 to 24 year old students started their Master studies 2 years or more after graduating from a first-cycle degree programme, the proportion among 25- to 29-year-olds is 22 % and ultimately reaches two-thirds among those aged 30 and over (66 %). While respective percent values vary between countries, this general age pattern in delayed transition between first-cycle and Master studies observed on cross-country average holds true in all countries.

Figure B3.8

Delayed transition between graduating from previous programme to current Master programme by educational background and age groups

Share of students in a Master programme (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.8.* ***No data:*** *AT, FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), ES, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *1.10 [Only if 1.6 "#Master degree [ISCED 7]", not "#Long national degree / integrated Master [more than 3 years, ISCED 7]"] How long after graduating from your previous study programme did you start your current Master programme?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Prospects of academic success over the course of studies

Study progress impacts sense of belonging, study performance, and dropout intention.

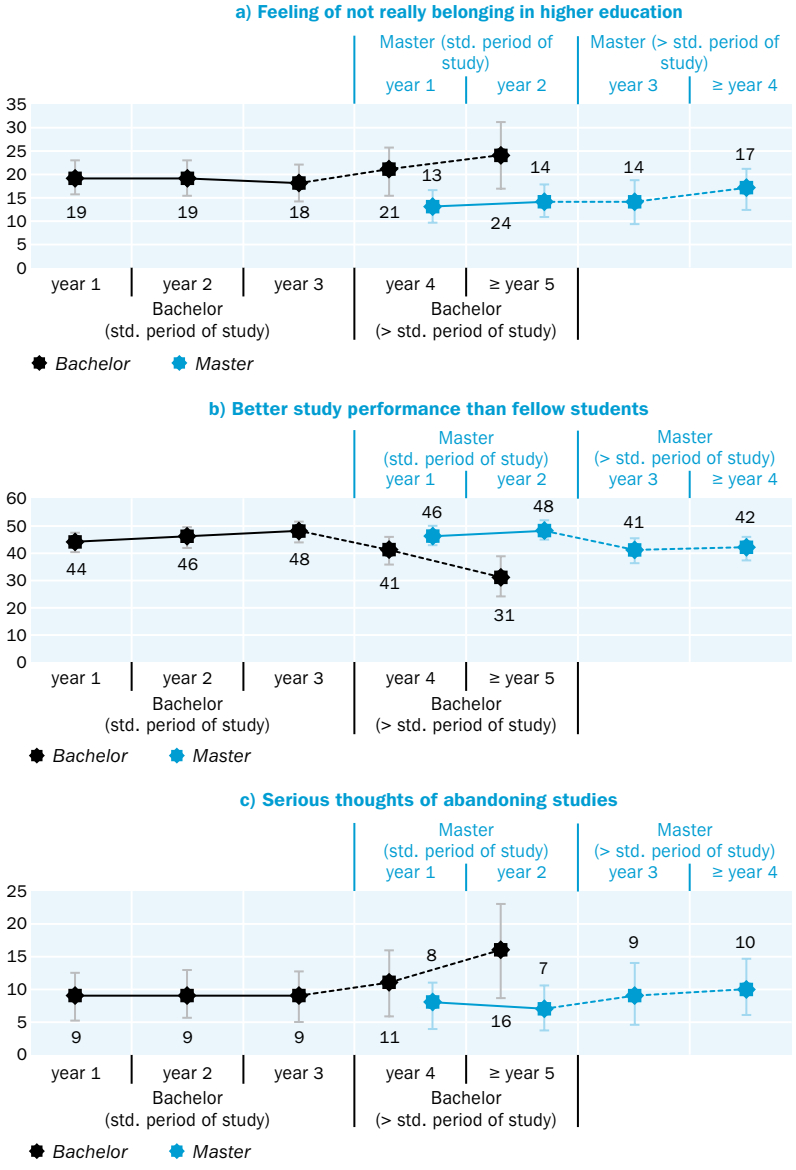
While the previous analyses have looked at different study entry paths and forms of re-entry, this section focuses on students' prospects of academic success from a study progression perspective. Figure B3.9 shows cross-country average values for a lacking sense of belonging in higher education, self-assessed study performance, and serious thoughts of dropping out of higher education in Bachelor or Master programmes at different stages of study progress. One can clearly see that students who study beyond the standard period of study a) have a lower sense of belonging, b) are less likely to rate their academic performance better than that of their fellow students, and c) are more likely to have thoughts of dropping out than those fellow students in their respective degree programme who are within the standard period of study. The (more or less

pronounced) 'jumps' in the percentage values between Bachelor and Master students in the sense of belonging and thoughts of study dropout also make it clear that the more integrated and those with few thoughts of dropping out opt for a continuation of studies after first-cycle degree graduation.

Figure B3.9

Students' academic success prospects by years of study in Bachelor and Master programmes

Share of students (in %, 95 % between-country CIs)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.12., C.15., C.14.* ***No data:*** *a) AT, ES, FR; b) CH, ES, FR; c) ES, FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.1 Generally, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your studies? 3.4 How would you rate your performance so far in your current #(main) study programme in comparison to that of your fellow students? Items adapted from Trautwein et al. (2007).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Discussion and policy considerations

In conclusion, the findings in this chapter shed light on several crucial aspects of the transition into and within higher education. Firstly, a predominance of standard qualifications and entry routes can be observed, with alternative pathways being less common. However, older students more often turn to these alternative routes, facilitating their entry into higher education and taking advantage of lifelong learning opportunities. Additionally, we find that a non-tertiary parental educational background and older age often coincide with more extensive work experience before enrolling in higher education. Alternative access routes, i.e. higher education entry through non-standard qualifications or standard qualifications acquired later in life, is related to transition time. Furthermore, an interplay between access routes, participation in higher education, and student populations' age structure can be observed, suggesting that countries in which alternative access routes are more commonly used tend to have higher entry ages, greater age heterogeneity, and increased overall participation in higher education. Distinct disparities in study interruptions can be observed regarding students' age, with older age groups (consistently) indicating longer breaks. Moreover, we find that a significant portion of Master students experience delays in starting their programmes; again, particularly those with non-tertiary parental educational backgrounds and older age. Lastly, the findings reveal that extended study durations (above the standard period of study) are associated with lower sense of belonging, inferior self-assessed performance, and higher likelihood of contemplating dropout, emphasising the importance of support to ensure smooth progression towards graduation. Overall, the findings taken together underscore the need for flexible educational pathways to accommodate the diverse circumstances of students' journeys throughout higher education.

Considerations for policymakers

Older students and those without tertiary educational background commonly access higher education through alternative pathways, often after extended periods outside the formal education system and with significant work experience. Additionally, countries with higher proportions of students entering through alternative routes tend to have more representation of older population groups in their student bodies. This correlation suggests that promoting openness in higher education systems to alternative entry options can lead to more representative participation across the lifespan. To advance lifelong learning and address socio-economic disparities, policymakers should prioritise easing accessibility into higher education as a crucial starting point.

Considerations for HEI staff

Implementing tailored support services for non-traditional students, such as mentorship programmes, academic advising, and financial assistance, can help address their unique needs and challenges. Staff participation in projects such as 'ENTRANTS – Enhancing the transition of non-traditional students'[6] can be a meaningful measure to reduce dropout rates and promote academic success, especially among disadvantaged student groups. Offering flexible learning options, including online courses, evening classes, and part-time study opportunities, can accommodate the diverse schedules of

6 https://entrants.eu/

non-traditional students, enabling them to balance their studies with work and other responsibilities (> *Chapter B4*, > *Chapter B5*). Finally, collaborating with community organisations (Allinson & Gabriels, 2021; Schlanger, 2018) can provide additional resources and support networks for non-traditional students, enhancing their overall academic experience and success.

Considerations for researchers

The relationships (and especially directions of influence) between offerings of alternative pathways to higher education access and higher overall societal participation in higher education require deeper analyses than what is possible within the context of this book chapter. Which measures of openness actually contribute over time to opening up the higher education sector for disadvantaged population groups? In this regard, national traditions and contexts need to be considered in more detail than what is possible within the framework of the very abstract indicators used here.

Tables

Table B3.2

Type of qualification used for access to higher education, alternative access route into higher education, and work experience prior to entering higher education by educational background and age group

Share of students (in %)

	Share of students without #SMAR						Share of students with alternative access route				Share of students with continuous work for at least one year without interruption and at least 20 hrs./week					
	Educational background		Age groups				Age groups				Educational background		Age groups			
	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years and over	Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years and over	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years and over
AT	4	3	1	2	3	8	2	4	10	22	33	21	8	16	31	52
AZ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.5	2	5	2	8	7	4	6	33	41
CH	7	4	1	2	6	21	4	10	17	30	42	29	9	24	41	77
CZ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	2	7	28	15	10	14	30	73
DE	5	5	2	2	6	12	5	10	22	37	36	26	10	21	35	62
DK	4	3	4	2	3	7	5	4	8	24	54	51	31	50	56	72
EE	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	2	7	10	39	26	12	22	40	51
ES	n.d.	n.d.	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.3	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	2	12	40	73
FI	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	5	10	59	39	18	32	45	65
FR	2	1	1	1	3	10	1	1	3	10	13	7	6	8	17	32
GE	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	3	2	10	18	12	10	13	17	35
HR	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.1	2	3	3	7	27	16	8	4	6	19	53
HU	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	5	14	27	13	4	12	27	55
IE	5	5	1	6	10	10	3	8	14	18	36	22	10	23	51	60
IS	8	4	0.3	1	2	12	3	9	22	41	70	56	29	54	67	72
LT	1	2	1	3	0	0.2	2	4	2	8	29	19	8	23	33	59
LV	3	2	2	3	4	2	2	6	11	16	46	28	7	26	45	74
MT	n.d.	n.d.	2	4	17	14	8	14	26	31	n.d.	n.d.	11	23	54	69
NL	2	3	1	3	5	6	3	10	18	31	22	14	7	14	29	68
NO	3	2	1	1	3	4	3	7	17	24	51	37	17	29	47	62
PL	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	6	16	26	30	15	9	18	39	71
PT	2	1	0.2	1	3	8	2	5	13	25	20	11	3	10	36	69
RO	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	4	13	13	23	11	4	9	33	60
SE	1	1	0.3	0.3	1	2	1	4	10	19	56	44	18	43	58	69
SK	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.3	5	4	8	23	35	21	12	20	42	83
av.	**3**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**6**	**3**	**5**	**11**	**20**	**34**	**23**	**11**	**21**	**39**	**62**

n.d.: no data. n/a: not applicable. Decimal points shown for values < .5

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, B.9, B.16, B.16b.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent? 2.1 Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent? 2.2 [Only students with #SMAR] When did you obtain your #SMAR? 2.3 [Only students without #SMAR] Where did you last attend the #regular school system? 2.4 Did you have any paid job(s) prior to entering higher education for the first time?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *AT, CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B3.3

(Duration of) interruption of current study programme by educational background and age group

Share of students (in %), duration of interruption (in %)

	Educational background								Age groups															
	Without tertiary educational background				With tertiary educational background				Up to 21 years				22 to <25 years				25 to <30 years				30 years and over			
	Interruption	≤1 year	1–2 years	>2 years	Interruption	≤1 year	1–2 years	>2 years	Interruption	≤1 year	1–2 years	>2 years	Interruption	≤1 year	1–2 years	>2 years	Interruption	≤1 year	1–2 years	>2 years	Interruption	≤1 year	1–2 years	>2 years
AT	12	52	24	24	11	59	23	18	2	97	3	0	6	84	15	1	14	61	27	11	24	37	25	38
AZ	2	72	13	15	2	41	33	25	1	79	21	0	6	31	38	31	6	47	26	26	6	40	0	60
CH	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
CZ	5	82	13	5	5	79	17	5	1	95	3	1	5	86	11	2	13	77	18	5	7	69	22	10
DE	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
DK	7	86	11	3	8	83	12	4	2	98	2	0	4	92	8	1	13	85	12	3	12	77	17	6
EE	6	68	15	17	7	78	14	8	2	96	4	0	6	92	7	1	12	73	22	4	9	61	16	23
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	17	80	11	9	19	80	13	7	6	100	0	0	18	92	7	1	22	83	14	3	22	69	16	16
FR	10	73	14	14	10	83	10	7	3	93	7	0	13	90	8	2	24	68	18	14	11	43	14	43
GE	5	76	11	13	5	63	12	25	2	75	11	15	6	57	18	25	13	64	8	29	9	81	6	13
HR	5	71	15	14	5	68	13	18	1	98	2	0	4	91	7	2	11	65	21	14	11	43	18	40
HU	7	83	13	4	8	88	9	3	2	94	3	3	8	95	5	0	16	85	14	1	11	73	16	11
IE	4	73	11	16	4	80	12	7	2	92	6	2	7	88	10	2	5	66	20	14	7	60	18	22
IS	16	52	22	26	15	63	16	21	4	94	0	6	7	87	9	4	18	73	18	10	20	47	21	32
LT	14	70	16	14	14	60	28	12	5	89	11	0	17	62	23	15	29	56	29	15	22	64	21	14
LV	9	72	17	11	8	60	21	19	1	86	13	1	6	84	12	5	19	64	20	17	13	55	23	22
MT	3	63	10	27	2	97	0	3	1	81	0	19	4	69	19	12	5	76	0	24	3	86	2	12
NL	9	77	17	6	10	77	18	5	4	96	3	1	13	82	17	0	18	62	25	12	13	51	31	18
NO	10	65	19	16	8	76	15	9	2	95	5	0	6	90	9	1	12	78	16	6	13	61	19	20
PL	13	65	13	22	15	71	14	15	5	95	5	1	15	86	10	3	33	56	21	23	22	31	14	55
PT	5	61	17	21	6	65	18	17	2	86	13	1	5	78	13	9	13	64	24	12	13	35	19	46
RO	2	82	18	0	3	71	16	13	1	96	4	0	3	84	16	1	7	57	27	16	2	64	25	11
SE	15	60	15	25	16	63	15	22	4	96	4	0	10	84	13	3	22	61	19	20	25	48	14	38
SK	5	66	23	10	6	80	14	6	2	92	4	4	7	79	12	9	15	72	19	9	6	42	32	26
av.	**8**	**71**	**15**	**14**	**9**	**72**	**16**	**12**	**3**	**92**	**6**	**2**	**8**	**81**	**13**	**6**	**15**	**68**	**19**	**13**	**13**	**56**	**18**	**26**

n.d.: no data.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.6b.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *2.8 Have you ever officially or unofficially interrupted your current #(main) study programme?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *AT, FI, GE, NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B4
Types and modes of study

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Key

Study flexibility across Europe

Across the EUROSTUDENT countries, various forms of study flexibility are evident. On average, 15 % of students have part-time status, 9 % are enrolled in distance learning programmes, and 23 % are studying predominantly or entirely online (categories not exclusive).

B 4

Structural variations in study modes across national higher education systems

National higher education systems exhibit varied relationships between study intensity and flexible study modes. Students appear to create their own flexibility through lower study intensity when formal structures are lacking. While most correlations lack significance, there are notable links between online and distance learning as well as between low study intensity and online learning.

Patterns in flexible study preference across demographics

Socio-demographic factors influence the uptake of flexible study modes across countries, with older students and those without tertiary educational background favouring part-time, distance, or online studies. Additionally, students reliant on their own employment income, studying Education or Business, Administration and Law, low study intensity, or with longer transition periods and alternative access routes into higher education are more inclined towards flexible modes.

Schirmer, H. (2024). Types and modes of study. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024*. wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew004

findings

Satisfaction with study programme

On cross-country average, around two thirds of students recommend their main study programme, with similar satisfaction rates among online students and above-average satisfaction among part-time students in many countries.

Social disparities across types of HEIs

Universities and research-intensive institutions enrol higher proportions of students from well-off and tertiary educated backgrounds. Similarly, institutions with high academic staff provision and research intensity also attract students from more privileged backgrounds. However, differences based on field specialisation and institutional control are less pronounced.

Study mode disparities across types of HEIs

Non-universities, institutions with higher imbalance in the student-to-academic staff ratios, less research-intensive, as well as subject-specialised HEIs show higher proportions of flexible study formats among their student populations. Although public HEIs more often offer part-time studies, students at private HEIs are more often distance or online students.

Main issues

While > *Chapter B3* addresses the openness of (re-)entry options to higher education (as an instrument for ensuring lifelong learning), the present chapter is dedicated to the different modes through which broad participation may be ensured (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020; EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2020), as well as the diversification of the institutional higher education landscape that might provide study structures for opening participation, but also has the potential to contribute to and enhance social inequalities (Arum et al., 2007).

Understanding the prevalence, demographics, and satisfaction levels associated with flexible study modes – such as part-time studies, distance learning, and online lectures – offers insight into the evolving landscape of higher education, particularly in the context of rapid technological advancements (Orr et al., 2018) and global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Coughlan et al., 2022; Katić et al., 2021). By examining the commonality and interconnections of flexible study modes between and within countries, we can gain a deeper understanding of shifting paradigms in educational delivery and accessibility (Fiorini et al., 2022; Hunt & Loxley, 2021; Orr et al., 2018). Exploring the demographics of students engaging in flexible study modes allows for a more nuanced understanding of educational equity and inclusivity, shedding light on the diverse needs and preferences of learners across different contexts (Matthews & Kotzee, 2020). Investigating student satisfaction in flexible study modes provides valuable feedback for educational institutions to refine and optimise their offerings, ultimately enhancing the quality of the learning experience and fostering student success (Ober & Kochmańska, 2022).

- How common are flexible study modes and how are they connected?
- Who studies in flexible study modes?
- How satisfied are students in flexible study modes with their course of study?

Exploring various characteristics of higher education institutions (HEIs) offers valuable insights into the diversity and dynamics of educational landscapes (Lepori, 2022). This includes different types of HEIs, such as universities and non-universities, and the level of private sector involvement, as well as education intensity (students per academic staff; Chifamba & Pedzisai, 2022; Palmisano et al., 2022), PhD intensity (as a proxy for institutional research intensity), and subject concentration (HEIs specialisation in certain study subjects). While institutional diversity can enrich a higher education system in numerous ways, such diversity becomes problematic when it reproduces and perpetuates social inequalities (Arum et al., 2007; Marginson, 2016; Palmisano et al., 2022; U-Multirank, 2022). Access to certain types of HEIs may be made difficult for specific societal groups, thereby reproducing and institutionalising social divides associated with obtaining a degree from e.g. a particularly research-intensive or highly specialised institution. Of particular concern here are the prosperity within students' families (which, according to the European objectives for the social dimension of education, should not influence institutional choice) and the educational background (a categorisation in which many inequalities in the endowment with economic, social, and cultural capital culminate). Understanding different HEI characteristics in the context of flexible modes of study sheds light on how these institutions create opportunities for flexible learning and cater to various student demographics. This understanding is essential for

addressing questions about the differential access and opportunities among students across diverse institutional settings.

- Are different types of HEI socially selective?
- Do the study modes differ between different types of HEI?

Data and interpretation

Variations and connections of flexible study modes

At the level of cross-country averages, considerable differences can already be identified regarding different types of flexible study modes (Figure B4.1). On average across countries, 15 % of students have an official part-time status, with an additional one percent having an officially classified 'other' status. In contrast, there are an average of 9 % of students enrolled in distance learning programmes. Finally, almost a quarter (23 %) were predominantly or entirely studying online at the time of survey (in most countries summer 2022/2023, see > *Chapter C3*), with an additional 20 % balancing their courses between online and in-person lectures.

Box B4.1

Methodological note: Types of flexible study modes

In the analyses presented in this chapter, three forms of flexible study modes are distinguished:

- Full-time vs. part-time (+ other) students: This classification is based on students' formal current status, as recognised by law and HEIs in their respective countries. Students are expected to report their status according to their 'de jure status', not their 'de facto status' (which can be different based on the time allocation). The 'other' category encompasses alternative study modes officially recognised by institutions.
- Distance learners vs. attendance learners: This categorisation identifies students enrolled in study programmes that lack physical face-to-face interaction in lectures, classes, or taught studies, excluding exams.
- Students studying mostly/completely online vs. students studying in balanced modes vs. students studying mostly/completely in person: This categorisation stemmed from students' responses to a Likert scale question, where they rated their current ratio of online to in-person teaching, with options ranging from 1 for completely online to 5 for completely in person. Students who chose options 1 and 2 were grouped as 'students studying mostly/completely online', those who chose option 3 were categorised as 'students studying in balanced modes', and those who selected options 4 and 5 were classified as 'students studying mostly/completely in person'.

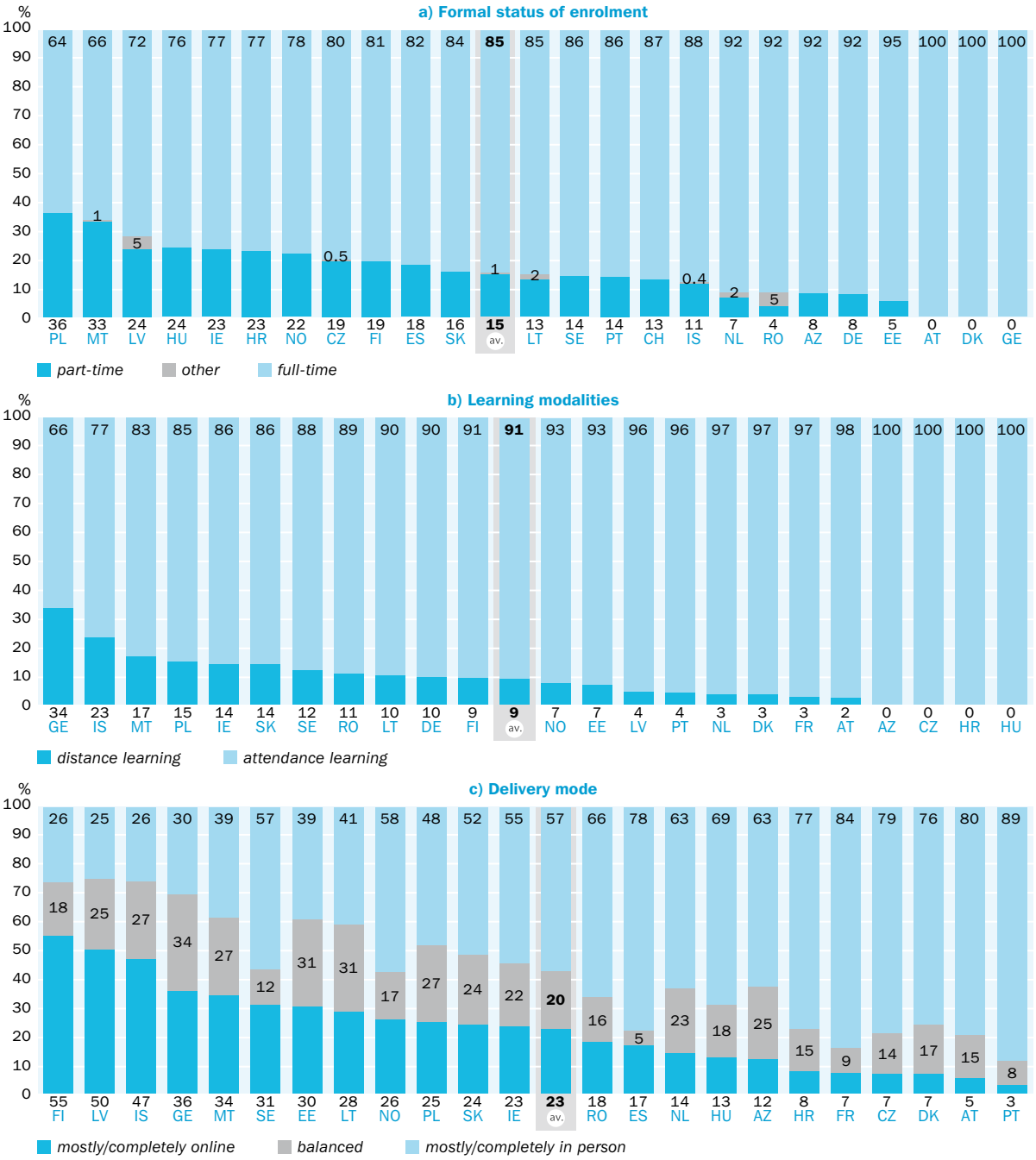
Even greater variance becomes apparent when examining the range of these three different forms of flexibilisation across EUROSTUDENT countries:

- At least a third of students in Poland and Malta have an official part-time status, while such an official part-time solution is not offered in Austria, Denmark, and Georgia. 'Other' official regulations regarding time commitment exist in relevant proportions only in Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Romania.

Figure B4.1

Study statuses and modes

Shares of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.5, C.5b, TM.51.* ***No data:*** *FR (formal status of enrolment), CH, ES (learning modalities), CH, DE (delivery mode).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *1.8 What is your current formal status as a student? 1.2 Is your current #(main) study programme formally defined as a distance learning programme? M3.1 Please indicate the actual current and what you consider the ideal ratio between online and in-person teaching and learning in your studies. [actual current ratio]*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, CZ, DK, FI, HR, NO, PL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- In Georgia and Iceland, distance learning is very prevalent – with over a third and just under a quarter of students, respectively, studying in this mode – whereas the possibility of distance learning is not available in Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Croatia, and Hungary.
- While about half of students in Finland, Latvia, and Iceland predominantly or entirely attend their courses online, the proportion in Croatia, France, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Austria, and Portugal is less than 10 %.

Table B4.1

Relationship between part-time study status, distance learning, online mode, and low study intensity

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), statistical significance (p)

	Part-time + other	Distance learning	Mostly/Completely online	Low study intensity
Part-time + other	$r = 1.000$			
Distance learning	$r = -0.034$ ($p = 0.883$)	$r = 1.000$		
Mostly/Completely online	$r = 0.255$ ($p = 0.252$)	$r = 0.589$ ($p = 0.005$)	$r = 1.000$	
Low study intensity	$r = 0.355$ ($p = 0.088$)	$r = 0.128$ ($p = 0.571$)	$r = 0.462$ ($p = 0.027$)	$r = 1.000$

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.5, C.5b, TM.51, H.54.* ***No data:*** *FR (formal status of enrolment), CH, ES, NO (learning modalities), CH, DE (delivery mode).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *1.8 What is your current formal status as a student? 1.2 Is your current #(main) study programme formally defined as a distance learning programme? M3.1 Please indicate the actual current and what you consider the ideal ratio between online and in-person teaching and learning in your studies. [actual current ratio] 3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, CZ, DK, FI, HR, NO, PL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Box B4.2

Methodological note: Correlation

Correlation is a measure of a relationship between variables. Correlation coefficients (i.e. Pearson's product-moment coefficient; r) do not indicate causality and are not used to make predictions, but instead show the degree of association between variables. In correlated data, the change in the magnitude of one variable is associated with a change in the magnitude of another variable, either in the same (positive correlation) or in the opposite (negative correlation) direction. Values of r closer to 1 or -1 indicate stronger relationships, while values closer to 0 indicate weaker relationships. Taking established thresholds as a reference, the resulting correlation coefficients can be classified as ranging from negligible (r: 0.00 to (-)0.10) or weak (r: 0.10 to 0.39) to moderate (r: 0.40 to 0.69; Schober et al., 2018). Established significance levels such as $p < 0.05$ indicate the probability of observing the correlation coefficient by chance – p-values above 0.05 indicate random findings; only selected findings in Table B4.1 may consequently be interpreted as statistically significant (i.e. relationships between online mode and distance learning as well as between low study intensity and online mode) and only these therefore do not represent random findings.

The correlation matrix shown in Table B4.1 analyses whether the three mentioned forms of flexible studying go hand in hand within countries and establishes a connection to the study intensity in countries. Most relationships are not significant, indicating the diversity and variation between national higher education systems regarding their study statuses and modes: In most cases, one characteristic does not coincide with another. Specifically, low study intensity is not correlated with the aggregated part-time and 'other' statuses or distance learning, again confirming (and expanding) the finding that student populations are creating their own flexibility in case the higher education system lacks a formal way to provide it (Hauschildt et al., 2021). However, online and distance learning are moderately ($r = 0.589$) and significantly ($p = 0.005$) correlated. Finally, low study intensity (mainly with regard to taught studies; > *Chapter B5*) is more common in higher education systems where broader shares of the student population are studying mostly or completely online ($r = 0.462$, $p = 0.027$).

In lack of formal flexible modes, students create their own flexibility.

Socio-demographic and study-related preferences for flexible study modes

Complementing socio-demographic and study-related trends in different forms of flexible study mode utilisation.

We now know that national higher education systems differ considerably in terms of the prevalence and extent of study flexibility. However, it remains to be seen whether common trends exist regarding the user groups of these flexible study forms. So, who are the students making use of the opportunities of part-time, distance, and online studies? In fact, despite all national differences regarding the range of offerings, common trends can be observed concerning a variety of student characteristics (Figure B4.2):

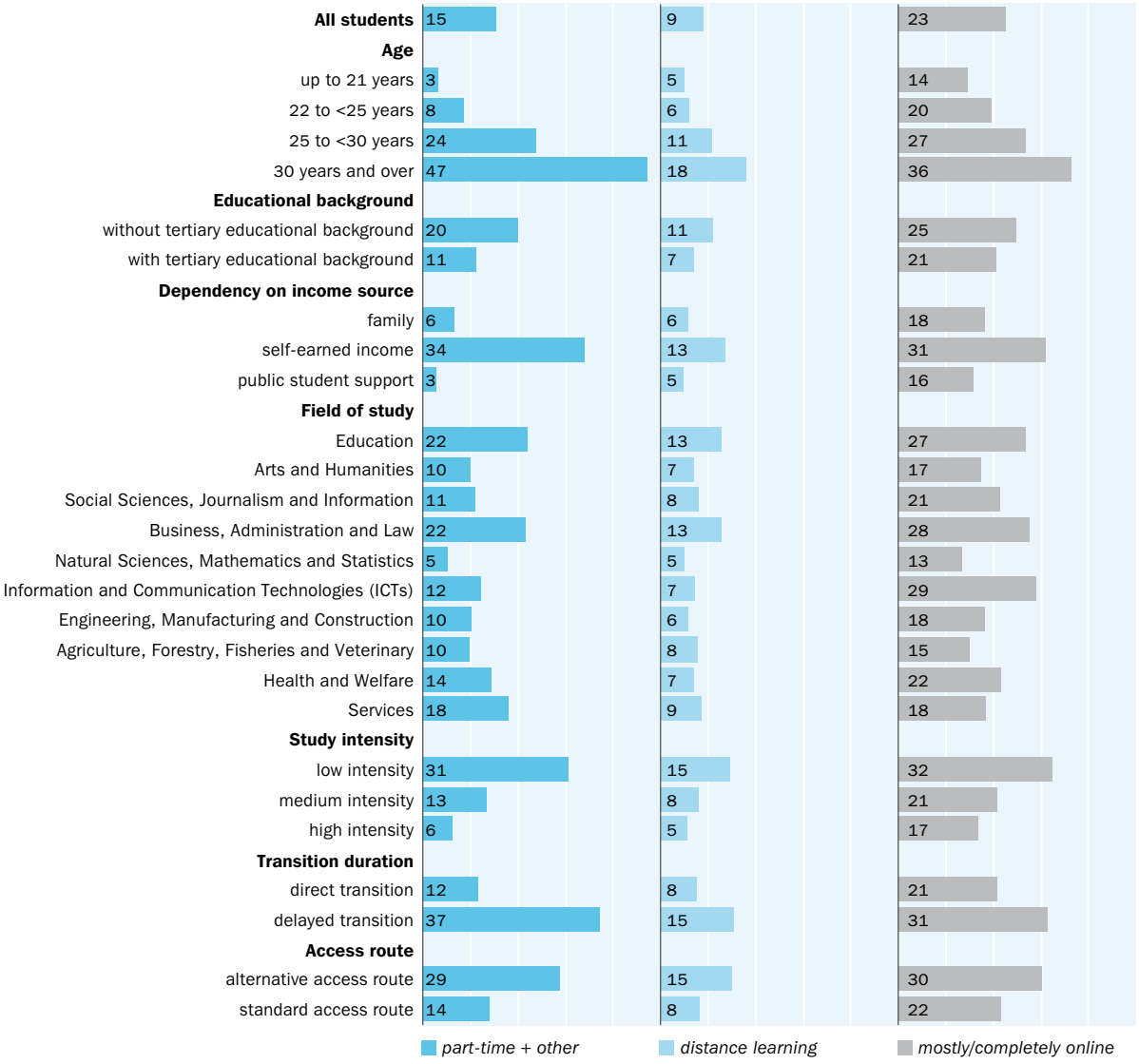
- The higher the age group, the more likely it is that part-time, distance, or online studies are embraced.
- Students without a tertiary educational background more frequently utilise the three forms of flexible studying on average across countries.
- Students whose income relies heavily (> 50 %) on earnings from employment make use of the opportunities of flexible studying much more often than students whose income stems mostly from family sources or public student support.
- Students in the fields of Education as well as Business, Administration and Law more frequently engage in part-time, distance, or online studies compared to those in other subject groups. Additionally (and not surprisingly), the group of students in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) stands out with a disproportionately high level of online studies.
- The higher the study intensity (i.e. the time spent on lectures and personal studies), the less likely a flexible study mode is adopted.
- Students who have a transition period of more than 2 years between leaving the school system and entering higher education more frequently opt for part-time, distance, or online studies than students with a relatively direct transition path from school into higher education.
- This finding is also reflected in terms of the access route (see > *Chapter B3* regarding the association between delayed entry to higher education and non-traditional study qualification routes); students with alternative pathways to higher education are disproportionately engaged in part-time, distance, or online studies.

The trends shown and described can be observed in all countries, with very few exceptions and to varying degrees (> *Database*).

Figure B4.2

Study statuses and modes by student characteristics

Cross-country averages (unweighted, in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.5, C.5b, TM.51.* ***No data:*** *FR (formal status of enrolment), CH, ES, NO (learning modalities), CH, DE (delivery mode).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *1.8 What is your current formal status as a student? 1.2 Is your current #(main) study programme formally defined as a distance learning programme? M3.1 Please indicate the actual current and what you consider the ideal ratio between online and in-person teaching and learning in your studies. [actual current ratio]*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, CZ, DK, FI, HR, NO, PL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Flexible study modes and satisfaction

Generally, on cross-country average, nearly two-thirds of all students would agree with the statement that they would recommend their current main study programme (65 %; Figure B4.3). This also corresponds to the proportion of the subgroup of predominantly online students (65 %). Students with part-time study status would

recommend their programme even more at 69 % – slightly higher than the overall average of students across countries. However, a closer look at specific countries reveals a somewhat more nuanced picture of satisfaction with the study programme by study mode:

- While the proportion of online students who would recommend their study programme (as depicted in the cross-country average) roughly corresponds to that among all students in a large number of countries, Georgia and Romania stand out, where online students would recommend their programme much more frequently than their respective peers in balanced and predominantly face-to-face study modes. Conversely, in the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal, and Croatia, students in face-to-face studies are more satisfied than their peers in online study.

Part-time students would commonly recommend their study programme.

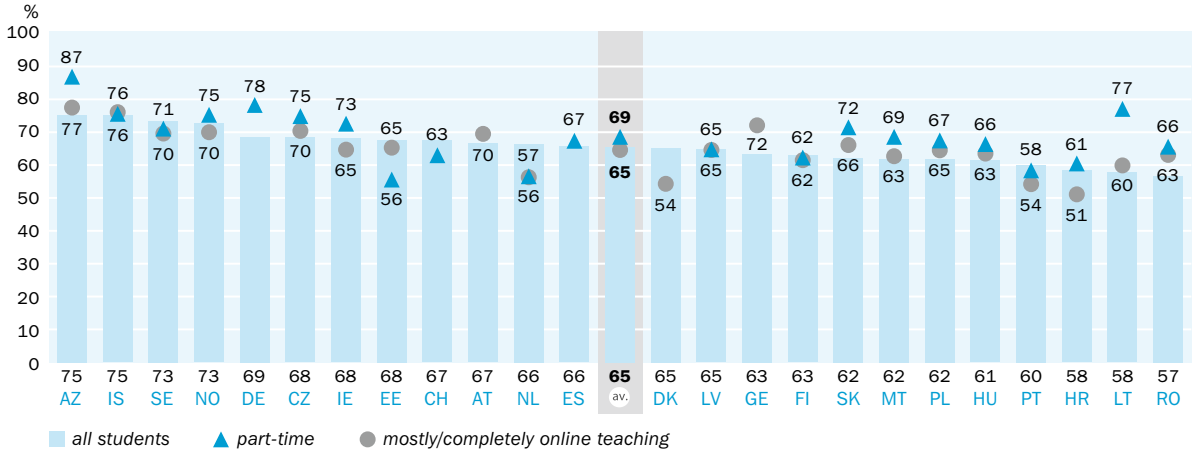
- Satisfaction with the study programme is significantly higher among part-time students in a large number of countries; in 8 out of the 21 countries where official part-time studies are possible, the proportion of part-time students who would recommend their study programme is at least 5 percentage points above the average of all students. Only in Estonia and (again) the Netherlands is satisfaction among part-time students considerably below the average of all students.

B 4

Figure B4.3 ⬇

Student endorsement of current study programmes by part-time study status and online mode

Shares of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.11.* ***No data:*** *FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.1 Generally, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your studies? [I would recommend my current #(main) study programme. (Strong) agreement.]*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Fields of study and degree structure

Large shares of students in the field of Business, Administration and Law.

Different subject groups are taken up by students in the EUROSTUDENT countries to varying degrees (Table B4.2). A common finding is that the Business, Administration and Law subject group constitutes the largest (18 out of 25 countries) or at least the second-largest (in an additional 5 countries) proportion in most countries. A lower proportion can only be found in Azerbaijan (where the Education field has the largest share) and Sweden (where Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction takes the top rank). Additionally, in many countries, large proportions of students are found in the

groups of Health and Welfare or Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction. Considerable differences in subject group preferences regarding gender are outlined in > Chapter B1.

In line with standardisation efforts within the Bologna Process, large majorities of students are enrolled in programmes following the two-cycle degree structure, i.e. Bachelor (ISCED 6) and Master programmes (ISCED 7). Relatively large proportions (more than 10 %) of students in short-cycle degree programmes are found in Denmark, France, Ireland, Latvia, and Malta. Apart from Sweden (19 %) and Norway (9 %), short national degree programmes (corresponding to an ISCED level of 6) as well as other types of degrees play a relatively minor or no role. Long national degree programmes, corresponding to an ISCED level of 7, have a significantly higher importance in many countries and can account for up to 21 % (France) or even 32 % (Sweden) of students in a country.

Social selectivity across HEI types

Certain HEI types tend to be socially selected.

As expected (and in line with the high correlation between parental finances and students' educational background; > Chapter B2), most trends in the composition of HEIs regarding social and educational backgrounds run parallel to each other (Figure B4.4):

- Universities, typically institutions with the right to award doctoral degrees, have a higher proportion of students who rate their parents to be (very) well-off and students with tertiary educated parental backgrounds.
- HEIs with (very) high balance between students and academic staff at HEIs consist of higher proportions of students from affluent backgrounds and with tertiary education background compared to HEIs with lower staffing levels.
- The more research-intensive the HEI (as approximated here by doctoral student enrolment), the higher the proportion of students from well-off and tertiary educated parental backgrounds.

A marked difference in social composition is not initially evident regarding the differentiation of different types of HEIs based on their field specialisation (Figure B4.4). Interestingly, the differentiation of social composition between public and private HEIs does not yield differences, whereas the differentiation of educational background by institutional control does indeed suggest that a higher proportion of students from tertiary educated parental backgrounds study at public HEIs. What is the underlying mechanism? As a glance at Table B4.3 and Table B4.4 reveals, the cross-country averages depicted in Figure B4.4 provide only a rough and necessarily abbreviated overview – national specifics, which certainly exist[1], are thus levelled out. At the same time, despite the strong relationship between parental financial status and educational background (> Chapter B2), it should not be assumed lightly that there is a simple match between both characteristics: Differences based on educational background are not only an expression of economic disparities between students' parental homes but also encompass the entire interplay of social and cultural resources that shape educational decisions.

1 *For example, in countries like Austria or Lithuania, contrary to the cross-country trend, private HEIs are composed to a greater extent of students from tertiary educational backgrounds than public HEIs.*

Box B4.3

Methodological note: EUROSTUDENT-ETER data merge

The European Tertiary Education Register (ETER)[2] is a comprehensive database encompassing information about HEIs across 41 European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries, offering detailed insights into institutional activities, including student demographics, personnel, finances, and outputs like graduates (Lepori et al., 2023). ETER aims to provide reliable, standardised data for comparative analysis and policymaking in the European higher education landscape. In order to explore potential synergy effects, EUROSTUDENT's extensive student survey data have been supplemented with a selection of eight institutional insights sourced from the most recent information available (2020, in some cases 2019) in the ETER database (Lepori, 2023). While the ETER indicators may not cover the entire EUROSTUDENT sample (due to missing HEIs in the ETER database), they are nevertheless informative for uncovering broader patterns. In the context of the chapter at hand, four indicators are analysed:

- institutional control (differentiating HEIs under public control or mostly financed by the state from private HEIs and those mostly funded by private sources),
- education intensity (HEI's number of diploma, Bachelor, and Master students divided by academic staff),
- PhD intensity (HEI's number of PhD students divided by number of students),
- and subject concentration (index computed as the sum of the squares of the share of Bachelor and Master students in each of the 10 ISCED-F 2013 subject fields (Herfindahl concentration index), ranging from 1 = all students in a single field to 0.1 = students equally distributed between fields).

Study mode differences between types of HEI

The range of flexible study modes is related to the type of HEI.

After analysing the prevalence of flexible study modes and their utilisation by specific student groups on one hand, and the social selectivity of certain types of institutions on the other hand, the question arises regarding the interconnection of study modes and institutional characteristics. Regarding formal status of enrolment, learning modalities, and delivery mode, there are often parallel and mostly very clear differences between types of institutions (Figure B4.5):

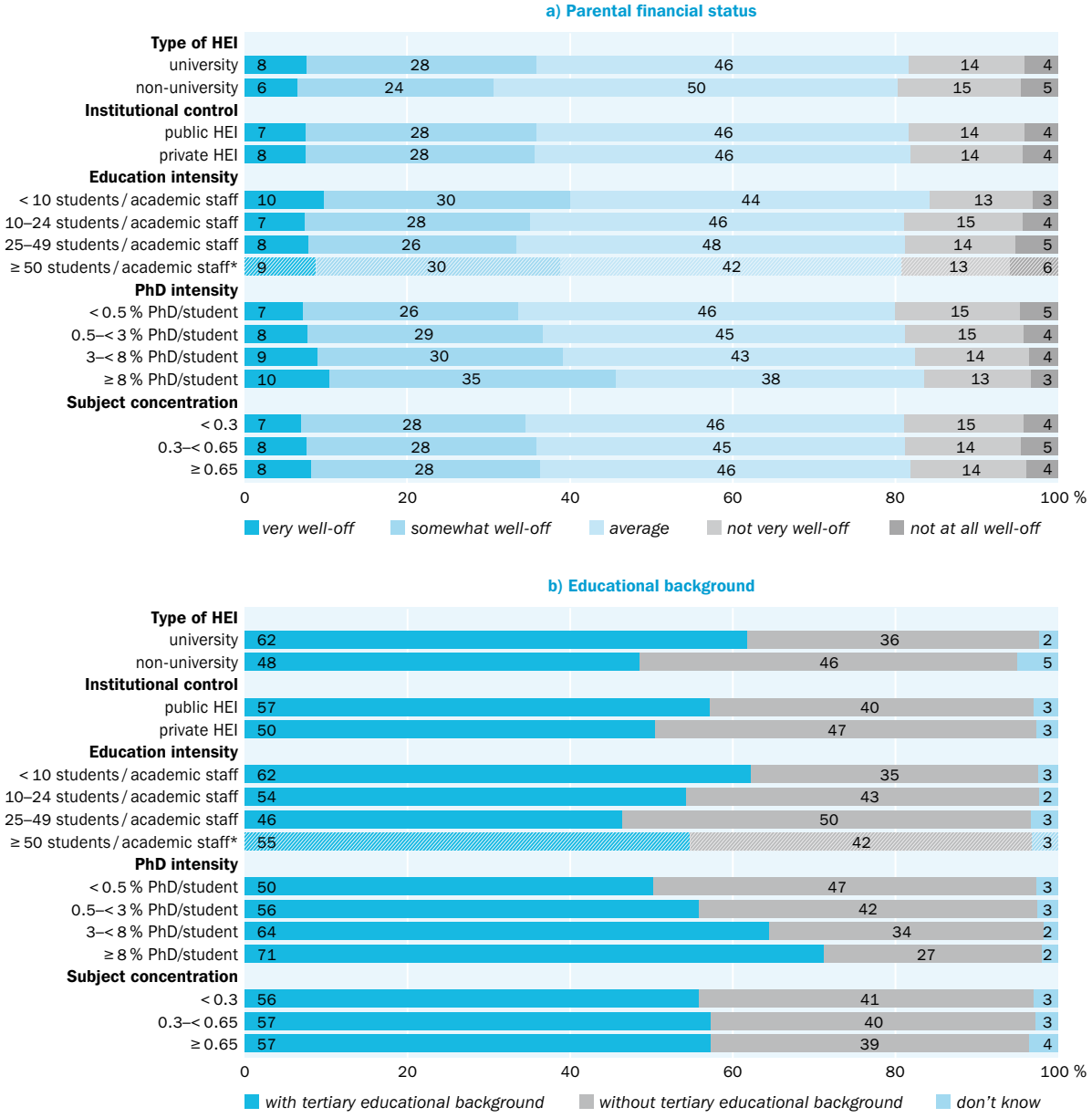
- Non-universities appear as providers of part-time, distance, and online study formats to considerably higher extent than universities.
- While public HEIs more frequently offer part-time studies than private HEIs, they lag behind in terms of distance and online formats.
- The larger the imbalance between students and academic staff at HEIs, the more likely its students are engaged in part-time, distance, or online study formats.
- The higher the research intensity of HEIs (PhD intensity), the lower the proportion of part-time, distance, or online study formats among students.
- The more specialised HEIs are in certain fields of study, the higher the proportion of part-time, distance, or online study formats.

2 https://eter-project.com/

Figure B4.4

Composition of types of HEIs by social background

Cross-country averages (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.4, D.3.* ***No data:*** *CH (parental financial status), ES (educational background).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/#guardian and father/#guardian have obtained? 6.8 How well-off financially do you think your parents (or #guardians) are compared with other families? Source: PIRLS 2006. Copyright © 2005 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Publisher: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education, Boston College.*

Note(s): ** Due to low number of cases (i.e. few countries with ≥50 students / academic staff) and large variation of values between these few cases, the cross-country average is not significant, and can consequentially not serve as reliable source of information.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR, GE, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

It is evident that different types of institutions also serve different target groups, and the specialisation of the higher education landscape can indeed contribute to the diversification of various study offerings (and thus to offering demanded flexible study modes). The trends shown and described can be observed in all countries, with very few exceptions and to varying degrees (> *Database*).

Figure B4.5

Composition of types of HEIs by study statuses and modes

Cross-country averages (unweighted, in %)

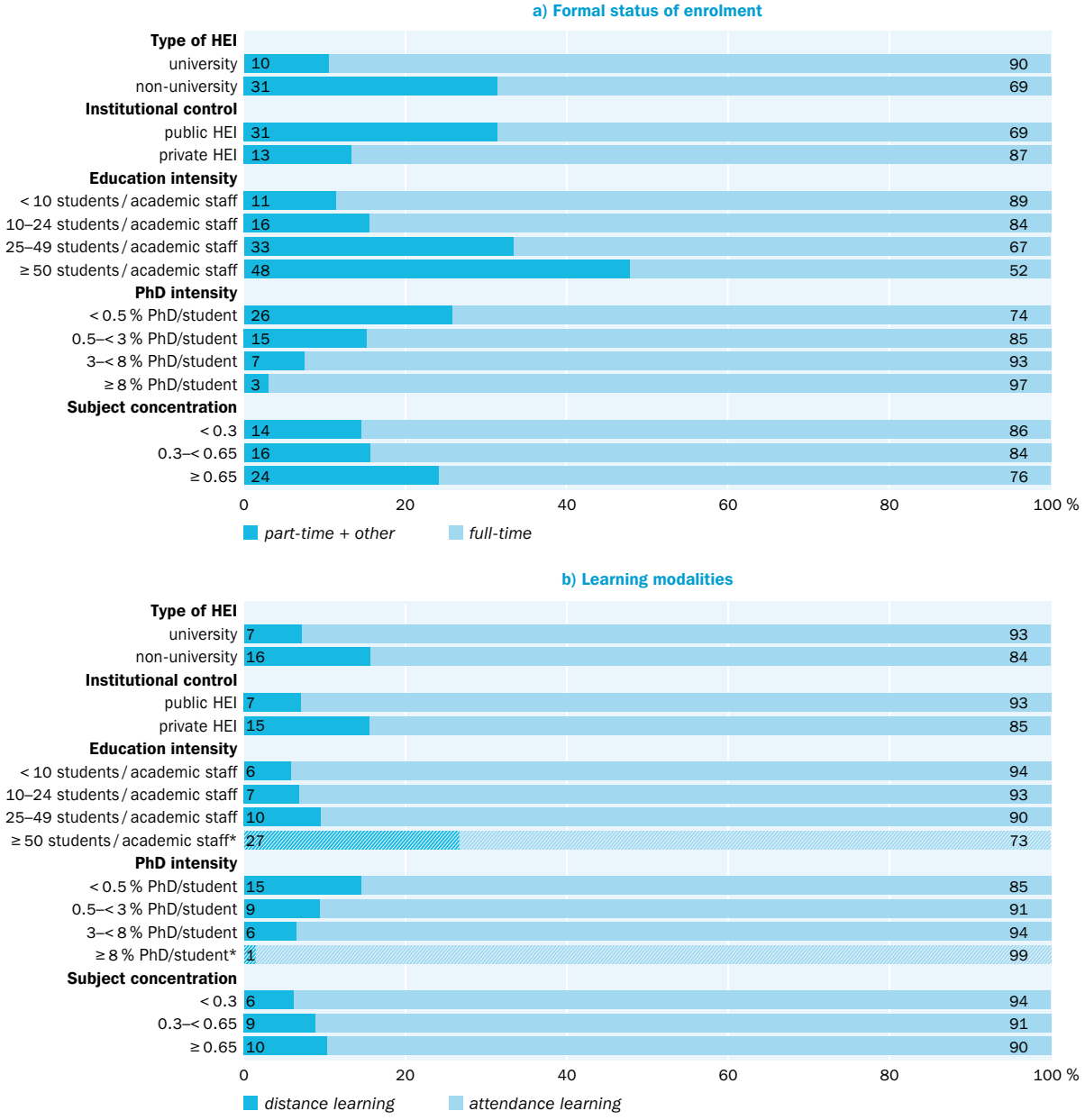
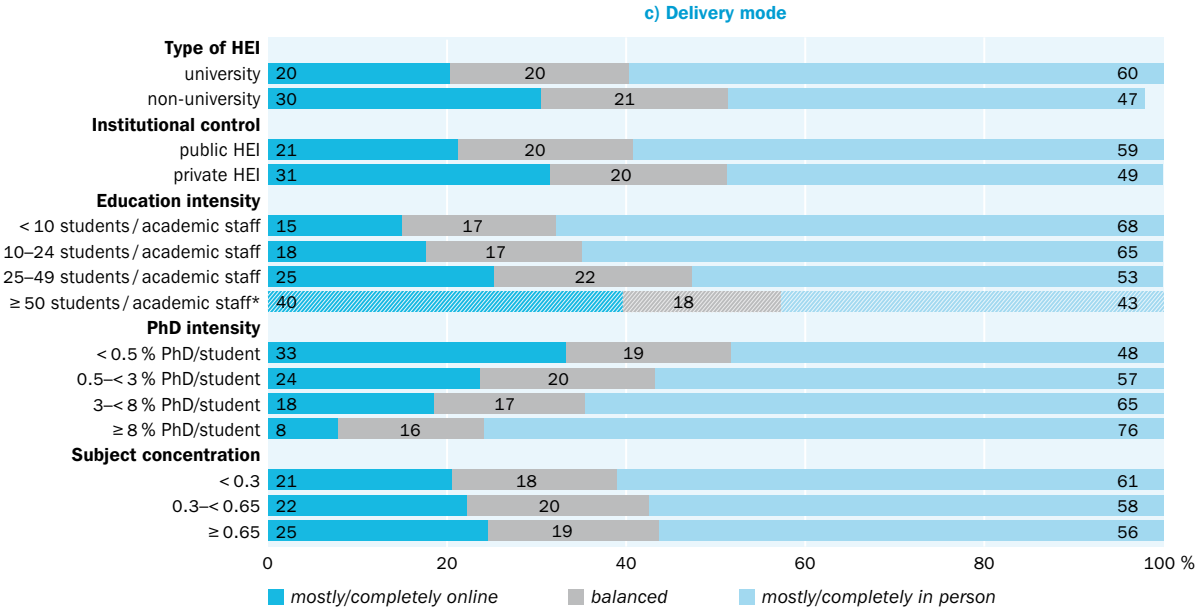


Figure B4.5 (continued)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.5, C.5b, TM.51.* ***No data:*** *FR (formal status of enrolment), CH, ES, NO (learning modalities), CH, DE (delivery mode).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *1.8 What is your current formal status as a student? 1.2 Is your current #(main) study programme formally defined as a distance learning programme? M3.1 Please indicate the actual current and what you consider the ideal ratio between online and in-person teaching and learning in your studies. [actual current ratio]*

Note(s): ** Due to low number of cases (i.e. few countries with ≥ 50 students / academic staff, ≥ 8 % PhD/student) and large variation of values between these few cases, the cross-country average is not significant and can consequentially not serve as reliable source of information.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, CZ, DK, FI, HR, NO, PL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Discussion and policy considerations

The findings about types and modes of study reveal a diverse landscape of study flexibility across European higher education systems, with significant variations in part-time enrolment, distance learning availability, and online study prevalence. National systems demonstrate varied relationships between study intensity and flexible modes, highlighting students' adaptability amidst structural differences. Socio-demographic factors strongly influence study mode preferences, with older students, those without tertiary educational background, job income-dependent, low intensity students, as well as students with delayed higher education entry, or alternative access route favouring flexible modes. Overall, satisfaction with study programmes is high, particularly among part-time students – with certain national exceptions. Social disparities are apparent across institution types, with universities, institutions with a favourable student-staff ratio, and research-intensive institutions enrolling students from more well-off backgrounds. Study mode disparities reflect the diverse target groups served by different institution types: Non-universities, institutions with higher imbalance in the student-to-academic-staff ratios, less research-intensive, as well as subject-specialised HEIs show higher proportions of flexible study formats among their student populations. Understanding these findings is crucial for addressing inequities and enhancing access to higher education opportunities.

Considerations for policymakers

At the system level, there are no significant correlations between the shares of students with official part-time study status and those enrolled in distance learning programmes, nor between part-time study statuses and students predominantly studying online (Table B4.1). This underscores the varied and diverse structure of higher education systems concerning flexible study modes. The insignificant correlations between low study intensity and both part-time and distance studies reinforce previous findings that student populations tend to find their own ways to adapt higher education to their needs when formal structures are lacking. However, it is crucial for policymakers to consider formalising these flexible study modes to effectively plan resources and enhance student satisfaction. Establishing official frameworks for part-time and distance learning can provide clarity for students and institutions, leading to better resource allocation and increased satisfaction among students. This approach aligns with the analysis indicating increased satisfaction among part-time students (Figure B4.3), highlighting the importance of formalising flexible study options in higher education policy planning. Additionally, policymakers should ensure that resources and support services are readily available to students engaging in flexible study modes, including access to academic advising, counselling, and technical assistance (Schirmer, 2024).

Considerations for HEI staff

However, too strong reliance on flexible education in the form of distance or online learning might considerably disrupt peer integration (Fiorini et al., 2022; Głodowska et al., 2022; Schirmer, 2024). Consequently, part-time studies, distance education, and online lectures should be evaluated regularly to ensure student satisfaction and retention – particularly in countries where lower recommendation levels among part-time students have been identified (i.e. Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, and Portugal) – as is already planned within the framework of the European quality assurance measures[3]. Provision of comprehensive support services tailored to the needs of students engaging in flexible study should be ensured, including academic advising, technical support, and access to resources. Moreover, exploring avenues to foster peer interaction and community building within flexible study programmes can contribute to a more enriching learning experience. This may involve exploring innovative approaches like virtual study groups or online discussion forums. Furthermore, collaborating with policymakers and stakeholders to advocate for supportive policies and resources can enhance the delivery of flexible study modes and bolster student success.

Considerations for researchers

Further research could delve deeper into the complex relationship between study modes and their user groups on the one hand and social selectivity in institutional types: Going beyond the highly aggregated information presented in the chapter at hand will most certainly enhance our knowledge about segregational processes in the field of higher education. Additionally, analyses could be enriched by adding qualitative information about national legislation specifics regarding part-time study statuses, distance learning modalities, and online teaching infrastructure.

3 *https://www.ehea.info/page-eqar, https://www.eqar.eu/.*

Tables

Table B4.2

Field of study and current degree programme

Share of students (in %)

	Field of study										Current degree programme					
	Education	Arts and Humanities	Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	Business, Administration and Law	Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services	Short-cycle	Bachelor	Master	Short national	Long national	Other
AT	15	11	10	21	9	7	13	1	12	1	n/a	59	30	n/a	11	n/a
AZ	21	11	9	18	3	4	19	2	7	6	n/a	90	10	n/a	n/a	n/a
CH	12	10	11	23	10	4	13	1	14	1	n/a	71	28	n/a	n/a	1
CZ	13	9	9	21	6	7	11	4	13	6	n/a	64	25	n/a	12	n/a
DE	5	13	9	24	10	8	18	1	9	2	n/a	57	32	n/a	11	n/a
DK	6	9	10	19	7	6	15	1	25	2	10	64	26	n/a	n/a	n/a
EE	8	14	9	15	7	10	15	1	15	5	n/a	67	25	n/a	8	n/a
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n/a	66	15	n/a	17	1
FI	6	10	6	19	4	11	19	3	19	4	n/a	72	26	n/a	2	n/a
FR	3	13	9	30	12	3	15	1	12	3	14	40	22	0.4	21	3
GE	4	10	15	27	4	5	10	3	20	4	n/a	71	11	2	17	n/a
HR	7	9	5	29	4	7	16	3	14	5	n/a	59	24	0.0	17	n/a
HU	11	8	10	25	3	9	13	3	13	5	4	62	15	n/a	18	n/a
IE	5	14	6	20	13	9	13	2	16	3	11	72	14	n/a	n/a	4
IS	15	12	13	22	5	5	9	1	17	1	8	66	24	0.4	0.3	2
LT	4	10	10	28	4	7	14	2	19	2	n/a	75	16	n/a	9	n/a
LV	7	8	7	26	2	8	14	2	18	8	19	57	16	0.4	8	n/a
MT	11	10	10	28	4	7	6	n.d.	20	4	12	53	30	n/a	5	n/a
NL	9	8	14	26	7	5	10	1	16	4	2	76	20	2	n/a	n/a
NO	19	9	10	20	4	5	10	1	20	2	n/a	47	18	9	18	8
PL	7	10	13	24	4	6	14	2	14	8	n/a	62	22	n/a	16	n/a
PT	4	10	12	20	7	3	19	3	18	5	5	67	18	n/a	9	1
RO	4	8	10	21	4	7	23	5	18	1	n/a	66	21	n/a	13	n/a
SE	15	11	14	12	6	6	19	1	16	1	1	27	13	19	32	8
SK	13	6	10	19	4	6	11	3	21	6	n/a	64	27	n/a	9	n/a
av.	**9**	**10**	**10**	**22**	**6**	**6**	**14**	**2**	**16**	**4**	**3**	**63**	**21**	**1**	**10**	**1**

n.d.: no data. n/a: not applicable. Decimal points shown for values < .5

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.3, C.4.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *1.7 What is your current #(main) study programme? 1.6 With which degree does your current #(main) study programme conclude?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *AT, AZ, CH, CZ, DK, FR, IS, GE, LT, NO, PL, RO, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B4.3

Composition of HEIs by educational background (part 1)

Share of students (in %)

	Type of HEI				Institutional control				Education intensity							
	University		Non-university		Public HEI		Private HEI		< 10 students/ lecturer		10–24 students/ lecturer		25–49 students/ lecturer		≥ 50 students/ lecturer	
	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background
AT	43	56	55	45	46	53	31	68	42	57	48	52	42	57	17	83
AZ	34	66	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
CH	33	64	46	48	38	57	51	45	38	57	41	57	48	46	n/a	n/a
CZ	47	53	61	38	47	53	58	40	41	59	50	50	68	30	66	32
DE	33	62	40	51	36	58	36	60	30	65	38	56	41	48	49	42
DK	18	81	28	68	22	75	n/a	n/a	18	80	20	79	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
EE	30	68	42	54	32	65	35	60	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	21	78	39	58	30	67	n/a	n/a	21	78	40	57	29	68	n/a	n/a
FR	32	64	27	68	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
GE	14	83	14	84	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
HR	54	45	65	33	56	43	55	43	65	35	55	44	74	24	n/a	n/a
HU	39	59	53	46	41	58	48	51	32	67	42	57	45	54	n/a	n/a
IE	33	64	47	46	38	58	n.d.	n.d.	37	59	55	41	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
IS	41	58	n/a	n/a	41	58	n/a	n/a	27	72	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
LT	34	63	53	43	40	56	34	62	34	62	37	60	48	45	n/a	n/a
LV	30	66	50	45	31	65	38	58	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
MT	41	49	39	32	40	47	n/a	n/a	39	49	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NL	22	76	38	56	30	65	n.d.	n.d.	19	79	30	65	33	63	t.f.c.	t.f.c.
NO	21	76	24	73	22	75	22	75	16	82	27	70	n/a	n/a	22	75
PL	45	54	66	30	45	53	56	41	36	63	48	51	57	42	56	41
PT	53	46	68	30	58	41	63	34	66	32	58	40	65	31	t.f.c.	t.f.c.
RO	54	45	n/a	n/a	54	45	53	46	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	59	40	58	41	n/a	n/a
SE	37	63	n/a	n/a	37	63	n/a	n/a	28	71	33	66	47	52	n/a	n/a
SK	53	46	77	22	53	46	77	22	46	54	58	41	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
av.	**36**	**62**	**46**	**48**	**40**	**57**	**47**	**50**	**35**	**62**	**43**	**54**	**50**	**46**	**42**	**55**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.3.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/#guardian and father/#guardian have obtained?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *AT, CH, FR, GE, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B4.4

Composition of types of HEI by educational background (part 2)

Share of students (in %)

	PhD intensity								Subject concentration					
	<0.5 % PhD/student		0.5–<3 % PhD/ student		3–<8 % PhD/ student		≥8 % PhD/student		<0.3 (low)		0.3–<0.65 (medium)		≥0.65 (high)	
	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	With tertiary educational background	Without tertiary educational background	Wwith tertiary educational background
AT	24	76	32	67	47	53	38	61	47	52	44	55	43	57
AZ	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
CH	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	36	61	31	65	40	55	25	72	45	52
CZ	56	42	53	46	42	57	35	65	49	50	44	56	53	46
DE	39	52	42	52	37	57	31	65	35	59	39	54	34	60
DK	n/a	n/a	21	77	17	81	15	82	21	77	25	71	20	77
EE	n/a	n/a	32	65	27	70	n/a	n/a	30	68	44	52	34	63
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	n/a	n/a	27	72	21	78	n/a	n/a	30	67	23	75	37	62
FR	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
GE	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
HR	66	33	60	39	45	54	n/a	n/a	55	44	59	40	67	31
HU	49	50	40	59	36	62	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	44	55	39	60	34	65
IE	54	41	41	53	27	70	n/a	n/a	38	58	42	52	30	67
IS	42	57	40	60	55	45	n/a	n/a	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
LT	22	73	36	61	29	69	n/a	n/a	40	56	41	56	27	69
LV	31	63	31	65	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	37	59	24	71	37	59
MT	n/a	n/a	41	49	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	40	49	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	48	24
NL	n/a	n/a	28	68	21	76	19	79	31	64	24	73	37	61
NO	25	72	27	70	16	81	16	83	22	75	25	71	20	78
PL	47	50	44	55	28	70	n/a	n/a	54	43	48	50	35	63
PT	58	39	69	29	48	50	n/a	n/a	58	41	67	31	57	41
RO	65	34	58	41	31	69	n/a	n/a	59	40	60	39	56	43
SE	44	56	47	53	32	67	29	71	38	61	30	69	29	71
SK	85	15	63	36	46	54	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	55	44	58	41	n/a	n/a
av.	**47**	**50**	**42**	**56**	**34**	**64**	**27**	**71**	**41**	**56**	**40**	**57**	**39**	**57**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, D.3.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *6.7 What is the highest level of education your mother/#guardian and father/#guardian have obtained?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *AT, CH, FR, GE, NL, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B5
Students' time budget

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Key

Time budget

Students' schedules are packed: on average, a student spends 48 hours per week on study-related activities (personal study time and taught studies) and work. In Latvia and Poland, students' time budget is highest with 54 hours spent on studying and working. In Finland, France, and Sweden – where students report the lowest time budget – the average is lower by more than 10 hours per week.

Time spent on work

On average, students spend 14 hours per week on paid work. Whether working while studying affects time available to spend on free time and/or study time depends on how many hours a week students work. While mostly free time suffers when working between 1 and 10 hours per week, working more than 10 hours per week is associated with reduced study time, too. Students who work 37 hours per week, on average, only spend 26 hours on their studies, compared to students without paid work who spend 38 hours on studying.

Time spent on study-related activities

On average, students studying mostly/completely online report spending 5 hours less on study-related activities (30 hours) than students studying mostly/completely in person (35 hours). This difference is mainly due to less time spent on taught studies. Differences in time spent on study-related activities also occur between students who identify as 'students' and those who identify as 'workers'. On average, 'workers' invest about two thirds of the time 'students' invest in studying. For the total time budget including time spent on work, the pattern is reversed (but less pronounced).

Menz, C., & Mandl, S. (2024). Students' time budget. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024*. wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew005

findings

Study time by degree level and by field of study

On average, students spend 16 hours per week on taught studies. Master students spend the least (12 hours), followed by Bachelor students (17 hours), and students in long national degrees (19 hours). On average, students spend 18 hours per week on personal study time. With 17 hours a week, the average Bachelor student tends to spend slightly less time on personal studies than a typical Master student (18 hours). However, in nearly all countries that offer a long national degree, those students spend a lot more time on personal studies (23 hours on average) than Bachelor or Master students do. Students in fields of Medicine and Dental Studies spend the most time on study-related activities (47 hours), whereas students in Education Science spend the least time on these activities (28 hours).

Study intensity and mental well-being

On average across all EUROSTUDENT countries, about one fifth of students studies up to 20 hours a week, half of the students study up to 40 hours a week, and nearly every third student studies more than 40 hours a week. On average, high-intensity students indicate a slightly lower level of mental well-being compared to low-intensity students. The differences between the two groups vary, with a large well-being gap between high- and low-intensity students in Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Sweden, and no differences in Finland and Georgia. However, there is no country in which high-intensity students indicate a higher level of mental well-being than low-intensity students.

Main issues

This chapter focuses on students' time budget in isolation as well as in relation with various factors (e.g. level of degree, teaching type, mental well-being). Gaining insights into students' time budget – and consequently into their time poverty (Vickery, 1977) – is of specific interest because this feeling of having too much to do and not enough time to do it is associated with reduced well-being, mental health, productivity, and creativity among others (for an overview, see Giurge et al., 2020).

Students' time budget

Logically, time is a limited resource, with every day consisting of only 24 hours. With time being that limited, sufficient time management skills are important. Students comprise a specific group whose time management skills are not only particularly necessary, but also regularly put to the test (see van der Meer et al., 2010; Wolters & Brady, 2021). When starting higher education directly after school, many students are faced with more freedom of choices and an expectation of being an independent learner compared to when they were enrolled at secondary school (Cifuentes Gomez et al., 2022; Leese, 2010; van der Meer et al., 2010). In addition, adult life offers new opportunities and especially students in their first year of higher education need to spend time on making new friends and engaging in social activities (van der Meer et al., 2010). However, students with a delayed entry into higher education might face different challenges (e.g. balancing family, work, and study life). Unsurprisingly, spending time on study-related tasks is generally considered being positive for study success (e.g. Diseth et al., 2010). However, spending time in taught classes is not equivalent to successful learning, e.g. due to using technology for non-academic reasons while in class (i.e. cyber-slacking), a common occurrence which is detrimental to learning (e.g. Kornhauser et al., 2016). Nevertheless, aspects that are beyond students' direct influence also have an effect on how much time they can spend on different (study-beneficial or study-detrimental) activities: for example, data from various countries show that some fields of study require more teaching hours than other fields of study (DZHW, 2018). In addition, a lot of universities moved their courses online as a result of the recent COVID-19 outbreak (see Barratt & Duran, 2021), which makes it worthwhile to explore how virtual studies relate to students' time budget. Taken together, there are many demands regarding students and their time budget, making it essential to understand what students spend their time on. Within this chapter, we will therefore investigate students' time budget in detail and have a look at further aspects that are associated with how students spend their time.

Combining studies and working

Being both a student and a worker is the reality for many higher education students (> *Chapter B6*). Research results regarding the effects of working while studying are ambiguous. On the one hand, positive effects are reported, for example, regarding future employment chances (e.g. Di Paolo & Matano, 2022; Masevičiūtė et al., 2018). On the other hand, negative effects – especially regarding study performance – are not to be denied (e.g. Benner & Curl, 2018). Irrespective of whether working while studying is supportive or detrimental for students' long-time study and work success, it is a fact that many students do (need to) work during their studies. Whether the time students invest in working is taken from time they would otherwise spend on leisure activities or study-related tasks gives an insight into how students manage their numerous responsibilities.

Mental well-being and time

Mental health issues among students are a rising issue of concern (Brown, 2018; Duffy et al., 2019). It has been argued that working a lot while studying can pose a threat to students' mental well-being (Benner & Curl, 2018). With EUROSTUDENT 8 data, it is possible to also investigate whether spending a lot of time on study-related tasks is associated with a high or low level of mental well-being.

Data and interpretation

Students' time budget for study and work

How many hours do students invest in their studies and their paid jobs in a typical week? On average, students spend 48 hours in total on their ◉ personal study time, ◉ taught studies, and ◉ paid job(s)[1] (Figure B5.1).

Box B5.1

Methodological note: Measurement of students' time budget

Students indicated how many hours they spend on taught courses and personal study time for every day (including weekends) in a typical week. Students who indicated to engage in paid work during the current lecture period, were additionally asked how many hours per week they spend on their work.

Students devote most of these hours, namely 18 hours, to personal study time, followed by taught studies (16 hours), and paid work (14 hours). There are large differences between EUROSTUDENT countries, with students in Latvia and Poland spending 54 hours and students in France spending 41 hours on studying and working in total. Interestingly, in each country, the average student invests at least 41 hours, which is comparable to regular full-time employment contracts in many EUROSTUDENT countries. Romania, Portugal, and Switzerland are the only countries in which students spend more than 20 hours in a typical week on taught studies.

Regarding full-time and part-time students, there are some differences to be reported: on average, part-time students' total time budget is 10 hours higher compared to full-time students' time budget. The large difference is mainly due to part-time students spending an average 32 hours on their paid job(s), whereas it is only 11 hours for full-time students. On the other hand, full-time students spend 19 hours on personal study time and 17 hours on taught studies, whereas it is only 13 hours and 12 hours among part-time students, respectively.

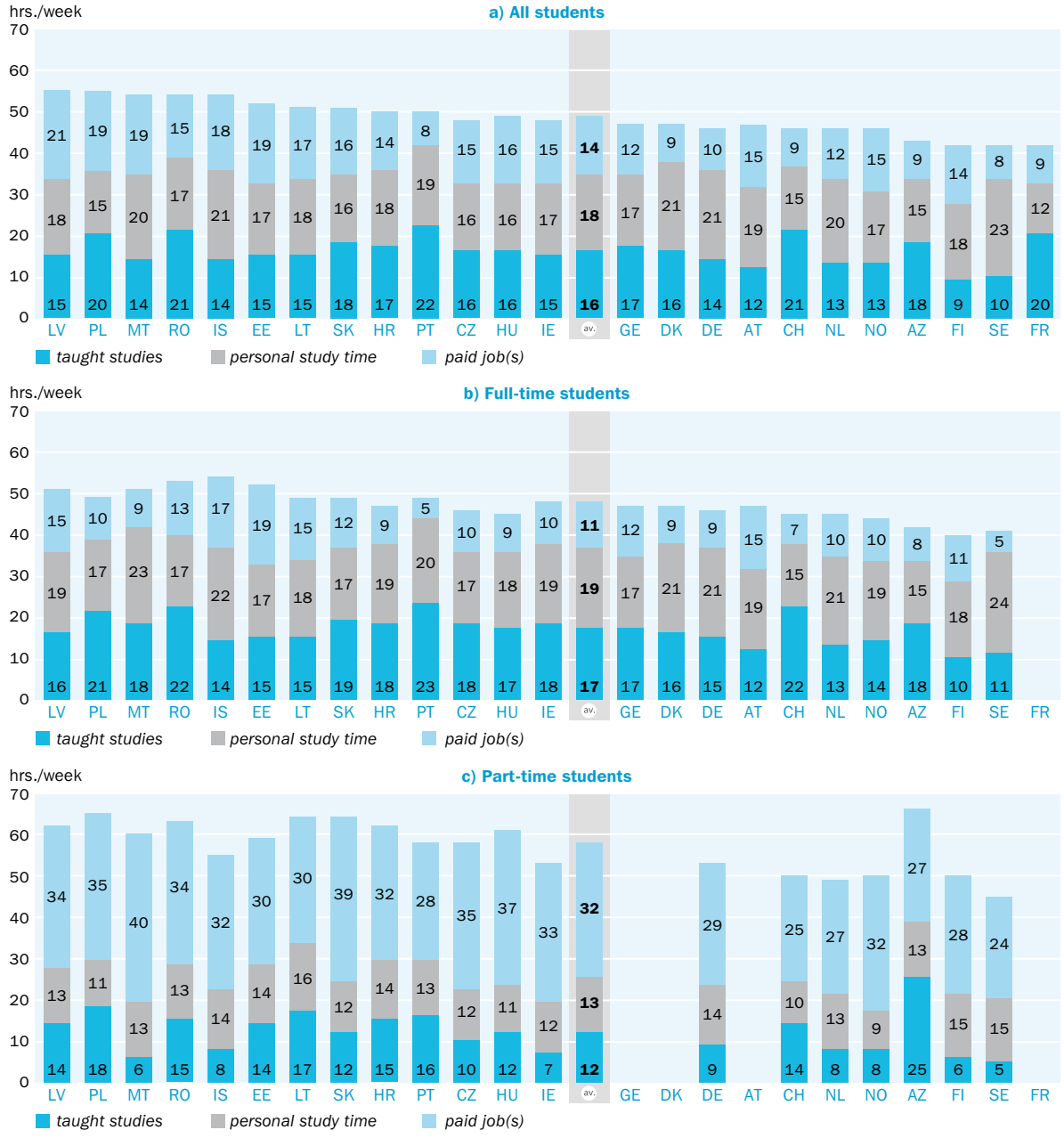
- This pattern, namely that part-time students spend more of their time on their paid work than on their study-related activities, is depicted in most countries, except for Lithuania, Portugal, and Azerbaijan.
- Especially in Azerbaijan, part-time students nearly spend the same amount of time on their taught studies (25 hours) and their work (27 hours). Spending 25 hours on taught studies in an average week is the highest number of hours in all EUROSTUDENT countries, for both full-time as well as part-time students.

1 *Students not working while studying are considered spending 0 hours on paid work (i.e. averages of all students are depicted); specific data on students working while studying only are reported in* *> Chapter B6*.

Figure B5.1

Students' time budget by type of activity and formal status

In hours per week (mean)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32, H.38.* ***No data:*** *ES; full-time students: FR; part-time students: DK, FR; no part-time students exist in AT, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period? 4.5 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Weekly hours spent on childcare – a substantial factor adding to student parents' time budget – are not included in this chapter. Detailed information on students with childcare duties is available in > *Chapter B1*.

Students' total time budget is also compared between students studying at different types of higher education institutions (HEIs) as well as students with or without disabilities limiting them in their studies (Table B5.1). The average university student spends more time on personal study time (19 hours) than the average non-university student (14 hours), whereas they spend the same amount of time on taught studies (16 hours) and remarkably less time on paid job(s) (13 vs. 20 hours). This results in a different total time budget of university and non-university students; in a typical week, non-university students invest two hours more (50 hours) in their studies and job(s) than university students do (48 hours). The especially large difference of 7 hours spent on working can be partly explained by students at non-universities in extra-occupational study programmes. With 32 and 36 hours, non-university students in Malta and Slovakia report a particularly high number of hours working in paid job(s). Even though those students also report a high total time budget (55 and 60 hours, respectively), this comes at costs of study time with 23 hours spent on study-related activities in Malta and 24 hours in Slovakia.

On average, both students with and without disabilities limiting them in their studies have a total time budget of 47 hours. A small difference can be found regarding time spent on paid work: on average, students with disabilities work 12 hours in a typical week, whereas students without disabilities work 14 hours. Time spent on taught studies is the same among both groups (16 hours) and time spent on personal studies is slightly higher (19 vs. 17 hours) among students with disabilities.

Over the last four rounds of EUROSTUDENT, students not living with parents show a quite stable investment in study-related activities for many countries (maximum change of 2 hours since EUROSTUDENT V, Figure B5.2). There are six countries with a variation of 3 hours or more in both taught studies and personal study time.

- Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Ireland, and Finland show a (slight but steady) decline in time spent on taught studies (e.g. Hungary starting with 21 hours in EUROSTUDENT V to 16 hours in EUROSTUDENT 8).
- In Finland, the decline in time spent on taught studies is most pronounced with 7 hours less in EUROSTUDENT 8 than in EUROSTUDENT V.
- In the Netherlands, there was a slight increase in time spent on taught studies (from 13 hours in EUROSTUDENT V to 16 hours in EUROSTUDENT VII), however, this dropped to 12 hours in the current round.

Regarding personal study time, differences over the time span are even smaller and exist less frequently.

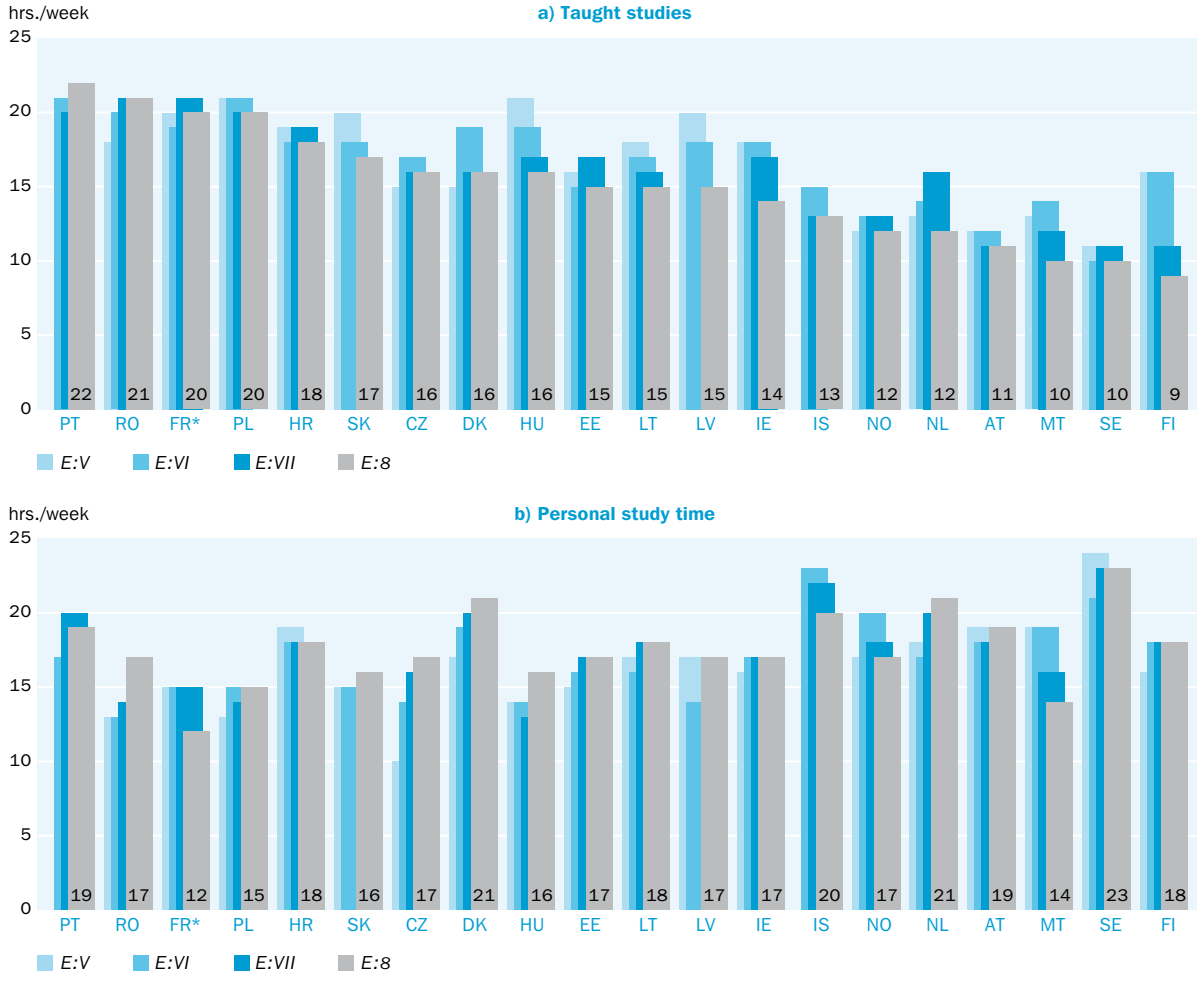
- The Czech Republic and Denmark show a steady increase of personal study time (starting with 10/17 hours in EUROSTUDENT V to 17/21 hours in EUROSTUDENT 8, respectively).
- Students from Romania and Hungary steadily reported to spend 13–14 hours on personal studies from EUROSTUDENT V to EUROSTUDENT VII, but this round it increased to 16–17 hours.
- Iceland is the only country with a steady decline of time spent on personal studies, however, it has to be kept in mind that there are no data available from EUROSTUDENT V.
- Students from France[2] reported steadily to spend 15 hours on personal study time during the last EUROSTUDENT rounds, however, in the current round it dropped to 12 hours (being the lowest number of hours spent on personal study time in all EUROSTUDENT countries for the current round).

2 *The phrasing of the question changed in the French survey for this round (> Chapter C2) which may limit comparability between the current round and the previous ones.*

Figure B5.2

Time spent on study-related activities in EUROSTUDENT V to EUROSTUDENT 8

In hours per week (mean), only students not living with parents



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32.* ***No (comparable) data:*** *AZ, CH, DE, ES, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period?*

Note(s): *For information on previous rounds, see eurostudent.eu.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 5

Relationship between study time and work time

With time being a limited resource, students need to decide how much time they spend on their various tasks and duties. Especially for students in paid work, the question is from where to take the time needed for their jobs or – adding another perspective – from where to take the time needed for their studies: do they reduce their personal free time or does working come at the expense of their study time? This trade-off between study time and time spent on working – as unweighted cross-country average – is depicted in Figure B5.3. Students who work up to 15 hours per week sacrifice more of their free time for their jobs, however, also the time spent on study-related activities decreases gradually with more hours spent on work: students without work spend 38 hours on

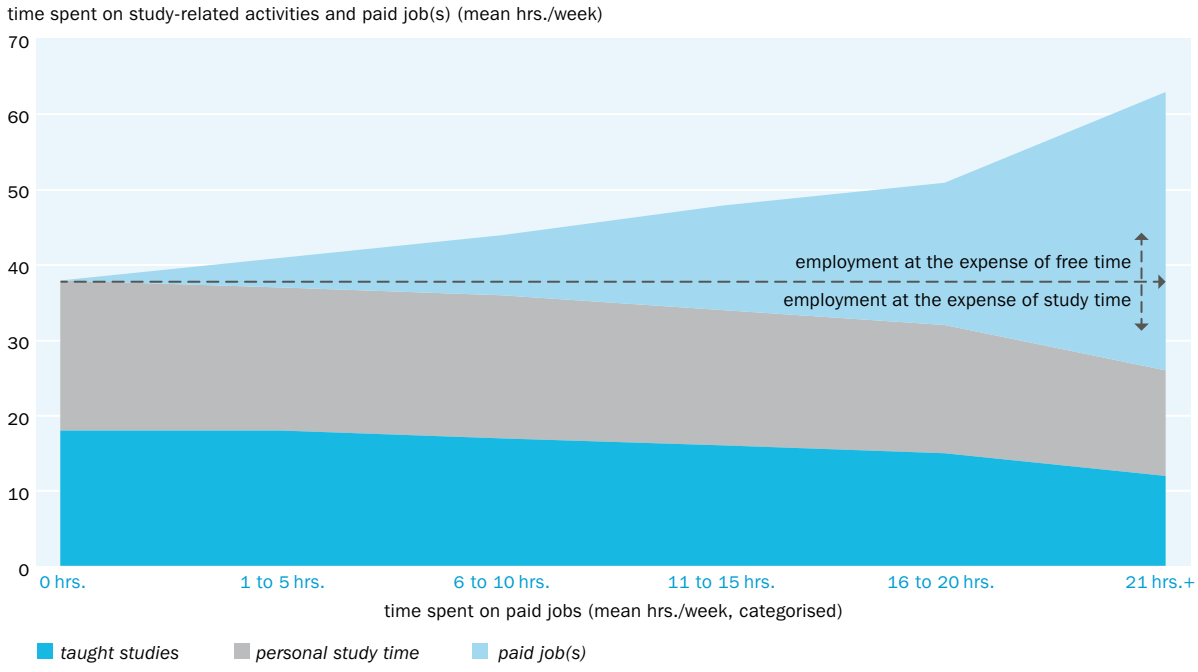
study-related activities, students working 1 to 5 hours spend 37 hours on study-related activities, students working 6 to 10 hours spend 36 hours on study-related activities, and students working 11 to 15 hours only spend 34 hours on study-related activities. For students working up to 20 hours per week, study time suffers even more (only 32 hours), whereas especially for students who work more than 20 hours per week, working clearly also comes at the expense of study time: they spend only 26 hours per week on study-related activities. Even though this clearly indicates students sacrificing study time for working, students first sacrifice their free time for their paid work. This again is most pronounced for students working more than 20 hours per week with an overall workload of 63 hours compared to the workload of students without work (38 hours).

Working while studying comes at the expense of free time and study time.

Figure B5.3

Relationship between time spent on studying and working as unweighted cross-country average

In hours per week (mean)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32, H.38.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period? 4.5 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

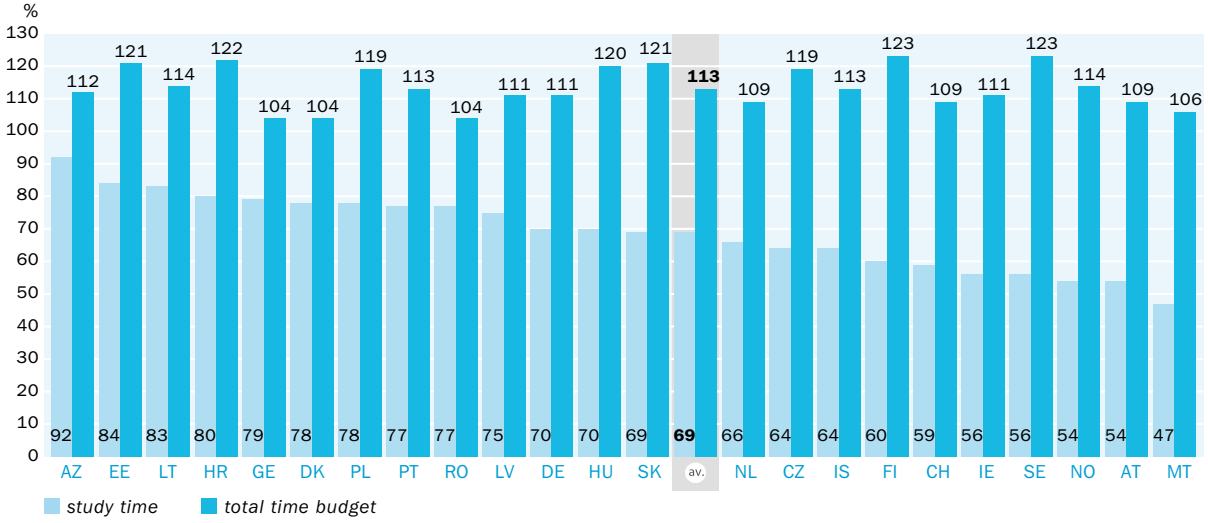
Figure B5.4 shows the relative time budget (study time and total time budget) of working students who perceive themselves to be 'workers' compared to working students who perceive themselves to be 'students' (> *Chapter B6* for more information on 'workers' and 'students'). On average, 'workers' only spend 69 % of the time 'students' spend on their studies. Adding working hours to the time budget leads to an increase: 'workers' spend 13 % more time on studying and working together than 'students' do.

- In Azerbaijan, the difference in study time is very small; 'workers' spend 92 % of 'students'' study time budget on it.
- In Malta, 'workers' do not even study half of the time 'students' spend on studying.
- The largest difference regarding the total time budget can be found in Finland and Sweden: 'workers'' time budget is higher by 23 % compared to 'students'' time budget of a typical week.

Figure B5.4

Relative time budget (study time and total time budget) of working students perceiving themselves as 'workers' compared to 'students'

Proportion of hours spent by 'workers' averaged on hours spent by 'students' (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32, H.38.* ***No data:*** *ES, FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period? 4.5 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current #lecture period?*

Note(s): *Only students who are working during the current lecture period included.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Time spent on study-related activities

The average student in EUROSTUDENT countries spends 16 hours on taught studies and 18 hours on personal study time (Figure B5.1).

Box B5.2

Methodological note: Measurement of teaching type

Regarding their teaching type, students indicated the actual current ratio of their online and in person teaching on a five-point scale (completely online to completely in person). Based on this, the two groups 'studying mostly/completely online' and 'studying mostly/completely in person' were built (i.e. not based on whether students' programmes are officially classified as distance learning programmes).

Whether a student reports studying mostly/completely online or in person is associated with how many hours they spend on studying. On average, students receiving completely

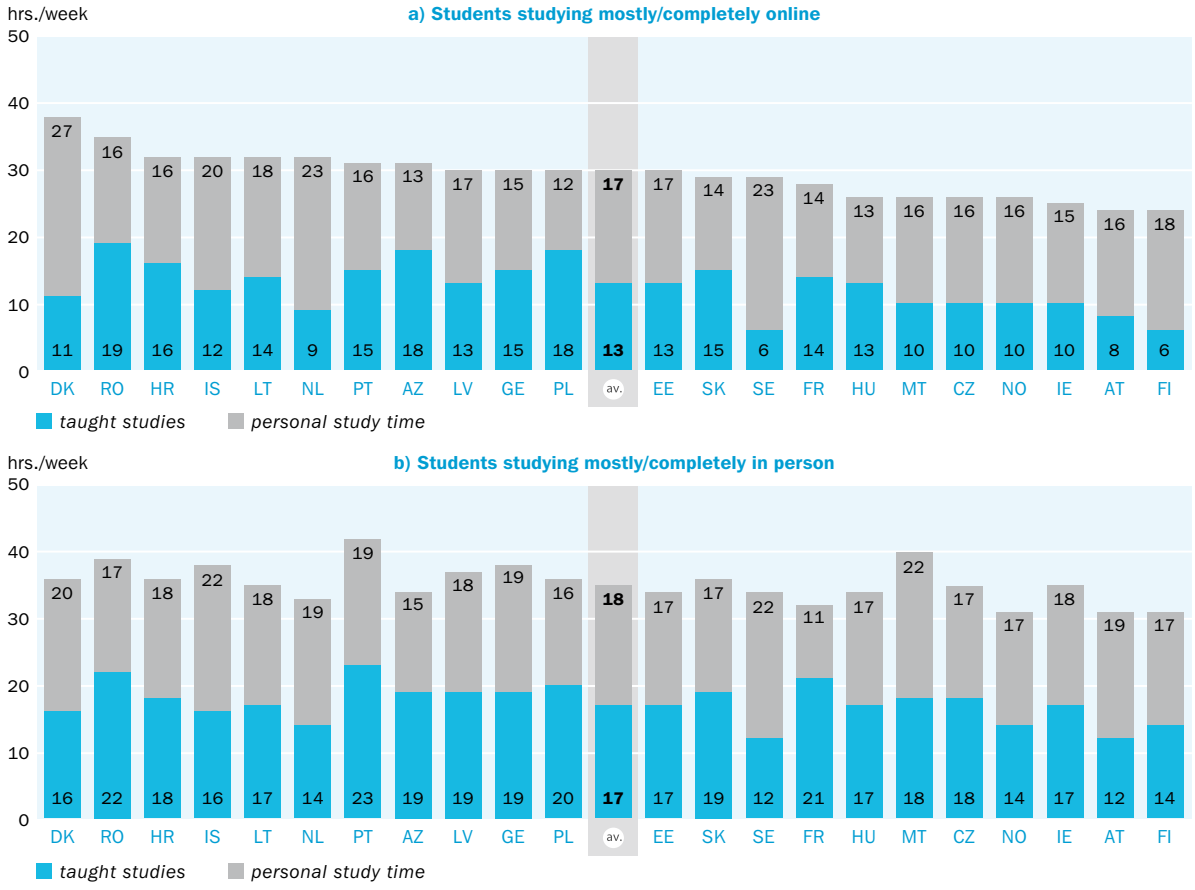
or mostly online teaching spend 30 hours on study-related activities, whereas it is 35 hours for students who are mainly taught in person (Figure B5.5). The large difference between both groups of students occurs due to their time spent on taught studies (13 hours for students studying mostly/completely online vs. 17 hours for students studying mostly/completely in person). Regarding personal study time, both groups only differ by 1 hour. This pattern holds true for nearly every country, with the largest difference of 14 hours found in Malta, followed by 11 hours in Portugal. The only country showing the opposite pattern is Denmark, where students in programmes with more online teaching spend 38 hours on their studies compared to 36 hours for students studying mostly/completely in person. Even though there is a noticeable time difference in study-related activities overall, the differences in personal study time and taught studies in detail should not be exaggerated because for students studying mostly/completely online, it might be difficult to distinguish between taught and self-study. In addition, it has to be noted that students studying mostly/completely online or in person can differ regarding several aspects (> Chapter B4).

Students studying mostly/completely in person spend 5 hours more per week on study-related activities compared to students studying mostly/completely online.

Figure B5.5

Time spent on study-related activities by delivery mode of teaching

In hours per week (mean)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE, ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR.*

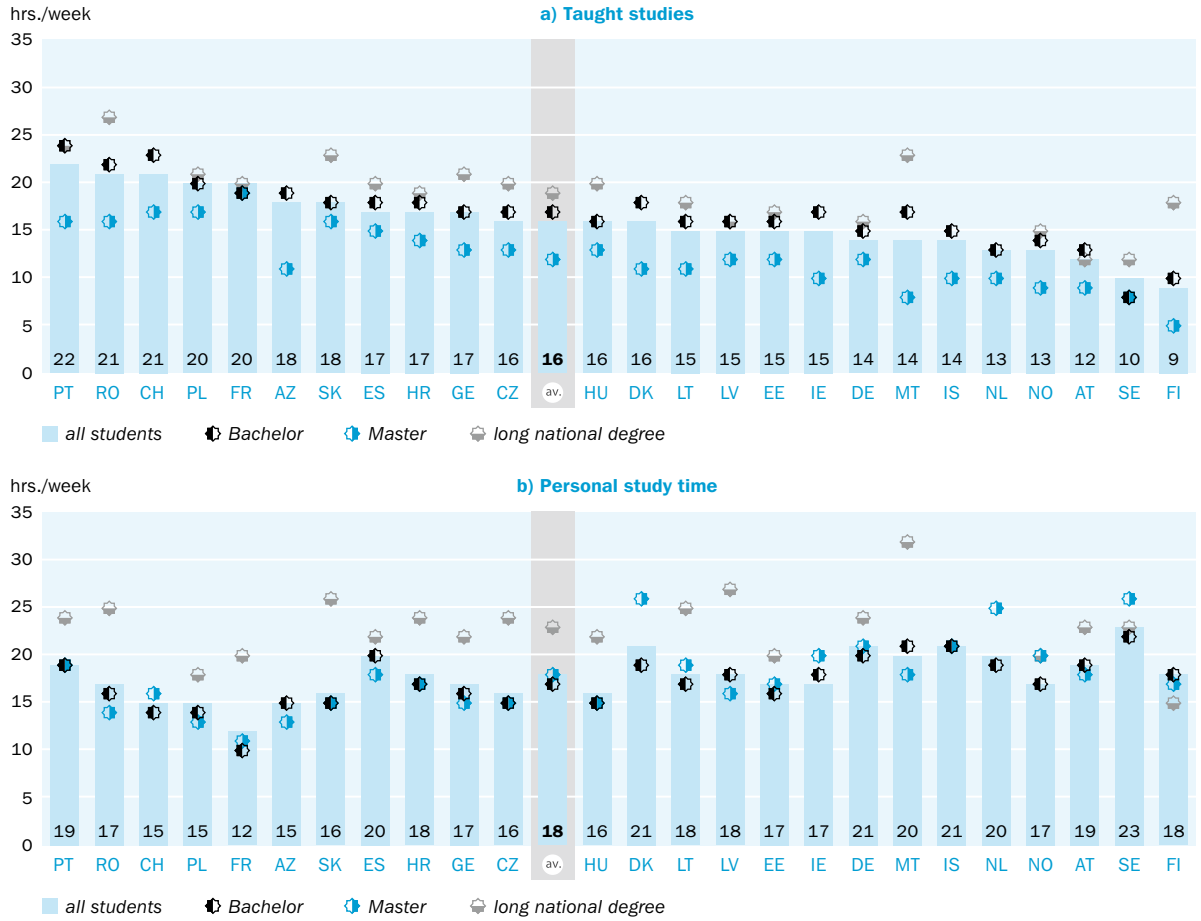
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Differences in study time become apparent according to the type of study programme (Figure B5.6). On EUROSTUDENT average, in a typical week, students spend 16 hours on taught studies and 18 hours on personal study time. Master students spend the least amount of time on taught studies (12 hours), followed by Bachelor students (17 hours), and students in long national degrees (19 hours). This pattern holds true for most countries, except France (Master and Bachelor students both spend 19 hours on taught studies), Portugal, Latvia (long national degree students and Bachelor students spend the same amount of time on taught studies), and Austria (long national degree students spend one hour less on taught studies than Bachelor students).

Figure B5.6

Time spent on study-related activities by type of study programme

In hours per week (mean)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32.* ***No data:*** *long national degree: CH; no long national degree exists in AZ, DK, IE, NL.* ***Too few cases:*** *long national degree: IS.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

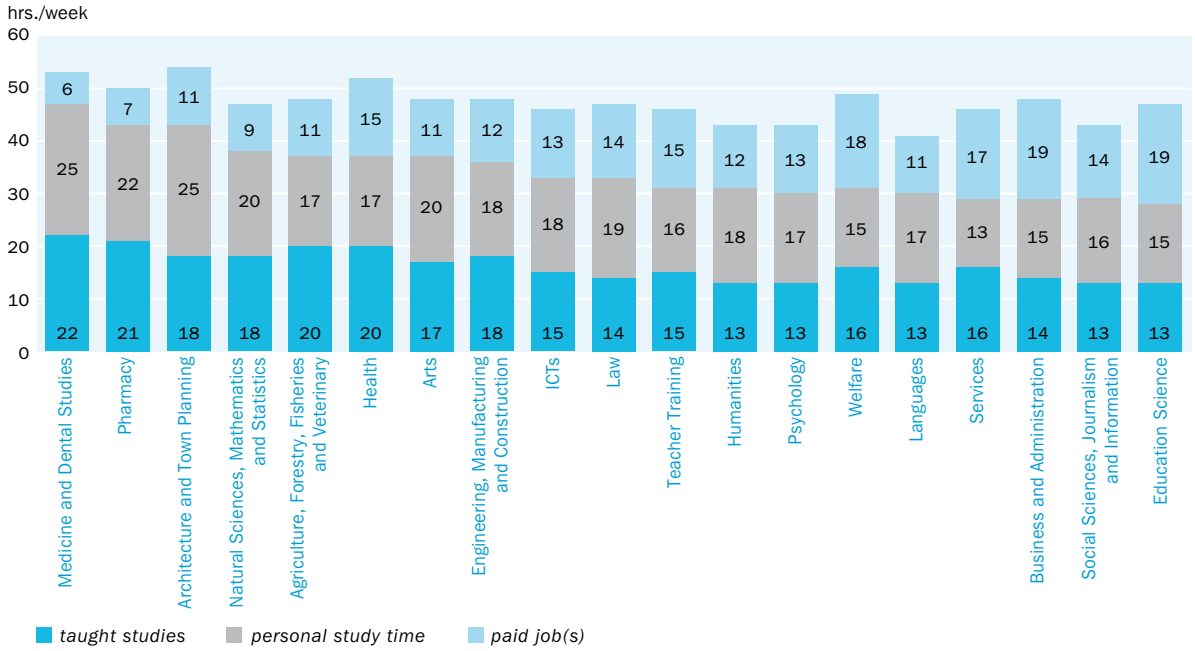
Bachelor students spend the least amount of time on personal studies (17 hours), closely followed by Master students (18 hours), whereas students in long national degrees spend clearly more time on their personal studies (23 hours). While it differs between countries whether Bachelor students (e.g. Azerbaijan, Malta) or Master students (e.g. Ireland, the Netherlands) spend more time on personal studies, in nearly every country that offers a long national degree (or has enough valid cases to report data), those students in long national degrees spend most time on personal studies and taught studies. The Nordic countries Sweden, Finland, and Norway present an exception in this regard, however. In Norway, for example, the highest share of long national degree students studies in teacher training, which is not the case in most other EUROSTUDENT countries. Long national degrees in many countries comprise mainly fields of study like Medicine, Law, and Teacher Education; sometimes also Arts or Religion (and are not offered in all countries, as depicted in Figure B5.6).

In most countries, students in long national degrees spend the highest amount of time on study-related activities compared to Bachelor and Master students.

Figure B5.7

Time budget by field of study as unweighted cross-country average

In hours per week (mean)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32, H.38.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period? 4.5 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current #lecture period?*

Note(s): *Adapted from ISCED-F 2013 to reflect content similarity.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Therefore, having a closer look at students' time budget by field of study is worthwhile (depicted as unweighted cross-country average in Figure B5.7). Regarding time spent on study-related activities, students in Medicine and Dental Studies have the highest time budget with 47 hours a week spent on those activities, followed by students in Pharmacy as well as Architecture and Town Planning (43 hours each). Students in fields of Education

Students in Medicine and Dental Studies spend the most hours on study-related activities, whereas students in Education Science and Business and Administration spend the most hours on paid job(s).

Science (28 hours), Services, Social Sciences, Journalism and Information as well as Business and Administration (29 hours each) spend the least time on study-related activities. However, when also taking time spent on paid job(s) into account, the differences in the total time budget become smaller. For example, students in Education Science spend 19 hours a week on their work, whereas Medicine and Dental students only work 6 hours a week, on average. The highest total time budget is reported by students of Architecture and Town Planning; on average, those students spend 54 hours a week on study-related activities and paid work. The lowest total time budget with 41 hours can be found for students of Languages.

Mental well-being and study intensity

Mental well-being is an increasingly important topic, both in society and among students. EUROSTUDENT 8's special focus on mental well-being as one topical module (see also Cuppen et al., 2024) gives us the opportunity to investigate whether students' study intensity is associated with their self-reported mental well-being (Figure B5.8). The average student from EUROSTUDENT countries has neither a very high nor a very low level of mental well-being, indicating a 51 on a scale from 0 to 100.

B 5

Box B5.3

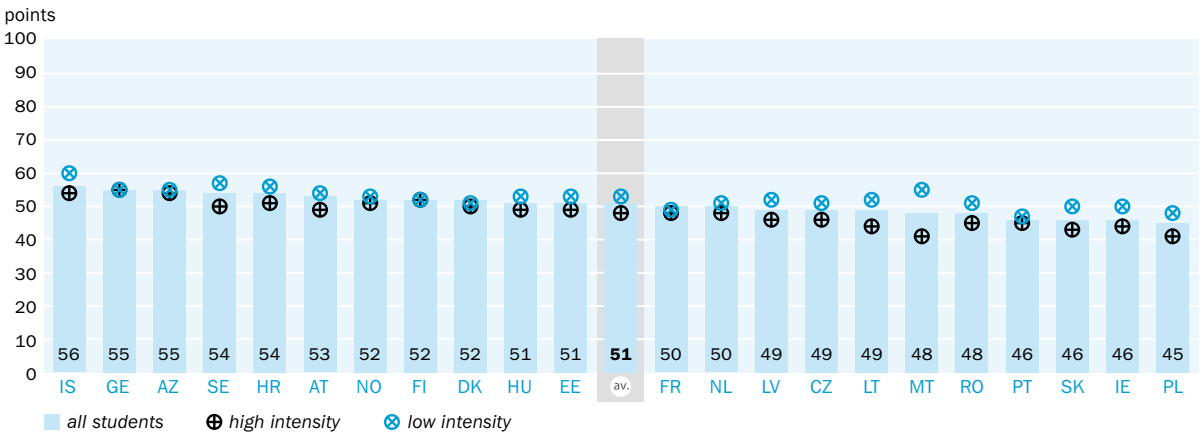
Methodological note: Measurement of students' well-being

The scale on mental well-being is based on the World Health Organisation-Five Well-Being index (WHO-5; see also Cuppen et al., 2024). It comprises five items, answered on a six-point scale (0 to 5). The total score (ranging from 0 to 25) is multiplied by 4, resulting in a scale between 0 (worst well-being possible) and 100 (best imaginable well-being).

Figure B5.8

Students' mental well-being by study intensity

Points (mean) on a 100-point scale



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, TM.31.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE, ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *M1.6 Please indicate for each of the 5 statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the past 2 weeks. a) I have felt cheerful and in good spirits b) I have felt calm and relaxed c) I have felt active and vigorous d) I woke up feeling fresh and rested e) my daily life has been filled with things that interest me. Source: World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. (1998). Wellbeing measures in primary health care/the DEPCARE Project: report on a WHO meeting: Stockholm, Sweden, 12–13 February 1998. World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR, NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Within all EUROSTUDENT countries, the mental well-being of students differs: students from Iceland report the highest mental well-being (56), whereas students in Poland report the lowest (45).

Box B5.4

Methodological note: Measurement of students' study intensity

Study intensity is an indicator built on students' indication of time spent on study-related activities. Students are either classified as low-intensity students (i.e. spending less than 20 hours per week on study-related activities), medium-intensity students (i.e. spending between 20 and 40 hours per week on study-related activities), or high-intensity students (i.e. spending more than 40 hours per week on study-related activities).

On average, students with a high study intensity indicate a score (48) which is 5 points lower than students with a low study intensity (53). There is no country in which high-intensity students have a higher mental well-being score than low-intensity students, but in Georgia and Finland students with both intensities indicate the same score, 55 and 52, respectively. The small country Malta shows the largest difference between both groups of students (14 points), their high-intensity students being among those with the lowest mental well-being score of all EUROSTUDENT countries and their low-intensity students being among those with the highest mental well-being score. In Lithuania, the difference of 8 points is also remarkable. These data show an association between study intensity and mental well-being. Of course, with these data, there is no possibility to analyse any causal effects. However, it is important to note that students who are spending a lot of time on their studies – maybe too much time – might also feel less cheerful and relaxed, for example.

Discussion and policy considerations

The central finding from this chapter is that being a student in a EUROSTUDENT country means being very busy. On average, students spend 48 hours in a typical week on their studies and their paid work (not even considering care time, > *Chapter B1*). Whether students' schedules are full or very full is related to various aspects: part-time students and students at non-universities – which are often overlapping groups with students who are frequently working while studying (> *Chapter B3*) and comparably older (> *Chapter B1*) – dedicate (a lot) more time to studies and work compared to their counterparts, whereas regarding students with(out) disabilities, the differences are less pronounced. Given such a packed schedule, it is evident that students require advanced time management abilities (see van der Meer et al., 2010). For example, in the U.S., it is state of the art to offer time management courses to first semester students (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, What Works Clearinghouse, 2016). It would probably help students if policymakers – especially in countries where students spend a lot of time on study-related activities (e.g. Portugal and Romania) – encourage HEIs even more to support students in developing those highly needed skills.

Students who are working alongside their studies (> *Chapter B6*) experience time pressure the most. EUROSTUDENT 8 data in this chapter show that working, irrespective of the number of hours, comes at the expense of both students' study and free time. Working more than 10 hours is associated with a noticeable decrease in time spent on study-related activities. Students who work 21 hours or more spend the extremely high number of more than 60 hours on study-related tasks and work every week. Additionally, we compared the time spent on study-related activities between working students who consider themselves 'workers' and working students who consider themselves 'students': on average, 'workers' spend only 69 % of 'students'' study time on their studies. However, when considering the total time budget, it is 113 % of that of 'students'. A high time budget for working students has been associated with negative outcomes such as a feeling of stress or poor sleep (Lederer et al., 2015; Mounsey et al., 2013). Combining studies and working many hours constitutes an enormous challenge which could be alleviated offering specific settings for those working students. Policymakers should therefore support HEIs in designing and implementing supportive structures for working students more and more. Also, spending very much time (maybe even too much time) on study-related activities seems to be associated with undesirable outcomes: data presented in this chapter show that those high-intensity students, on average, display lower mental well-being scores than low-intensity students (who spend less than 20 hours per week on their studies). Mental health issues among students are an increasingly important topic. Providing insights into associations of mental health indicators might help policymakers and institutions improve and fine-tune their support for afflicted students.

Digitalisation in higher education has been an important topic for many years now (see Orr et al., 2020; see also Schirmer, 2024). As stated by Alina and colleagues (2023), the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for online and hybrid education. This chapter shows that students who report studying mostly/completely online spend less time on taught lectures than those students who experience more in-person teaching. Online classes are especially interesting for students with many duties (e.g. working, caring), who therefore might have less time to spend in taught classes and are in need of more flexibility. However, the lesser time spent on taught studies is also accompanied by a slightly smaller number of hours spent on personal study time in many countries. One explanation that offers an opportunity for further research could imply that accurately designed online classes meet students' needs perfectly and, therefore, students personal study time is lower.

Time spent on taught studies varies between levels of degree: on average, long national degree students spend most time on taught studies, closely followed by Bachelor students, whereas Master students spend clearly less time on taught studies. Regarding personal study time only – the time students themselves have most influence on – data in this chapter show that also students in long national degrees invest more of it compared to Bachelor or Master students. Between Bachelor and Master students, the picture is less clear: there are some countries in which Bachelor students devote more time to personal studies than Master students and vice versa, however, in most countries there is hardly any difference between both levels of degree. It can only be speculated why this is the case; for example, the study of Medicine is classified as a long national degree in many countries and previous data from Austria (Unger et al., 2020;

Zaussinger et al., 2016) as well as EUROSTUDENT 8 data in this chapter show that Medicine students typically spend a lot of time on study-related activities.

To sum up, this chapter shows that the lazy student life is no more than a stereotype. In contrast, students have a full and busy schedule, especially if they work alongside their studies. Institutions and policymakers should take students' different worlds and diverse living conditions into account to enable all students to have a fruitful study experience.

Tables

Table B5.1

Time spent on taught studies, personal studies, and paid job(s) by type of HEI and students with(out) disabilities limiting them in their studies

In hours per week (mean)

	Type of HEI						Disabilities limiting in studies					
	University			Non-university			Students without disabilities			Students with disabilities		
	Taught studies	Personal study time	Paid job(s)	Taught studies	Personal study time	Paid job(s)	Taught studies	Personal study time	Paid job(s)	Taught studies	Personal study time	Paid job(s)
AT	11	20	14	17	16	18	12	19	15	11	20	14
AZ	18	15	9	n/a	n/a	n/a	18	15	10	18	17	8
CH	21	16	7	22	12	12	21	14	9	21	16	10
CZ	17	17	14	14	12	27	16	16	16	17	18	14
DE	14	22	9	16	19	13	15	21	11	14	21	9
DK	12	23	9	20	18	9	16	21	9	16	22	7
EE	14	17	18	20	14	22	15	17	20	16	18	16
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	8	19	11	10	16	17	9	17	16	10	18	11
FR	18	13	9	23	9	9	20	12	9	19	12	9
GE	18	17	12	13	14	16	17	17	12	16	17	14
HR	17	19	13	17	14	23	17	18	14	17	19	12
HU	16	17	14	13	12	24	16	16	16	17	18	14
IE	14	19	13	16	14	18	15	17	16	16	18	12
IS	14	21	18	n/a	n/a	n/a	13	20	20	14	23	15
LT	15	19	16	17	16	20	15	18	17	15	21	15
LV	15	18	19	15	15	27	15	17	21	16	19	17
MT	17	22	13	9	14	32	14	19	20	15	24	16
NL	11	22	9	14	18	14	13	20	12	12	21	11
NO	13	18	14	12	15	17	12	17	16	13	18	11
PL	20	16	16	20	12	29	19	14	19	20	17	16
PT	21	20	7	24	17	10	22	19	8	22	21	8
RO	21	17	15	n/a	n/a	n/a	21	16	16	21	19	12
SE	10	23	8	n/a	n/a	n/a	10	22	9	10	24	6
SK	18	17	13	13	11	36	17	16	17	19	18	13
av.	**16**	**19**	**13**	**16**	**14**	**20**	**16**	**17**	**14**	**16**	**19**	**12**

n.d.: no data. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.26, H.32, H.38.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2 How many hours do you spend in taught courses and on personal study time in a typical week during the current #lecture period?*
4.5 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current #lecture period?

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B6
Students' employment and internships

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Key

Students with paid jobs

On average, 59 % of students in the EUROSTUDENT countries work during the lecture period. Every fifth student sees themselves primarily as a 'worker', rather than as a 'student'. In almost all countries older students, those at non-universities, and female students work more often than their counterparts. Male students work more hours and earn more money in most of the EUROSTUDENT countries. Among students who work more than 20 hours per week, dropout intentions are more prevalent than among those who do not work.

Relation of job and studies

Overall, about half of working students hold a position directly related to their studies. Whether the job is closely related to the studies differs between fields of study. Students in Social Sciences, Journalism and Information, Arts and Humanities, as well as in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, on average, least often have jobs that match their field, while for Education, Health and Welfare, and Information and Communication Technology, the opposite is the case.

Motivation for working

Being able to pay living expenses appears to be the main motivation to work for students, closely followed by the desire to be able to afford extra things. Compared to students who work one to five hours a week, those who work more than 20 hours a week far more frequently say they work to pay for living expenses and to be able to afford to be students. Out of all students, on average, 29 % could not afford to study without having a paid job.

Mandl, S. & Menz, C. (2024). Students' employment and internships. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024*. wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew006

findings

Internships

On average, about 40 % of students have done at least one internship in their country or abroad since first entering higher education, but there are very large differences between the EUROSTUDENT countries. Overall, only about every third internship is paid and most of the financially not compensated internships are mandatory. Unpaid internships are most common in the fields of Education and Health and Welfare.

Financial background

Often it is students with parents not at all well-off who (have to) work during the lecture period. On average, the share of students who must work to afford studying is more than 2.5 times as high among students with not at all well-off parents compared to those who are from affluent backgrounds. Students with parents not at all well-off also tend to see themselves as 'workers' rather than as 'students'. They furthermore often undertake unpaid internships.

Main issues

A large proportion of students work while they pursue their degrees. While the previous chapter (> *Chapter B5*) took a closer look at how students divide their time between studying and working, this section shows the specifics of students' employment. Two types of work activities are considered in more detail: ○ jobs that students carry out (continuously) during the semester, and ○ internships.

Students who work alongside studies

According to Masevičiūtė et al. (2018), working while pursuing a degree is a common occurrence for students in Europe, although employment trends differ between countries. Often, more mature students who need to earn their living work alongside their studies. However, in some countries, undergraduate students are increasingly likely to work in part-time jobs of some kind, mainly for budgetary reasons, especially in light of the growing cost of tuition and study loans (Tan et al., 2020).

A study focusing on Western Balkan countries showed that, depending on their socio-economic origins, students have different career patterns and work experiences (Savić & Kresoja, 2018). There are greater financial constraints for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Avdic & Gartell, 2015), which is why it is not surprising that students from middle-class households were found to have a 13.3 % lower chance of having a job during the semester than those from low-income families in Malaysia (Tan et al., 2020). Furthermore, it was found that it is rather female students who work alongside their studies (65 % vs. 61 % of male students) in Germany (Kroher et al., 2023).

Advantages and difficulties of working as a student

Having financial resources is not only essential to be able to afford studying but also for participating in activities with other students, being accepted, or simply belonging to higher status groups (Fernández et al., 2023). Nevertheless, spending time on a paid employment has been shown to negatively impact academic success (Beatson et al., 2021; Salamonson et al., 2020; Seow & Pan, 2014). While there are benefits to working while studying, such as increased employability, data unmistakably demonstrates that working too much while studying can be detrimental to academic performance (Lessky & Unger, 2023). Part-time work while studying likely leads to longer duration of study (Theune, 2015). Furthermore, there is a higher chance of dropping out of higher education when students are financially dependent on themselves (Castaño et al., 2008). Also, not all types of work help to strengthen employability. Being dependent on earning money reduces the possibilities to adapt employment opportunities to individual career ambitions due to the greater accessibility of general employment compared to specific and career-enhancing activities (Hordósy et al., 2018).

Different types of internships

In higher education, internships are essential because they are often seen as a link between theoretical input and practical application. Internships, which can be integrated as mandatory into the curriculum or pursued voluntarily, give students the chance to gain practical experience and consider several future paths. Besides positive associations, internships can also have a negative impact on outcomes, especially when it comes to mandatory intern-

ships. For instance, also less talented students must devote time and effort to them, which may have a negative impact on students' academic performances and grades (Bittmann & Zorn, 2020).

While some of the internships are paid, others are not financially compensated. Research indicates that there is a difference between fields of study in payment of internships. While 91 % of Engineering students were paid for their internships, only 3 % of students in the field of Education, 13 % in Social Service Professions and 16 % in Health Professions were compensated financially for their work (Zilvinskis et al., 2020). Related to the gender imbalance in fields of study, men tend to receive pay for their internships more often than women. However, also within those fields of study with many financially compensated internships, fewer female students received payment for their internship than male students (ibidem).

There are ongoing discussions on the EU-level about financial compensation of internships. According to research, the average cost of an unpaid internship for a young person in Europe is more than 1,000 Euro per month (Moxon et al., 2023). In 2023, the majority of the EU Parliament's Employment Committee voted in favour of a ban on unpaid internships. According to the Parliament, internships should at least cover the cost of essential living expenses like food, housing, and transportation, taking into consideration the cost of living in each member state (European Parliament, 2023).

In order to contribute to the ongoing discourse about employment of students, this chapter focuses on working while studying and aims to provide answers to the following questions:

- To what extent and why do students work?
- What differences in working patterns exist between groups of students?
- How is the work of students characterised?
- Which role do different types of internships play in the life of students?

Data and interpretation

Box B6.1

Methodological note: Students' paid work

When talking about the employment rate ('students who work'), the extent of paid employment during the lecture period is described. In calculating the employment rate, both jobs performed from time to time during the semester and jobs kept during the whole semester are considered. In some parts of the chapter, a distinction is made between all students, depending on the number of hours worked. The categories for this are: students who do not work during the semester, students working in paid jobs up to 20 hours per week and students working in paid jobs more than 20 hours per week. When only students with paid jobs are taken into account for analysis, a finer sequencing in categories of five hour steps is available.

Students with paid jobs

On average, 59 % of the students in the EUROSTUDENT countries work during the lecture period, the majority during the whole semester (Figure B6.1).

- The share of working students varies between the countries and ranges from 28 % (Azerbaijan) to 77 % (Netherlands).
- France is the only country in which roughly equal proportions of students work constantly and from time to time.

The employment rates of students are rising in most EUROSTUDENT countries.

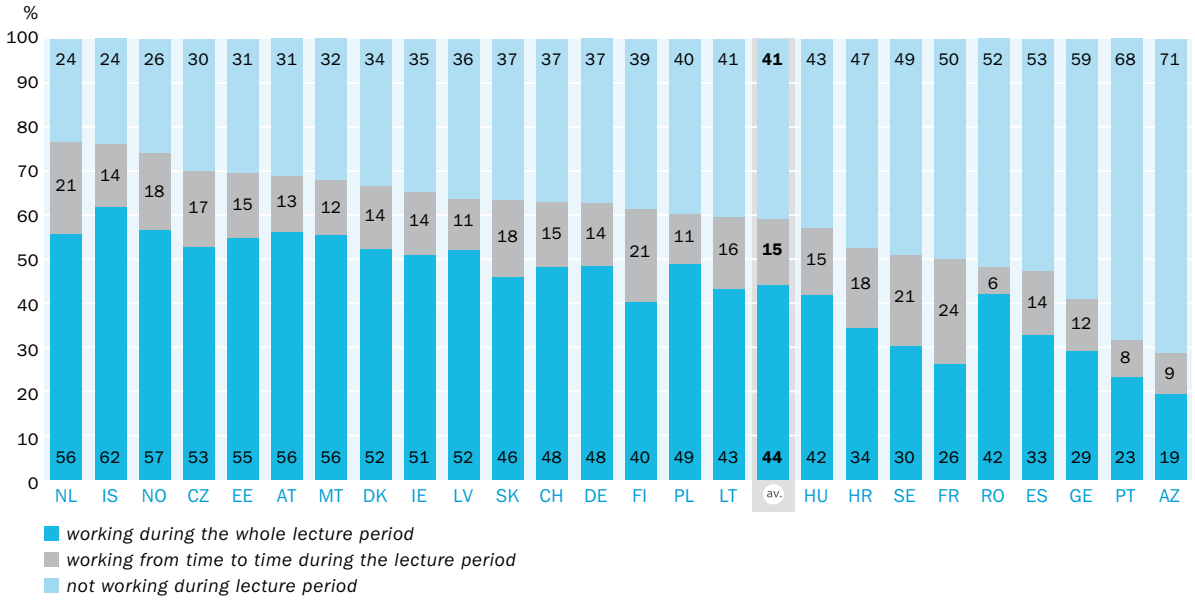
Differences can be observed not only between countries but also over time. The shares of students with a paid job during the lecture period (not living with their parents) changed over the last rounds of EUROSTUDENT (Figure B6.2). In most countries, an increase of working students is visible.

- Especially drastic increases in the employment rates since the last EUROSTUDENT round are visible in Malta.
- Only in the Czech Republic the share of students with a paid job decreased since the last round.
- The largest increase in working students between round VI and the current round is in Malta (from 60 % to 79 %).

Figure B6.1 ↓

Students' employment during lecture period

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.1.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.4 Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

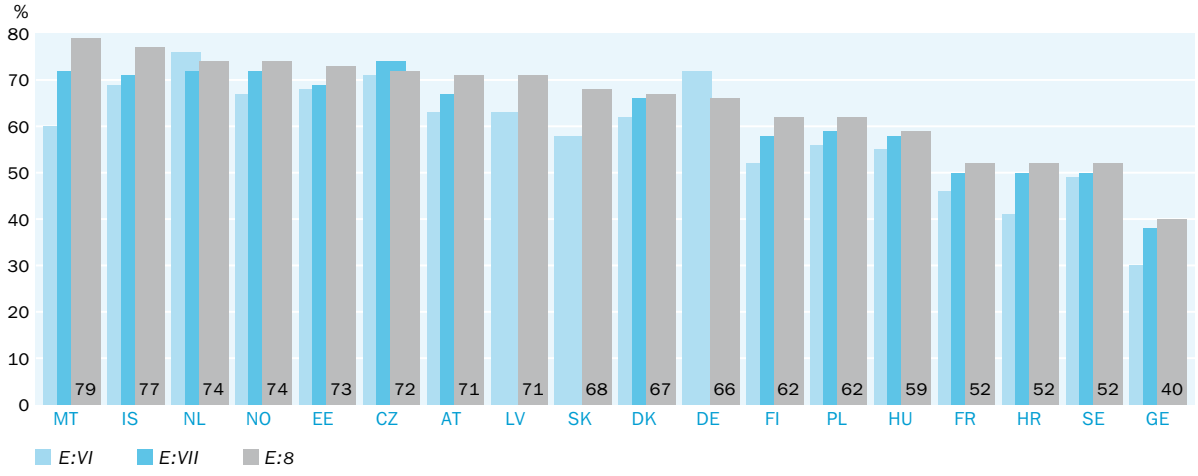
Students with parents not at all well-off work more often.

Working during the lecture period leaves students less time for focusing on their studies (> Chapter B5). Often it is the students with parents not at all well-off who (have to) work during the lecture period (Figure B6.3). This can also be due to the fact that this group is older in many countries and in a different life situation (> Chapter B2).

Figure B6.2

Students' employment during the lecture period in EUROSTUDENT VI to EUROSTUDENT 8

Share of students with (a) paid job(s) (in %), only students not living with parents



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.1.* ***No (comparable) data:*** *AZ, CH, ES, IE, LT, PT, RO.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.4 Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current #lecture period?*

Note(s): *For information on previous rounds, see eurostudent.eu.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, FR.*

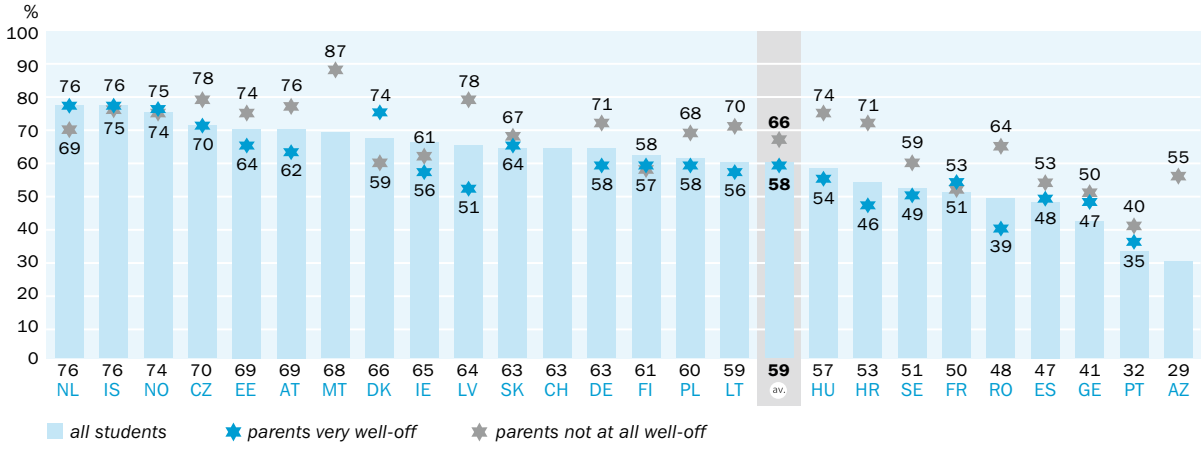
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 6

Figure B6.3

Students' employment during lecture period by parental financial status

Share of students with (a) paid job(s) (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.1.* ***No data:*** *parental financial status: CH.* ***Too few cases:*** *parents very well-off: AZ, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.4 Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Employment rates during the lecture period are compared between different groups in Table B6.1. Not surprisingly, the share of working students is larger in older age groups. On average, 44 % of students younger than 22 years work, while the share is 80 % among students 30 years and over. Logically, higher shares of Master students work, compared to Bachelor students. Overall, in the group of students who study at non-universities, 69 % combine studying and working during the lecture period, while it is 56 % at universities.

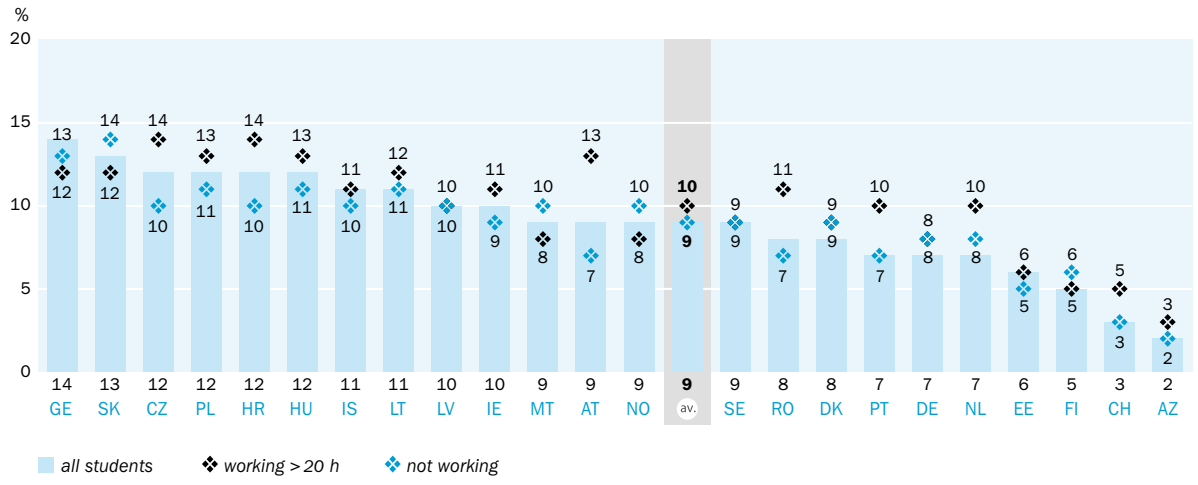
10 % of students working more than 20 hours a week consider completely abandoning their higher education studies.

In general, about 9 % of the students have serious thoughts of completely abandoning higher education studies. Considering the extra responsibility and time that goes along with working, it is not surprising that in most of the EUROSTUDENT countries the dropout intentions are (slightly) more prevalent among students working more than 20 hours a week, with the largest gap in Austria (Figure B6.4). Besides the number of working hours, also the flexibility of the study programs and jobs can play a role in (working) students' intentions to dropout.

Figure B6.4

Dropout intention by hours of work

Share of students with dropout intention (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, C.14.* ***No data:*** *ES, FR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.1 Generally, to what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding your studies? I am seriously thinking of completely abandoning my higher education studies. Source: Trautwein et.al. (2007).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Income from paid job(s)

There are huge differences in the income of working students between the countries.

By working during the lecture period, the median income of students is about 811 PPS/month (PPS: Purchasing Power Standard, > Chapter B7). However, as visible in Figure B6.5, the income varies greatly between countries.

- The highest incomes of students can be found in Malta, the lowest in Denmark.

In nearly all countries, male students earn on average more than female students. This can be partly explained by the fact that male students with paid jobs on average work more hours per week (1 h more) in most of the EUROSTUDENT countries (Table B6.2).

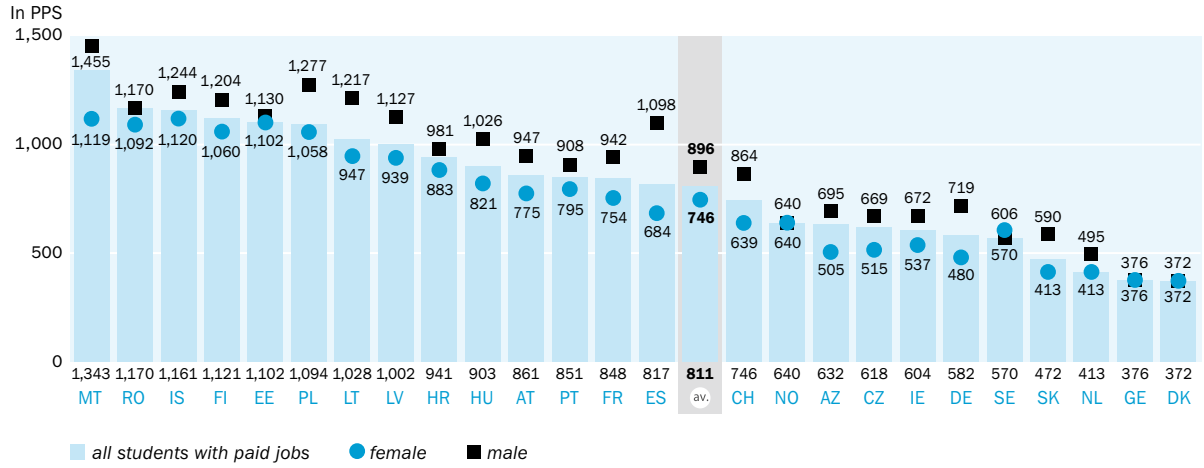
- In the Czech Republic, Estonia, Iceland, and Lithuania, they work about the same amount of time.
- In Norway and Sweden, where there is no or even an opposite income gap, female students work on average 1 hour more per week.

While male students work more hours, in nearly all EUROSTUDENT countries, slightly more female students work. Azerbaijan stands out in that it is rather male students who work (difference of 18 % points between males and females).

Figure B6.5

Income from current job by female/male students

Monthly median income from job (in PPS), only students with paid job(s)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.61.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via #bank transfers from the following sources during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Study-related jobs

Combining studying and working does not always mean that theoretical and practical input go hand in hand. Analysing students with (a) paid job(s) shows that, on average, only about half of them has a position that is directly related to their studies (Figure B6.6).

- Taking a closer look at universities and non-universities, it becomes visible that in most of the countries, students at non-universities tend to more often work in fields related to their studies.
- Only in Estonia, Denmark, and Lithuania, it is more often students at universities who work in study-related jobs.

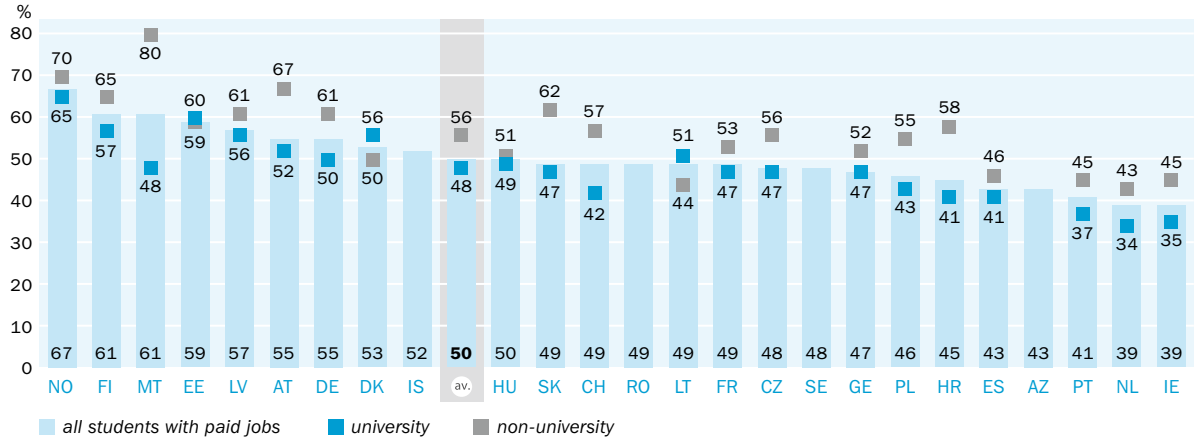
Table B6.3 shows that especially students from the fields Education, Health and Welfare, and Information and Communication Technology have jobs related to their studies. Students in the fields Social Sciences, Journalism and Information, Arts and Humanities, and Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, on average, have least often jobs that match their field.

How closely the jobs of students are related to their studies varies between fields of study.

Figure B6.6

Study-related jobs by type of HEI

Share of students whose jobs are (very) closely related to their studies (in %), only students with paid job(s)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.6.* ***No data:*** *No non-universities exist in AZ, IS, RO, SE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.7 How closely related is/are your paid job(s) to the content of your current study programme?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 6

Motives for working

Students with paid jobs were also asked regarding their motives for working. They could agree to each of five different reasons to work (multiple responses). On average of all EUROSTUDENT countries, covering living costs is the most important motive (70 % of students agree to that), closely followed by being able to afford extra things (69 %). To work to gain experience on the labour market was mentioned by 59 % of the students with paid jobs, 48 % work to afford to be a student and 26 % work to support others financially (Figure B6.7).

- Compared to the agreement to the other motives, in Iceland, Norway, Ireland, and Malta working to be able to afford to be a student seems to be more relevant than in other countries.
- Experience on the labour market is a particular relevant reason for students in France, while working because of the need to support others plays a comparatively important role in Azerbaijan.

Students who work more than 20 hours per week much more often state that they work to be able to cover living costs and to afford to be a student than students working one to five hours.

It is especially students with parents not at all well-off, who have to work to be able to afford studying.

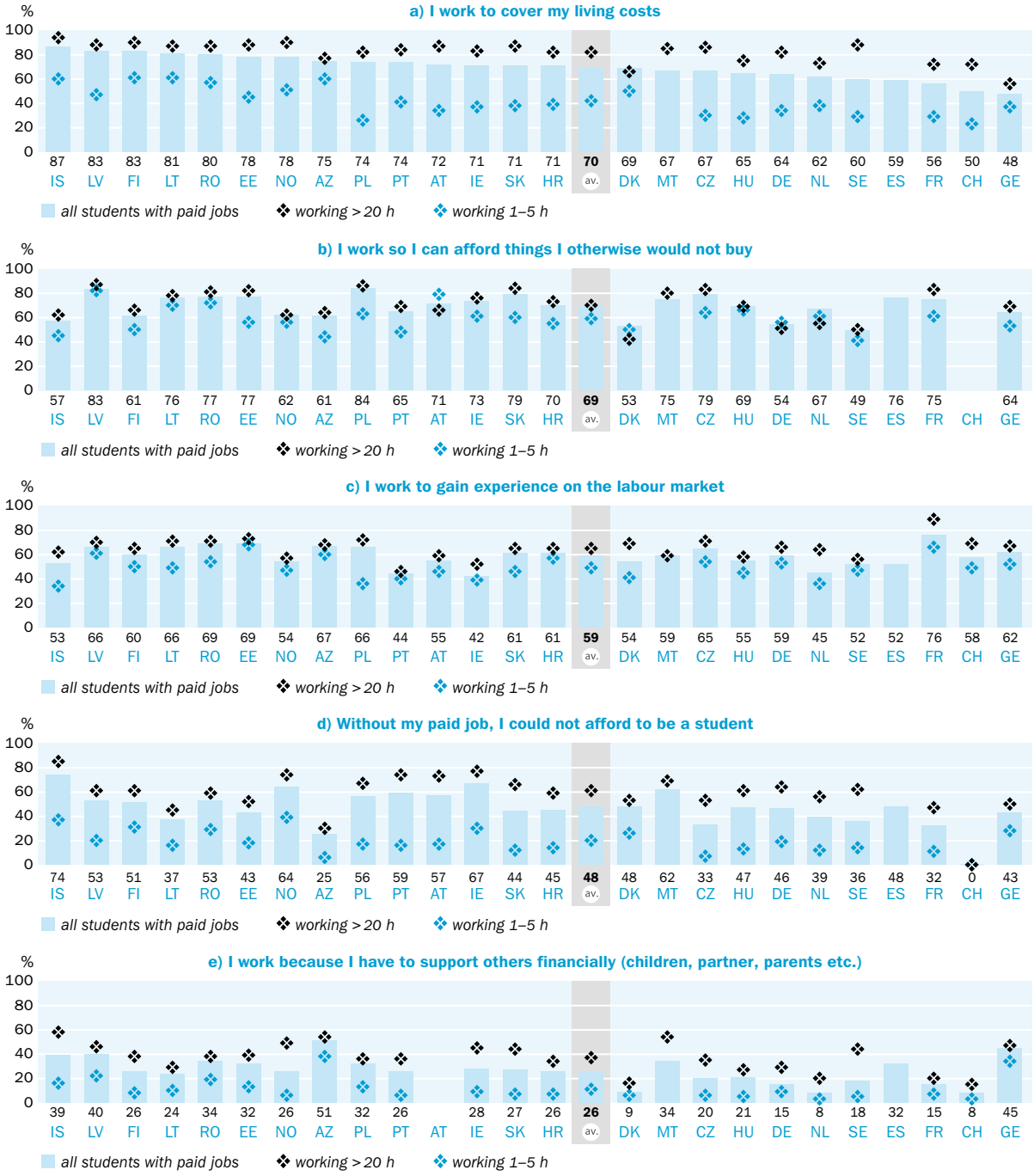
A closer look has to be taken at the group who could not afford to be a student without having a paid job. Figure B6.8 shows how big those shares are among all students (Figure B6.7: only students with paid jobs). The decisive factor here is the gap between students with parents that are very well-off and those with parents not at all well-off. On average, the share of students who has to work to afford studying is 2.6 times higher among students with parents not at all well-off compared to those with very well-off backgrounds. However, this factor varies extremely between the countries.

- The greatest gap can be found in Germany, where this share is about 9.3 times higher, followed by Romania (5.8), Croatia (5.2), and the Czech Republic (5.1).

Figure B6.7

Reasons to work by working hours

Share of students to whom this applies (totally) (in %), only students with paid job(s)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.5.* ***No data:*** *AT (e), CH (b, d); working hours: ES.* ***Too few cases:*** *working 1-5 h: MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.6 To what extent do the following statements apply to your situation? I work to cover my living costs; I work so I can afford things I otherwise would not buy; I work to gain experience on the labour market; Without my paid job, I could not afford to be a student; I work because I have to support others financially (children, partner, parents etc.).*

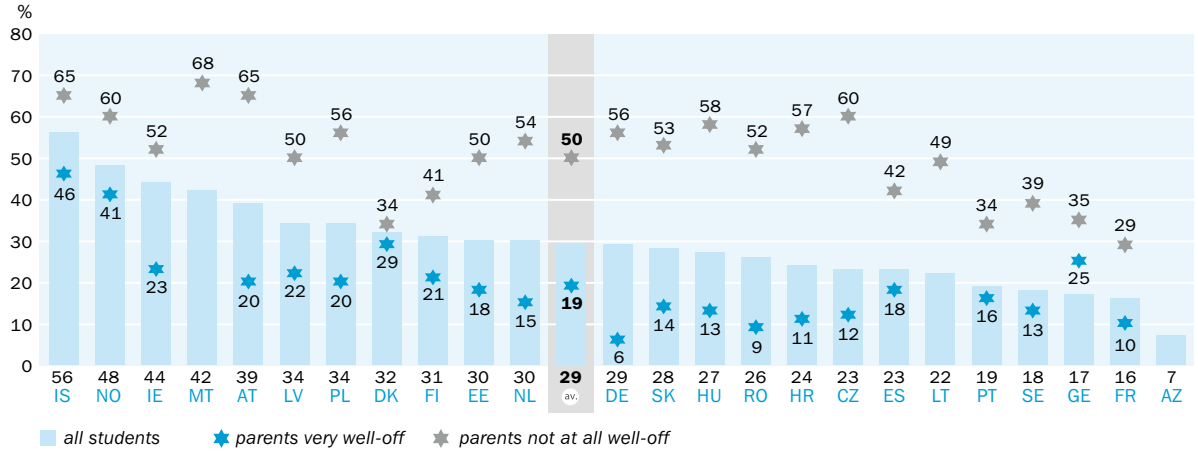
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Figure B6.8

Working to afford to be a student by parental financial status

Share of students to whom this applies (totally) (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.5.* ***No data:*** *CH.* ***Too few cases:*** *parental financial status: AZ; parents very well-off: LT, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.6 To what extent do the following statements apply to your situation? Without my paid job, I could not afford to be a student.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 6

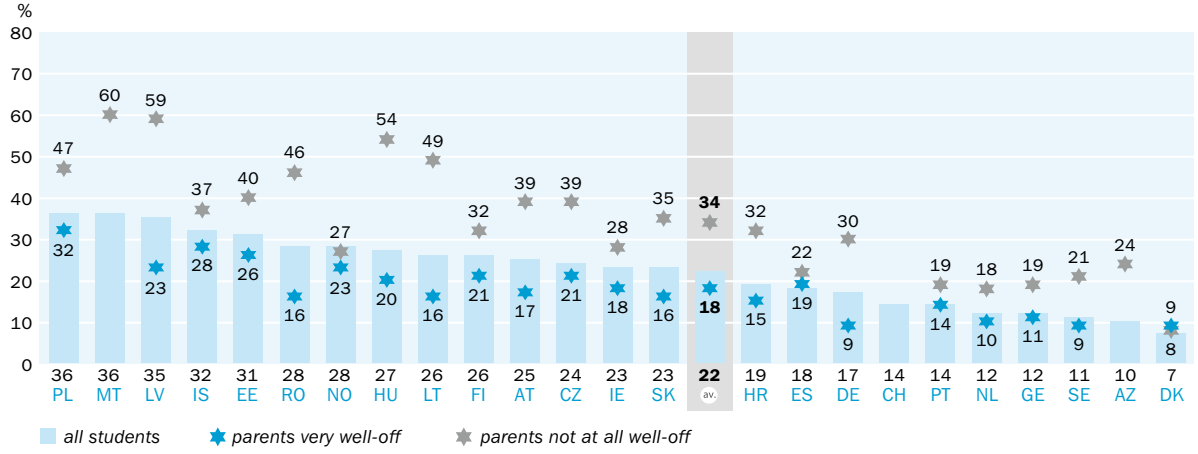
Students' self-perception

Students with paid jobs were asked if they see themselves primarily as a student who works alongside their studies, or as a worker who studies alongside their paid job(s). About one fifth of all students describe themselves as being primarily 'workers' rather than 'students'.

Figure B6.9

Self-identification as being primarily a worker by parental financial status

Share of students who identify themselves as 'workers' (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.4.* ***No data:*** *FR; parental financial status: CH.* ***Too few cases:*** *parents very well-off: AZ, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.8 Which of the following describes your current situation best? 1) Primarily I am a student, and I am working alongside my studies, 2) Primarily I work, and I am studying alongside my paid job(s).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

This share is much bigger among students with parents not at all well-off. About every third of them considers themself to be a worker (see Figure B6.9). The pattern of students with parents not at all well-off rather considering themselves to be 'workers' holds true for all EUROSTUDENT countries except Denmark.

Internships

Box B6.2

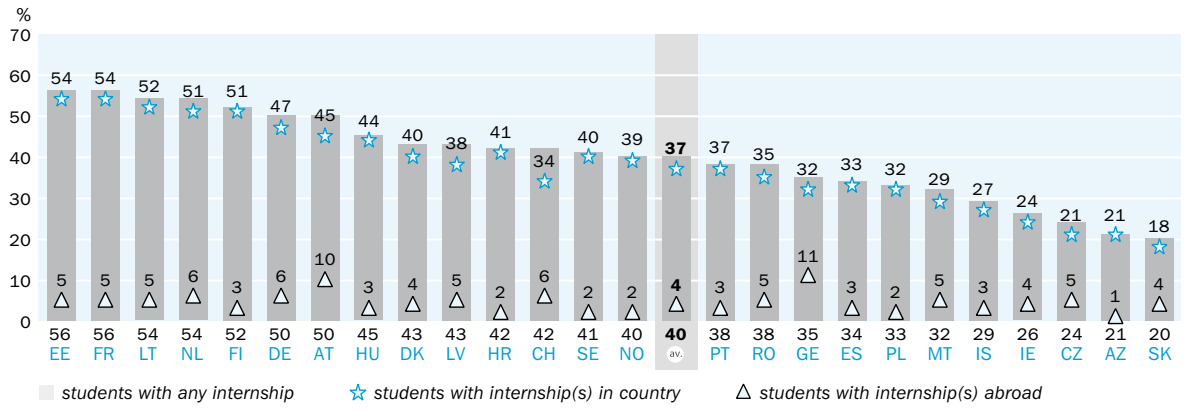
Methodological note: Students' internship(s)

Students were asked to give information about the internship(s) they have done since they first entered higher education on the one hand (in country/abroad), and to give more details on their latest internship on the other hand (obligation, payment).

Figure B6.10 ⬇

Internship(s) since first entering HE (in country or abroad)

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.7.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.18 Have you done any internships (of at least one week, mandatory or voluntary) since you first entered higher education in #country?*

Note(s): *Multiple internships possible.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

On average, about 40 % of students have done at least one internship since first entering higher education, but the differences between countries are considerable. The columns of Figure B6.10 display all students that have done at least one internship, regardless of whether it was in the country or abroad. Most common everywhere are internships in the country of studying. While on average around 37 % have already done one of those, only 4 % have been abroad for an internship. More insights into mobility can be found in > *Chapter B10* on international student mobility.

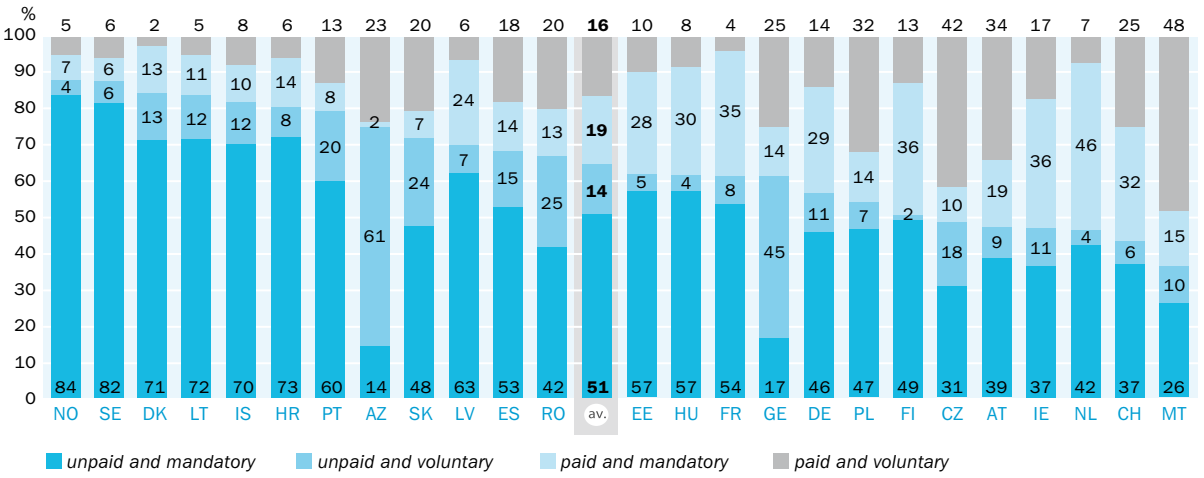
Taking a closer look at the most recent internships (in country) of the students, it shows that on average, every second internship is unpaid and mandatory (Figure B6.11).

- Only in two countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia), the share of unpaid voluntary internships stands out.

Figure B6.11

Remuneration and type of most recent internship in country

Share of students (in %), only students with internships in country



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.10.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.19 Was your most recent internship in #country mandatory or voluntary? 4.20 Was your most recent internship in #country paid or unpaid?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

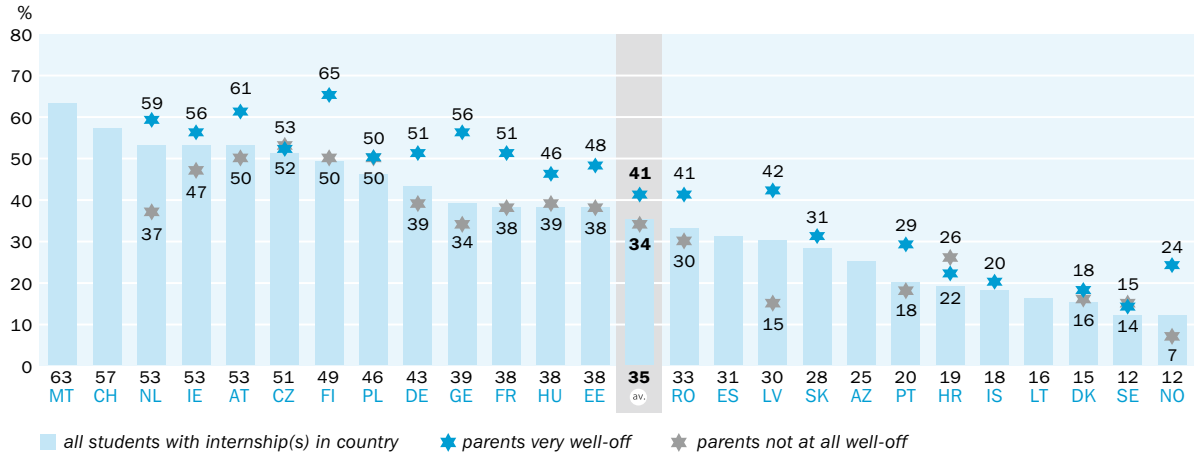
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 6

Figure B6.12

Payment of most recent internship in country by parental financial status

Share of students whose most recent internship was paid (in %), only students with internships in country



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.10.* ***No data:*** *parental financial status: CH, ES.* ***Too few cases:*** *parental financial status: AZ, LT, MT, not at all well-off: IS, SK.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.19 Was your most recent internship in #country mandatory or voluntary? 4.20 Was your most recent internship in #country paid or unpaid?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Overall, only about 35 % of the most recent internships (in country) are paid (see Figure B6.12). In most of the countries the shares of paid internships are higher among students with very well-off parents.

Most of the students' internships are not paid.

In Table B6.4, the shares of unpaid internships (in country) are compared between the different fields of study. On average, unpaid internships are most common in the fields Education and Health and Welfare. They are least common in Information and Communication Technologies and Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction.

Discussion and policy considerations

Working students are a common phenomenon in higher education, which means that grasping their backgrounds and knowing the details of their jobs is of great importance for improving the framework conditions of their studies. Understanding the experiences and challenges faced by working students is crucial for institutions and policymakers to develop effective support mechanisms to facilitate students' academic success and overall well-being.

On average, 59 % of the students in EUROSTUDENT countries work during the lecture period, with more mature students and those at non-universities having paid jobs. Furthermore, a higher share of female students works, but on average less hours per week, earning less money. As a matter of fact, for a fifth of the students their work plays such a significant role in their life that they identify rather as 'workers' than as 'students'.

The intersection of academic goals and professional aspirations offers a special set of opportunities and difficulties. As outlined above, previous studies show that working besides studying often comes along with various side effects on academic performance, be it longer duration of study or a higher chance of dropping out on the negative, or better employability and more resources to spend on the positive side. Furthermore, with a job comes the additional challenge for students to allocate their individual time resources appropriately between work and study without neglecting either of the two or other activities (> *Chapter B5*). How easy it is to combine studying and working depends on whether part-time studies are available in the countries and how flexible the study programmes and jobs are. Students with jobs must arrange their classes and individual learning activities with the hours they signed up to work. In view of the additional burden that this entails, it is not unexpected that dropout intentions are more prevalent among students who work more than 20 hours per week in most of the countries. This all raises the question as to what the motives are for combining studying and working.

The main reason to work for students in the EUROSTUDENT countries is that they need to afford their living expenses. Especially students working more than 20 hours a week state that this is the reason for why they have a job. Beyond financial incentives, the goal of gaining work experience can also be to close the knowledge gap between academic programmes and the practical requirements of different positions, gaining a competitive advantage in one's professional career. On average, about 60 % of working students in the EUROSTUDENT countries state that gaining experience on

the labour market is one of the reasons why they have a job. However, the extent to which a job alongside the degree programme increases future employability also depends on whether it is related to the field of study. Moreover, not all students can be selective in their choice of workplace. Overall, about every second student who works holds a job that is directly related to their academic pursuits, but this share varies between fields of study. Furthermore, a very critical aspect is that students with parents who are not at all well-off are much more likely to have to work in order to be able to afford to study than students with very wealthy parents.

Besides working during the semester, also internships can offer a possibility for students to gain practical insights. Although there are significant disparities across students from different EUROSTUDENT countries, on average, 40 % of them have completed at least one internship either domestically or in another country since beginning their higher education. However, while taking time off to fully focus on a work experience may be advantageous for additional training, it can also cause issues for students who depend on paid employment which they cannot continue simultaneously. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that most students' internships in the EUROSTUDENT countries are unpaid, especially those that are mandatory. The topic of internship compensation is currently being discussed at the EU level with the Employment Committee of the European Parliament voting overwhelmingly in favour of outlawing unpaid internships (European Parliament, 2023). Hence, it is not only of scientific, but also political interest to observe the forthcoming advancements in this domain.

Tables

Table B6.1

Students with paid jobs during the lecture period by age, qualification studied for, and type of HEI

Share of students (in %)

	All students	Age groups				Qualification studied for		Type of HEI	
		Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years and over	Bachelor degree [ISCED 6]	Master degree [ISCED 7]	University	Non-university
AT	69	49	65	78	80	64	79	69	70
AZ	29	21	47	60	71	25	59	29	n/a
CH	63	38	60	74	77	59	73	58	69
CZ	70	56	71	81	94	69	82	68	86
DE	63	45	62	70	76	60	71	60	67
DK	66	64	69	69	54	64	73	68	65
EE	69	49	68	80	85	65	86	68	75
ES	47	30	51	72	76	44	64	39	63
FI	61	49	52	62	72	57	73	56	66
FR	50	38	67	71	69	40	67	51	48
GE	41	34	46	48	65	43	58	40	49
HR	53	32	55	71	88	51	66	49	68
HU	57	38	55	71	88	57	73	53	74
IE	65	58	62	71	79	60	73	63	68
IS	76	66	77	74	79	74	80	76	n/a
LT	59	42	66	75	82	56	82	58	64
LV	64	41	70	79	84	58	80	62	73
MT	68	52	64	80	87	59	84	59	85
NL	76	77	75	73	84	77	71	69	83
NO	74	61	70	76	85	68	80	72	78
PL	60	44	63	76	90	57	76	55	79
PT	32	13	32	60	83	26	54	29	36
RO	48	23	49	69	89	44	81	48	n/a
SE	51	38	46	53	63	50	51	51	n/a
SK	63	49	62	73	92	62	75	59	91
av.	**59**	**44**	**60**	**71**	**80**	**56**	**72**	**56**	**69**

n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.1.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.4 Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B6.2

Share of students with paid jobs and mean of their working hours by female/male students

Share of students (in %) and mean of working hours per week (in h)

	Share of students with paid jobs		Working hrs./week	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
AT	70	68	20	23
AZ	20	38	28	36
CH	68	57	14	16
CZ	72	67	22	22
DE	64	62	16	17
DK	69	63	13	14
EE	71	66	28	28
ES	65	48	n.d.	n.d.
FI	65	57	22	26
FR	52	48	17	19
GE	41	41	31	32
HR	54	51	27	28
HU	58	56	28	29
IE	67	63	22	25
IS	77	74	24	24
LT	61	57	29	29
LV	66	60	32	33
MT	66	71	27	31
NL	78	74	15	16
NO	77	70	21	20
PL	61	59	31	32
PT	30	33	25	28
RO	46	50	31	33
SE	55	44	16	15
SK	65	61	25	26
av.	**61**	**58**	**24**	**25**

n.d.: no data.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.1.* ***No data:*** *working hours: ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.4 Do you have (a) paid job(s) during the current #lecture period? 4.5 How many hours do you spend on your paid job(s) in a typical week in the current #lecture period?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, FR.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B6.3

Study-related jobs by field of study

Share of working students whose jobs are (very) closely related to their studies (in %)

	All students	Field of study									
		Education	Arts and Humanities	Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	Business, Administration and Law	Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	ICTs	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services
AT	55	64	39	38	59	37	75	62	54	57	71
AZ	43	41	49	26	55	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	34	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	37
CH	49	58	40	31	46	42	65	59	64	59	63
CZ	48	57	35	31	53	34	67	53	34	53	45
DE	55	56	40	40	58	42	70	62	68	69	35
DK	53	56	44	56	53	48	55	44	39	64	46
EE	59	70	42	51	61	50	67	66	t.f.c.	64	59
ES	43	52	37	39	48	45	41	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	47	n.d.
FI	61	69	48	50	62	45	59	64	58	70	62
FR	49	67	27	29	45	44	60	62	69	72	41
GE	47	69	45	33	57	31	40	42	61	50	38
HR	45	51	36	33	47	44	55	40	29	53	40
HU	50	59	36	32	52	39	60	59	42	48	46
IE	39	58	19	26	40	27	40	42	42	53	57
IS	52	82	26	42	48	30	33	33	t.f.c.	70	t.f.c.
LT	49	79	31	42	51	42	50	57	t.f.c.	52	t.f.c.
LV	57	83	42	42	48	55	56	67	t.f.c.	66	56
MT	61	87	35	50	60	t.f.c.	52	55	t.f.c.	66	t.f.c.
NL	39	49	33	29	37	26	46	37	42	52	35
NO	67	79	58	55	62	39	55	46	58	83	69
PL	46	54	34	28	53	27	61	50	36	53	33
PT	41	55	30	29	44	30	32	45	34	44	48
RO	49	71	43	34	46	37	62	53	48	52	t.f.c.
SE	48	70	32	40	47	32	33	31	40	57	44
SK	49	45	40	30	52	30	68	56	30	58	53
av.	**50**	**63**	**38**	**37**	**51**	**38**	**54**	**51**	**47**	**59**	**49**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.6.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.7 How closely related is/are your paid job(s) to the content of your current study programme?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B6.4

Unpaid internship(s) by field of study

Share of students whose most recent internship was unpaid (in %)

	All students	Field of study									
		Education	Arts and Humanities	Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	Business, Administration and Law	Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	ICTs	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services
AT	47	84	46	57	15	30	8	9	51	82	43
AZ	75	79	74	79	73	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	72	t.f.c.	87	t.f.c.
CH	43	89	33	29	16	43	13	18	60	25	6
CZ	49	66	55	63	33	44	12	19	67	85	55
DE	57	92	74	65	40	61	40	34	47	85	59
DK	85	96	95	80	89	80	71	65	96	86	95
EE	62	90	77	66	63	51	29	27	t.f.c.	86	54
ES	69	65	74	66	68	73	73	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	71	n.d.
FI	51	90	62	28	29	34	30	13	35	84	62
FR	62	75	72	63	66	56	48	46	55	63	78
GE	61	69	60	65	67	52	t.f.c.	47	49	68	41
HR	81	92	84	82	76	73	52	61	91	96	92
HU	62	86	71	69	41	60	22	29	82	89	64
IE	47	89	68	61	29	34	16	14	66	73	47
IS	82	77	73	91	67	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	95	t.f.c.
LT	84	95	87	84	83	83	62	72	t.f.c.	93	t.f.c.
LV	70	79	70	64	69	t.f.c.	39	54	91	84	71
MT	36	58	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	24	t.f.c.	4	t.f.c.	n.d.	68	*0
NL	47	82	48	41	22	62	24	15	48	61	47
NO	88	96	83	86	71	80	50	50	77	94	76
PL	54	60	73	52	37	69	27	47	61	86	57
PT	79	89	82	75	66	80	74	66	82	96	78
RO	67	87	77	71	76	76	31	49	75	91	t.f.c.
SE	88	95	80	85	77	81	76	60	91	91	t.f.c.
SK	72	89	80	80	57	t.f.c.	20	33	94	93	t.f.c.
av.	**65**	**83**	**71**	**67**	**54**	**61**	**37**	**41**	**69**	**81**	**60**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, H.10.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.19 Was your most recent internship in #country mandatory or voluntary? 4.20 Was your most recent internship in #country paid or unpaid?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

References

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Chapter B7
Students' resources

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Key

Level of student income

In Latvia, Malta, and Romania, students' median income per month, including transfers in kind, is comparatively high with values above 1,400 Purchasing Power Standard (PPS). In Azerbaijan, Denmark, France, Germany, and Slovakia, the median income is below 1,000 PPS.

Financial impact of COVID-19 pandemic

On cross-country average, 23 % of students report a (very) negative impact of the pandemic on the financing of their studies. Student groups that are affected to an above-average extent are those whose parents are not at all well-off (35 %), students depending on national public student support (25 %), and students with disabilities (30 %).

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Student income and inflation

When comparing student income and inflation between 2013 and 2022/23 in a limited number of countries, it shows that in most countries student income rose at higher rates than inflation. In France, this only applies temporarily and in Sweden the inflation rate was most of the time markedly higher than the income trend.

Composition of student funding

From a macro perspective, students receive, on average across countries, 40 % of their total monthly income from their family or partner. Students' self-earned income provides 41 %, national public student support 12 %, and other income sources account for 6 %.

Gwosć, C. (2024). Students' resources. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024*. wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew007

findings

Importance of family/partner contributions

On average across EUROSTUDENT countries, 76 % of students receive support in cash and in kind from their parents, partner, or other relatives. This type of support accounts for an average of 52 % of the recipients' total monthly income.

Importance of public support

Across countries, 41 % of students receive, on average, national public student support. This way the public sector provides 34 % of the recipients' total monthly income.

Recipients of public support

Student groups receiving national public student support to an above-average extent are, for instance, young students (< 25 years), students who are not paying fees, and students with migration background.

Extent of students' financial difficulties

When measured by the international average, 26 % of all students report either serious or very serious financial difficulties. In Georgia, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, and Romania, more than 30 % of students are faced with this problem.

Main issues

This chapter on students' resources refers to the financial requirements for higher education studies. Participation in higher education can involve considerable costs for students, especially when they (have to) leave the parental home and establish their own households. In order to cover their living and study-related costs, students generate their income from a variety of sources. For analytical reasons, however, these many sources are summarised into four categories in this report: a) family/partner contributions, b) students' self-earned income, c) national public student support, and d) other income. The first three sources of income, which generate the majority of revenue in all countries (Hauschildt et al., 2021), have different characteristics and implications. The financing of the study programme through contributions from the parents, for instance, takes the financial burden off the students. However, it prolongs the students' financial dependency on their parents, even if the students are of age. Furthermore, some students may fear overburdening their parents (Middendorff et al., 2013), which can be stressful for students. When students finance their studies through self-earned income, this provides (more) financial independence from their parents (Middendorff et al., 2017) and may considerably ease the students' budget restriction as gainful employment appears to be a very productive income source (Gwosć, 2019). However, students then have to spend a lot of time on employment, which they then lack for their studies or other important activities (Apolinarski & Gwosć, 2020; Keute, 2017; Franzen & Hecken, 2002). Finally, receiving public support may relieve the students and their parents, especially when it takes the form of non-repayable support. Yet, public support often appears not to be a rich source of income and is frequently associated with the emergence of financial difficulties (Hauschildt et al., 2021; DZHW, 2018). Furthermore, students may feel increased psychological pressure due to the requirement of regularly providing proof of study performance in order not to lose eligibility for state support or due to the prospect of repaying public loans in the future. In this way, any source of funding has its up- and downsides. The fact that students use a certain source of income particularly intensively (though not exclusively) is sometimes also due to the restriction that other, more favoured sources of income are not (sufficiently) available.

For many years, the issue of student funding has been featured in the ministerial declarations of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), although with varying degrees of concreteness (e.g. London Communiqué, 2007; Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009; Yerevan Communiqué, 2015). With the Rome Communiqué, the EHEA countries stated that: "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." (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, p. 6, 2020). The 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA' developed as part of the Rome Communiqué were later underlaid with various indicators, including composite scoreboard indicators, to monitor the implementation and development of the principles and guidelines. For the area of student financing, this includes the proportion of students receiving universal or need-based grants, as well as state support for student accommodation, transport, and meals (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022). Through this description of instru-

ments and their use in indicator formation, the mandate for public student funding was further concretised.

Magnitude of student income

The level of income provides information about students' financial opportunities to purchase consumer goods and invest in education (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 2018; Becker, 1993). In this chapter, income differences between countries and various groups of students within and across countries will be looked at in more detail. Income can be affected by crisis events such as the recent COVID-19 pandemic (Kroher et al., 2023; Becker & Lörz, 2020; Berkes et al., 2020). Our analysis looks at the negative impact of the pandemic on students' income situation. Inflation is another crisis phenomenon which may have a mainly negative impact on the purchasing power of students, suited to cause a cost-of-living crisis (Neves & Stephenson, 2023; European Students' Union, 2022). Therefore, an attempt is made to compare the development of student income and inflation over almost a decade. Furthermore, as insufficient income can be one reason for students' financial difficulties (Unger et al., 2020; Finocchietti, 2015), the relation between students' income situation and their assessment of financial difficulties is investigated, among other things.

Box B7.1

Methodological note: Magnitude of student income

When interpreting the data on student income, it should be noted that the EUROSTUDENT 8 target group has changed in so far as distance students in fully online programmes living in the country of survey have now been taken into account (> *Chapter A3*). These students are more likely to be intensively employed while studying and, therefore, receive higher earnings. Furthermore, stricter data cleaning rules have been applied during data preparation that may have an impact on the level of income as well.

Composition of student funding

The magnitude of student income is, inter alia, influenced by its structure, i.e. the number of income sources available and the yield of these funding sources. The average income structure of a country's student population, in turn, is affected by the basic orientation of the national student funding system on the macro level towards the private or the public sector. In the first case, student funding is seen as the sole or at least predominant responsibility of the students and often also that of their parents. As a result, students' self-earned income and intra-family transfers dominate the income structure. In the second case, providing student funding is mainly a government task. Public support in various forms, such as ● grants, scholarships, loans or even public ● transfers in kind, such as subsidised student accommodation or tuition-free studies, then play a major role for the students' income structure. The prevalence of one of these funding sources is then also associated with different societal perceptions of the students. In systems with a strong private orientation, students who generate large income parts by gainful employment alongside studies can be regarded as employees in a training programme (young learners). If they are mainly funded by their parents, who have a legal or socially expected responsibility for their upkeep, students can be

viewed as dependent children, even if they are of legal age (essentially, children still supported by their families). In systems relying to a large extent on public support, students are considered as independent adults who are especially financially independent of their parents (responsible citizens) (see also Schwarz & Rehburg, 2004, for a similar classification). The national characteristics of the three most important income categories – a) family/partner contributions, b) students' self-earned income, and c) national public student support – are analysed in more detail. Additional data on students' self-earned income can be found in > *Chapter B6*.

Financial difficulties of students

Students' financial difficulties result from the interplay of their income and expenses. Financial distress may encourage students to seek (additional) employment alongside studies, however, this could result in other difficulties or potentially negative outcomes, such as prolonged duration of studies (Theune, 2015; Triventi, 2014), a lower number of credits acquired, worse grades (Wenz & Yu, 2010; Callender, 2008), interruption of studies, or even dropping out of higher education completely (Heublein et al., 2017; Hovdhaugen, 2013). Due to the limitations set by available time and jobs (> *Chapter B5*), many students confronted with financial difficulties may not be able to increase their income through employment, leading to lower quality of living conditions. Our analysis focuses on the question of which student groups are especially challenged by financial difficulties and are thus more prone to negative effects as mentioned above. Furthermore, we will also look into the development of students' financial distress over time.

Data and interpretation

Magnitude of student income

Box B7.2

Methodological note: Purchasing Power Standard

Since the EUROSTUDENT countries use different currencies (e.g. the Euro, Danish Krone, Swiss Franc), Purchasing Power Standard (PPS) has been used as a common currency to achieve a great degree of comparability. PPS is an artificial currency used to eliminate the influence of exchange rates and differing price levels between countries, both of which may distort the international comparison of monetary values. One PPS can be depicted as a tiny goods basket that costs exactly the same amount of money (= 1 PPS) in all EU-27 countries. If, for example, income recipients in country A have 800 PPS and those in country B have 500 PPS, the data clarify that income recipients in country A can buy 800 units of the goods basket, while their counterparts in country B can purchase only 500, although the price is the same in both countries. To calculate PPS, the monetary values reported by the EUROSTUDENT countries in national currency have been converted using the Euro as reference. The respective currency conversion factors applied are Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) for 2022, as reported by Eurostat (Eurostat, 2023) and – in the case of Azerbaijan and Georgia – by the World Bank (World Bank, 2023). The interested reader can view all financial data, including Euro and national currency units, in the EUROSTUDENT > *Database*.

Across all countries, the median income of students amounts to 1,154 PPS per month, taking into account monetary income, as well as transfers in kind received by students in the form of goods, services, and bills paid by others (e.g. by parents, partner, or other relatives) (Figure B7.1). As already seen in the past, there are differences between the countries. The difference between the highest student income in Latvia (1,603 PPS) and the lowest in France (856 PPS) with a factor of less than two is comparatively small and clearly lower compared to the last project round when the factor was three.[1]

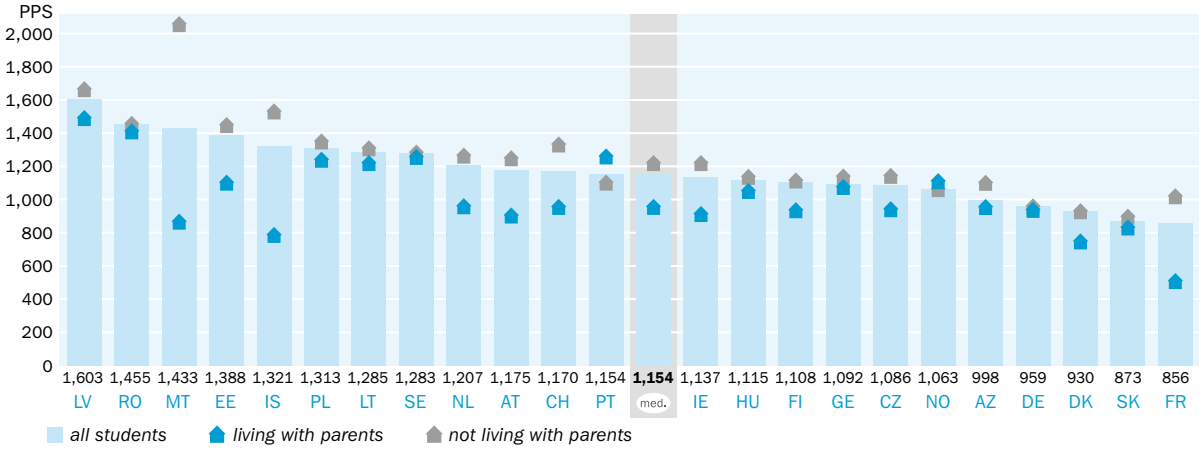
Students' median income is relatively high in Latvia, Romania, and Malta, with more than 1,400 PPS monthly.

By using PPS, the differences between countries are much smaller than if income had been expressed in Euro, since PPS eliminate not only exchange rate effects but also price level differences between countries. The use of PPS also influences the order of countries. Norway and Denmark, for example, would not be below the international median if the data were displayed in Euro. The amount of student income within a country is primarily determined by the expenses that students need or choose to cover. These expenses encompass living costs and study-related expenditures. With respect to the latter, the level and structure of costs in higher education as well as the cost-sharing between the public and the private sector are important. Furthermore, the level of income is also influenced by the availability of different income sources and the extent to which students can and want to utilise them.

Figure B7.1

Student income by form of housing

Total monthly income including transfers in kind. Median income (in PPS)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.1 (PPP).* ***No data:*** *ES, HR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period? 4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *The values above the country abbreviations represent the median income of all students. Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Students' financial needs are also influenced by their housing situation. Our analysis distinguishes between students living with parents, who receive, on international median 956 PPS per month, and those living independently, who receive 1,220 PPS within the same timeframe.

1 *For comparison: The median income of 1,603 PPS in Latvia equals 1,280 Euro.*

This fundamental difference between the two groups is also evident in the vast majority of countries.

- Particularly clear differences in income of more than 300 PPS between the two groups can be seen in Malta, Estonia, Iceland, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Ireland, and France.
- Only in two countries, Portugal and Norway, is the pattern reversed, i.e. students living with parents have a higher median income than those who live outside the parental home.[2]

As students get older, the median income rises continuously in almost all countries (Table B7.1). This is mainly due to the increasing share of ○ self-earned income of older students. On cross-country median, students with low educational backgrounds have the highest income compared to their peers with medium or high educational backgrounds. This is because the first group often generates more employment income. When students have a dominant source of income, it appears that students ○ depending on self-earned income have usually the highest income and those ○ depending on national public student support the lowest income. Students' financial difficulties are reflected in their income levels: in the vast majority of countries, students with financial difficulties have a lower median income than their peers without such difficulties. Finally, fee-paying students have in almost all countries a higher median income than those who do not pay ○ fees as the first group has higher costs to cover.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on student financing

Across countries, almost a quarter of students report a (very) negative impact of the pandemic on financing their studies.

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The recent coronavirus pandemic had a wide range of effects on students. Physical and mental health, social contacts, freedom of movement, and the format of university teaching are just a few examples of the areas that have been affected by the pandemic. What impact has it had on students' finances? The following analysis takes a look at students who stated that the pandemic had either a negative or very negative impact on the financing of their studies (Figure B7.2).

On cross-country average, 23 % of all students report a (very) negative impact of the pandemic on the financing of their studies. At country level, the share ranges from a bit more than a tenth in Lithuania to more than a third in Portugal. This means that at the same time, a large majority of students in all countries experienced either no or even a positive impact of the pandemic on their finances, however, it should be noted that only those who are still in higher education and have not dropped out responded to the questionnaire.

When looking at students who differ by their ○ parents' financial status (Figure B7.2a), it appears that students whose parents are not at all well-off experienced much more often negative impacts than their counterparts whose parents are very well-off. The cross-country average for the first group is more than twice as high as for the second group (35 % vs. 16 %). This basic pattern holds true for all but one country with available data on both groups.

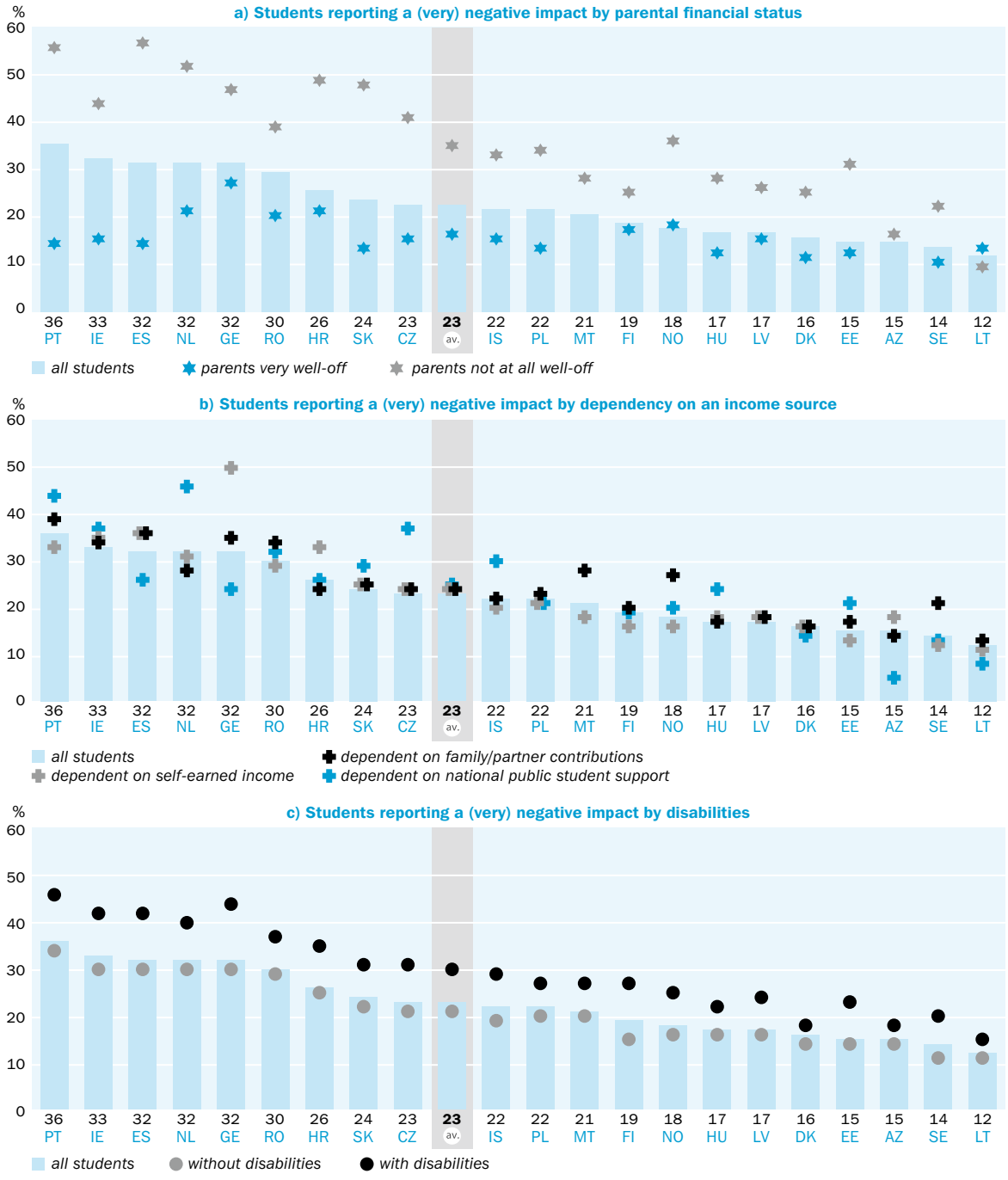
- In Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and Slovakia, the difference between students whose parents are not at all well-off and their peer group is more than 30 percentage points. The difference is comparatively low in Finland and Latvia at around 10 percentage points.

2 *Income data that differentiate more by students' various types of housing outside the parental home can be found in the > Database.*

Figure B7.2

Students' assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on financing studies

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, TM44.* ***No data:*** *AT, CH, DE, FR.* ***Too few cases:*** *parents very well-off: MT, AZ; dependent on national public student support: MT, LV.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except ES, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *M2.2 To what degree are you currently experiencing a positive or negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on financing of your studies?*

Note(s): *The values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students reporting a (very) negative impact.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

The wealth of students' parents thus plays an important role for students in coping with the financial consequences of the crisis.

For students depending on a certain source of income, a pattern is much more difficult to recognise (Figure B7.2b). On cross-country average, there are almost no differences between students depending on family/partner contributions, on self-earned income, or on national public student support. 24 % in the first two groups and 25 % in the latter report a (very) negative impact of the pandemic on their finances. A pattern becomes clearer when data are analysed at country level. Looking at the countries that provided data for all three student groups, the following picture emerges: In eight countries, it is students depending on national public student support who report the highest shares of negatively affected students.[3] In seven countries, it is students depending on family/partner contributions and in another four countries it is students depending on self-earned income.

This indicates that students with public support as dominant income source experienced more financial hardships due to the pandemic, although this is not very clearly reflected in the international average. There is no obvious explanation for this. Especially in times of the pandemic, public support is – due to the state guarantee – expected to be a more stable source of income than, for example, earned income, which can be lost due to lay-offs. However, it has become apparent that almost 10 % of students in Europe encountered problems with their scholarship status as payments have been reduced, postponed, or cancelled (Farnell et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has been shown time and again in the past that students who depend on national public student support often receive clearly lower incomes than their fellow students who depend on other sources of income. If the pandemic is then associated with rising expenses (e.g. general inflation, costs for technical equipment to attend online lectures, higher expenses on meals due to the temporary closure of university canteens), students receiving public support may be particularly ill-equipped to cover them.

When students' disabilities are used as differentiation criterion, a very clear pattern emerges (Figure B7.2c). In all countries, students with disabilities report (very) negative financial impacts of the pandemic to an above-average extent. The opposite applies to the experiences of the comparison group. In all countries, students without disabilities suffered (very) negative effects less often than average. The cross-country average for the first group is 30 % and for the second 21 %.

- The differences between the two student groups are rather large in Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Georgia, the Czech Republic, and Finland, with more than 10 percentage points.
- By contrast, in Denmark, Azerbaijan, and Lithuania, the difference is no higher than 4 percentage points.

One reason for the differences between the two groups could be that disabled students who were working while studying and lost their job during the pandemic had greater difficulty finding a new job than their fellow students without disabilities. In addition,

3 *In the Czech Republic, data on students depending on national public student support are based on a relatively low number of respondents.*

the pandemic may also have placed a greater burden on the health of the first group and thus increased their expenses. This would also have a negative impact on their financial situation.

Student income and inflation

Monetary income can be subject to a process of devaluation over time. Such an inflationary process took place with particular vigour in 2022/23 in many European countries (Eurostat, 2024b). High inflation rates mean a great loss of purchasing power, which students may not be able to compensate. We have taken this as an opportunity to analyse the development of student income and the general inflation rate over a longer period of time for selected EUROSTUDENT countries (Figure B7.3). The focus is on students not living with parents as they have to cover higher costs compared to their peers who are living with parents.

In the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Poland, and temporarily in France, student income rose at a higher rate than inflation for nearly the last decade.

The data show the development of student income for students not living with parents and the general inflation rate as measured by the European Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) over the last four rounds of EUROSTUDENT. Index values have been used for both variables. The data for both variables were standardised to the value 100 in the year of the EUROSTUDENT V data collection (2013 or 2014, depending on the individual country) to have a common baseline. The inflation rate rose continuously in almost all countries during the reporting period. Partial exceptions are Estonia, Ireland, and Poland, where the HICP value fell slightly or even only marginally at times. The inflation level differs somewhat between the countries. In Estonia and the Czech Republic, the HICP reaches values of more than 130, while in Ireland and Sweden the index does not exceed 121. All countries have in common that inflation increased clearly in 2022. This is particularly true for Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Poland with annual inflation rates between 15 and 22.5 %. In France, Ireland, and Sweden, the increase ranged between 6.4 and 9 %.[4]

With respect to student income, there is a monotonous growth in all analysed countries except Ireland and Sweden. However, the level increases vary markedly across countries. In Sweden, student income increased between 2013 and 2022 by almost 19 %. By contrast, the increase in Estonia amounted to 147 % in the same time span. A comparison of the development of both variables – student income and inflation – shows that in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, and Poland, student income rose at a higher rate – in most countries at a clearly higher rate – than inflation. In France, the increase in student income exceeded the inflation rate in the period from 2016 to 2018 and from 2020 to 2021. In Sweden, student income decreased between 2016 and 2021 and increased markedly in 2022. By contrast, the inflation rate in Sweden increased constantly from 2013 to 2022. It was, therefore, above the rate of change in student income for almost a decade.

The data indicate that in most of the selected countries student income rose for nearly the last decade at higher rates than inflation. However, this also implies for students who do not (or cannot) build up savings that their expenses have also grown at higher

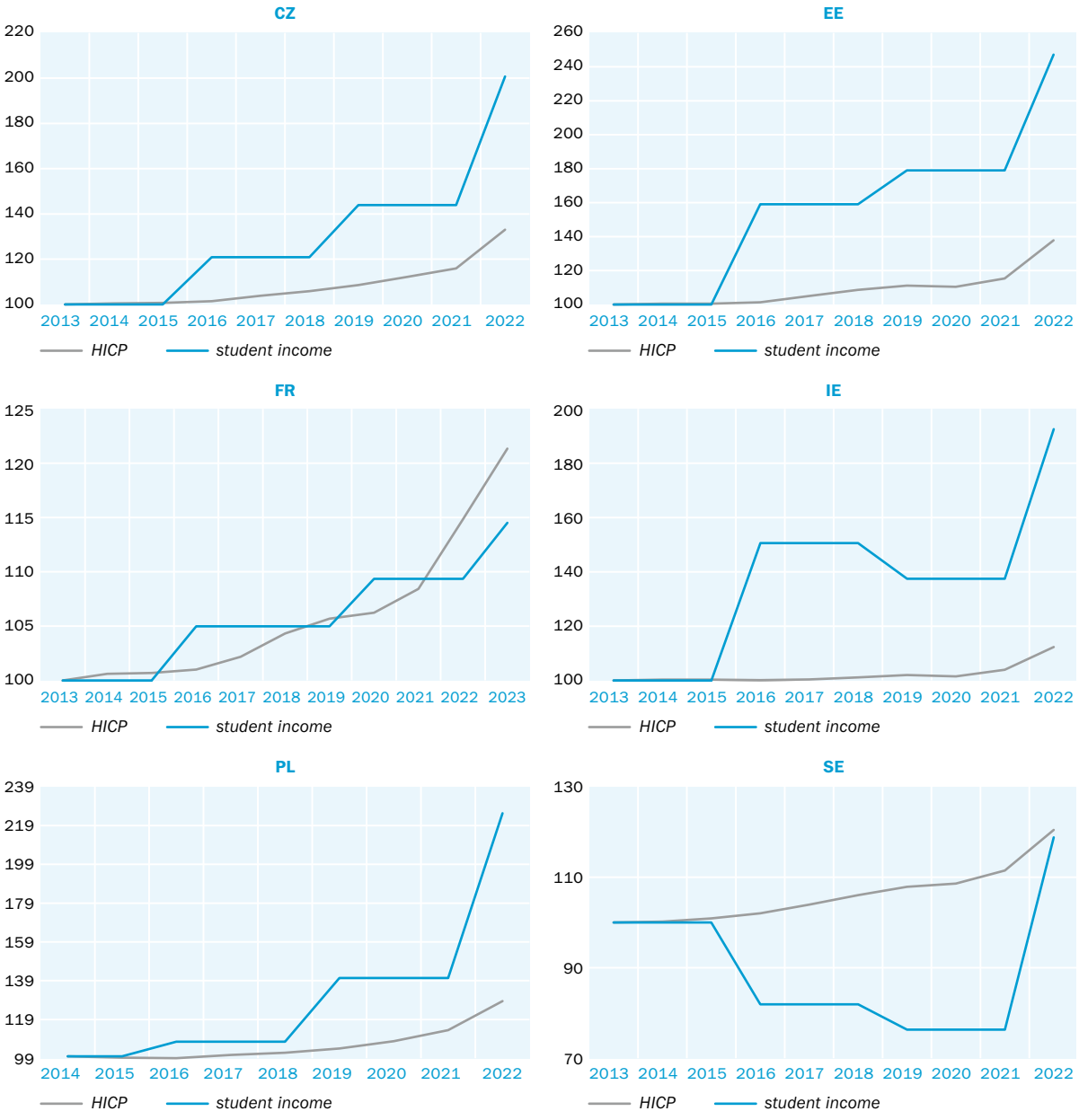
4 *It should be noted that due to the timing of the countries' field phases in E:8, the peak in inflation, which occurred with country-specific differences between June 2022 and February 2023, could largely not be recorded.*

rates than inflation. When interpreting the data, two things should be taken into account. Firstly, the results cannot tell anything about whether student income is sufficient to cover all necessary expenses.

Figure B7.3

Student income and inflation over time in selected countries

Index values based on students' total monthly income including transfers in kind (mean), students not living with parents



Data source: *Student income: EUROSTUDENT V: G.1, EUROSTUDENT VI: G.1, EUROSTUDENT VII: G.1, EUROSTUDENT 8: G.1; HICP: European Central Bank, 2023.*

Data collection: *EUROSTUDENT 8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except FR (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period? 4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

In the above analysis, there is no indicator that could provide information on the level of any minimum student income required. It only provides information on the extent to which inflation led to a loss of purchasing power for students. Secondly, for methodological reasons it may well be that the HICP is not a well-suited indicator for measuring inflation for students. On the one hand, students have expenses (e.g. tuition fees) that other population groups do not need to cover. On the other hand, students have reduced expenses (e.g. price reduced meals in refectories or rooms in student halls of residence) from which other population groups do not benefit. An inflation measure that was developed for the general population cannot adequately take these special features into account. Applying the general inflation rate to students may then mean that their situation is wrongly estimated.[5] However, a better indicator on European level is not (yet) available.

The structure of student income

Box B7.3

Methodological note: Categories of student income

For the analysis in this chapter, student income is grouped into four categories: a) family/partner contributions, b) self-earned income, c) national public student support, and d) other income.

Family/partner contributions: Contributions from family/partner are transfers in cash (legally required or voluntary) that students receive from their parents, partner, or other relatives. The transfers comprise disposable income such as cash and money transfers that students can use freely for their monthly spending. The amounts for transfers in kind have also been added to family/partner contributions in the figures and tables in this chapter.

Transfers in kind: Transfers in kind are students' living and study-related costs that are not paid by the students themselves, but by the students' parents, partner, or other relatives. The respective payments go directly to the students' creditors, i.e. the money is intangible for the students. One example of transfers in kind is the rent that parents whose collegiate children live away from the parental home pay directly to their children's landlord. Transfers in kind can also be provided in the form of free goods and services by the family and partner (e.g. free meals, clothes, etc.). The concept of transfers in kind is used to capture the full extent of material support for students.

Self-earned income: The category 'self-earned income' includes students' income from gainful employment, be it dependent employment or self-employment. Income from both current and previous employment (i.e. savings) is taken into consideration. With respect to income from previous employment, only the average amount that students use to cover their costs of living and studying per month during the current lecture period is considered.

5 *In relation to this, a recent study for Germany has indeed shown that the goods basket of students differs considerably from that of the general population, especially with respect to rent (including ancillary costs) and food. It was also found that – based on specifically estimated student inflation rates – the majority of students had to bear a higher inflation in 2022 than the general population (Meier et al., 2023).*

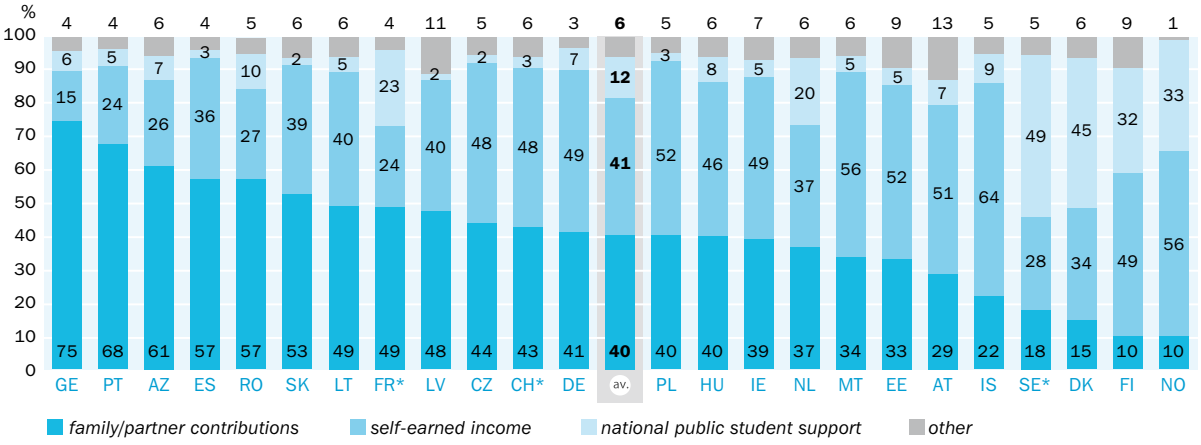
National public student support: This type of support comprises payments that students receive, usually because of their student status, directly from the state in which they are permanently studying. It includes non-repayable support (i.e. grants and scholarships) and repayable support (i.e. loans) that may be subject to interest or not. Support from all levels of state (i.e. national level, province, and municipality) as well as from higher education institutions (HEIs) is taken into account. However, as the EUROSTUDENT data are based on students' self-reports, some public support items cannot be covered. This applies, for example, to tax relief for students and their parents or when the state assumes costs to the benefit of students (e.g. state payments to HEIs intended to cover students' tuition fees).[6]

Other income: 'Other income' is a residual category covering various income items from either private or public sources not assigned to one of the other categories mentioned above. Student income from other private sources could be grants and loans from private companies. Income from other public sources refers, for example, to pension payments and child benefit for students, which are public support items that are not exclusively granted to students in higher education. Finally, 'other income' may include student support from outside the country of study, i.e. from foreign countries or international entities such as the EU.

Figure B7.4

Composition of students' funding

Based on total monthly income including transfers in kind. Source of funding (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.52, G.53, G.54, G.55, and G.56.* ***No data:*** *HR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period? 4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *The category 'other' also includes in this case income from sources outside the respective country. Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR, CH, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

6 *In Georgia, for instance, 30 % of students do not pay tuition fees (> Chapter B8). Instead, their fees are borne by the state, which makes corresponding payments directly to the universities. In accordance with the EUROSTUDENT conventions, this state financial contribution to the institutional costs of higher education is not included in public support for students.*

Across all countries, students receive, on average, two fifths (40 %) of their total monthly income including transfers in kind from their families and partners (Figure B7.4). Students generate 41 % of their total income through gainful employment. The public sector provides 12 % of student income by giving out grants, scholarships, and loans. The remaining 6 % come from other private or public sources. This means that on cross-country average the composition of student income has changed compared to the last round and the family/partner now seems to provide a larger part of student income (+ 4 percentage points).

Across countries, students themselves and their families or partners provide more than 80 % of students' total monthly income.

As before, the bulk of student funding continues to come from the private sector. Students and their families provide slightly more than four fifths of student income, while the public sector supplies about one eighth (12 %).[7]

- When comparing at country level, it appears that students' self-earned income is the single most important source of income in 54 % of countries. This is true for the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Malta, Estonia, Austria, Iceland, Finland, and Norway.
- In more than a third of countries, namely Georgia, Portugal, Azerbaijan, Spain, Romania, Slovakia, Lithuania, France, and Latvia, family/partner contributions are in relative terms the most important source of income.
- National public student support is only in two countries, Sweden and Denmark, the income source with the highest share in students' total income.

The importance of contributions from family/partner

We previously emphasised the significance of family/partner contributions to student funding (Figure B7.4). In the following analysis, we focus exclusively on recipients to gain deeper insights into this funding source.

On cross-country average, 76 % of students receive support from the family or partner. These contributions supply more than half of the recipients' monthly income.

On cross-country average, 76 % of students receive support in cash and in kind from their parents, partner, or others (Figure B7.5). On average, this type of support accounts for 52 % of the recipients' total monthly income including transfers in kind. Based on the international average, two groups of countries stand out:

- In the countries of the lower left quadrant, both the share of recipients and the income share of family/partner contributions are below the sample average. This group of countries encompasses all Nordic countries as well as Austria, Ireland, and Malta. The share of recipients ranges from 41 % in Finland to 72 % in Malta. The income share varies from 19 % in Norway to 52 % in Ireland.[8]
- In the upper right quadrant, which includes Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Portugal, Georgia, Slovakia, Romania, France, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Spain, Hungary, and Poland, both shares are above the international average. The share of recipients ranges from 79 % in Poland and Hungary to 100 % in Lithuania. The share of family/partner contributions in the recipients' income varies between 54 % in Hungary and 76 % in Portugal.

7 *This calculation of the shares of private and public sector funding is only approximate. The category 'national public student support' may not cover all public contributions to student funding. On the one hand, some items of national public support, such as housing benefits for students, are reported in the category 'other'. On the other hand, the contributions from family/partner may contain income that the family or partner has received in the form of state support beforehand (e.g. in Austria and Germany, students' parents may receive child benefit for their collegiate children, and the parents may pass on this support to their children). As a result, the share of public support is likely to be underestimated in our calculation.*

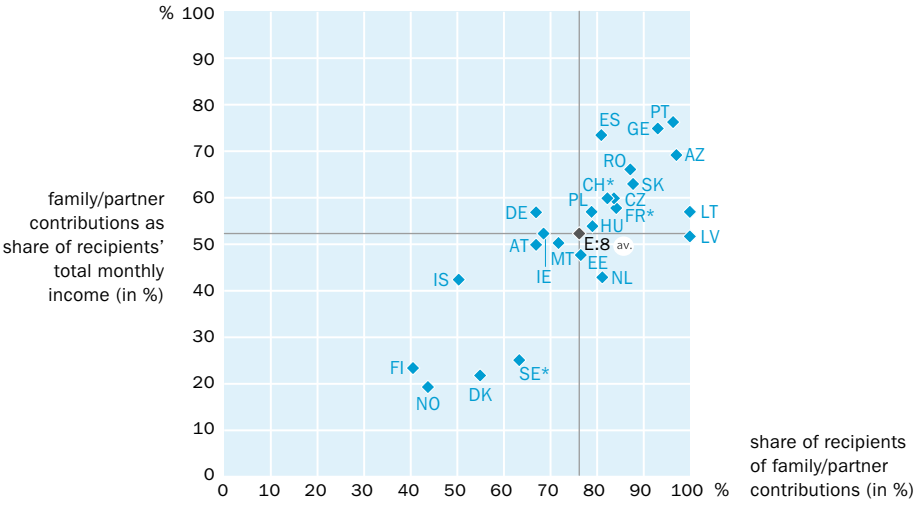
8 *In Ireland, the income share is only marginally below the cross-country average.*

As in the last round, the countries in the upper right quadrant form the largest group. There, study funding rests to a particularly high degree on the shoulders of the students' families. Countries with such a funding system could basically run the risk of excluding children from financially not well-off families from higher education, unless, for instance, the state succeeds in closing the funding gap.

Figure B7.5

Recipients of family/partner contributions and importance of income source

Based on total monthly income including transfers in kind



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.92, and G.97.* ***No data:*** *HR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period? 4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR, CH, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 7

The importance of public support

The state supports, on cross-country average, 41 % of students, providing more than a third of the recipients' total income.

The importance of public support can be investigated in the same manner as family support above. Across the EUROSTUDENT countries, 41 % of all students receive national public student support and this type of support accounts for 34 % of the recipients' total monthly income including transfers in kind (Figure B7.6).

- In the lower left quadrant, there are seven countries – Latvia, Slovakia, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Lithuania, and Romania – in which both the recipient quota and the share of national public student support in the recipients' total income are below the international average. This is the largest group of countries. The recipient quota ranges from 16 % in Slovakia to 35 % in Romania. The income share varies between 18 % in Latvia and 32 % in Ireland.
- In the upper right quadrant, which encompasses most of the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and France, both variables are above the international average. The recipient quota varies between 54 % in the Netherlands and 88 % in Denmark. The income share ranges from 41 % in the Netherlands to 65 % in Sweden.
- In Switzerland, Poland, Germany, Iceland, and Austria, which can be found in the upper left quadrant, the income share of the recipients is above the international

average as well, ranging from 37 % in Austria to 62 % in Germany. At the same time, the recipient quota is below the international average in these countries, ranging from 10 % in Switzerland to 22 % in Iceland and Austria.

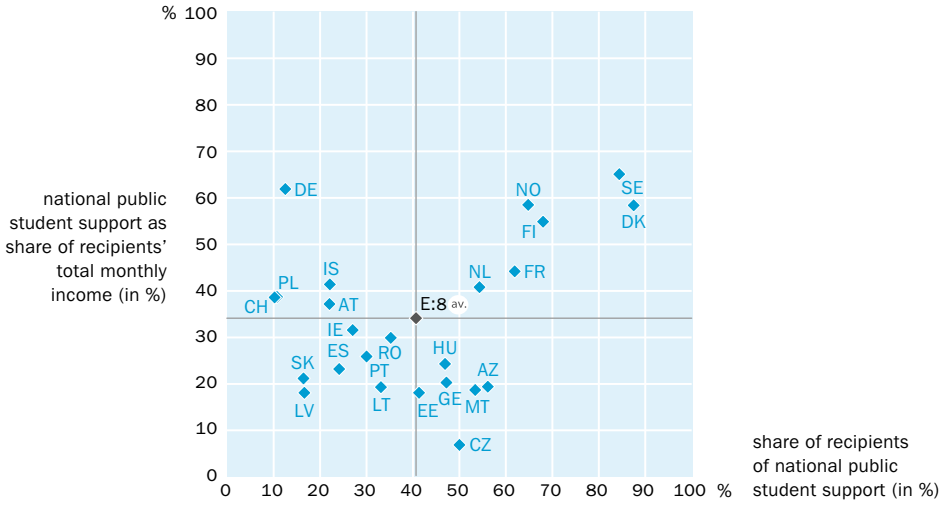
- Finally, there are six countries – Estonia, Hungary, Georgia, the Czech Republic, Malta, and Azerbaijan – in the lower right quadrant. In those countries, the recipient quota is above average, ranging from 41 % in Estonia to 56 % in Azerbaijan.[9] The income share is below the international average, varying between 7 % in the Czech Republic and 24 % in Hungary.

The analysis of family/partner contributions and national public student support shows how the two sources partially replace each other as (most) important sources of funding. For example, in the Nordic countries Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, public support plays a major role for student funding (both the share of recipients and the share of public support in the recipients' total income are above the international average).

Figure B7.6

Recipients of national public student support and importance of income source

Based on total monthly income including transfers in kind



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.82, and G.91.* ***No data:*** *HR.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period? 4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

At the same time, family/partner contributions are of much less importance in these countries (both variables are below the international average). The opposite is essentially true for Slovakia, Latvia, Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, and Romania. There, public support is rather low (in terms of recipient quota and income share) and family/partner contributions are rather high (although in Latvia the income share does not exceed the international average – nevertheless, the value is still high). This emphasises that the

9 *In Estonia, the recipient quota is marginally above the cross-country average.*

two groups of countries are based on different fundamental funding principles assigning different priorities to the public and private sectors.

Recipients of public support

Students who profit to an above-average extent from public support are, e.g. young students, those with a migration background, and those who do not pay fees.

In the previous section the share of students receiving national public student support has already been examined on cross-country level. Which student groups benefit most or least from state support? The following analysis describes the cross-national recipient rates across various institutional, study-related, and socio-demographic characteristics (Figure B7.7).

When interpreting the data, it should be borne in mind that public student support systems can be very complex not only in their structures but also in their effects. There are different fundamental principles of state social policy (e.g. welfare principle vs. supply principle), several policy objectives are being pursued (e.g. equalising social disparities or supporting meritocratic targets), and a large variety of instruments is used (for example, repayable and non-repayable support, loans that are subject to interest or not, transfers in cash and in kind, targeted and flat rate support). This cannot be differentiated in the following analysis. In addition, there are overlaps between various supported student groups, for example, a student receiving national public student support may come from a medium educational background, studying at a university, striving for a Bachelor's degree. For this reason, the focus of comparison should be only on contrastive pairs (e.g. Bachelor vs. Master).

On average across EUROSTUDENT countries, 41 % of all students receive national public student support. Student groups which receive state support to an above-average extent are, for example, students who are not paying fees (47 %), young students in the age groups below 25 years (47 % respectively 45 %), first- and second-generation migrant students (45 %). Within the framework of social policy, the state often uses targeted tuition waivers for certain groups of students to make studying less costly. The exemption from paying fees thus complements other instruments of state social policy. With respect to student age, there is a clear and stable pattern over time according to which the recipient quota for public support is decreasing as students get older. This is mainly due to the state regulations in place for public support. Eligibility is often determined based on a certain student age, a maximum funding period, and supplementary income limits. These factors make it less likely for older students to receive state support. According to the EHEA's principles and guidelines, students with migration background are counted among the underrepresented groups whose participation should be increased and who are – together with other groups – in the focus of specific support. Not least for this reason, they receive national public student support more often than average.

Student groups receiving national public student support clearly less often than average are, inter alia, those attending non-universities (32 %), attending HEIs under private control[10] (15 %), Master students (34 %), and students whose parents are financially very

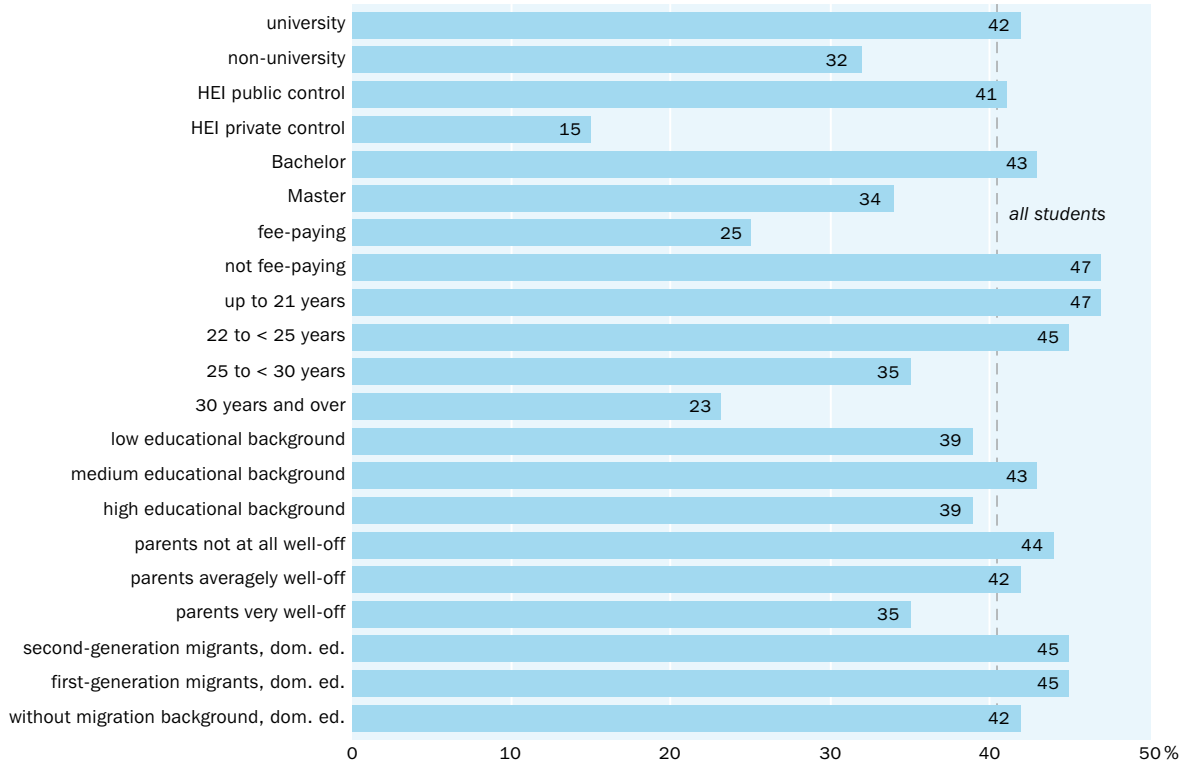
10 *According to ETER, the classification between public and private control is made according to whether a public agency or a private entity has ultimate control over the institution. Ultimate control is decided with reference to who has the power to determine the institution's general policies and activities and appoint the officers managing the school and will usually also extend to the decision to open or close the institution. As many institutions are under the operational control of a governing body, the constitution of that body will also have a bearing on the classification (European Commission, 2023,* *> Chapter B4**).*

well-off (35 %). Students attending non-universities are often from low social backgrounds, they are older on average and – in connection with this – receive rather high incomes due to intensive employment alongside studies (> *Chapter B4*). As a result, they receive less state support; this is where the age effect mentioned above comes into play.

Figure B7.7 ⬇

Recipients of national public student support

Students receiving national public student support by institutional, study-related and socio-demographic characteristics. Share of students on cross-country average (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.82.* ***No data:*** *second-generation migrants, first-generation migrants, without migration background: ES; parents very well-off, averagely well-off, not at all well-off: CH; fee-paying: DK, NO; not fee-paying: NO, PT; HEI public control: AZ, GE; HEI private control: AZ, DK, FI, FR, GE, IE, IS, MT, NL, SE.* ***Too few cases:*** *low educational background: LT; first-generation migrants: AZ, LT, LV, MT, SK; parents very well-off: AZ, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *The dotted line represents the cross-country average for all students receiving national public student support. Non-universities do not exist in Azerbaijan, Iceland, Romania, or Sweden.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

This basic argument also applies to Master students. They are, on average, clearly older than Bachelor students. With advancing age of students, however, they are more likely to have an accommodation of their own, live with a partner and have children. All this is associated with increased financial requirements, which the students cover by spending more time on gainful employment and thus achieving higher total incomes. Simultaneously, public support and also parental support diminish over time. Higher education institutions under private control finance themselves largely through tuition fees. This requires from students and their families a sufficient ability to pay. In fact, the majority of students at such HEIs still hail from high educational backgrounds or

come from financially (very) well-off families. However, this makes it less likely that these students will receive state support – at least no state support which is meant to equalise social disparities. Country-specific data for most of the previously mentioned student groups can be found in Table B7.2.

Students' financial difficulties

On cross-country average, 26 % of students report (very) serious financial difficulties.

Students' financial difficulties result from an imbalance of income and expenditures. The subsequent analysis is based on the survey question about the extent of financial difficulties that students experienced at the time of the survey. The interviewees were asked to respond according to a 5-point scale that ranged from 'very seriously' to 'not at all'. Based on the cross-country average, 8 % of students report very serious financial difficulties, while another 18 % still indicate serious difficulties (Figure B7.8). 27 % of students have moderate financial distress and 21 % state only slight problems in this respect. Finally, 27 % of students have no financial difficulties at all. It appears that in all countries, the majority of students have at the most moderate financial difficulties. Nevertheless, the minority of students with (very) serious financial distress is rather large in all countries.

- In Georgia, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Iceland, and Ireland, more than 30 % of students are affected by (very) serious financial problems.
- In Germany, Croatia and Switzerland, the share of students with such troubles is at least 13 %.

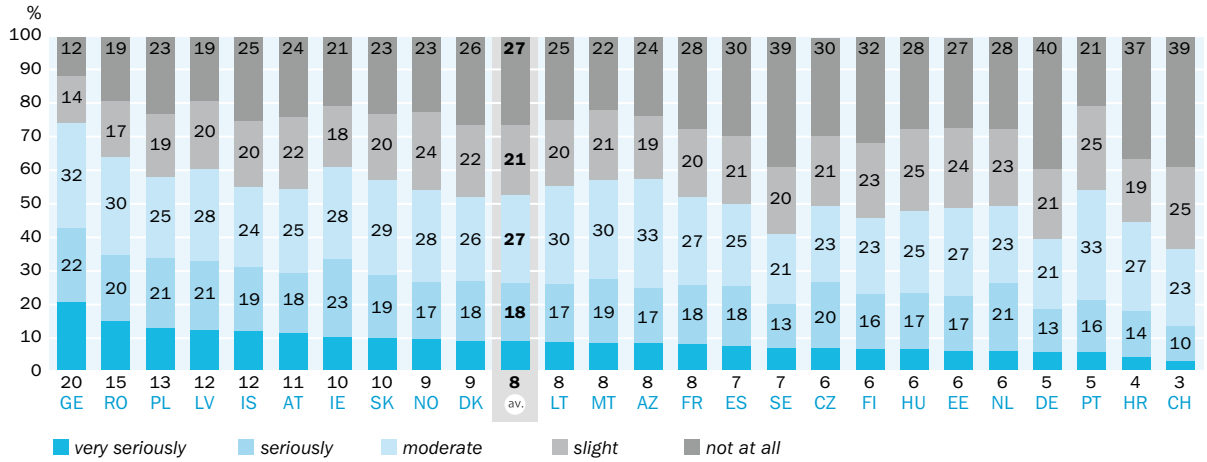
Compared to the last round, the share of students with (very) serious financial worries has partially increased. On average across all countries with available data, the respective share increased by 2 percentage points. In Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Poland, and Romania, the increase was rather high, ranging between 6 and 10 percentage points.

B 7

Figure B7.8

Students' assessment of their financial situation

Extent of current financial difficulties of all students. Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.148.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.16 To what extent are you currently experiencing financial difficulties?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Financial difficulties by different characteristics of students

Student groups reporting (very) serious financial distress particularly often include, e.g. those whose parents are not at all well-off, students with disabilities, and those depending on public support.

The degree of financial difficulties varies between different groups of students. When differentiating by students' parents' financial status, it appears that students who rate their parents as financially not at all well-off are – not surprisingly – much more likely to have severe financial difficulties than their counterparts (Figure B7.9a). On cross-country average, 59 % of these students report (very) serious financial problems, while the share for their fellow students whose parents are financially very well-off amounts only to 15 %.

In all countries with available data, the share of students whose parents are not at all well-off is not only above the respective national average, but also the highest of all three groups.

- The differences between students whose parents are not at all well-off and those whose parents are very well-off are particularly high in Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Portugal, and Croatia, at more than 50 percentage points.
- Even in the countries with the comparatively smallest differences, that is Iceland, Sweden, and Germany, the difference between the two groups is not smaller than 30 percentage points.

In Georgia, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Azerbaijan, Portugal, and Croatia, the share of students with (very) serious financial difficulties whose parents are not at all well-off is very high. These countries are characterised by two features. On the one hand, the student funding systems are largely based on support from the students' families and partners. The analysis of Figure B7.5 has shown that both the share of recipients of family/partner contributions and the share of family/partner contributions in the recipients' total monthly income are above the international average in these countries; thus, they all can be found in the upper right quadrant in Figure B7.5.[11] On the other hand, the countries are characterised by the fact that their wealth is below the international average in the European Union.[12] It can, therefore, be assumed that the combination of strongly family-dependent student financing and a country's relatively low per-capita income means that students from low-income families are likely to have particularly great financial difficulties.

Students with disabilities struggle more often with severe financial difficulties, too. In all countries, disabled students report (very) serious financial problems to an above-average extent (Figure B7.9b). On cross-country average, this share amounts to 37 %. At the same time, their fellow students without disabilities are only affected by such financial problems to a below-average extent in all countries. On average across countries, this share amounts to 23 %. The reasons for a higher risk of financial distress of disabled students can be found both on the students' income and expenditure side. Disabled students may have lower incomes, e.g. in case their disabilities limit their abilities or chances for gainful employment. In fact, a further analysis of EUROSTUDENT data shows that the income from paid jobs during the lecture period differs

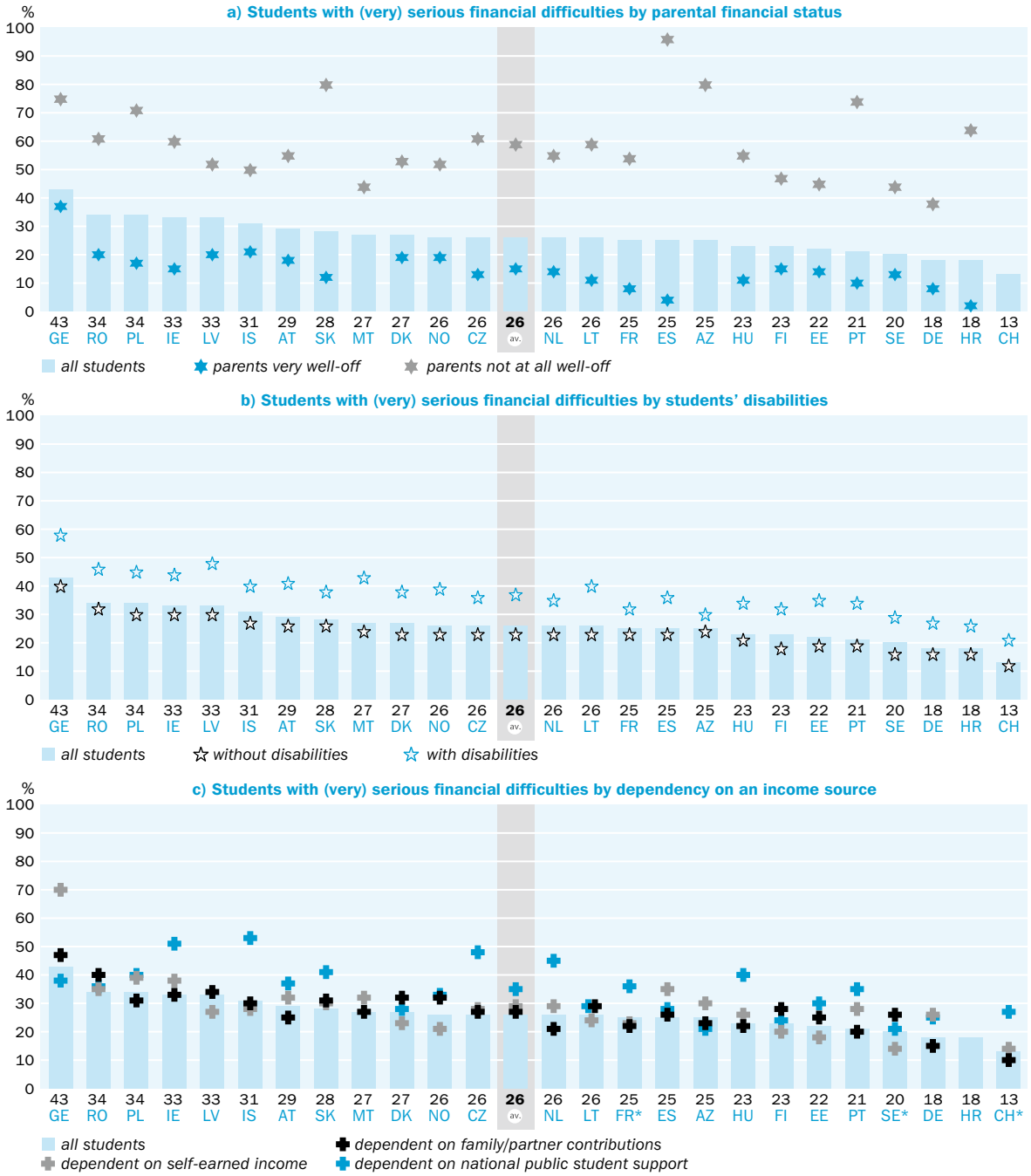
11 *For Croatia, data on family support are not available for the current project round. However, previous analyses over the last four rounds of EUROSTUDENT have shown that the two characteristics mentioned above were also true for Croatia. It can, therefore, be assumed that this will continue to apply in the current round.*

12 *A comparison of the countries' GDP per capita in PPS with the average value of the EU-27 countries for the year 2022 yields the following results: EU-27 = 100, GE = 40 (own estimate), Poland = 79, Slovakia = 71, Spain = 85, Azerbaijan = 46 (own estimate), Portugal = 79, Croatia = 73 (Eurostat, 2024a; World Bank, 2024).*

Figure B7.9

Students' assessment of their financial situation by parental financial status, students' disabilities, and dependency on an income source

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.148.* ***No data:*** *parents very well-off and not at all well-off: CH; dependency on an income source: HR.* ***Too few cases:*** *parents very well-off: MT, AZ; dependent on national public student support: LV, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.16 To what extent are you currently experiencing financial difficulties?*

Note(s): *The values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students with (very) serious financial difficulties.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, FR, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

clearly between the two groups. On cross-country average, the mean employment income per month of students with disabilities is 403 PPS. Their counterparts without disabilities earn 531 PPS (> *Database*). This has also an impact on the students' total income. The total monthly mean income, including transfers in kind, of disabled students amounts, on international average, to 1,425 PPS, while that of their peers without disabilities is 1,450 PPS (> *Database*). Of course, this difference is only small, however, at country level the difference between the two groups is sometimes more pronounced (e.g. in Estonia, Ireland, and Norway, it is more than 100 PPS per month). There are also variations between the two groups on the expenditure side. For example, in all countries, disabled students have higher health costs than their fellow students without disabilities (cross-country averages: 47 PPS vs. 31 PPS, > *Database*). This indicates that the finances of disabled students are indeed under pressure from both sides although the income problem seems to weigh heavier.

When students depend on an income source, the cross-country average indicates that two student groups show similar results, while one group stands out (Figure B7.9c). Among students depending either on family support or on self-earned income, 27 % respectivly 29 % report (very) serious financial difficulties, which is (just) above the international value for all students (26 %). In the group of students ◐ depending on national public student support, 35 % complain about severe financial problems. This is also reflected on national level. Out of 22 countries with data on all three student groups, there are 13 countries in which students depending on national public student support report the largest shares of those with (very) serious financial difficulties.[13] In five countries, Romania, Denmark, Lithuania, Finland, and Sweden, it is students depending on family support and in another four countries, namely Georgia, Spain, Azerbaijan, and Germany, it is students ◐ depending on self-earned income who most often have serious financial problems. The fact that students depending on public support have a much higher risk of getting in severe financial troubles is most likely related to their income situation: on cross-country median, students depending on national public student support receive a total income, including transfers in kind, of 602 PPS per month. Their fellow students depending on family support have 1,117 PPS and students depending on self-earned income get 1,472 PPS in the same time span (Table B7.1).

Further student groups who report (very) serious financial difficulties to an above-average extent are those of advanced age (25 years and over), from low and medium educational backgrounds, international students, students living away from parents, and students who are paying fees (Table B7.3).

Comparison over time: students' assessment of their financial situation

In 60 % of countries, the share of students with (very) serious financial difficulties has decreased between E:V and E:8.

How did students' financial difficulties develop over time? The following analysis draws a comparison of the proportion of students with serious or very serious financial difficulties between the fifth and the current eighth round of EUROSTUDENT (Figure B7.10). There are 20 countries with available data on this indicator for the two project rounds. A trend can be observed that the extent of students' severe financial difficulties

13 *In the Czech Republic, data on students depending on national public student support are based on a relatively low number of respondents.*

has been decreasing over time. In 60 % of countries, the share of students reporting (very) serious financial difficulties has decreased between E:V and E:8.

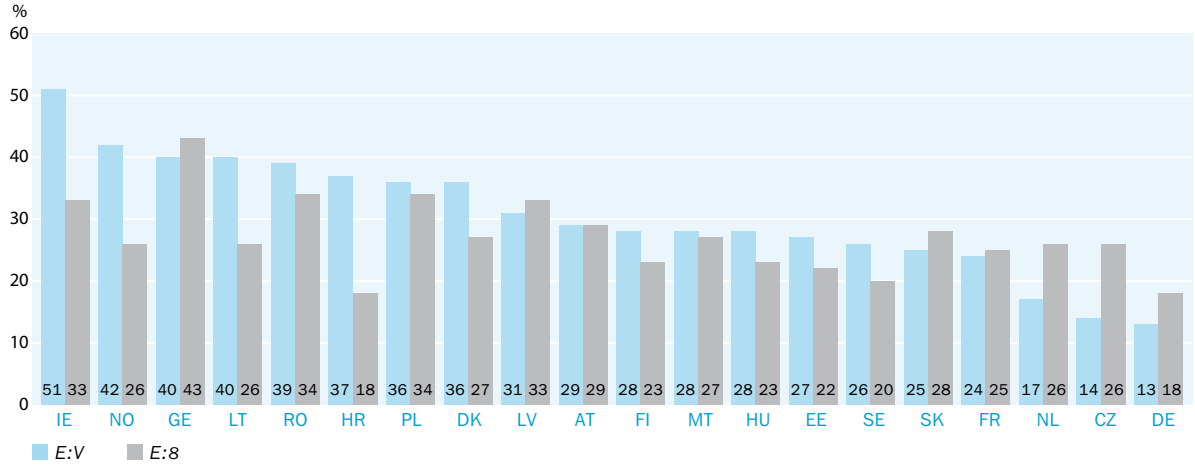
- The decline was particularly pronounced in Ireland, Norway, Lithuania, Croatia, and Denmark, with 10 percentage points and more. In another seven countries, the decline in the share of students with (very) serious financial difficulties ranges between 1 and 6 percentage points.
- In Austria, the share of financially distressed students is the same in both rounds (29 %).
- In 35 % of countries, including Georgia, Latvia, Slovakia, France, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Germany, the share has increased from E:V to E:8. The increase varies from 1 percentage point in France to 12 percentage points in the Czech Republic.

If we look at the data not only for the fifth and eighth round, but for the last four rounds of EUROSTUDENT, a variety of patterns emerges, i.e. in many countries the values of the time series do not fall or rise strictly monotonously. Nevertheless, a general downward trend is recognisable in most countries. This is generally a positive outcome. However, the reasons for this are not yet clear. The decreasing share of students with severe financial distress may be caused by an improved material well-being of them over time. This may be due to students receiving more financial support from their families, from the state, or they generate more earned income through gainful employment alongside studies.

Figure B7.10

Comparison over time: students' assessment of their financial situation

Students with (very) serious financial difficulties. Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT V, F.6, and EUROSTUDENT 8, F.148.* ***No data:*** *E:V: AZ, ES, IS, PT; E:8: AM, BA, CH, IT, ME, RS, RU, SI, UA.*

Data collection: *E:8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.8/4.16 To what extent are you currently experiencing financial difficulties?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Another explanation, however, might be that the social composition of the student populations has changed over time. Perhaps potential students from low-income families have increasingly refrained from taking up studies so that their places have been more and more taken by students from wealthier families. A more in-depth analysis is needed to clarify this question.

Discussion and policy considerations

The financial resources available to students, as measured by the median income, still vary from country to country, which is to be expected. Azerbaijan, Germany, Denmark, Slovakia, and France are countries where student income in PPS is rather low in international comparison, although the level of median income as such does not necessarily indicate an increased inability to cover costs. Compared to the last round, the income range between the countries has narrowed noticeably, as the ratio between the highest and lowest income of the countries has decreased from more than three in the last round to less than two in this round. When taking the results from the sixth project round into account as well, when the ratio was slightly above two, this rough measure seems not to indicate a convergence of student income across countries over time. However, the international convergence of student income would also not be an objective set by the Rome Communiqué (2020) or the development of its principles and guidelines (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022).

Student income can come under considerable pressure because of crisis events. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on study financing for parts of the student populations, e.g. through the loss of students' own jobs, reduction of family support, or difficulties obtaining public support (Hawley et al., 2021; Becker & Lörz, 2020; Berkes et al., 2020; Farnell et al., 2021). In a global comparison, students in Europe expressed during the pandemic more frequently worries about their personal finances than their fellow students in Asia, North America, and Oceania. This problem was only reported more often among students in Africa and South America (Aristovnik et al., 2020). At national level in the EUROSTUDENT countries, the share of students negatively affected financially by the pandemic ranged between more than a tenth in Lithuania and more than a third in Portugal. Student groups that were disproportionately often affected by such negative impacts of the pandemic were especially those whose parents are financially not at all well-off. Furthermore, students with disabilities and – to a lesser extent – students depending on national public student support were part of these groups. The reasons for the difficulties of these groups in coping with the financial consequences of the pandemic may initially vary (e.g. lack of (more) parental support, loss of jobs, increased health costs, insufficient public support) but in the end it is due to a lack of opportunities to increase income to the extent required. Students have received additional state aid during the pandemic in several countries. In Germany, all federal levels, i.e. federal, Länder and local governments, as well as universities, have provided financial support. The instruments and measures used included, inter alia, grants, giving out interest-free loans, the temporary exemption from interest on loans, and the extension of funding periods (Reus, 2022; Gwosć, 2023). Apart from the appropriateness of this support, which cannot be assessed here, another major problem was the time delay in making public aid available to students in need. The call for quick, unbureaucratic help from the state, echoing not only in the higher education sector but across many other areas during the pandemic, however, seems unfortunately only be realisable to a limited extent (van der Beek et al., 2023). Nevertheless, forward-looking state crisis prevention measures could help to reduce the response time in the event of future crises.

Another event that is very likely to have had a direct, predominantly negative impact on students' finances is inflation like that of the years 2022/23. A time series analysis of student income and the general inflation rate over the last 10 years for selected countries has shown that in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Poland, and – at least half of the time – in France, income growth has outpaced inflation. However, if students do not – or cannot – build up savings, their expenditure growth exceeded inflation as well. The positive findings on the long-term development of students' purchasing power, however, says nothing about the adequacy of their income levels to cover their costs, it only says to what extent inflation reduces purchasing power. The current EUROSTUDENT data reflect the inflation in 2022/23 to some extent, but it was not possible to capture its peak. The European Students' Union (2022) pointed out that in winter 2022/23, students were facing the decision to choose between heating, eating, or dropping out of higher education because of inflation. They suggested a comprehensive list of countermeasures for different federal levels. In fact, the state has also provided financial support during this crisis. In France, vulnerable groups including students received one-off payments (Ministère de l'économie des finances et de la souveraineté industrielle et numérique, 2021), in Spain, tax reductions on food, electricity and gas, as well as subsidies for low-income families were granted (La Moncloa, 2022), and in Austria, one-off payments, changes in income taxation (e.g. eradication of cold progression) and regular indexation of study assistance were introduced (Fink, 2022). Students were not always explicitly addressed as a target group, but they at least benefited from measures when those were aimed at the total population or large population groups. It must be feared, however, that the public sector in many countries was too financially overstretched with the overall crisis management to be able to fulfil the above-mentioned students' needs satisfactorily.

The analysis of students' income structure has shown that private sources provide the lion's share of student funding. On cross-country average, family/partner contributions and students' self-earned income together account for 81 % of students' total monthly income, while direct cash support from the state provides another 12 %. Compared to the data from the last round, the share of family/partner contributions has increased by 4 percentage points, while the importance of all other income categories has slightly decreased. This could also be an effect of the previous crises resulting in students increasingly falling back on parental support.

While the recipient quota of national public student support has, on cross-country average, hardly changed compared to the last round (E:8: 41 % vs. E:VII: 42 %) this does not apply to the share of public support in the recipients' total income. The international share has decreased from 42 % in the last round to 34 % in the current round. In countries like Georgia, Ireland, Malta, Poland, and Sweden, the decline was between 11 and 27 percentage points. This is most likely due to considerable increases in the recipients' job income, which took place in all countries with available data (> *Database*, although this result can probably also be partly attributed to the changes in the student populations targeted by EUROSTUDENT as mentioned in the beginning and the data cleaning rules applied, see Box B7.1). This could mean that the income importance of public support has decreased for the group of recipients (for a time comparison for Germany see Dohmen et al., 2021). Against the background of the objectives of the social dimension of the EHEA, this might be a worrying development. Not least

because public support, especially in the form of need-based grants, is a suited means of preventing employed students from dropping out of higher education (Kalalahti et al., 2023).

Across countries, more than a quarter (26 %) of students report (very) serious financial difficulties. This share has increased by 2 percentage points compared to the last round, which is probably not least due to various crises, such as the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapidly increasing inflation. It should be noted, however, that our data set only records the consequences for those who are still in the higher education system. Other consequences, such as students dropping out due to financial reasons, cannot be captured. Particularly affected by financial worries are students whose parents are financially not at all well-off. But also students with disabilities, students depending on national public student support, 25- to 29-year-olds, those from low educational backgrounds, international students, and students who are paying fees, are often among those who report disproportionately high shares. Most of these groups are identified as disadvantaged, underrepresented, or vulnerable in the EHEA's Social Dimension Strategy and are targeted by inclusive strategies (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020). Our results indicate that financial support for these groups is still urgently needed. One piece of seemingly good news is that in a long-term comparison between the fifth and the current eighth round, there is still a trend towards the extent of students' severe financial difficulties decreasing over time in most countries. However, the exact causes still need to be investigated.

Tables

Table B7.1

Students' total monthly income including transfers in kind by age, educational background, dependency on an income source, financial difficulties, and student fees

Income (median, in PPS)

	Age groups				Educational background			Dependency on income source			Financial difficulties		Student fees	
	Up to 21 years	22 to < 25 years	25 to < 30 years	30 years and over	Low educational background	Medium educational background	High educational background	Dependent on family/ partner contributions	Dependent on self-earned income	Dependent on national public student support	With financial difficulties	Without financial difficulties	Students paying fees	Students not paying fees
AT	891	1,057	1,262	1,722	1,324	1,219	1,119	964	1,464	1,096	1,119	1,267	1,335	1,111
AZ	930	1,168	1,596	1,643	1,093	911	1,105	934	1,409	433	935	1,073	1,246	842
CH*	906	1,039	1,264	1,972	1,247	1,178	1,124	1,018	1,482	1,031	1,170	1,172	1,172	1,013
CZ	891	1,029	1,338	1,956	1,338	1,117	1,070	923	1,472	109	1,014	1,146	1,698	1,010
DE	828	926	988	1,247	927	959	986	959	1,017	863	826	1,055	959	918
DK*	818	893	967	1,236	976	930	930	1,364	1,116	817	930	927	n.d.	930
EE	1,046	1,195	1,542	1,928	1,366	1,399	1,361	1,157	1,652	587	1,228	1,537	1,719	1,322
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	962	978	1,070	1,316	1,266	1,172	1,060	1,087	1,308	934	1,082	1,153	1,247	1,108
FR*	699	1,069	1,178	1,682	792	771	949	924	1,318	561	746	961	1,013	735
GE	1,061	1,139	1,208	1,199	993	1,092	1,078	1,226	939	141	1,139	1,025	1,200	798
HR	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
HU	842	1,026	1,355	1,752	1,239	1,155	1,068	944	1,437	546	1,014	1,170	1,492	982
IE	946	996	1,343	1,679	1,276	1,050	1,196	1,132	1,343	559	971	1,363	1,190	907
IS	805	954	1,286	1,867	1,831	1,618	1,244	1,203	1,618	1,047	1,244	1,452	1,323	1,278
LT	1,028	1,408	1,894	2,030	t.f.c.	1,228	1,304	1,167	1,549	600	1,238	1,366	1,871	1,113
LV	1,340	1,583	1,844	1,940	1,616	1,622	1,628	1,590	1,628	t.f.c.	1,570	1,643	1,848	1,331
MT	908	1,092	2,139	2,239	1,735	980	1,211	1,042	2,015	t.f.c.	1,213	1,694	2,207	1,119
NL	1,068	1,227	1,292	1,816	1,307	1,168	1,206	1,215	1,298	1,127	1,197	1,206	1,216	1,583
NO	819	922	1,088	1,953	1,601	1,172	1,019	1,322	1,793	807	941	1,191	n.d.	n.d.
PL	1,123	1,309	1,568	1,860	1,457	1,299	1,338	1,087	1,580	602	1,279	1,352	1,641	1,049
PT	1,041	1,177	1,323	1,808	1,145	1,135	1,164	1,117	1,535	624	1,161	1,135	1,146	n.d.
RO	1,170	1,541	1,840	2,327	1,507	1,404	1,560	1,349	1,872	468	1,385	1,572	1,844	1,326
SE*	1,062	1,141	1,284	1,825	1,568	1,355	1,210	1,367	1,879	1,141	1,251	1,296	1,434	1,283
SK	732	833	1,107	1,299	932	838	885	797	1,086	386	870	886	1,078	785
median	**930**	**1,069**	**1,292**	**1,816**	**1,292**	**1,168**	**1,124**	**1,117**	**1,472**	**602**	**1,139**	**1,191**	**1,323**	**1,049**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.1 (PPP).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period? 4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, DK, FR, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B7.2

Recipients of national public student support by age, educational background, parental financial status, type of HEI, and study programme

Share of students (in %)

	Age groups				Educational background			Parental financial status			Type of HEI		Study programme	
	Up to 21 years	22 to < 25 years	25 to < 30 years	30 years and over	Low educational background	Medium educational background	High educational background	Parents very well-off	Parents averagely well-off	Parents not at all well-off	University	Non-university	Bachelor	Master
AT	23	26	23	14	28	28	14	13	23	33	20	29	24	19
AZ	60	50	32	27	43	56	55	t.f.c.	57	59	56	n/a	57	53
CH	11	11	11	8	22	13	7	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	10	10	11	10
CZ	64	57	31	4	31	47	53	47	50	39	53	19	48	49
DE	15	12	14	8	19	17	9	1	12	26	14	11	12	11
DK	91	90	85	79	85	89	87	85	87	85	87	89	91	81
EE	45	44	39	36	44	44	40	33	43	44	42	40	43	39
ES	31	28	14	7	37	37	12	9	28	36	30	12	25	20
FI	91	90	70	41	42	65	74	72	66	59	74	62	74	49
FR	62	68	61	42	67	72	56	42	63	78	62	61	61	66
GE	51	44	44	37	37	46	48	51	47	32	50	28	53	28
HR	51	42	19	4	35	41	34	31	38	35	40	23	35	37
HU	59	56	34	14	47	44	49	43	48	42	50	29	47	42
IE	37	26	16	11	32	35	19	9	25	51	24	31	34	12
IS	13	19	30	22	23	19	25	21	23	23	22	n/a	24	20
LT	36	32	31	30	t.f.c.	34	33	37	32	29	32	35	34	27
LV	28	14	7	7	11	13	19	14	18	12	18	9	20	11
MT	85	63	19	10	43	67	65	t.f.c.	51	26	66	23	71	23
NL	50	64	59	23	58	58	53	43	60	80	58	51	55	54
NO	80	83	72	33	48	62	69	64	64	65	67	62	75	53
PL	10	12	10	10	15	14	7	4	13	28	11	11	11	11
PT	36	31	21	14	44	37	15	7	30	38	28	33	32	25
RO	39	37	25	28	41	37	33	30	35	38	35	n/a	36	36
SE	95	93	84	66	78	87	84	90	82	81	84	n/a	90	65
SK	14	22	14	7	16	17	16	16	16	24	17	8	16	20
av.	**47**	**45**	**35**	**23**	**39**	**43**	**39**	**35**	**42**	**44**	**42**	**32**	**43**	**34**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, G.82.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.15 What is the average monthly amount available to you in cash or via bank transfers from the following sources during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Non-universities do not exist in Azerbaijan, Iceland, Romania, or Sweden.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B7.3

Students' assessment of their financial situation by age, educational background, educational origin, basic form of housing, and student fees

Share of students experiencing (very) serious financial difficulties (in %)

	Age groups				Educational background			Educational origin		Housing form		Student fees	
	Up to 21 years	22 to < 25 years	25 to < 30 years	30 years and over	Low educational background	Medium educational background	High educational background	Domestic	International	Living with parents	Not living with parents	Students paying fees	Students not paying fees
AT	21	26	35	34	41	30	27	26	38	21	31	36	27
AZ	22	29	42	30	24	29	22	24	t.f.c.	23	28	25	24
CH	8	10	16	20	25	15	10	12	19	10	15	12	13
CZ	26	27	30	22	44	29	23	25	37	22	28	35	25
DE	9	12	27	26	29	22	14	16	32	10	21	19	19
DK	19	23	28	40	42	28	25	28	21	20	27	n.d.	26
EE	21	23	23	22	30	23	21	21	33	21	22	31	21
ES	19	28	39	30	29	31	16	25	38	22	28	30	19
FI	17	20	26	24	27	26	21	22	30	14	23	32	23
FR	23	26	38	31	38	32	20	24	43	22	27	23	29
GE	40	46	42	51	53	48	39	42	45	41	45	43	42
HR	16	18	19	22	21	20	14	18	21	15	20	20	16
HU	19	22	30	25	40	26	20	21	36	19	25	25	22
IE	31	38	40	30	37	37	29	33	33	31	34	32	35
IS	24	30	38	28	29	32	30	30	39	26	32	34	28
LT	25	27	29	22	t.f.c.	26	25	25	34	24	26	28	25
LV	31	35	35	31	38	39	30	32	36	29	34	38	28
MT	27	32	36	19	28	27	26	26	39	28	25	24	29
NL	20	29	40	26	34	24	25	24	36	17	34	27	21
NO	28	29	30	20	35	30	25	26	27	19	27	n.d.	n.d.
PL	29	33	43	41	43	38	28	33	38	31	35	38	29
PT	17	20	28	33	24	21	18	19	43	16	26	20	n.d.
RO	33	35	41	32	37	39	28	34	47	33	35	41	33
SE	16	17	23	23	25	21	18	19	26	15	21	31	20
SK	27	28	31	30	39	30	24	28	38	26	30	32	27
av.	**23**	**26**	**32**	**28**	**34**	**29**	**23**	**25**	**35**	**22**	**28**	**29**	**25**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.148.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.16 To what extent are you currently experiencing financial difficulties?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B8
Students' expenses

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Key

Students' expenses and inflation

When comparing the development of students' total monthly expenses and the general inflation rate between E:VII and E:8, it appears that in 88 % of countries the percentage change of students' expenses outpaced inflation.

The composition of students' expenses

Students' expenditure is dominated by their living costs. On cross-country average, the composition of students' total expenses is as follows: 62 % living costs paid by students, 28 % living costs paid by others (e.g. parents or partner), 5 % study-related costs paid by students, and 5 % study-related costs paid by others.

B 8

Selected living costs

Students who live outside the parental home allocate, on average across countries, 37 % of their total monthly expenses, including transfers in kind, to accommodation, 23 % to food, and 7 % to transportation.

Accommodation costs by form of housing

Students living with partner/children spend, on cross-country average, 494 PPS per month on accommodation. Students who live on their own (outside student accommodation) spend 469 PPS on this purpose. Their fellow students utilising shared accommodations spend 364 PPS and students living in student accommodation dedicate 329 PPS to housing costs.

Gwosć, C. (2024). Students' expenses. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024.* wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew008

findings

Accommodation cost overburden

On average across countries, 26 % of students face accommodation cost overburden (i.e. they spend 40 % or more of their total income on accommodation). Student groups that are affected by this phenomenon more often than average include, for instance, international students, students depending on national public student support, students with financial difficulties, students living alone, and those living with other persons.

Accommodation costs over time

A time comparison of the share of students' accommodation costs in their total expenses over the last four rounds of EUROSTUDENT shows that an increasing trend in relative accommodation costs is recognisable in 86 % of EUROSTUDENT countries. Strong increases in relative housing costs between E:V and E:8 are, inter alia, visible in Denmark, Malta, and Norway with 13 to 15 percentage points.

Study-related costs

On cross-country average, students allocate 7 % of their total monthly expenses, which include transfers in kind, to tuition fees, 1 % to other fees, and 2 % to other regular study-related costs.

Fee-paying students

Around half (46 %) of students in EUROSTUDENT countries pay, on international average, tuition fees to HEIs. Student groups that are affected to an above-average extent are those from low educational backgrounds, students enrolled in privately controlled HEIs, and students who are studying Business, Administration and Law.

Magnitude of tuition fees

Students who pay tuition fees dedicate, on cross-country average, 256 PPS per month to this purpose. The amount of fees is highest in Finland and Sweden, although the payment obligation applies only to a very small group of students in these countries (not more than 3 %).

Main issues

The previous chapter (> *Chapter B7*) analysed the generation of student income. This chapter focuses on how students allocate and spend their income. Covering one's own expenditure[1] can be regarded as the most important motif for students' income generation. The subjects of our analyses are both the magnitude as well as the structure of student expenditure. Some expenditure items are directly related to students' participation in higher education, such as fees for attending a higher education institution (HEI). Other expenses may occur partially or completely independent of taking part in higher education. Examples for this are expenses for food or clothing. Some of students' expenses are being covered or supported by their social environment, especially the family, in the form of goods and services provided or bills that are covered (transfers in kind). EUROSTUDENT attempts to take this type of support into account as well in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the full expenses students – supported by their social environment – have to bear. This knowledge is also important for policymakers at the national and international level to be able to appropriately reflect, for example, on the calibration of any minimum public support for students.

At the level of European higher education policy, the issue of student expenses has recently received more explicit attention. According to Annex II to the Rome Communiqué (2020, p. 6) "Financial support systems ... 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.)." As part of the further development of the 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA', four indicators have been proposed, among others, used to monitor and evaluate the aspect of student funding in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries. One of these indicators is the existence of indirect top-level support for students' accommodation, transport, and meals, which is also included into a composite scorecard indicator (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022). This gives the topic a more concrete, roughly measurable meaning.

Development of the level of students' expenses in the light of inflation

In 2022/23, many European countries were affected by a rapid and strong rise of inflation. The general price level in Estonia and Lithuania, for example, rose by 22 % in 2022 compared to the previous year, in Hungary by 18 %, and in the Czech Republic by 17 % (Eurostat, 2024a). Although the main cause of inflation was an increase in the price of natural gas or energy prices, this had a cost-increasing effect on many other goods and services that require energy to be produced or transported. Inflation is having a worrying impact on the spending behaviour of students, for example in the form that they are partially foregoing the use of health services, heating, and food (Sherwood, 2023).[2] In order to – at least roughly – assess the role of inflation for students' expenses, a comparison is drawn of the development of students' total monthly expenses over the last two project rounds and the general inflation as measured by the European Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP).

1 *The terms expenditure, expenses, and costs are used synonymously in this chapter.*

2 *In a survey among students of the Arts in London, it came to light that due to inflation 37 % of respondents have cut back on healthcare, 48 % on food, and 43 % on heating (Sherwood, 2023).*

Composition of students' expenses

Based on human capital theory (Becker, 1993) and economic consumer theory (Varian, 2024), student expenditure can be categorised as either investment or consumption expenditure, whereby the use of the respective good or service generally determines the categorisation of the corresponding expenses (Woll, 2014). An investment can be considered an expenditure that students incur in the present, expecting it to generate a future income stream that overcompensates for expenditure (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1960). Thus, investment expenditure serves above all to satisfy future needs. In contrast, consumer spending serves mainly to satisfy current needs (Pindyck & Rubinfeld, 2018). The EUROSTUDENT data allow a simple approximation of these two categories of expenditure. Students' consumption expenditure is mainly expressed in their costs of living, whilst their investment expenditure is essentially expressed in their ◇ study-related expenses. A corresponding analysis gives a first impression of how participation in higher education influences the students' cost structure and to what extent the countries differ in this. A further differentiation is made between 'costs paid by students' and 'costs paid by others'. This takes into account the fact that many students receive economic support from their families to help them cover their expenses (Hauschildt et al., 2021; DZHW, 2018). Furthermore, the composition of students' ◇ living costs and their study-related costs will be investigated in more detail to identify the most important sub-categories.

Students' expenses for accommodation

Accommodation costs are a significant concern for many students. This applies in particular to those who have their own household outside the parental home. Accommodation costs often dominate not only students' living costs, but also their total costs (Hauschildt et al., 2015; 2021; DZHW, 2018). For students not living with parents, the level of accommodation costs is analysed for four different types of housing [a) with partner/children, b) with other persons, c) alone (outside student accommodation), and d) ◇ student accommodation] to give an impression of the range of rent/mortgage payments. As housing costs may require a very large chunk of the students' budget, the question of the extent to which paying rent leads to a possible financial overburden is investigated for different student groups. For this purpose, an internationally common indicator is used that relates the amount of rent to the income of the rent payer (Eurostat, 2024c; Destatis, 2024). Attention is also paid to the long-term development of relative housing costs. For this purpose, the share of housing costs in total student expenditure over the last four project rounds is analysed.

Students' expenses for fees

The payment of (tuition) fees is a particularly visible financial expression of participation in higher education. Fees can be viewed as being part of a larger context of cost-sharing between the public and the private sector for funding higher education (Johnstone, 1986, 2006; Orr et al., 2014). A country's fee policy is shaped by a number of key elements, including a) the group size of fee payers, b) the level of fees, c) the point in time of fee payment, and d) ◇ public support to offset fee costs (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020; OECD, 2022; Orr, 2020). A country's fee policy at the macro level affects the individual level of students via various transmission channels. The EUROSTUDENT data will shed some light on the results of this transmission. The share of fee-payers among all students will be displayed and compared to the share of fee-payers in specific groups of students. This identifies groups that are either partic-

ularly frequently or rarely charged with fees. To determine the importance of fees for students, not only the magnitude but also the share of fees in students' total expenses is displayed. In doing so, fees are compared to other study-related expenses of students, since the former are often the most important but not the only category of study costs (Hauschildt et al., 2021; DZHW, 2018).

Data and interpretation

Students' total expenses and inflation

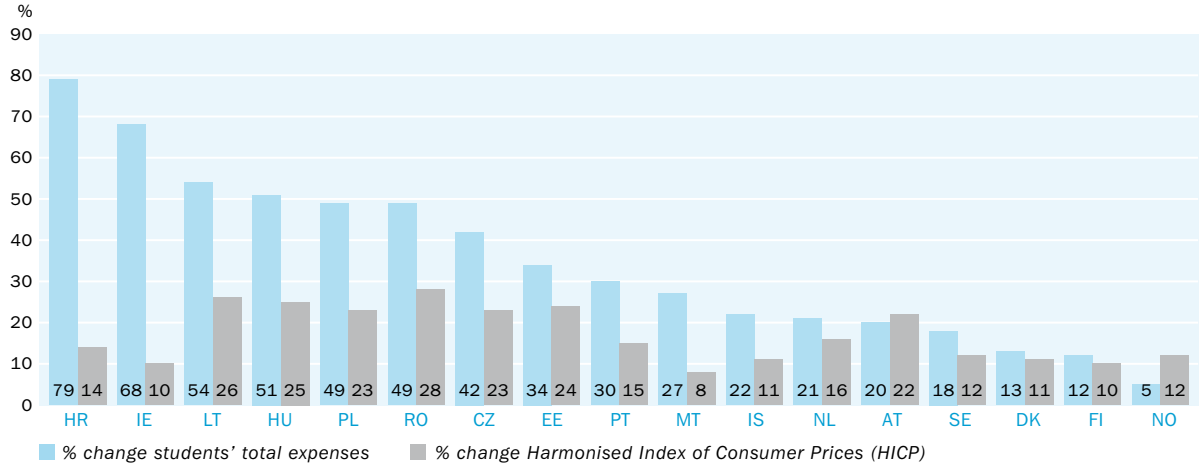
In 88 % of countries, students' total monthly expenses rose by a higher rate than inflation between E:VII and E:8.

How did the recent inflation affect students' finances? The following comparison is based on the one hand, on the rate of change of students' total monthly median expenses between the seventh and the current eighth project round. On the other hand, the percentage change of the European HICP in the same time span has been used (Figure B8.1).

Figure B8.1

Development of students' total monthly expenses and inflation

Median of students' total monthly expenses including transfers in kind and HICP, annual data (percentage change between E:VII and E:8)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT VII, F.1, EUROSTUDENT 8, F.1, and Eurostat (2023).* ***No (comparable) data:*** *GE; E:VII: AZ, DE, ES, LV, SK; E:8: CH, FR.*

Data collection: *E:8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.17/4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- The increase in students' total expenses between E:VII and E:8 was extraordinarily high in Croatia, Ireland, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Czech Republic, with at least 42 %.
- In the group of countries with Estonia, Portugal, Malta, Iceland, the Netherlands, and Austria, the increase was still between 20 % and 34 %.
- The comparatively lowest increase in students' total expenses can be found in the Nordic countries, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Norway, with rates of change between 5 % and 18 %.

When comparing the two indicators, it appears that in 88 % of countries students' expenses rose by a higher rate than inflation. Only in two countries, namely Austria and Norway, the opposite was true.

- The difference between the rise in students' total expenses and the general inflation is particularly high in Croatia and Ireland, with more than 50 percentage points.
- In Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Malta the difference still amounts to at least 20 percentage points.
- In the Netherlands, Denmark, and Finland the increase in students' expenses was at the most 5 percentage points higher compared to inflation.

In the majority of countries, double-digit – in some cases extremely high – growth rates can be observed for student expenditure. This is exceptional within a period of only 3 years. The sharp rise in inflation in many European countries in 2022/23 has certainly driven up student spending (see also for the UK NatWest, 2022). There is also empirical evidence that inflation may have a stronger effect among students than among the population as a whole (Meier et al., 2023). However, the growth in student expenditure in the EUROSTUDENT countries cannot be explained by inflation alone. Another effect, which may play a role as well, may be caused by the inclusion of distance students (also in fully online programmes) in the data set of the current project round. These students have presumably considerably higher incomes than traditional on-campus students, as the first group studies alongside extensive employment and has, therefore, also higher expenses. Furthermore, the introduction of stricter data cleaning rules for the preparation of data in the current round may have an influence on the level of income and expenditure (> *Chapter B7*, Box B7.1). Independently of such special influences, it may well be in addition that the HICP – which is an instrument of measuring inflation for the general population – is not a well-suited instrument for adequately measuring inflation processes among students (> *Chapter B7*). A different instrument will be needed here in the future.

The structure of students' expenses

Box B8.1

Methodological note: Students' costs

EUROSTUDENT uses several differentiation criteria for analysing student expenditure to achieve sufficient analytical depth. These approaches and further concepts that are important in interpreting the data are shortly explained in the following.

Living costs

Nine sub-categories of students' living costs are distinguished. These include costs for a) accommodation (rent or mortgage and utilities), b) food, c) transportation, d) communication (telephone, internet, etc.), e) health (e.g. medicine, medical insurance), f) childcare, g) debt payment (except mortgage), h) social and leisure activities, and i) other regular living costs, such as clothing, toiletries, tobacco, pets, insurance (except medical insurance), or alimony. Since students' regular monthly costs are in focus here, extraordinary costs, such as for a washing machine or holiday travel were excluded.

Study-related costs

Students' study-related costs contain three sub-categories: a) tuition fees, b) other fees, such as for registration and administration, and c) other regular study-related costs, e.g. for field trips, books, photocopying, private tutoring, or contributions to student unions. In the EUROSTUDENT questionnaire, study-related costs for the sub-categories a) and b) were asked per semester. However, for data delivery the values have been re-calculated as monthly expenses to ensure comparability with the other data on costs.

Total costs

Students' total costs are the sum of their monthly living and study-related costs. Furthermore, total costs contain any expenses of students' parents, partner, or others that are either directly paid to the students' creditors or take on the form of free goods and services for the students (e.g. parents paying the rent for their children who live outside the parental home directly to the children's landlord, see ▶ transfers in kind and costs by payer). As the EUROSTUDENT project focuses on students' ordinary running costs that typically occur per month, total costs do not include any extraordinary expenses.

Costs by payer

When recording expenses, the fact that students often do not have to bear the costs of participating in higher education alone is also taken into account. During studies, students may receive economic support from their private environment, for example, from their parents, other relatives, or their partner. The support that students obtain may be in two basic forms: on the one hand, students may simply receive money, such as cash or bank transfers (▶ transfers in cash). On the other hand, students' families may provide the students with goods and services or pay students' debts directly to their creditors so that the money is intangible to the students (transfers in kind). When collecting data, it is sometimes not easy to record transfers in kind as it can be difficult for students to be aware of both the number and value of these transfers; this holds true especially for students living with parents. Nevertheless, EUROSTUDENT tries to quantify both types of transfers to show the full extent of support to students and illustrate their economic situation as well as possible. Therefore, in the following, expenditures will also be separated into payments of students (out-of-own pocket) and payments of parents, partner, or others.[3] In the EUROSTUDENT questionnaire, payments by the second group were captured for both students' living costs and study-related costs. In the following figures, these transfers in kind are either explicitly presented or already included in students' expenses.

Students dedicate, on cross-country average, 90 % of their total monthly expenses (including transfers in kind) to living costs.

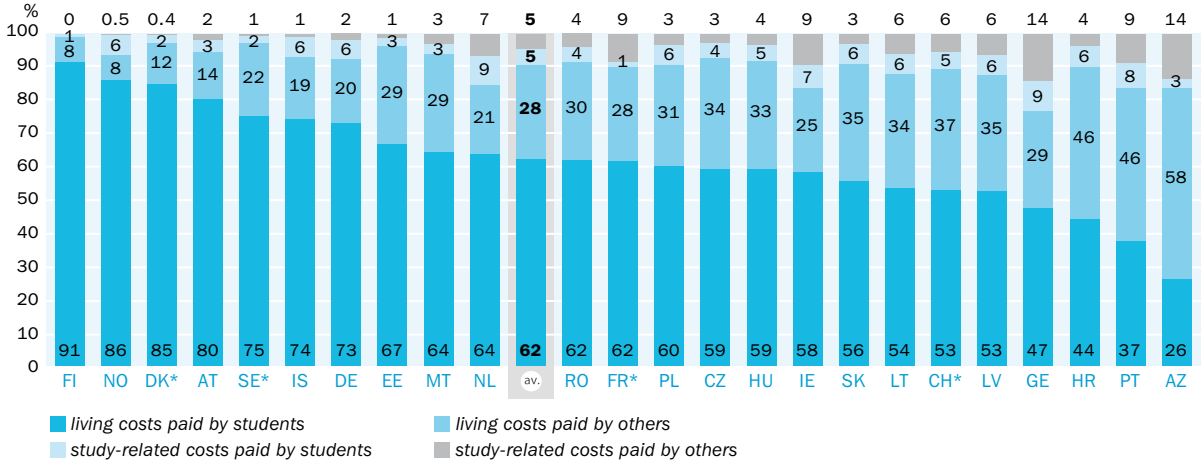
In all EUROSTUDENT countries, students financially supported by parents, partner, or others dedicate the largest part of their total monthly expenses to living costs (Figure B8.2). On average across countries, living costs paid by students and others account for 90 % of total monthly expenses, while study-related costs make up the remaining 10 %.

3 *It should be noted that the concept of payer does not reveal the origin of the sources of funding in every case. The payments of students (out-of-own pocket) may be financed, for example, by students' self-earned income, cash/money transfers from their family/partner (transfers in cash), or public support. Similarly, direct payments of parents, partner, or others to students' creditors (transfers in kind) may be based on income streams that these persons have received from different private and public sources of income. The crucial point of the concept of payer is simply that the support for students by parents, partner, or others in the form of transfers in kind, which is a money-worth advantage for the students, is taken into account to describe students' economic situation as comprehensively as possible.*

Figure B8.2

Composition of students' expenses by payer

Regular living and study-related costs as a share of students' total monthly expenses (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.24, F.34, F.105, and F.109.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Interpretation aid: In Malta, students' total monthly expenses consist of the following: 64 % living costs paid by students, 29 % living costs paid by students' parents, partner, or others, 3 % study-related costs paid by students, and 3 % study-related costs paid by students' parents, partner, or others. Decimal points shown for values ≤ .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *DK, SE, FR, CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- The combined contributions to living costs from students and others are particularly high in Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and Estonia, with at least 96 % of students' total monthly expenses. This is due to low shares of students paying tuition fees in these countries. Especially in the three Nordic countries, the share of fee-paying students does not exceed 3 % (Figure B8.9).[4]
- By contrast, the share of all study-related costs is relatively high in the Netherlands, Ireland, Georgia, Portugal, and Azerbaijan, ranging between 16 % of students' total monthly expenses in the Netherlands and Ireland and 23 % in Georgia. In these countries, the share of fee-paying students is rather high, ranging from 45 % in Azerbaijan to 100 % in Portugal (Figure B8.9). Furthermore, in Georgia and Azerbaijan the amount of fees students (and their families) are paying is relatively high (Figure B8.10). Accordingly, the aggregated share of living costs is rather low in all these countries.

When looking at the general intra-family cost-sharing, it appears that, measured by the cross-country average, students are paying around two thirds (67 %) of their total monthly expenses directly, while students' parents, partner, or others take over the remaining third. In a time comparison with the last round, the cost-share of the family/partner appears to have increased notably (5 percentage points).

4 *In the Danish survey, the questions on study fees have been omitted. In Denmark, national and EU/EEA full-time short-, first- and second-cycle students do not pay fees, only international students from outside EU/EEA pay fees (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). The latter group has not been surveyed on this topic.*

- In Switzerland, Latvia, Georgia, Croatia, Portugal, and Azerbaijan, the aggregated share of transfers in kind that students receive from their parents, partner, or others is clearly above the international average. The range stretches from 41 % in Latvia to 72 % in Azerbaijan.
- The situation is reversed in Finland, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Iceland, and Germany, where the aggregated share of transfers in kind is visibly below the cross-country average, ranging from 8 % in Finland to 23 % in Sweden.

There is indication that the share of transfers in kind is related to students' basic form of housing. In the group of countries where the aggregated share of transfers in kind is rather high, large parts of the student population are living in the parental home. The respective share of students varies from 30 % in Latvia to 68 % in Azerbaijan and clearly exceeds the international average in all countries except Latvia (> *Chapter B9*). By contrast, the share of students living with parents is relatively low in the other group of countries, where the aggregated share of transfers in kind is rather low as well. The share of students residing in the parental home ranges from 0.1 % in Finland to 26 % in Germany. Another influential factor is most likely a country's basic notion of students. In the first group of countries, students are regarded as being financially dependent on their parents, whilst the opposite is true for the Nordic countries in the second group, where students are viewed as independent individuals (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). Both concepts are also largely reflected in the public student support systems and their designing principles (Gwosć, 2019).

Selected items of students' living costs

Students not living with parents allocate, on aggregate across countries, 67 % of their total monthly expenses to accommodation, food, and transportation.

The following analysis investigates in more detail to which purposes students allocate their living costs. The analysis is restricted to students who are not living with parents, as living expenses and especially accommodation costs have a greater meaning for them than for their peers who are living in the parental home. On cross-country average, the expenses for accommodation, food, and transportation absorb 67 % of students' total monthly expenses, including transfers in kind (Figure B8.3). In all countries, the aggregated share of these costs amounts to more than half of students' total expenses.

When measured against the international average, it appears that accommodation costs are of the greatest importance for students, amounting to more than a third of students' total monthly expenses. Food requires almost a quarter and transportation less than a tenth of students' total expenses. In all countries except Lithuania and Azerbaijan, accommodation costs account for the largest part of students' living expenses and, in most countries, also of their total expenses.

- Particularly large shares of accommodation costs of more than 40 % can be found in all Nordic countries (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Iceland, Norway), France, Germany, Austria, and Ireland. By contrast, the share of accommodation costs is rather low in Estonia, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. There, the respective share ranges between 21 % and 29 %.

Food appears to be the second most important expenditure category when measured against the international average and in most cases also at country-level.

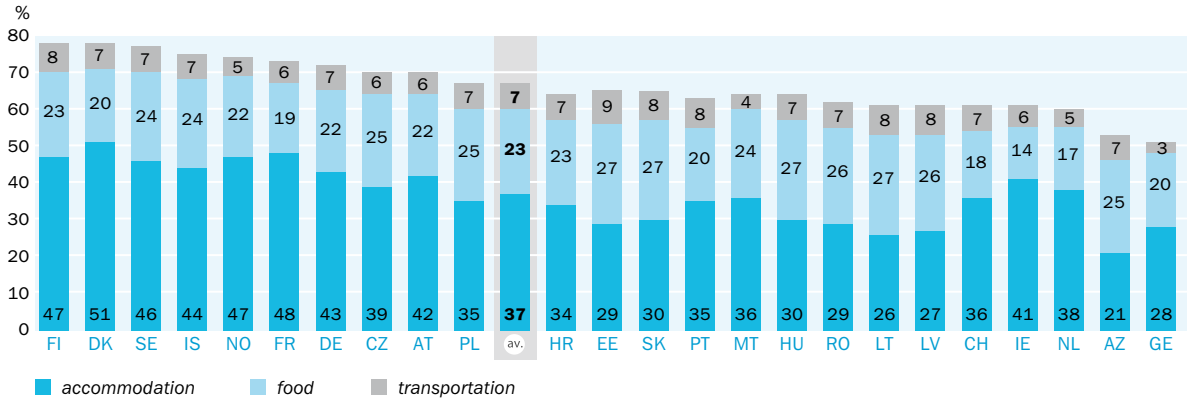
- The highest proportion of food costs can be found in Estonia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Lithuania with 27 %. In Switzerland, Ireland, and the Netherlands, this expend-

iture category absorbs no more than 18 %. In two countries, Lithuania and Azerbaijan, students spend relatively more money on food than on accommodation.

Figure B8.3

Costs for accommodation, food, and transportation – students not living with parents

Expenses paid by students and others, monthly expenses as a share of total expenses including transfers in kind (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.3 NLWP, F.64 NLWP, F.142 NLWP, and F.143 NLWP.* ***No data:*** *ES.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Out of the three expenditure categories, transportation requires the smallest share of the students' budget.

- The highest percentage of transportation costs can be found in Estonia with 9 %. Low shares are reported by the students in Malta and Georgia with less than 5 % of students' total monthly expenses.

Accommodation costs and transportation costs are both related to students' form of housing. Living with parents is usually the most cost-saving type of housing for students with respect to rent. Students who live in the parental home, however, have to cover longer distances to get to university, which is reflected in higher commuting times (= indirect transportation costs, > *Chapter B9*). Direct transportation costs, i.e. payments for the mode of transportation, may also be higher for these students as they often cannot use particularly inexpensive modes of transportation, such as cycling due to the long distances. Instead, they must resort to more expensive means of transport, such as public transport or cars. By contrast, students residing in ◉ student accommodation usually have the shortest commuting time (> *Chapter B9*). This often allows them to reach the university on foot or by bicycle (low indirect and direct transportation costs). However, these students have to pay a higher rent than their fellow students who live with their parents.

Students' expenditure on food can be negatively affected by their accommodation costs. Recent studies for Germany, for instance, have brought to light that students with low income who are in financial distress have reduced their expenses on nutrition – sometimes to an extent that the physical subsistence level appears to be jeopardised – to be

able to continue paying their rent (Dohmen et al., 2019; 2017). This phenomenon seems to have become more widespread during the last inflation (Sherwood, 2023; European Students' Union, 2022).

Accommodation costs of students not living with parents

Students living with partner/children have the highest level of accommodation costs (cross-country average: 494 PPS per month).

The previous analysis has shown that accommodation costs require a large chunk of the students' budget. The level of accommodation costs, including ancillary costs, that students who are not living with their parents spend per month in different forms of housing is displayed below (Figure B8.4).

Box B8.2

Methodological note: Purchasing Power Standard

This chapter contains several figures in which the magnitude of student expenses is shown. To ensure a high level of data comparability, the absolute values are displayed in Purchasing Power Standard (PPS). An explanation of the concept of PPS and its interpretation can be found in the previous chapter (> *Chapter B7, Box B7.2*).

On average across EUROSTUDENT countries, students living with partner/children spend 494 PPS per month on accommodation. Students who are living alone (outside student accommodation) dedicate 469 PPS to this purpose. Their peers who share their accommodation with other persons (e.g. fellow students or friends) spend 364 PPS monthly on housing, and students living in student accommodation pay 329 PPS in the same time span.[5] This basic pattern has not changed compared to the last round. At country level, it appears that living with partner/children is the most expensive form of housing in 64 % of countries.

- Exceptions to this are Spain, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Estonia, and Azerbaijan, where either student accommodation (Spain), living alone or living with other persons (Azerbaijan) turn out to be the most expensive variant.

With respect to student accommodation, the pattern at country level is even clearer. In 79 % of countries with available data, student accommodation appears to be the cheapest form of housing outside the parental home.

- Only in Iceland, Ireland, Spain, Georgia, and Azerbaijan, either living with other persons or living with partner/children (in the last two countries mentioned) is the cheapest form of housing.

This predominant pattern of the most expensive and the cheapest housing form can be explained by several reasons. Students who have their own family need more living space than their fellow students who live alone or who just need a room in a shared flat; this need for larger living space results in higher rents/mortgages for the first group. Furthermore, students who live with partner/children clearly tend to be older (> *Database*). Older students usually spend more time on employment (> *Chapter B6*) and have

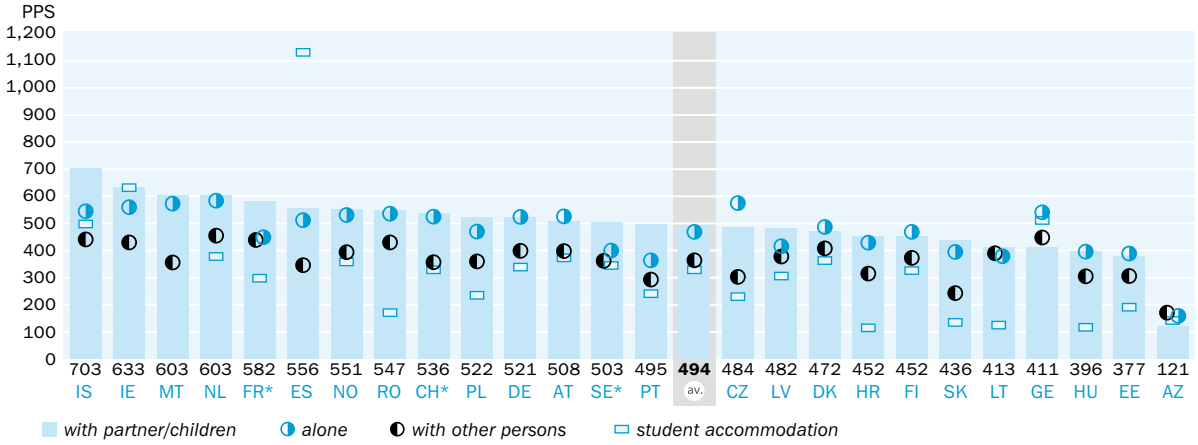
5 *For comparison: The accommodation costs of students living with parents amount, on cross-country average, to 284 PPS per month (> Database).*

markedly higher levels of total income (> *Chapter B7*), which enables them to afford more expensive housing space. This argument is all the more important when students live with their partner in a double-income household. By contrast, student accommodation – often the cheapest form of housing outside the parental home – is in many countries subject to state support in order to provide students with affordable housing space. This type of social policy reduces the accommodation prices below market level, which makes this form of housing particularly inexpensive.

Figure B8.4

Accommodation costs by form of housing – students not living with parents

Monthly amounts paid by students and others (mean, in PPS)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.66 (PPP) NLWP.* ***Too few cases:*** *student accommodation: MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Included are expenses of parents, partner, or others in favour of the students as well as their provision of goods and services (= transfers in kind). Values above the country abbreviations represent the amount of accommodation costs of students living with partner/children.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR, CH, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

A more general overview of accommodation costs, irrespective of the form of housing (i.e. including students living with parents), is given in Table B8.1. With advancing age, students spend more money on accommodation which is, inter alia, related to the fact that older students tend to live outside the parental home more often. Furthermore, the age-related arguments about employment time and higher incomes apply. Female students spend often slightly higher amounts on accommodation than their male counterparts. The former group lives less often with parents (> *Database*) – which is usually the cheapest form of housing – and thus female students utilise more expensive forms of housing. In most countries, students from low educational backgrounds spend more money on housing than their peers from medium or high educational backgrounds. In this case, the same arguments apply as for older students, i.e. students from low educational backgrounds often have the highest amount of employment time (> *Database*) and generate higher incomes than their comparison groups (> *Chapter B7*). Finally, in almost all countries, students with financial difficulties spend higher amounts on accommodation than their peers without financial problems, pointing to a causal relationship.

Accommodation cost overburden

Box B8.3

Methodological note: Accommodation cost overburden

The burden of financing accommodation can put a lot of pressure on students' budgets and may easily turn into an overburden. Based on a concept from Eurostat (2024b), we define accommodation cost overburden as given if students spend at least 40 % of their total monthly income, which includes transfers in kind, on accommodation (including ancillary costs). When interpreting the data, it should be noted that not all students who exceed the 40 % threshold may perceive this as overburden. Especially students with high incomes may spend a large chunk of their budget on housing and still have sufficient funds to easily cover all remaining costs. However, the indicator is an established measure to signal at least potential overburden.

Across EUROSTUDENT countries, 26 % of students are facing accommodation cost overburden.

In all EUROSTUDENT countries, there are parts of the student population that are confronted with accommodation cost overburden. On international average, 26 % of students – across all forms of housing – spend 40 % or more of their total income on accommodation (Figure B8.5). The spread of students affected across the countries appears to be rather high, ranging from 1 % in Azerbaijan to 55 % in Denmark.

When differentiating by students' ◘ educational origin, it shows that international students report this phenomenon clearly more often than domestic ones (cross-country average: 34 % vs. 25 %) (Figure B8.5a).

- In 81 % of countries with available data, international students show the highest percentage of all three groups. By contrast, international students show the lowest proportions of the three groups in Denmark, Norway, Finland, and Latvia.

These findings can be explained, inter alia, by students' form of housing: International students live with their parents considerably less often than ◘ domestic students (cross-country average: 8 % vs. 37 %, *> Database*). This is probably due to the fact that their parents often live abroad, which makes it impossible for many international students to daily commute between the parental home and the HEI. However, this means that the least expensive form of housing by far is available to international students much less frequently and they have to resort to more expensive alternatives instead (see previous section).

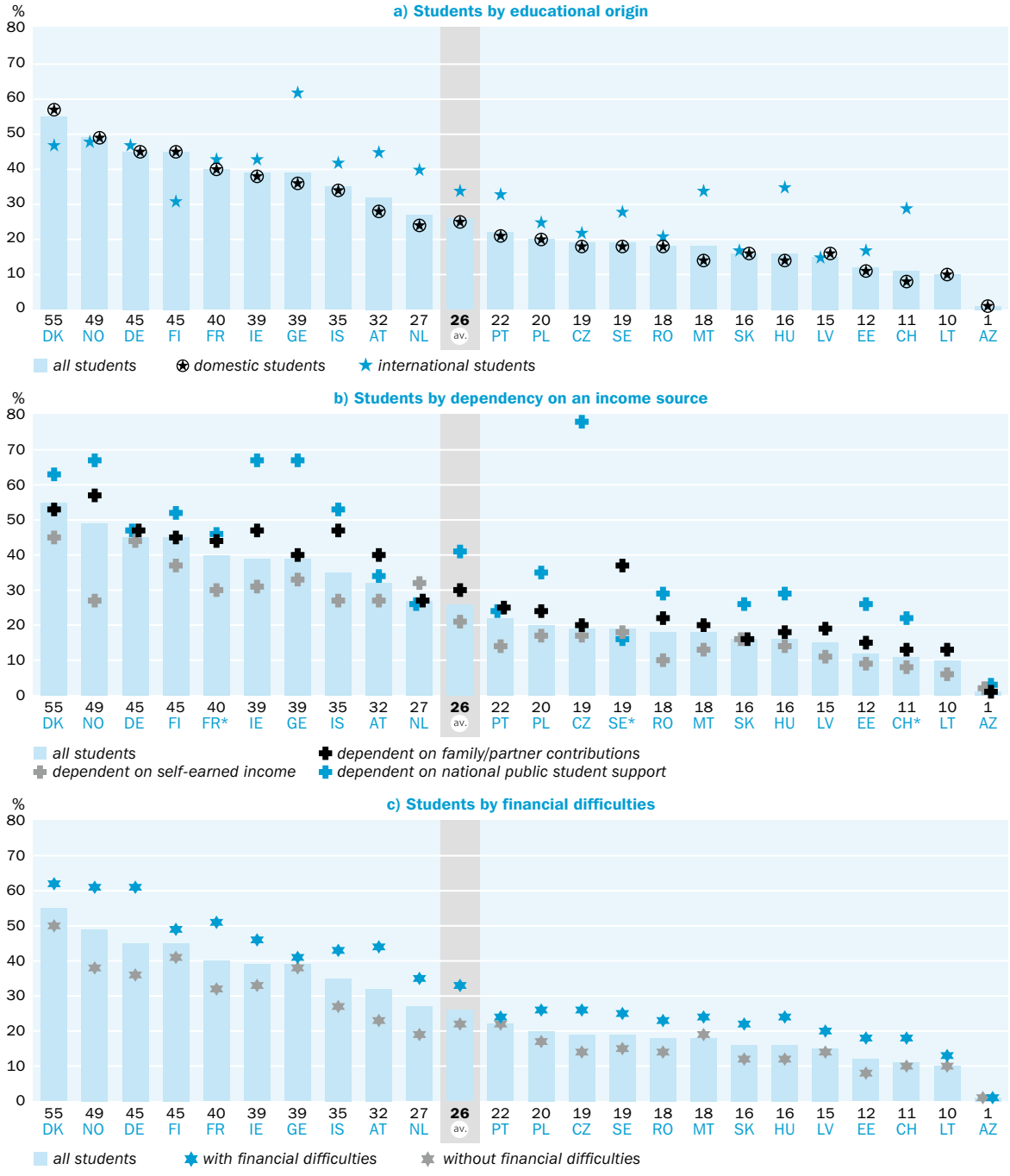
Another clear pattern emerges when differentiating by students' dominant source of income (Figure B8.5b). On international average, the share of students with accommodation cost overburden among those ◘ depending on national public student support amounts to 41 %.[6] The respective proportion for their fellow students ◘ depending on family/partner contributions is 30 % and for students ◘ depending on self-earned income it is 21 %. An explanatory factor for the order of the groups seems to be – at least in parts – student income.

6 *In the Czech Republic, data on students depending on national public student support are based on a relatively low number of respondents.*

Figure B8.5

Accommodation cost overburden by educational origin, dependency on an income source, and financial difficulties

Share of students spending 40 % or more of their total monthly income including transfers in kind on accommodation (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.145.* ***No data:*** *ES, HR.* ***Too few cases:*** *international students: LT, AZ; dependent on national public student support: MT, LV, LT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others. Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *FR, SE, CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Students depending on self-earned income usually receive the highest total income per month of the three groups (cross-country average: 1,472 PPS, > *Chapter B7*). This apparently makes it possible to keep the proportion of accommodation costs most often below the 40 % threshold. Students depending on national public student support have in almost all countries clearly the lowest monthly income of the three groups (cross-country average: 602 PPS). Although they often live in student accommodation – the cheapest housing option outside the parental home – they are most often confronted with accommodation cost overburden compared to the other two groups. Finally, students depending on family/partner contributions occupy the middle position compared to their peers from the other two groups. They usually receive the second highest total income per month (cross-country average: 1,117 PPS); this is probably why they are the second most affected by accommodation cost overburden.

It is also investigated whether accommodation cost overburden is generally associated with students' financial difficulties (Figure B8.5c). On average across countries, 33 % of students with financial difficulties are confronted with accommodation cost overburden. The respective value for their fellow students who have no financial difficulties is 11 percentage points lower (22 %). This basic pattern is evident in all countries.

- The difference between the two groups is particularly pronounced in Norway, Germany, France, Iceland, Austria, and the Netherlands, with at least 16 percentage points.
- It is comparatively low in Georgia, Portugal, Malta, Lithuania, and Azerbaijan, with no more than 5 percentage points.

Parts of the student populations may not perceive paying 40 % or more of their total income for housing as placing an outsize burden on their budget. However, the marked differences between students with and without financial difficulties in many countries suggest indeed that such a proportion of housing costs contributes to financial difficulties of many students.

B 8

Students who are living alone are most often confronted with accommodation cost overburden (35 % on cross-country average).

The degree of accommodation cost overburden varies also with students' form of housing (Figure B8.6). The analysis is restricted to students living away from parents. When measured against the EUROSTUDENT average, it appears that more than a third (35 %) of students living alone (outside student accommodation) are confronted with this problem. If students share their flat with other persons, a little less than a third (31 %) is affected. 27 % of students who are living in student accommodation are concerned with accommodation cost overburden and the problem applies least to students living with partner/children (26 %).

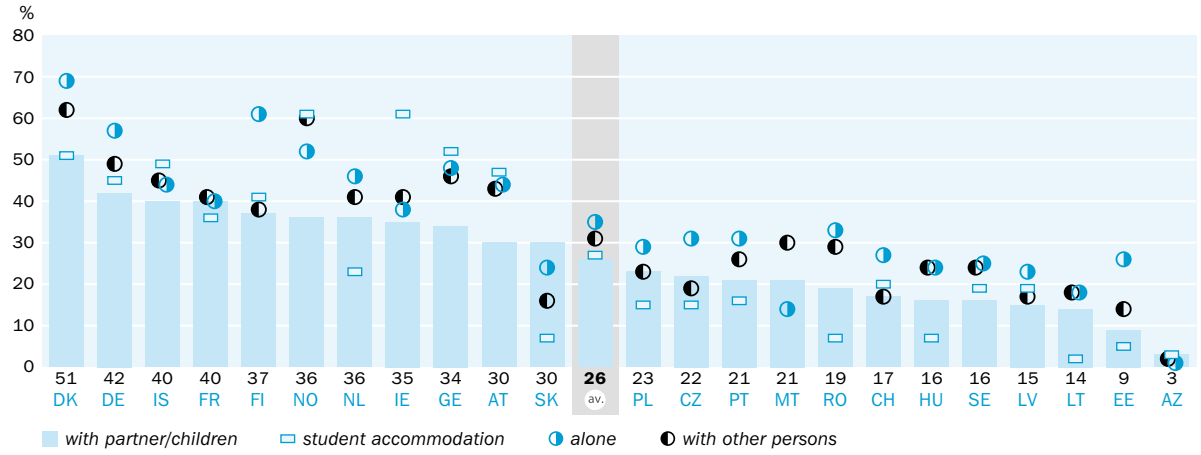
The fact that students who live alone show the highest value for accommodation cost overburden may be due to several factors. Firstly, these students do not benefit from publicly subsidised rents like their peers in student accommodation. Students living alone often pay the second highest rent of all forms of housing outside the parental home (international average: 469 PPS per month, Figure B8.4). Furthermore, by definition these students have no fellow occupant they could share accommodation costs with like their peers who are living either with partner/children or with other persons. The lack of such advantages is apparently not overcompensated by the relatively high total income of students living alone, which is the second highest of the four residential groups (cross-

country average: 1,513 PPS monthly, > *Database*). Students residing in student accommodation are the second least confronted with accommodation cost overburden. This is most likely due to the fact that this type of housing is very often the most inexpensive form of living outside the parental home (international average for rent: 329 PPS per month). Students who live with partner/children are characterised by two extremes: on the one hand, they pay the highest average rent per month of all types of housing (cross-country average: 494 PPS). On the other hand, they also have the highest total income of all residential groups (cross-country average: 1,794 PPS monthly). Obviously, the high income is sufficient to ward off housing cost overburden better than for other groups.

Figure B8.6

Accommodation cost overburden by form of housing – students not living with parents

Share of students spending 40 % or more of their total monthly income including transfers in kind on accommodation (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.145.* ***No data:*** *ES, HR.* ***Too few cases:*** *student accommodation: MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others. Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of students living with partner/children.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Comparison over time: accommodation costs of students not living with parents from E:V to E:8

In 88 % of countries, there is an increasing trend in relative accommodation costs for students not living with parents between E:V and E:8.

As housing costs have a significant meaning for most students, it is also important to observe their development over time. The development of relative accommodation costs of students living away from parents over the last four rounds of EUROSTUDENT is shown below for selected countries (Figure B8.7). The monthly accommodation costs are displayed as share of students' total expenses including transfers in kind.

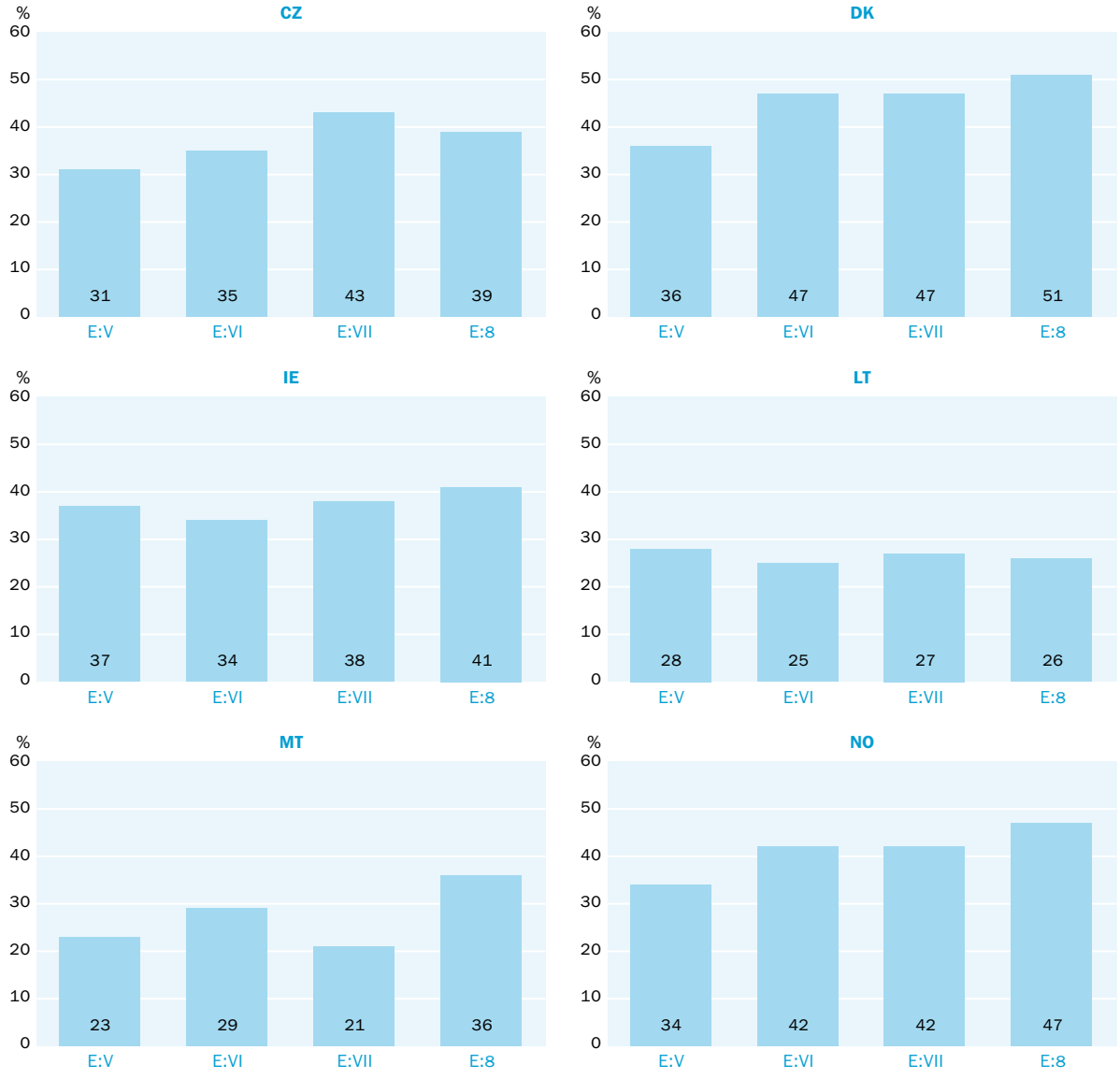
The starting level of relative housing costs differs clearly across countries. In Malta, the initial value of the share of students' accommodation costs in EUROSTUDENT V was 23 %, in the Czech Republic 31 %, and in Ireland the share of housing costs amounted to 37 %. While the starting values differ markedly across countries, the same is true for the current values of relative housing costs. In Malta, the current share of students' accommodation costs is 36 %, in Ireland 41 %, and in Denmark the value has reached 51 %. Although the spending trend in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Malta,

and Norway is not strictly monotonous, a general upward trend is nevertheless recognisable. Strong increases in relative housing costs between E:V and E:8 can be seen in Denmark, Malta, and Norway with 13 to 15 percentage points. In the Czech Republic and Ireland, the increase is only 8 and 4 percentage points respectively in the same period. In Lithuania, a different development is visible. There, housing costs have slightly decreased from 28 % in EUROSTUDENT V to 26 % in the current round.

Figure B8.7

Time comparison of accommodation costs – students not living with parents

Monthly accommodation costs as share of total expenses including transfers in kind (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT V: F.2; EUROSTUDENT VI: F.10 and F.76; EUROSTUDENT VII: F.142; EUROSTUDENT 8: F.142 NLWP.*

Data collection: *E:8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022.*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.7/3.4/4.17/4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period (E:V: current semester)?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE.*

Although only a time comparison for a small selection of countries is shown here, it is representative for the trends observed in the EUROSTUDENT countries as a whole. A comparison over time for 22 countries with at least three data points within the last four rounds including E:8 shows that an increasing trend in relative housing costs is recognisable in 86 % of countries (Table B8.2). In two countries, namely Hungary and Lithuania, a slight downward trend is apparent, while in Poland the trend is quite constant.

The structure of study-related expenses

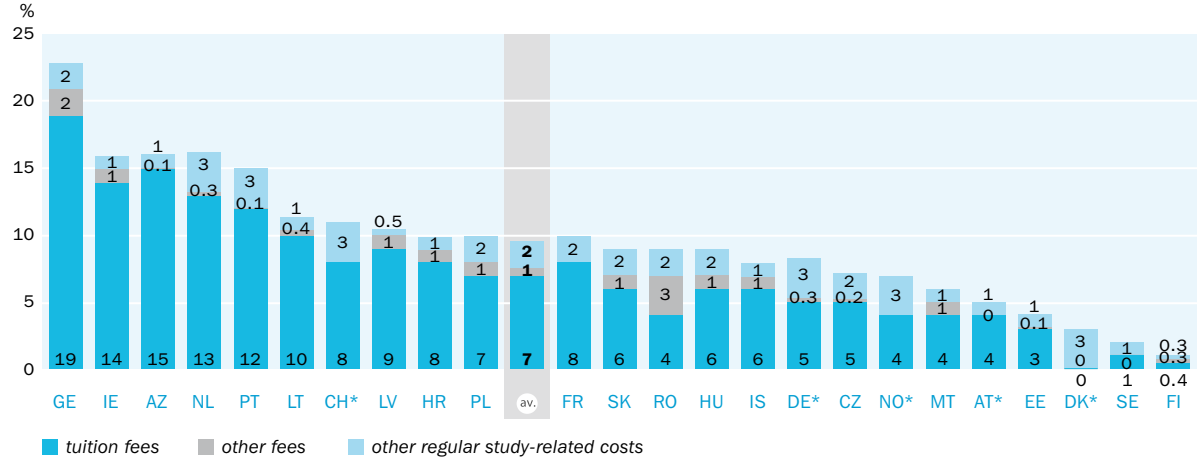
Students allocate, on average across countries, 10 % of their total monthly expenses to study-related costs.

Although students allocate more than three quarters of their total expenses to living costs in all countries, study-related expenses also play an important role and can account for a considerable proportion of students' budget. The structure of study-related expenses paid by students and their families per month is analysed below (Figure B8.8). Study-related expenses are divided into three categories: 1) tuition fees, 2) other fees (e.g. for registration and administration), and 3) other regular study-related costs (e.g. for field trips, books, photocopying, private tutoring, contributions to student unions).

Figure B8.8

Composition of study-related expenses

Share of total monthly expenses paid by students and others (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.1, F.97, F.98, and F.99.* ***No data:*** *ES; other fees: CH, FR, NO.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Included are expenses of parents, partner, or others in favour of the students as well as their provision of goods and services (= transfers in kind). Decimal points shown for values ≤ .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, DE, NO, AT, DK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

On average across countries, students dedicate 7 % of their total monthly expenses to tuition fees, 1 % to other fees, and 2 % to other regular study-related expenses. In almost all countries, tuition fees demand the largest share of study-related expenses. Exceptions are Denmark, where most students do not pay fees, and Sweden, where other study-related costs are marginally higher.

- The share of tuition fees is comparatively high in Georgia, Ireland, Azerbaijan, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Lithuania, with at least 10 % of students' total monthly expenses.

- By contrast, in Norway, Malta, Austria, Estonia, Denmark[7], Sweden, and Finland, the share is below 5 %.

Other fees, such as registration and administrative fees, play a smaller role in overall expenses.

- In 48 % of countries, specifically Georgia, Ireland, Latvia, Croatia, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Iceland, and Malta, do these fees constitute 1 % to a maximum of 3 % of the total expenses faced by students. In the remaining countries, these percentages are even lower.

The situation with other regular study-related costs is very similar.

- In the Netherlands, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, and Denmark, these costs are highest at 3 % of students' total monthly expenses.

Fee-paying students

Almost half of all students (46 %) in the EUROSTUDENT countries pay tuition fees to their HEIs.

The following provides an overview of the proportion of students who are paying tuition fees to HEIs (Figure B8.9). When determining the group of fee payers, EUROSTUDENT countries exhibit a wide range of practices. In Portugal, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, (nearly) all students are required to pay tuition fees. Conversely, in Finland, the proportion of students who pay fees is almost negligible. On average across all EUROSTUDENT countries, approximately half of students (46 %) are subject to tuition fees.

When differentiating by students' educational background it becomes apparent that, on cross-country average, students from low educational backgrounds pay fees most frequently (51 %) (Figure B8.9a). The share for their counterparts with medium or high educational background matches the cross-country average for all students (46 %). In almost three fifths (59 %) of countries, students with low educational background have the highest proportions of fee-payers out of the three groups.

- The difference between the highest share among students with low educational background and the second highest share in one of the other two groups is especially pronounced in Poland, Latvia, Azerbaijan, and the Czech Republic, with at least 10 percentage points.
- The difference is rather low in Sweden and Finland, with no more than 2 percentage points.

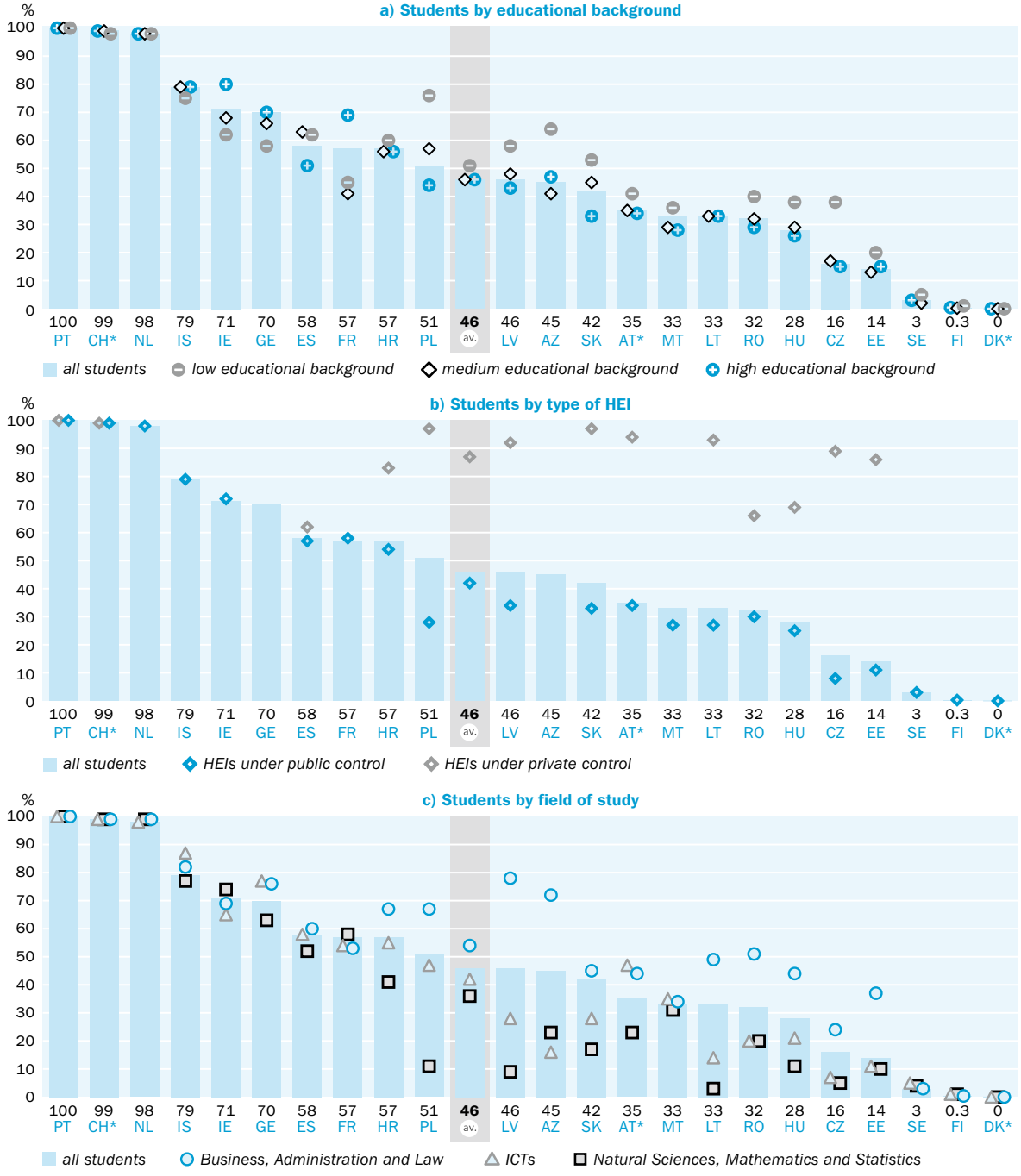
The reason why students with a low educational background pay tuition fees more often seems to be related to the type of HEI. Students enrolled at non-universities pay fees clearly more often than those enrolled at universities (> *Database*; Hauschildt et al., 2021). Students from low educational backgrounds are typically more frequently enrolled at non-universities than at universities (> *Chapter B2*). Another reason could be that these students enrol more frequently in certain degree programmes that are subject to fees. In fact, the largest proportion of students from low educational backgrounds has chosen the subject group Business, Administration and Law (25 %, > *Database*). This is the subject group with the highest share of fee-paying students (54 %, Figure B8.9c). The second highest share of students with low educational background

7 *In the Danish survey, the questions on study fees have been omitted. In Denmark, national and EU/EEA full-time short-, first- and second-cycle students do not pay fees, only international students from outside EU/EEA pay fees (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020). The latter group has not been surveyed on this topic.*

Figure B8.9

Tuition-fee-paying students by educational background, type of HEI, and field of study

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.153.* ***No data:*** *DE, NO; HEIs under public control: GE, AZ; HEIs under private control: NL, IS, IE, GE, FR, AZ, MT, SE, FI, DK.* ***Too few cases:*** *low educational background: LT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of fee-payers among all students. Decimal points shown for values < .5. With respect to Figure B8.9b, only cases are included that have been successfully matched with ETER indicators on the two types of HEIs (see also > Chapter B4).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, AT, DK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

studies Health and Welfare (18 %, > *Database*), which is a subject group also characterised by a rather high share of fee-payers (46 %, > *Database*). So, the students' choice of subject may also explain – at least in parts – their substantial share of fee-payers.

The share of fee-paying students differs greatly when differentiating by the type of HEI (Figure B8.9b). In this case, the distinguishing criterion is whether the HEI is under public or private control.[8] Unfortunately, data could not be provided for a number of countries. However, the available data show already great differences on average across countries. While 42 % of students enrolled in HEIs under public control pay tuition fees, the respective proportion for their peers in privately controlled HEIs amounts to 87 %.

- At country-level, the largest differences between the two student groups can be found in Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Estonia, with at least 60 percentage points.
- In Portugal, Switzerland, Spain, Croatia, Latvia, Romania, and Hungary,[9] the differences range between 0 % and 58 %.

The large differences between the two types of HEIs are to be expected. Private HEIs receive either less or no public support compared to their public competitors. Therefore, they are dependent on generating their revenues from other sources, one of these being tuition fees from their students.[10]

The share of fee-paying students varies also across fields of study (Figure B8.9c). On average across countries, 54 % of students studying Business, Administration and Law pay tuition fees to their HEIs. Among their peers who are enrolled in ICTs, the proportion of fee-payers amounts to 42 %. Students in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics are burdened the least with tuition fees out of the three groups; their share is 36 %.

- Particularly large shares of fee-paying students in Business, Administration and Law can be found in Poland, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, and Estonia, with at least 16 percentage points above the respective national average.
- In almost the same group of countries, including Croatia, Poland, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Slovakia, Austria, Lithuania, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, the share of fee-payers in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics is markedly below the country-average, by at least 12 percentage points.

The results for the different fields of study could be due to an underlying policy in the EUROSTUDENT countries that is trying to steer the flow of students into different fields of study. Imposing the requirement of paying tuition fees only on a smaller share of students in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics compared to other fields of study may be conducive to increase the number of enrolments. Increasing the number

8 *According to ETER, the classification between public and private control is made according to whether a public agency or a private entity has ultimate control over the institution. Ultimate control is decided with reference to who has the power to determine the institution's general policies and activities and appoint the officers managing the school and will usually also extend to the decision to open or close the institution. As many institutions are under the operational control of a governing body, the constitution of that body will also have a bearing on the classification (European Commission, 2023, > Chapter B4).*

9 *In case of Hungary, ETER data are from 2019. The range of HEIs under public/private control has changed since then.*

10 *In Germany, for instance, student fees account, on average, for 75 % of the revenues of private HEIs (Stifterverband, 2020).*

of enrolments in STEM subjects is still a political objective in many countries (BMBF, 2024b; Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft, 2024; BMBWF, 2024). By contrast, charging large parts of the students with fees in other fields of study could reduce the number of enrolments and thus counteract problems of overcrowding. However, if the obligation to pay fees differs noticeably by type of HEI (e.g. universities vs. non-universities) and the offer of certain study subjects differs across the types of HEIs as well, this may result in fee-payer quotas varying across fields of studies although this may not be intended.

Magnitude of tuition fees

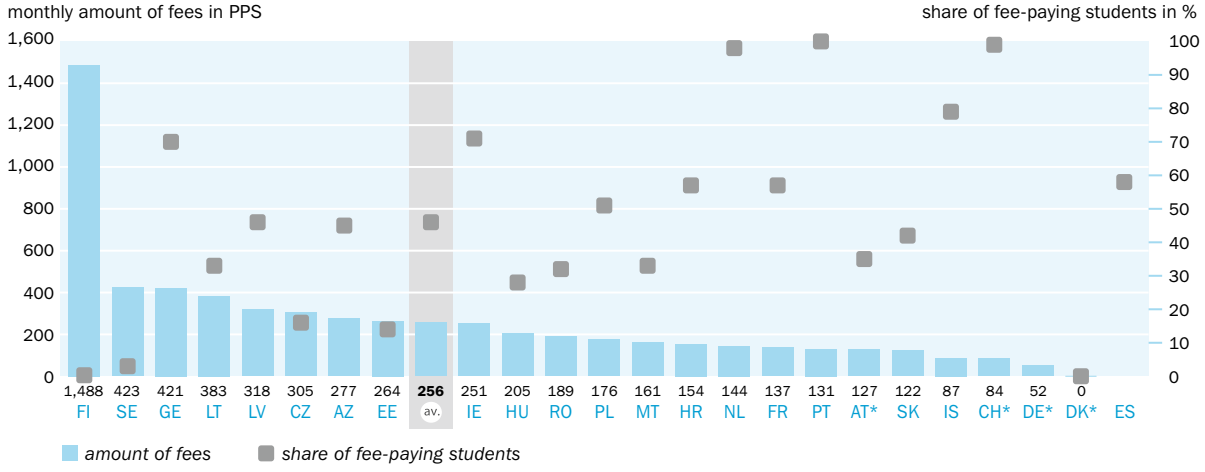
Students who are subject to tuition fees pay, on average across countries, 256 PPS per month on this purpose.

The examination of tuition fees concludes with an analysis of the level of tuition fees in country comparison (Figure B8.10). The figure displays the monthly average amount of tuition fees which students – supported by their private environment – pay to their HEI and the share of fee-payers. On international average, students' tuition fees amount to 256 PPS per month among fee-payers and 46 % of students are subject to the payment of tuition fees.

Figure B8.10

Magnitude of tuition fees paid to HEIs and share of fee-paying students

Monthly amount of tuition fees paid by students and others – only fee-paying students – (mean, in PPS) and share of fee-payers (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.158 PPP, and F.153.* ***No data:*** *NO; amount of fees: ES; share of fee-paying students: DE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Included are expenses of parents, partner, or others in favour of the students as well as their provision of goods and services (= transfers in kind). Values above the country abbreviations represent the amount of fees.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DE, DK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- Finland and Sweden are both characterised by the highest levels of tuition fees (1,488 and 423 PPS respectively) and the lowest levels of fee-payers (≤ 3 %). The small student groups that are confronted with high fees are, for instance, citizens of non-EU/EEA countries studying in foreign language first- and second-cycle programmes and domestic students who are enrolled in highly specialised programmes or – under certain conditions – in joint and multiple degree programmes (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020).

- Countries such as the Netherlands, Portugal, Iceland, and Switzerland, while having relatively low tuition fees, exhibit the highest proportions of fee-paying students. In these countries, the amount of fees ranges between 144 and 84 PPS per month and the share of fee-paying students is at least 79 %.

Across countries, the level of tuition fees and the share of fee-payers show a negative correlation (correlation coefficient: -.40). A high proportion of fee-payers is, therefore, often associated with a rather low level of fees and vice versa. However, in many countries, a remarkable share of students is confronted with monthly amounts of fees of more than 100 PPS; in the vast majority, it is considerably more than 100 PPS. These costs are not easy for students to shoulder. This is all the more true as the payment is usually not made per month, but per semester – in this case as a multiple of the monthly amount. Such timing for payments can readily lead to financial strain for students. To navigate this, they require robust liquidity management.

Further data on students' tuition fees are provided in Table B8.3. When measured by the international average, it appears that students at universities, students at HEIs under private control, and international students pay fees above the cross-country average for all students (256 PPS). By contrast, student groups whose payments for tuition fees are very clearly below the cross-country average are, for example, students at non-universities, Bachelor students, ○ domestic students, and those whose parents are not at all well-off.

Students' inability to pay for an unexpected required major expense

Across countries, 18 % of students would not be able to pay for an unexpected required major expense.

The following examines whether students would be able to generally cover an unexpected required major expense (Figure B8.11). The underlying question in the EUROSTUDENT survey was: 'Would you be able to pay for an unexpected required expense of xx currency units?' For the amount in question, countries were asked to use 60 % of the ○ median student income per month (excluding transfers in kind) from the last round of EUROSTUDENT adjusted to inflation and rounded to the nearest multiple of 10. Alternatively, for countries without such data, the monthly median income of the general population limited to a country specific age range was to be used. The figure displays only the share of students who responded that they were unable to afford an unexpected major expense through their own resources and that nobody else would be able to pay this on their behalf. Thus, the indicator does not focus on current but on future potential financial difficulties.

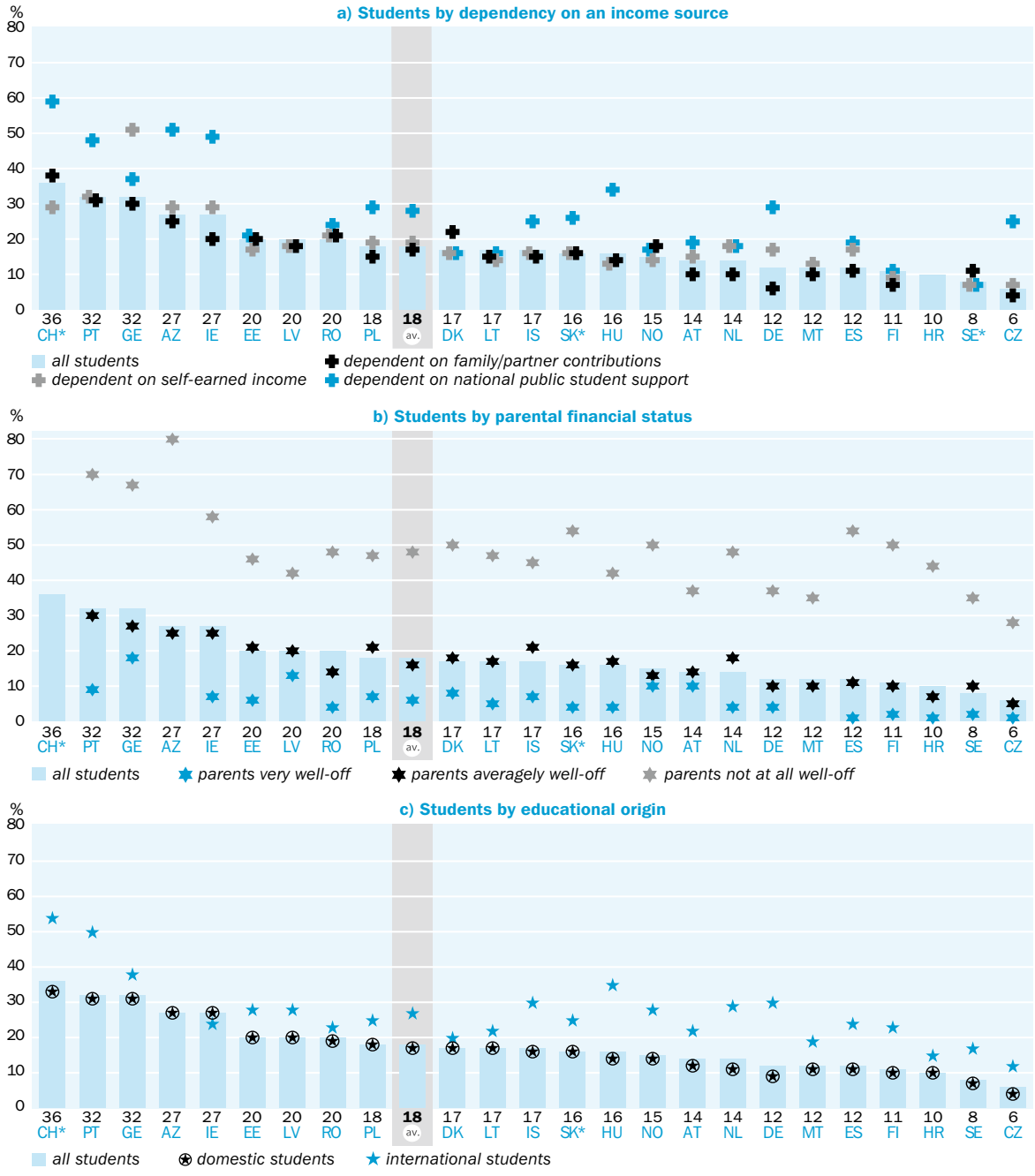
On average across countries, 18 % of students report that they would not be able to pay for an unexpected required major expense. The share ranges from 36 % in Switzerland to 6 % in the Czech Republic.

When students have a dominant source of income, it becomes apparent that the potential payment problem is most common among students ○ depending on national public student support (cross-country average: 28 %), followed by their peers ○ depending on self-earned income (19 %), and ○ students depending on family/partner contributions (17 %) (Figure B8.11a).

Figure B8.11

Students' inability to pay for an unexpected required major expense by dependency on an income source, parental financial status, and educational origin

Share of students who cannot afford to pay via their own or third-party resources (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, F.152.* ***No data:*** *FR; dependency on an income source: HR.* ***Too few cases:*** *dependent on national public student support: LV, MT; international students: AZ; parents very well-off: AZ, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.17 Would you be able to pay for an unexpected required expense of xxx currency units? Item adapted from Eurostat (ilc_mdes04).*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students who would not be able to pay.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, SK, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- In 81 % of countries with available data on all three focus groups, students who are depending on national public student support show the highest proportion on this indicator.
- Particularly large differences between the highest share of students depending on public support and the group with the second highest share can be found in Switzerland, Portugal, Azerbaijan, Ireland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic[11], with at least 16 percentage points.

The remarkably large lack of financial reserves among students depending on public support can be mainly explained by the fact that they have the lowest income of the three groups in almost all countries (> *Chapter B7*).

Students who differ in the ◉ financial status of their parents show particularly clear distinctions in their ability to cover an unexpected major expense (Figure B8.11b). In all countries with available data, students whose parents are not at all well-off report the highest shares among those who are unable to cover such an expense. On average across EUROSTUDENT countries, their share amounts to 48 %. This is more than twice as high as the proportion of all students. In all countries, their fellow students whose parents are averagely well-off show the second highest shares. Their cross-country average is 16 %. Students whose parents are very well-off would have the least difficulties in meeting an unexpected required major expense. In all countries, their share is not only below the respective country average, but also lowest of all groups displayed. The international average for this group is 6 %. Hence, the data show a known pattern and emphasise the great importance of the parents' financial situation for financing their children's studies.

When students differ by their ◉ educational origin, it appears that ◉ international students assess their ability to pay for an unexpected major expense much worse than their domestic fellow students (Figure B8.11c). On international average, 27 % of international students would be unable to cover such an expense, whilst the respective percentage among domestic students amounts to 17 %. This basic pattern is evident in all countries except Ireland.

- The largest differences between the two groups can be seen in Switzerland, Portugal, Hungary, the Netherlands, and Germany, with at least 18 percentage points.

International students are a group that is currently already experiencing ◉ financial difficulties to an above-average extent (cross-country average: 35 % compared to 26 % of all students, > *Chapter B7*). These difficulties seem not so much income-related as international students often have higher total incomes than their domestic fellow students (cross-country average: 1,415 vs. 1,360 PPS monthly, > *Database*). However, international students are not able to use the most cost-saving form of housing – living with parents – as often as their domestic fellow students.[12] Thus, they are forced to switch to more expensive forms of housing outside the parental home. Hence, it is not surprising that these students would expect additional financial problems for an unexpected major expense more frequently.

11 *In the Czech Republic, data on students depending on national public student support are based on a relatively low number of respondents.*

12 *While currently, on average across countries, 37 % of domestic students live with their parents, only 8 % of international students do so (> Database).*

Discussion and policy considerations

Covering their own expenses is at the centre of students' economic activities. In times of crisis, this can be a particularly difficult endeavour. Between E:VII and E:8, an increase in total student expenditure can be observed in all EUROSTUDENT countries with available data, often with high double-digit growth rates that clearly outpaced general inflation. These increases cannot with certainty be attributed solely to the high inflation in 2022/23, which many European countries were subject to. Other factors, such as the changed composition of the student population in E:8 and the introduction of stricter data cleaning rules for the preparation of data, probably also played a role. Nevertheless, recent inflation is likely to have played a considerable role in the increase in student spending. It is to be expected that some student groups suffered from inflation more than others. This includes most likely students who cannot draw on own savings, (additional) parental support, or (additional) job income. This applies in the EUROSTUDENT classification specifically to students whose parents are financially not at all well-off, those from low educational backgrounds, students depending on national public student support, and international students – i.e. student groups who already report financial difficulties to an above-average extent. In several countries, students have received additional state aid to help them cope with inflation. The instruments and measures used included, inter alia, one-off payments (partly repeated), tax reductions, changes in income taxation, and indexation of student support (Ministère de l'économie des finances et de la souveraineté industrielle et numérique, 2021; La Moncloa, 2022; Fink, 2022; BMBF, 2024a). Even if the appropriateness of the additional state support cannot be assessed here, the support as such is an example of state crisis management corresponding to the spirit of the Rome Communiqué and its principles and guidelines which call the countries' financial support systems for helping students to cover their living costs (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022) – although the two legal frameworks are more likely to have regular state support for students for 'normal' times in mind.

Living costs continue to claim the largest part of students' total monthly expenses (90 % on cross-country average). This proportion has even risen by 3 percentage points compared to the last round, maybe not least due to inflation. While students cover, on international average, 67 % of their total monthly expenses directly, their families take over the remaining third. The latter share has risen by 5 percentage points compared to E:VII, which points towards an increased importance of intra-family transfers. This seems to support the findings of previous studies about the increasing significance of parental/familial support for students in Europe (Antonucci, 2016; Brooks, 2017). Such a development would put low-income parents/families under increasing pressure when financing their children's studies. Especially in times of rapid succession of crises (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic, energy crisis, inflation) with serious economic consequences for society at large, this could permanently jeopardise the participation of children from low-income groups in higher education (see also Reus, 2022; Doolan et al., 2021).

In almost all countries, accommodation costs still account for the largest share of students' living expenses and often of their total expenses of those who are not living with parents. On average across countries and all forms of housing outside the parental

home, students dedicate clearly more than a third of their total monthly expenses to accommodation. In all Nordic countries, France, Germany, Austria, and Ireland, the share exceeds 40 %. A comparison over time for 22 countries across the last four project rounds has shown that an increasing trend in relative housing costs is recognisable in 86 % of EUROSTUDENT countries.

Rental payments can lead to an accommodation cost overburden. Based on an internationally recognised indicator, this is the case when students spend at least 40 % of their total monthly income on rent. Student groups that are – irrespective of the housing form – affected to an above-average extent include international students, students depending on national public student support, and students with financial difficulties. Housing space – especially in large cities where most HEIs are located – has become increasingly scarce and, therefore, more expensive. This development is expected to continue in many European cities, at least in the near future, whereas young people between the ages of 18 and 24 years are particularly attracted to cities (RE/MAX Europe, 2023).[13] This will greatly hamper any public provision of additional low-cost housing for students, e.g. in the form of student halls of residence. However, there are also other forms of public support besides the direct provision of housing space. The EHEA countries have recognised that accommodation costs become increasingly problematic for students across the EHEA. To monitor and evaluate the aspect of student funding, they use, inter alia, the indicator 'existence of indirect top-level support for students' accommodation, transport and meals'. Currently, 18 countries provide support to all three of these elements in the first cycle of higher education (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022), including 11 countries from the current round of EUROSTUDENT. It is to be feared that this support has to be extended in the future so that students can compete with other potential tenants on the private housing market. Otherwise, there is also an increased risk that some students will be (even more) restricted in their choice of study location due to particularly high housing costs in certain cities/regions (DSW, 2024).

Students' study-related expenses account, on average across countries, for 10 % of their total monthly expenses. Compared to the last round, they seem to have slightly lost significance. In almost all countries with available data, tuition fees prove to be the most important expense item of study-related costs. The proportion of students who pay tuition fees varies in the EUROSTUDENT countries almost across the entire scale from 100 % in Portugal to 0.3 % in Finland (cross-country average: 46 %). Student groups which pay tuition fees to an above-average extent are, for example, those from low educational backgrounds, students attending HEIs under private control, and students studying Business, Administration and Law. The level of tuition fees fluctuates over a very wide range, too. Fee-paying students in Iceland spend, on average, 87 PPS per month on tuition fees, while the amount for their peers in Finland is 17 times as high (1,488 PPS).

13 *The OECD, however, predicts that by 2050 the population of 30 % of metropolitan areas will be shrinking. Many of the currently shrinking metropolitan areas are located in Europe where the national population is growing slowly or shrinking. Metropolitan areas with less than a million inhabitants, inter alia, in Europe are the most vulnerable to population loss, with over one third of them already declining since 2000 (OECD/European Commission, 2020).*

Study fees do not play a pivotal role in the Rome Communiqué. Only in its principles and guideliness in Annex II (2020, p. 6) it is stated that "Financial support systems ... should mainly contribute to cover both the direct costs of study (fees and study materials) and the indirect costs ...". In addition, however, various objectives are formulated that have implications for any fee policy of the countries/HEIs. For example, one of the objectives of the Yerevan Communiqué is confirmed: that the quality of higher education is to be improved. HEIs should have the opportunity to develop their own strategies to fulfil their public responsibility towards widening access to participation in and completion of higher education studies. Furthermore, public authorities in the EHEA are called upon to provide sufficient and sustainable funding and financial autonomy to HEIs enabling them to build adequate capacity to embrace diversity and contribute to equity and inclusion in higher education (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020). This involves several objectives, some of which conflict with each other. The levying of tuition fees and their use for higher education teaching is suitable for increasing the quality of higher education (Hauschildt et al., 2013). At the same time, charging tuition fees may deter potential students – especially but not solely from low-income families – to take up studies (Quast et al., 2012; Hübner, 2012). Subsequently, this would run counter to the objectives of widening access, creating diversity, and contributing to equity and inclusion. However, it is precisely the integration of such underrepresented groups that may generate higher costs for HEIs that need to be covered. Furthermore, the granting of extensive financial autonomy to HEIs – that is desirable in many respects – could lead to them using their fee policy, at least within certain limits, to pursue their own objectives that might not be fully in line with those of the government. In particular, the objective of revenue generation should be considered here, which can compete with social policy objectives.[14] This complex situation with different actors (students, HEIs, governments of the EHEA member states), bundles of objectives and different target relationships can probably not be solved to everyone's satisfaction. Priorities must then be set via the political process, which may require different target weightings over time.

14 *However, one way for a government to limit the discretionary scope for action of HEIs can be to implement the objectives of the Social Dimension of the EHEA in the context of target and performance agreements with HEIs (see, for instance, BMWFW, 2017).*

Tables

Table B8.1

Accommodation costs by age groups, sex, educational background, and financial difficulties

Monthly accommodation costs paid by students and others (mean, in PPS)

		Age groups				Sex		Educational background			Financial difficulties	
	All students	up to 21 years	22 to < 25 years	25 to < 30 years	30 years and over	Female	Male	Low educational background	Medium educational background	High educational background	With financial difficulties	Without financial difficulties
AT	403	288	342	421	571	396	411	463	403	397	440	378
AZ	89	81	106	132	143	82	97	145	91	88	100	87
CH	268	159	183	296	569	266	271	261	271	263	317	254
CZ	358	280	312	434	627	361	354	459	368	347	367	345
DE	438	395	390	434	557	442	433	454	433	440	437	429
DK	425	375	400	423	573	435	410	453	423	419	460	398
EE	319	268	301	358	361	318	320	298	319	321	339	306
ES	463	470	338	494	580	484	434	404	380	562	460	433
FI	424	385	381	408	487	430	418	470	422	416	434	421
FR	466	437	437	474	737	486	441	478	447	481	447	481
GE	430	442	421	417	422	381	493	485	422	440	455	391
HR	349	310	335	388	458	359	333	345	344	353	362	338
HU	293	238	263	345	405	299	286	367	298	285	324	278
IE	511	488	457	459	607	503	520	515	482	537	493	532
IS	511	220	303	505	701	537	462	629	594	453	538	482
LT	305	250	302	433	453	307	300	t.f.c.	301	303	321	301
LV	407	354	410	444	484	434	366	422	413	413	425	389
MT	408	315	316	413	588	432	373	424	297	424	419	399
NL	418	356	391	482	681	423	410	492	425	407	453	388
NO	463	363	390	448	623	481	435	533	473	452	453	464
PL	386	332	356	449	582	384	390	425	385	386	423	358
PT	340	308	317	372	513	333	348	321	331	352	372	326
RO	405	325	369	493	610	405	406	430	409	402	440	381
SE	413	333	348	390	562	428	390	502	437	381	439	400
SK	264	181	224	297	470	270	254	345	261	244	299	233
av.	**382**	**318**	**336**	**408**	**534**	**387**	**374**	**422**	**377**	**383**	**401**	**368**

t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8: F.4 (PPP).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Included are expenses of parents, partner, or others in favour of the students as well as their provision of goods and services (= transfers in kind).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B8.2

Time comparison of accommodation costs – students not living with parents

Monthly accommodation costs as share of total expenses including transfers in kind (in %)

	EUROSTUDENT:V	EUROSTUDENT:VI	EUROSTUDENT:VII	EUROSTUDENT:8
AT	35	38	40	42
AZ	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	21
CH	33	33	36	36
CZ	31	35	43	39
DE*	34	42	42	43
DK	36	47	47	51
EE	26	29	32	29
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	43	45	46	47
FR	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
GE	23	26	18	28
HR	32	39	27	34
HU	32	31	26	30
IE	37	34	38	41
IS	n.d.	38	41	44
IT	34	38	39	n.d.
LT	28	25	27	26
LV	25	26	n.d.	27
MT	23	29	21	36
NL	37	36	36	38
NO	34	42	42	47
PL	36	35	36	35
PT	n.d.	34	41	35
RO*	22	28	34	29
SE	41	40	43	46
SI	26	30	34	n.d.
SK	25	28	n.d.	30

n.d.: no data.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT V: F.2; EUROSTUDENT VI: F.10 and F.76; EUROSTUDENT VII: F.142; EUROSTUDENT 8: F.142 NLWP.*

Data collection: *E:8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.7/3.4/4.17/4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period (E:V: current semester)?*

Note(s): *Transfers in kind are goods and services for students financed or provided by their parents, partner, or others.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *DE, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B8.3

Tuition fees paid to HEIs by type of HEI, institutional control, study programme, educational origin, parental financial status, and financial difficulties – only fee-paying students

Monthly amount of tuition fees paid by students and others (mean, in PPS)

	Type of HEI		Institutional control		Study programme		Educational origin		Parental financial status		Financial difficulties	
	University	Non-university	HEIs under public control	HEIs under private control	Bachelor	Master	Domestic	International	Parents very well-off	Parents not at all well-off	With financial difficulties	Without financial difficulties
AT*	179	53	58	718	125	125	109	180	271	80	110	150
AZ	277	n/a	n.d.	n.d.	268	343	266	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	258	302
CH*	76	95	82	252	86	78	77	116	n.d.	n.d.	86	82
CZ	317	286	319	297	253	309	242	498	326	258	310	295
DE*	45	63	44	141	52	55	50	59	57	60	51	51
DK*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
EE	278	235	236	342	258	299	212	347	257	t.f.c.	266	242
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	1,516	t.f.c.	1,488	n.d.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	n.d.	1,488	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.
FR	50	365	46	n.d.	76	149	137	143	223	122	140	140
GE	441	291	n.d.	n.d.	415	385	419	448	493	341	402	443
HR	108	327	113	400	170	152	151	260	213	175	180	143
HU	211	190	205	210	195	265	192	392	224	199	214	201
IE	279	202	258	n.d.	213	432	211	445	297	242	261	243
IS	87	n/a	87	n.d.	87	101	87	85	83	59	94	83
LT	435	264	401	332	290	t.f.c.	343	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	346	438
LV	346	197	358	267	280	314	246	775	344	316	321	331
MT	125	190	119	n.d.	167	162	134	343	t.f.c.	75	165	140
NL	143	144	144	n.d.	142	148	142	158	151	127	152	137
NO	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
PL	194	145	195	172	165	164	169	295	206	162	173	189
PT	138	120	92	277	120	173	125	220	146	136	137	135
RO	189	n/a	184	228	175	192	189	228	236	195	196	183
SE	423	n/a	423	n.d.	t.f.c.	659	53	645	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	563	349
SK	103	163	103	162	118	131	121	149	123	128	119	123
av.	**259**	**185**	**236**	**271**	**174**	**221**	**167**	**346**	**215**	**157**	**206**	**200**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8: F.158 (PPP).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.11 What are your average expenses for the following items during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Included are expenses of parents, partner, or others in favour of the students as well as their provision of goods and services (= transfers in kind). With respect to type of HEI 2, only cases are included that have been successfully matched with ETER indicators on the two types of HEIs (see also > Chapter B4).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DE, DK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B9
Students' housing situation

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Key

Types of housing

On average across EUROSTUDENT countries, 34 % of students live with their parents. 26 % of students share their homes (and lives) with a partner and/or children. 15 % of students reside in student accommodation and another 13 % share their accommodation with other persons. Living alone is the least common form of housing (12 %).

Living with parents

Students who are living in the parental home are found particularly often among those who do not have financial difficulties (38 % on cross-country average). By contrast, students with financial difficulties and students from low educational backgrounds live with their parents to a clearly below-average extent (30 % resp. 28 %).

B 9

Student accommodation

Across EUROSTUDENT countries, 15 % of students have decided to live in student accommodation. Student groups who utilise this form of housing rather frequently include, e.g. students depending on national public student support (30 %), young students below the age of 22 years (20 %), and students depending on family/partner contributions (18 %). Students who perceive themselves as 'workers' are hardly found in dormitories (4 %).

Gwosć, C. (2024). Students' housing situation. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024*. wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew009

findings

Student accommodation in time comparison

When comparing the share of Bachelor students residing in student accommodation between the fifth and the current eighth project round, it comes to light that in 58 % of countries their share has decreased. The decrease was most pronounced in Slovakia, Latvia, and Finland, with at least 12 percentage points. In 37 % of countries, Bachelor students use dormitories now more frequently than before.

Students' access to sufficient internet connection

On average across countries, 7 % of students living in student accommodation report that they seldom or never have sufficient internet connection in their home. The respective proportions in the other forms of housing are as follows: living with other persons, living alone, and living with parents: 4 %, living with partner/children: 3 %.

Students' access to a quiet place to study

Students living with partner/children have the greatest difficulties finding a quiet place to study in their homes (cross-country average: 13 %). Their peers who are living in student accommodation and in the parental home are slightly less concerned (both 12 %). The share for students living with other persons is 10 % and students who live alone have the least difficulties in this respect (5 %).

Commuting between home and the HEI

Students living with parents spend the longest time commuting from their home to the HEI they attend; the cross-country median time for one way is 45 minutes. Their fellow students in student accommodation have the shortest commuting time of 15 minutes one way.

Main issues

Housing is a key element for living and studying, which can help fulfil a plethora of needs (in reference to Maslow, 1943). A home is a place that may satisfy students' physical needs, such as the need for eating and sleep. It satisfies safety needs for physical and mental shelter (Paltridge et al., 2010), health, and – in case students are gainfully employed alongside studies and work from home – a secure working place. If the accommodation is shared with others, it helps satisfy social needs, e.g. for integration, communication, and organisation of family life. Student halls of residence – as a special type of housing – appear to be supportive for students' socio-academic integration (Riker & Decoster, 2008; Schudde, 2011) and may even help reduce dropout (Bozick, 2007). Setting up one's own household may satisfy the needs for independence (e.g. from parents) and freedom. It is also a place where students can develop their talents, creativity, and skills, especially but not solely with respect to their studies. Thus, it is not surprising that especially student accommodation is found to be of greatest importance (Parameswaran & Bowers, 2014) and housing in general an essential influencing factor for life satisfaction (Diaz-Serrano, 2006; Dukeov et al., 2001; Davis & Fine-Davis, 1991).

Until recently, housing was not explicitly mentioned in the ministerial declarations of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Bucharest Communiqué, 2012; Yerevan Communiqué, 2015; Paris Communiqué, 2018). It is only in the Rome Communiqué that the issue was taken up by pointing out that accommodation becomes "increasingly problematic for students across the EHEA due to the increased housing, living, and transportation costs" and that public support – where needed – should mainly contribute to cover these costs as well (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, p. 6, 2020). As part of the further development of the 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA', four indicators have been proposed, among others, to monitor and evaluate the aspect of student funding in the EHEA countries. One of these indicators is the existence of indirect top-level support for students' accommodation, transport, and meals, which is also included into a composite scorecard indicator (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2022). Thus, the topic of housing is receiving increasing attention, even if not yet as much as students and their representatives might feel it deserves.

Forms of housing

For many students, the use of different forms of housing is the result of a conscious choice and in some cases perhaps the rather unconscious continuation of an already existing living arrangement. The choice of a particular form of housing can be subject to many influencing factors. This includes, for example, the availability of housing in terms of quantity and quality in reach of the higher education institution (HEI) as well as the level of rent and ancillary costs. In addition, students' preferences for housing arrangements – which can be influenced by their social development as well as their learning and experiences –, income and wealth of students and of their families, and any social norms and expectations about young people's living arrangements also play a role (Middendorff et al., 2013; Fischer et al., 2017; Unger et al., 2020; Luetzelberger, 2014). Every form of housing has its up- and downsides for students. For instance, students who have started their own family are likely to want to live with them.

This way of living certainly promotes independence from students' parents. For living with their own family, students need a sufficiently large living space, for which they have to pay higher rents. In fact, students living with partner/children often have the highest accommodation costs of all housing forms investigated (Hauschildt et al., 2015, 2021). Students who continue to live with their parents can simply keep up their current living arrangement, which may be comfortable. They can save on living expenses as they often have to pay no or only little rent and may receive free meals, clothing, and other goods and services from their parents (transfers in kind). At the same time, these students usually have the longest daily commuting times for reaching their HEIs and maybe also higher commuting costs for using adequate modes of transport (Hauschildt et al., 2015, 2021). Furthermore, the wish or need to live with their parents limits students' choice of HEIs to those that are within reach of their parental homes. In this way, the academic mobility of the students concerned is restricted (Frenette, 2006; Spiess & Wrohlich, 2010). The subsequent analyses investigate in more detail which groups of students make use of the different forms of housing.

Students' personal study infrastructure

While guided learning in the form of lectures and tutorials usually takes place on campus, students' self-organised learning, such as preparing for exams (alone or in groups), reading specialist literature, writing term papers or theses, also takes place in the students' homes. For this to be successful, certain framework conditions are required. Some of these requirements include, for instance, access to a desk, computer, sufficient internet connection, and a quiet place to study (see Bonard, 2023, and Doolan et al., 2021, with respect to online studying). It will be investigated whether there are differences between various forms of housing in the availability of some of these items.

Commuting between home and the HEI

When students are enrolled in attendance study programmes, living in geographical proximity to their HEI is a necessary requirement for participating in higher education (for Germany, Spiess & Wrohlich, 2010; for Canada, Zarifa et al., 2018). Living with parents, for instance, may be comfortable and cost-saving with respect to rent, food, and other items. However, this form of housing may be associated with a longer journey – in terms of distance and time – from home to the HEI, especially for students living in the outer boroughs of big cities, who may not be able to reach their HEI by walking or cycling. Students who live with parents have indeed been shown to have clearly longer commuting times than their peers in other forms of housing in many European countries (Hauschildt et al., 2021; Orr et al., 2012). This could also mean that these students have to bear higher direct costs for transportation compared to students living in other forms of housing in closer vicinity to the university. Furthermore, the commuting time of students living in the parental home can negatively affect their study time, as the total commuting time for the outward and return journey of some of these students amounts to more than 2 hours per day in several European countries (Orr et al., 2011). By contrast, to be able to attend university at all, it is sometimes unavoidable for students to move out of the parents' home (Bonaccorsi, 2017). Student accommodation is then most often the form of housing with the shortest commuting times, as students in this form of housing often literally live on campus (Hauschildt et al., 2021; Orr et al., 2011). Such a proximity to university is also associated with less need for public and private transportation, parking spaces, and less traffic congestion around campus (Ike et al., 2016). The students' time required for

daily commuting between different forms of housing and the HEIs attended will be analysed in more detail.

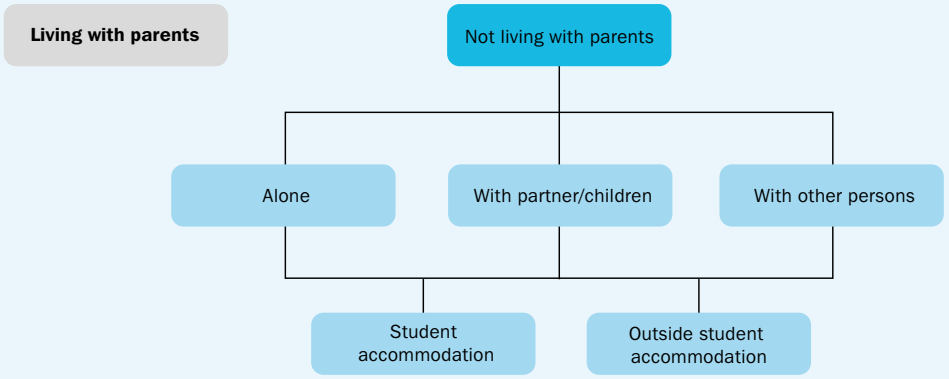
Box B9.1

Methodological note: Typology of student housing

The following data refer to students' housing situation during the week (Monday to Friday) in the lecture period. For analysis purposes, a first fundamental distinction is made between students living with parents and those not living with parents (Figure B9.1). The two groups differ, among other things, in their personal responsibility for financing and organising their accommodation (Hauschildt et al., 2021). Among students not living with parents, a further differentiation is made between the housing forms 'alone', 'with partner/children', and 'with other persons' (e.g. friends, fellow students, professionals, etc.), which are all mutually exclusive in our analysis. In practice, these three forms of housing can be found both inside and outside of student accommodation. In the analysis of student accommodation, however, no distinction will be made between these three forms of housing. The category 'student accommodation' generally refers to all sorts of accommodation in dormitories or halls of residence that are especially designated for the use of students in higher education and often subsidised by government, churches, HEIs, or other organisations.

Figure B9.1

Types of student housing



B 9

Data and interpretation

The housing situation of students: an overview

Living with parents continues to be the single most common form of housing in EUROSTUDENT countries (cross-country average: 34 %).

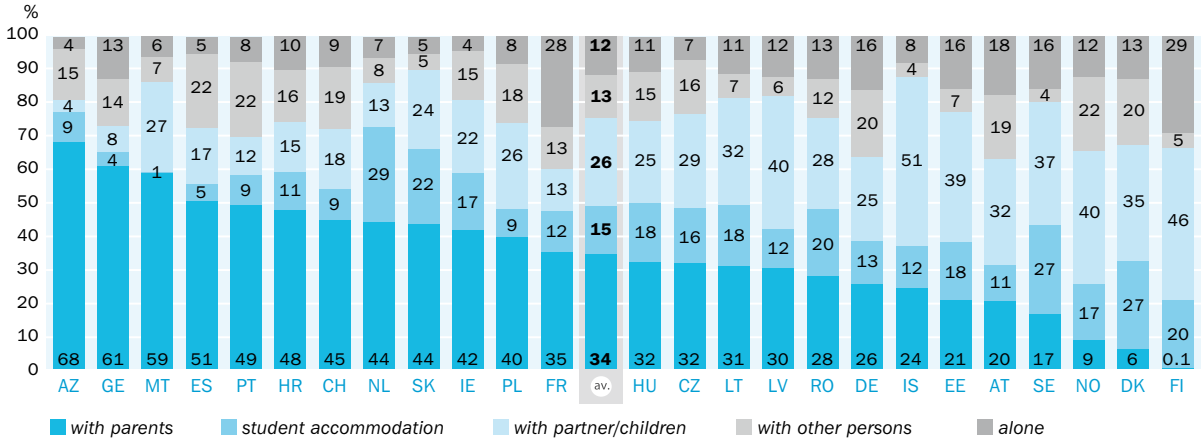
Students in EUROSTUDENT countries continue to predominantly live outside the parental home. In 84 % of countries, the majority of students live away from their parents (Figure B9.2). However, across all countries, living with parents is the type of housing with the single highest share of the five housing forms under comparison (cross-country average: 34 %).

- In Azerbaijan, Georgia, Malta, and Spain, most students live with their parents. In another 12 countries, it is also the single most common living arrangement.

Figure B9.2

Students' housing situation

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.2.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.1 Who do you live with during the current lecture period (Monday to Friday)? 4.2 Do you live in a student accommodation?*

Note(s): *Decimal points shown for values < .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Living with partner/children is the second most frequent form of housing. Across countries, 26 % of students, on average, live together with their partner and/or children.

- In 36 % of countries, the single highest share of students can be found in this form of housing. This applies to Lithuania, Latvia, Iceland, Estonia, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. In Iceland, it is even the majority of all students who are living this way.

Student accommodation is a type of housing that 15 % of students have chosen, on average across countries.

- Relatively large shares of students living in student halls of residence can be found in the Netherlands, Slovakia, Romania, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, with at least 20 %.
- By contrast, the use of student accommodation is quite rare in Georgia and Malta, with less than 5 %.

Sharing accommodation with other persons such as friends or fellow students outside student accommodation is a form of housing for which, on average across countries, 13 % of students have opted. Finally, living alone outside student accommodation continues to be the least used form of housing. On average across EUROSTUDENT countries, 12 % of students have decided to live this way.

Compared to the last round, there is indication that the utilisation of student accommodation has decreased (on cross-country average by 2 percentage points), while residing with partner/children or alone is a bit more frequently used. This might, inter alia, be due to distance students, which have now been taken into account in the data collection, as they are likely to use student accommodation less frequently.

The utilisation of housing forms changes with students' educational background (Table B9.1). When drawing on the cross-country average, it appears that with higher educational background, students increasingly tend to live with parents, in student accommodation, with other persons, and alone. By contrast, the share of students living with partner/children decreases markedly the higher the students' educational background is. This may also be related to students' age structure, transition into higher education, and the levels of their income (> *Chapters B2, B3, B7*).

Students living with parents

Students from low educational backgrounds and those with financial difficulties live with their parents to a below-average extent.

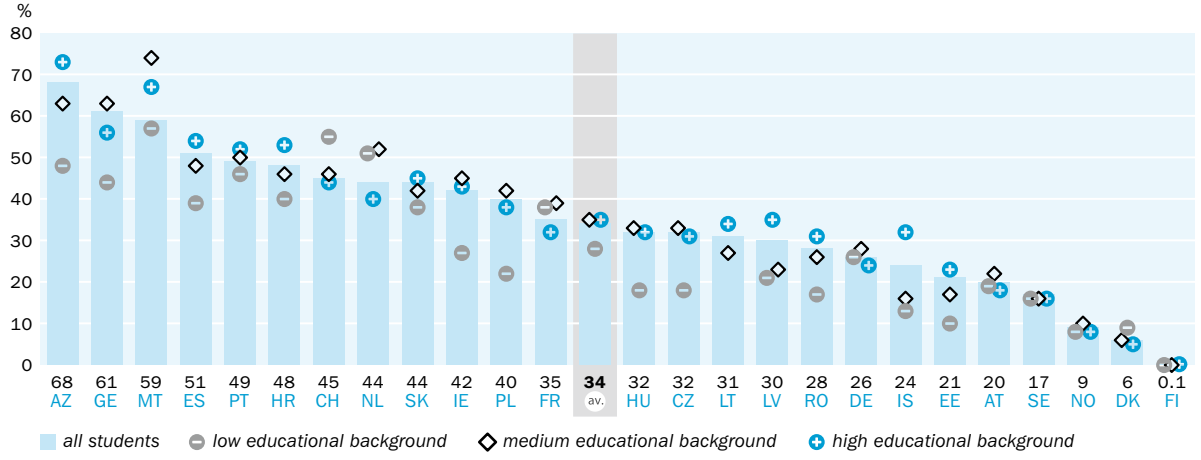
Living with parents during studies can be the result of either a conscious decision or the unconscious continuation of an already existing housing situation. One factor that may affect living with parents is students' educational background. The breakdown of the students' proportions living with parents by students' educational background is, on average across countries, as follows: students from low educational backgrounds: 28 %, from medium and high educational backgrounds: 35 %, (Figure B9.3). In all but four countries, the share of students living with parents among those with low educational background is below the national average for all students.

- Furthermore, in 63 % of countries, students from low educational backgrounds live least often in the parental home out of all compared groups. Exceptions can be found in Switzerland, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland.

Figure B9.3

Students living with parents by educational background

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.2.* ***Too few cases:*** *Low educational background: LT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.1 Who do you live with during the current lecture period (Monday to Friday)?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students living with parents. Decimal points shown for values < .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Students with low educational background are, on international average, clearly older than their fellows with medium or high educational background (mean age of the three groups in years: 30.3, 26.4, 24.7, > *Database*). Older students generally tend to

live with their parents less often than younger ones, as the first group is more likely to be married / live in a long-term relationship and to have children (> *Chapter B1*). This family status does not seem to be well accommodated in the parental home.

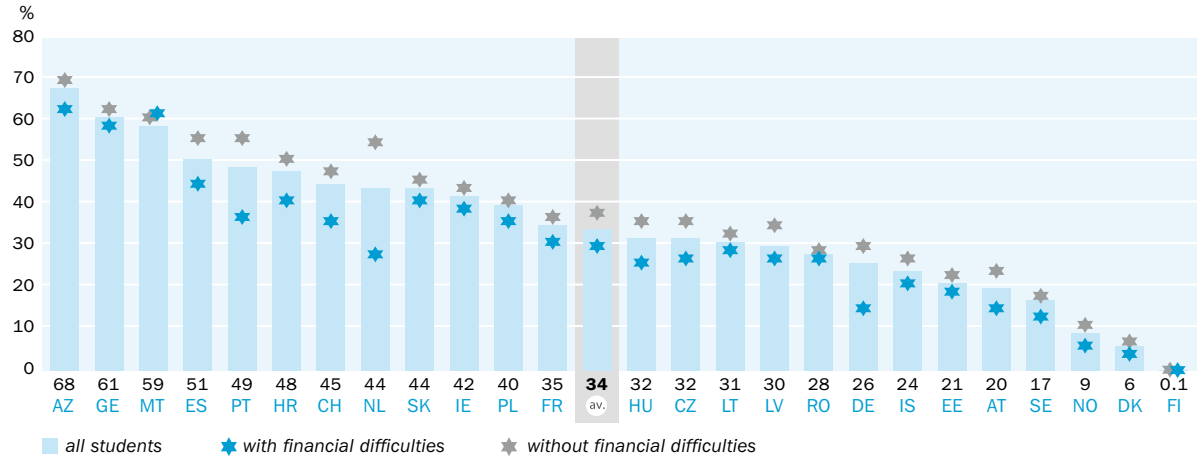
Students who live with their parents can save money in several ways compared to their fellow students living away from their parents. The first group usually pays no rent, or only relatively small amounts, and often receives free meals or other transfers in kind. If students can save on expenditure-intensive factors such as housing and food, this should also be reflected in the extent of their financial difficulties. In fact, such a relation is shown in the data below (Figure B9.4). Among students who do not report current financial difficulties, clearly more than one third (38 %) live with parents, on cross-country average. This exceeds the share of all students living with parents (cross-country average) by 4 percentage points. When looking at students who report current financial difficulties, the share of residents in the parental home amounts to just 30 % across countries.

- In all countries, students without financial difficulties live with parents to an above-average extent. The share of students living with parents in the group of those without financial difficulties is clearly above the national average with at least 5 percentage points in Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Latvia.

Figure B9.4

Students living with parents by the extent of students' financial difficulties

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.2.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.1 Who do you live with during the current lecture period (Monday to Friday)?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students living with parents. Decimal points shown for values < .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

In all but two countries, students with financial difficulties live with their parents to a below-average extent.

- The difference between the national average and the share of students living with parents among those with financial difficulties is largest in Portugal, the Netherlands, and Germany, with at least 11 percentage points. In Croatia and Switzerland, the difference is also rather large with 7 to 9 percentage points.

Students living in student accommodation

Students who reside in student accommodation are particularly often found among young students and those depending on public support.

The share of students residing in student accommodation still varies with students' age (Figure B9.5a). The general pattern according to which students are less likely to live in student accommodation as they grow older continues to apply. On cross-country average, the share of dormitory residents decreases continuously across the different age groups: from 20 % in the group of those younger than 22 years to 4 % in the group of students who are 30 years and over. At country level, the continuous decrease across the four age groups is reflected in more than two thirds of countries (68 %). Older students are more likely to be married or live in a stable relationship and to have children. At this stage of life, their housing needs may be less well met in a student residence than in another form of housing. Furthermore, with advancing age, students usually receive higher incomes (> *Chapter B7*) due to increasing employment alongside studies. This basically opens the possibility of renting larger and possibly better equipped living space than would be possible in student halls of residence.

Students' choice of housing is also clearly linked to their primary income source (Figure B9.5b). Students who depend on national public student support most frequently live in student accommodation (cross-country average: 30 %). The respective share among students who depend on family/partner contributions amounts to 18 %, which is still above the international average for all students (15 %). Only 10 % of students who depend on self-earned income have decided to move into student accommodation. This basic pattern emerges in 64 % of countries.

- Particularly large shares of students depending on national public student support living in dormitories can be found in the Netherlands, Slovakia, Romania, Estonia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Portugal, and Poland. Their share is at least 22 percentage points above the respective national average.

The residential behaviour of the three groups can, inter alia, be explained by their income situation. Students depending on national public student support have by far the lowest monthly income (cross-country median: 602 PPS, > *Chapter B7*). The tight budget constraint forces them to search for a form of housing that is as cost-effective as possible. Outside the parental home, they find this in a student accommodation. Their peers who depend on self-earned income generate the highest income of the three groups (1,472 PPS). This gives them additional options on the housing market, so that they have to resort less frequently to halls of residence.

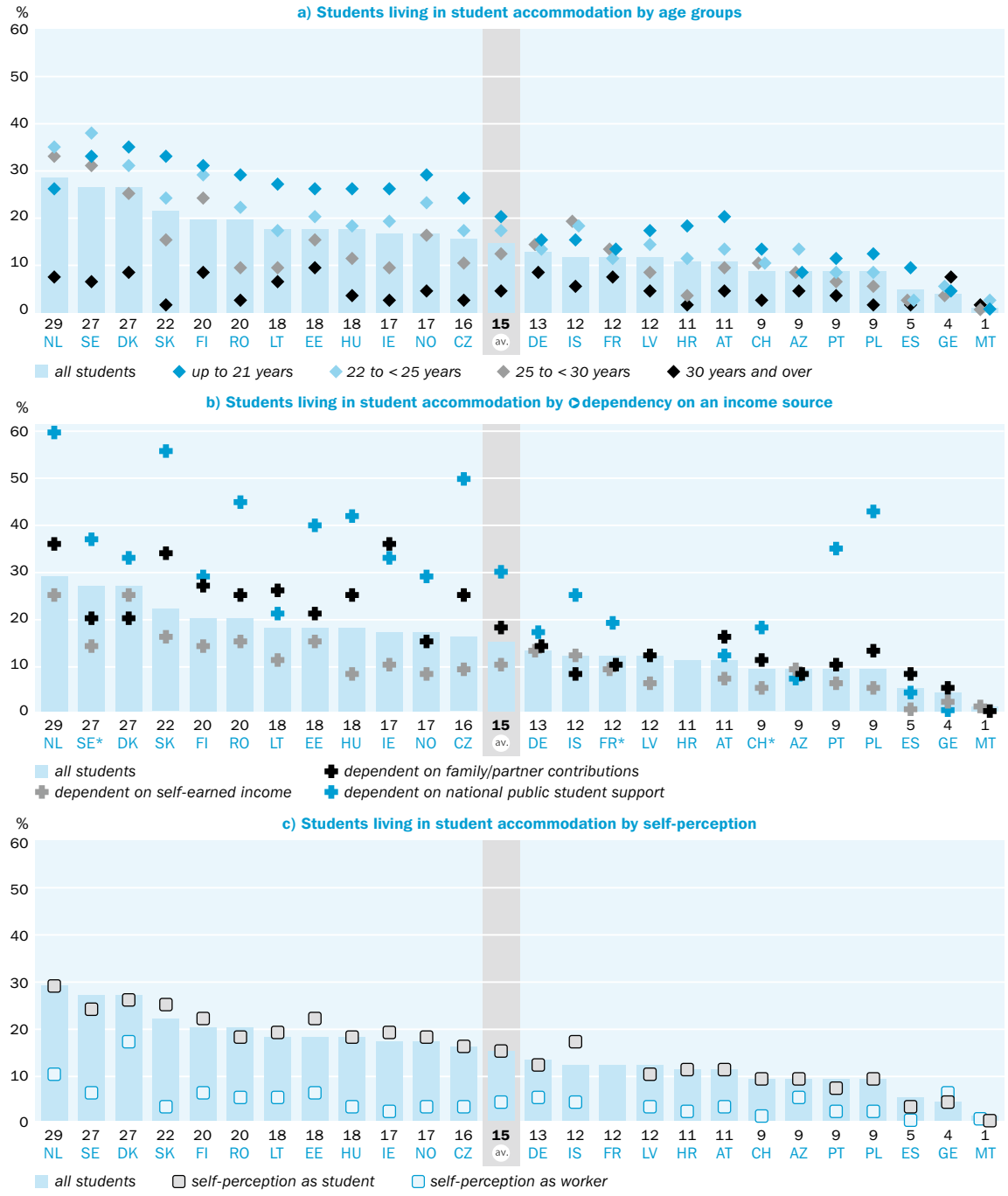
Living in student accommodation is also associated with students' self-perception as either a student or a worker (Figure B9.5c). Students who regard themselves as 'workers' live in student accommodation much less often than their counterparts. On cross-country average, only 4 % of students who perceive themselves as 'workers' live in student halls of residence, while the share for their peers is more than three times as high and coincides with the average of all students living in student accommodation (15 %). In all countries except Georgia and Malta, the share of students perceiving themselves as 'workers' is lower than the percentage of their fellow students who consider themselves as 'students'.

- The largest differences between the two groups are to be found in the Netherlands, Sweden, Slovakia, Estonia, and Ireland, with at least 17 percentage points.

Figure B9.5

Students living in student accommodation by age, dependency on an income source, and self-perception

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.2.* ***No data:*** *Dependency on an income source: HR; self-perception: FR.* ***Too few cases:*** *Dependent on national public student support: LV, MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.2 Do you live in a student accommodation?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of all students living in student accommodation.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, FR, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

In a group comparison, students who see themselves as 'workers' are considerably older than their peer group (cross-country average: 32.6 vs. 24.3 years, > *Database*) and spend much more time on gainful employment alongside studies (cross-country average: 35.3 vs. 17.8 hours per week, > *Database*). Furthermore, the share of students having children is in the first group more than five times as high as in the other group (cross-country average: 33 vs. 6 %, > *Database*). This again reflects various age-related characteristics that make living in student accommodation rather unattractive for students who see themselves as 'workers'.

When differentiating further by socio-demographic, institutional, study-related, and finance-related characteristics, it shows that – on international average – male students utilise student accommodation more often than their female counterparts (17 % vs. 13 %) (Table B9.2). The higher students' educational background, the higher is, on principle, the share of dormitory residents (low: 13 %, medium: 13 %, high: 16 %). Students at universities opt for this form of housing almost twice as often as their fellows at non-universities (17 % vs. 9 %), possibly reflecting the different student populations at the two types of institutions (> *Chapter B4*). Bachelor students live in dormitories a bit more often than Master students (15 % vs. 14 %) and the same holds true for students with financial difficulties compared to their peers without such problems (16 % vs. 14 %).

In the majority of EUROSTUDENT countries, the share of Bachelor students living in student accommodation has decreased between E:V and E:8.

Comparison over time: Bachelor students in student accommodation

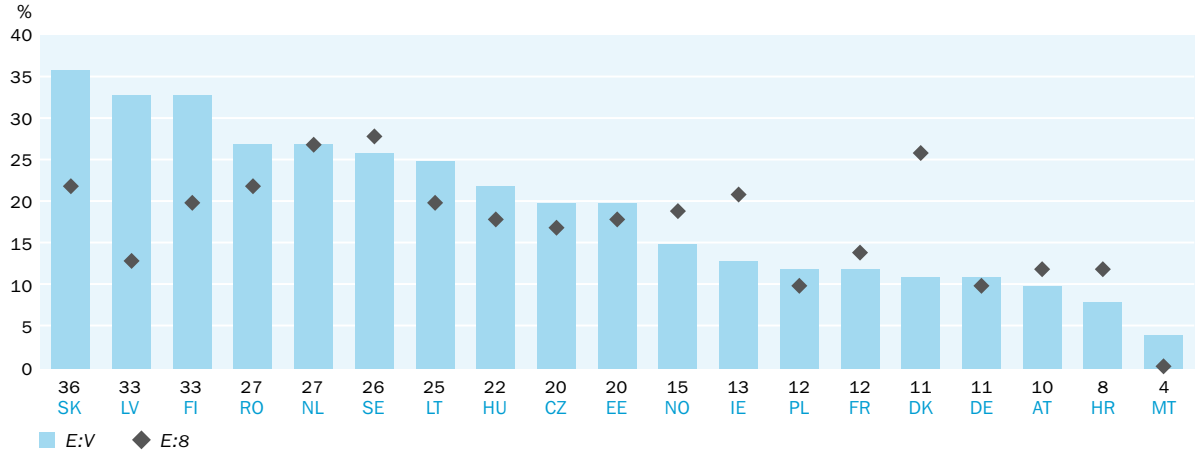
How did the utilisation of student halls of residence by Bachelor students change over time? In a comparison of data from the fifth and the eighth round of EUROSTUDENT, three cases can be distinguished (Figure B9.6).

In a majority (58 %) of countries, the share of Bachelor students in student accommodation has decreased.

Figure B9.6

Comparison over time: Bachelor students living in student accommodation

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT V: E.1 and EUROSTUDENT 8: E.2.* ***No data:*** *E:V: AZ, ES, GE, IS, PT; E:8: CH.*

Data collection: *E:8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.2/4.2 Do you live in a student accommodation?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of Bachelor students living in student accommodation from E:V.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- This holds true for Slovakia, Latvia, Finland, Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Germany, and Malta. The decrease was most pronounced in Slovakia, Latvia, and Finland, with at least 12 percentage points.

In another group of countries (37 % of countries), Bachelor students use dormitories now more frequently than before.

- This group includes Sweden, Norway, Ireland, France, Denmark, Austria, and Croatia. The change is clearly less pronounced compared to the first country group. The largest difference can be found in Denmark with 15 percentage points. In the other countries, the difference varies between 2 and 8 percentage points.
- Finally, the Netherlands is the only country in which the proportion of Bachelor students living in student accommodation has not changed between the two project rounds (27 %).

The decrease in the share of dormitory users among Bachelor students in the first group of countries, on average more pronounced than the rise in the second group, might stem from various factors that could also differ by country. If students enter higher education at an older age, this reduces their likelihood of moving into a hall of residence. The same applies if students receive higher total income. In addition, the preferences for forms of housing within a student population could, of course, also change over time to the detriment of student halls of residence. A more in-depth analysis would be needed here to shed some light on this phenomenon.

Access to personal study infrastructure by form of housing

Students living in student accommodation report most often insufficient internet access compared to students in other forms of housing (cross-country average: 7 %).

In today's digitalised world, it is difficult to imagine studying without access to the internet. In fact, it is one important element forming part of students' 'digital capital' (Ragnedda et al., 2020; Schirmer, 2024). As part of the E:8 topical module 'Digitalisation of teaching, learning, and student life', students were therefore also asked about this aspect of their living situation. The underlying question was: 'In your home, when you need it for your studies, do you have access to sufficient internet connection?' Students could respond on a 5-staged answer scale ranging from 'always' to 'never'. In the following figure, only data for those students are displayed who answered with 'seldom' or 'never' (Figure B9.7).

A first encouraging finding is that in 87 % of countries, the level of insufficient internet access does not exceed the 10 % mark in any form of housing.

- In Denmark, Austria, the Czech Republic, Malta, Slovakia, Norway, Estonia, Spain, Iceland, and Finland, all values are even below 5 %.
- Only in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Portugal do the values for certain types of housing exceed 10 %.

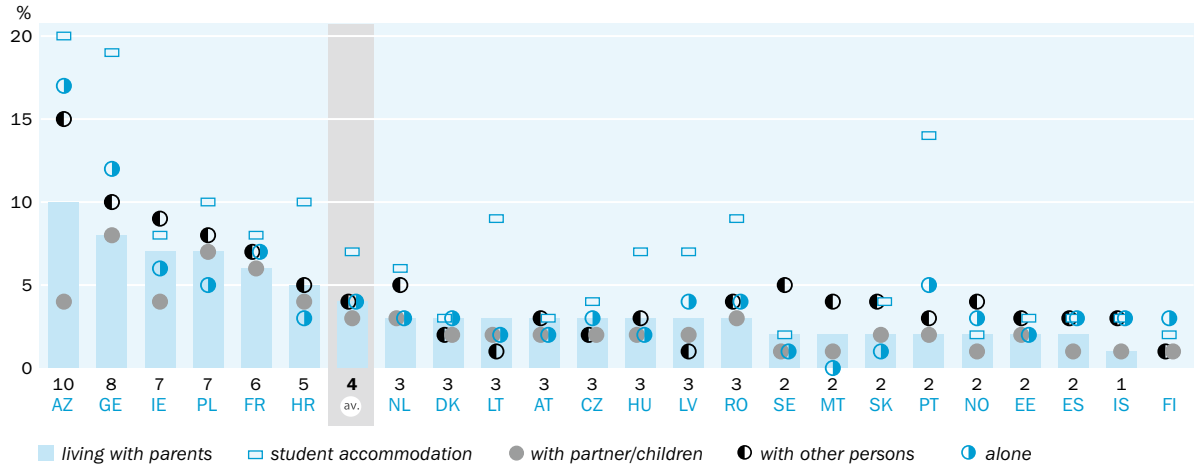
When looking at the various housing forms, it appears that students living in student accommodation clearly most often report that they have insufficient access to the internet (cross-country average: 7 %). The respective share among students living with other persons, alone, or with parents is 4 %. Students living with partner/children report this problem least often (3 %).

- In 64 % of countries, students residing in dormitories state the highest shares of those with insufficient internet access. The highest proportions are reported by students in Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Portugal, with 14 % and more.

Figure B9.7

Students' study-required access to sufficient internet connection by form of housing – only students who responded with 'seldom' or 'never'

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, L.TM 55.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE.* ***Too few cases:*** *Living with parents: FI; Student accommodation: MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *M3.2 In your home, when you need it for your studies, do you have access to sufficient internet connection?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of students living with parents.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

If this result is related to student groups, the problem affects to a higher degree, inter alia, students depending on national public student support, students whose parents are not very well-off, students with financial difficulties, international students, and students with high study intensity, as these groups live in student accommodation to an above-average extent (Figure B9.5b; > *Database*). The lack of internet access seems particularly serious for students receiving public support and their fellow students with high study intensity as both groups often need to provide proof of performance in order not to lose their eligibility for public support.[1] They would then have to switch to other locations, such as libraries, for internet-based work. However, this will not always be possible due to limited capacities.

B 9

Students living with partner/children have the greatest difficulty finding a quiet place to study compared to students in other forms of housing (cross-country average: 13 %).

Another element of students' personal study infrastructure with great meaning for their personal study time is access to a quiet place to study in their homes. In the EUROSTUDENT survey, students were asked: 'In your home, when you need it for your studies, do you have access to a quiet place to study?' Students were asked to use the same 5-staged answer scale ranging from 'always' to 'never'. In the following figure, again only data of those students are displayed who answered with 'seldom' or 'never' (Figure B9.8).

The lack of available quiet study place varies across countries and forms of housing.

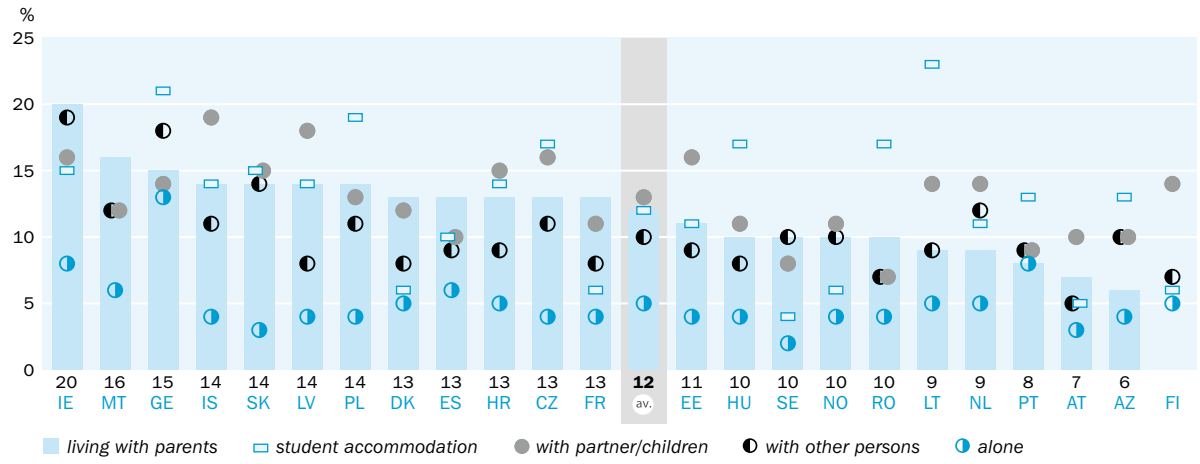
- In 43 % of countries, including Denmark, Spain, France, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, Austria, Azerbaijan, and Finland, the values for all forms of housing are below 15 %. In the other countries, at least one value exceeds this mark.

1 *Students with high study intensity receive national public student support particularly often (> Database).*

Figure B9.8

Students' study-required access to a quiet place to study by form of housing – only students who responded with 'seldom' or 'never'

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, L.TM 56.* ***No data:*** *CH, DE.* ***Too few cases:*** *Living with parents: FI; Student accommodation: MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *M3.2 In your home, when you need it for your studies, do you have access to a quiet place to study?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the share of students living with parents.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

When comparing the results for the different housing forms, it becomes apparent that finding a quiet place to study is most challenging for students living with partner/children (cross-country average: 13 %). Students who are living in student accommodation or with their parents are marginally less concerned (12 %). When students share their accommodation with others (e.g. friends, fellow students), 10 % report that they can never or only seldom retreat in their home to a quiet place for their studies. As expected, students who live on their own outside student accommodation have the least difficulties in this respect (5 %).

- Students living with partner/children show the highest proportions on this indicator in 35 % of countries. This holds true for Iceland, Latvia, Croatia, Estonia, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, and Finland.

It is easy to imagine that family life, especially with little children, makes retreating to a quiet room difficult.

In another 41 % of countries, students living in student halls of residence most often indicate a lack of a quiet place to study.

- This group of countries includes Georgia, Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Lithuania, Portugal, and Azerbaijan. This problem appears to be very pronounced in Georgia and Lithuania, where more than 20 % of the dormitory residents are concerned.

A student accommodation is a highly dynamic place where very heterogenous actors come together. The residents differ by social background, country of origin, ethnic affiliation, family bonds, and other characteristics (Holton, 2016). This may create an atmosphere that makes it rather difficult to find peace.

In these cases, too, students would then have to look for other locations to find a quiet place for their personal studies.

Commuting between home and the HEI

Students living with parents have the longest commuting time to get from home to their HEI (cross-country median: 45 minutes).

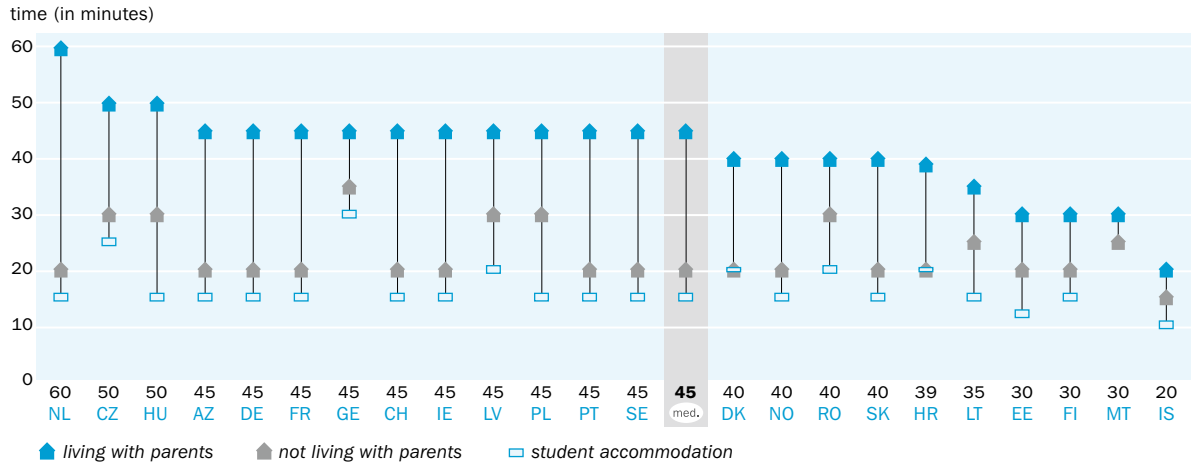
Students' form of housing not only has implications for their social life and finances, but it also affects their time allocation, as they have to spend time commuting between home and the HEI. Data on the commuting time of students were analysed for the two basic forms of housing 'living with parents' and 'not living with parents' and – as part of the latter – 'student accommodation' (Figure B9.9). The ◔ median time is displayed in minutes for students' regular commuting one way on a typical day in the current lecture period.

In all countries, students spend most time commuting when they are staying at their parents' home. According to the international median, the time for commuting from the parental home to the HEI (one way only) amounts to 45 minutes across all countries. Students who do not live with their parents have a markedly shorter commuting time of 20 minutes one way. Their peers residing in student accommodation have the shortest commuting time at 15 minutes. This general pattern indicated by the international median values is reflected in 91 % of countries with available data on all three forms of housing. Only in Denmark and Croatia is the commuting time for students not living with parents and those in student accommodation the same.

Figure B9.9 ⬇

Regular time for commuting from home to the HEI (one way) by basic type of housing

Median one-way commuting time (in minutes)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.4.* ***No data:*** *AT, ES.* ***Too few cases:*** *Student accommodation: MT.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.3 On a typical day, how much time does it take you to get from your home to your higher education institution during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *Values above the country abbreviations represent the median commuting time of students living with parents.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- Students in the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have the longest commuting times among those who are living with parents. They have to dedicate between 50 and 60 minutes to one way.

- By contrast, students living with parents in Estonia, Finland, Malta, and Iceland, do not spend more than 30 minutes on commuting.

Students who live away from parents spend, on cross-country median, less than half as much time on their commute. Also, the range of commuting time across countries is rather small. The difference between the longest ride (35 minutes in Georgia) and the shortest (15 minutes in Iceland) amounts to just 20 minutes; this difference is just half as large as in the group of students living with their parents (40 minutes).

In EUROSTUDENT countries, student accommodation is generally characterised by close proximity to the HEIs. Students often can cover the distance between their homes and their HEIs within a quarter of an hour (cross-country median).

- The longest commuting times are reported by students in the Czech Republic and Georgia, with at least 25 minutes. Their fellow students in Iceland have it best with spending only 10 minutes on the journey.
- When comparing within-country data for students living with parents and those in student accommodation, it shows that student accommodation in the Netherlands and Hungary is particularly timesaving. There, the one-way journey for students living with parents is more than three times as high as for their peers in dormitories. In another eight countries, Azerbaijan, Germany, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden, the factor is exactly three.

Further data on students' commuting time can be found in Table B9.3. This time, the average instead of the median was used to check whether differences are more pronounced. Across all countries and all forms of housing, students' average commuting time amounts to 39 minutes (one way). Students enrolled at ○ non-universities spend more time commuting than their peers at ○ universities (cross-country average: 43 vs. 39 minutes). When the size of the study location increases, there is at least a general pattern of slightly increasing commuting time, although not in a strictly linear way (< 100,000 inhabitants: 38 minutes, > 100,000–300,000 inhabitants: 37, > 300,000–500,000 inhabitants: 38, > 500,000 inhabitants: 41). In the capital city, the commuting time is longest on international average (43 minutes). Some clear differences can be found between the various forms of housing (living with parents: 49 minutes, with partner/children: 44, alone: 35, with other persons: 29, student accommodation: 23).

Discussion and policy considerations

The parental home is still the single most important form of housing in most EUROSTUDENT countries. From an economic point of view, it is still the most inexpensive form of housing (> *Chapter B8*), as students usually not only pay no or little rent but also receive various other transfers (in cash and in kind) from their parents. Therefore, it is not surprising that students without financial difficulties live clearly more often with parents than those in financial distress. The importance of the parental home as a place to live is also particularly evident in times of crisis. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many students who used to live away from their parents moved – at least temporarily – back into their parents' house (for Germany, Kroher et al., 2023). However, it should be noted that the parents' home continues to be a form of housing which is used more

often by students from medium or high educational backgrounds or students whose parents are financially (very) well-off (> *Database*) compared to those students who come from economically disadvantaged families. This means that the latter group is missing out on a particularly large economic advantage, as expenditure on housing and food, which typically make up most of their total expenditure (> *Chapter B8*), is only especially low in the parents' home. If the university these students attend is, however, not within reach of their parents' home, the loss of this benefit seems unavoidable.[2] However, there are of course also students – especially from low-income families – who cannot afford to move out of their parents' home (Dohmen et al., 2021); living with parents is then a prerequisite to take part in higher education.

Student accommodation is a form of housing that symbolises the university phase of life in a particularly visible way. Although it is still an important form of housing utilised by 15 % of all students across EUROSTUDENT countries, it seems to have lost a bit of importance. Compared to the last round, the frequency of use decreased by 2 percentage points. Furthermore, in a comparison with the fifth round of EUROSTUDENT, the proportion of Bachelor students living in student accommodation has decreased in more than half of countries. A lower utilisation of student accommodation might still be an effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which many students moved back in with their parents.[3] Despite this development, it can be assumed that student residences continue to be heavily utilised.[4] Student groups using student accommodation more often than average include students depending on national public student support, young students below the age of 25 years, and students ○ depending on family/partner contributions. Also, in most countries students with financial difficulties live more often in dormitories than their counterparts without such worries. This illustrates that halls of residence are a place that is – not exclusively, but often – a preferred choice for low-income students. This is not surprising as in most countries student accommodation is the cheapest form of housing outside the parents' home (> *Chapter B8*). The revitalisation or further development of state-subsidised halls of residence, therefore, appears to be a reasonable instrument for alleviating the housing shortage for students. This is also a requirement of the European Students' Union: "Regarding student housing, four principles must guide policy aimed at it: affordability, accessibility, quality, and sustainability. States and higher education institutions must make sure that anyone who wishes to study in Higher Education has access to an affordable place to live. This can be achieved through designated student housing, but in cases where that isn't sufficient, policies and systems must be in place to ensure affordability in the rental market. Support for housing can be offered both through grants for students or indirect means of covering the costs (e.g. subsidising student housing)." (European Students' Union, p. 24, 2024).

It is true that developable land for building student accommodations is particularly scarce in large cities (OECD, 2023). Nevertheless, there still appears to be development potential as analyses for private construction developers show, recommending invest-

2 *Attending a HEI far away from the parents' home is not always the result of a students' free decision though, but sometimes the consequence of a randomised procedure for the allocation of study places or overcrowding. In Germany, for example, 10 % of first-year students state that they have not received admission to their desired HEI (Kroher et al., 2023).*

3 *In 2020, the first year in which the pandemic spread in Europe, the occupancy rate for student accommodation declined Europe-wide by around 10 % (Catella, 2021).*

4 *To illustrate this with data on private dormitories: In 2022, occupancy rates in privately developed student accommodation across Europe averaged 98 %, with the lowest value (95 %) found in Austria and Switzerland (Bonard, 2023).*

ment opportunities for student housing in major cities such as Rome and Madrid in particular, but also Lisbon, Berlin, and Greater London (Bonard, 2023).[5] Also, a previous analysis for Poland estimated that state- and privately operated student housing facilities meet only 33–35 % of actual demand in Polands' largest cities (CBRE, 2020). In the case of public student accommodation, innovative forms of housing, such as co-operative student accommodation[6], are also being tried out in order to provide students with sufficient living space. However, these are still little known and not (yet) widespread (Busse et al., 2022).

The housing forms of students differ in their equipment with personal study infrastructure. Insufficient internet connection is a lack which is most often found in student accommodation. When a quiet place to study is called for, it is above all students living with partner/children but also again students living in student accommodation who have great difficulties finding such a place in their homes. Both elements, sufficient internet connection and a quiet place to study, are important for students' personal study time as they need to prepare for exams, read specialist literature, and write homework and theses. If one or both elements are not sufficiently available, there could in principle be substitutes, for example in university libraries. However, capacities there are limited and sometimes (e.g. at times during the COVID-19 pandemic) not available at all. At least the problem of internet access in public student accommodation should be the easiest to solve.

Related to the form of housing is the time for daily commuting of students from their home to their HEI. The current data reveal a well-known pattern when differentiating three (basic) forms of housing: Students living with parents have the longest commute (cross-country median: 45 minutes for one way). Their peers who are living away from parents spend less than half as much time on it and – as part of the latter group – students residing in student accommodation dedicate the least time on commuting (15 minutes). The commuting time is a feature of student accommodation that dormitory residents are typically (very) satisfied with (Hauschildt et al., 2021; DZHW, 2018). As expected, this is different for students who are living with parents. Out of the three groups, they show the highest levels of dissatisfaction with their commuting times in the large majority of countries (Hauschildt et al., 2021). If living with parents – due to the typically lower costs – is a prerequisite for students to be able to participate in higher education at all, these students may face a double disadvantage: firstly, they are limited in their choice of HEI (and maybe study subject) to those that are within reach of their parents' home. Secondly, long commuting times are perhaps at the expense of study time. These problems could in principle be solved by increasing the regional spreading of student halls of residence and/or HEIs. However, both options are rather expensive and also very difficult to realise because universities (and their housing supply) are competing with other public and private purposes for scarce construction ground, especially in big cities.

5 *Such privately developed student accommodations, however, will not be available to students for a similar price as publicly subsidised halls of residence. To illustrate this: When expressing the average rent for student accommodation in the EUROSTUDENT countries in Euro, the value amounts to 364 Euro. In 2022, the average rent for a single studio in purely private student accommodation in Europe (without UK) amounted to 664 Euro (Bonard, 2023).*

6 *Co-operative student accommodations are social projects in which either several generations and families live together and the focus is on a joint organisation of living together, or co-operations that go beyond shared living and offer rent-free housing for students in exchange for e.g. providing tutoring and leisure activities for pupils of nearby schools (for Germany, Busse et al., 2022).*

Tables

Table B9.1

Students' housing situation by educational background

Share of students (in %)

	Low educational background					Medium educational background					High educational background				
	With parents	Student accommodation	With partner/children	With other persons	Alone	With parents	Student accommodation	With partner/children	With other persons	Alone	With parents	Student accommodation	With partner/children	With other persons	Alone
AT	19	9	41	13	19	22	9	35	16	18	18	14	27	24	17
AZ	48	25	3	25	0	63	11	3	20	2	73	7	4	11	5
CH	55	7	20	8	10	46	7	21	17	9	44	11	16	21	9
CZ	18	18	46	13	6	33	13	33	14	7	31	20	24	18	8
DE	26	18	32	13	12	28	10	28	18	16	24	14	23	22	17
DK	9	22	44	15	11	6	29	36	16	14	5	28	32	22	13
EE	10	30	41	6	13	17	17	46	7	13	23	17	35	7	18
ES	39	2	22	32	6	48	3	17	26	5	54	8	11	22	5
FI	0	9	68	2	21	0	16	51	3	30	0.2	25	39	5	31
FR	38	14	16	10	22	39	13	15	10	24	32	11	12	15	30
GE	44	8	10	28	10	63	3	5	16	13	56	6	8	16	13
HR	40	17	24	12	7	46	12	17	16	9	53	10	11	15	12
HU	18	15	37	16	14	33	17	31	12	8	32	18	21	17	12
IE	27	8	48	10	7	45	14	23	14	4	43	22	14	18	4
IS	13	8	70	3	7	16	11	61	3	9	32	14	42	5	8
LT	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	t.f.c.	27	18	39	7	9	34	18	28	8	12
LV	21	12	52	5	10	23	13	50	4	10	35	11	34	7	13
MT	57	1	31	6	6	74	0.3	18	4	4	67	0.3	14	12	7
NL	51	18	22	3	7	52	19	18	5	6	40	34	11	9	6
NO	8	10	64	7	11	10	16	47	15	13	8	18	35	27	12
PL	22	6	55	8	10	42	7	29	16	7	38	10	22	21	10
PT	46	8	19	21	7	50	10	11	22	7	52	9	7	23	9
RO	17	23	45	8	8	26	20	31	12	12	31	20	21	12	16
SE	16	14	52	4	14	16	23	43	3	15	16	31	31	4	17
SK	38	13	38	4	7	42	22	27	4	5	45	26	16	6	6
av.	**28**	**13**	**38**	**11**	**10**	**35**	**13**	**29**	**12**	**11**	**35**	**16**	**21**	**15**	**12**

t.f.c.: too few cases.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.2.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.1 Who do you live with during the current lecture period (Monday to Friday)? 4.2 Do you live in a student accommodation?*

Note(s): *Decimal points shown for values < .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B9.2

Students living in student accommodation by sex, educational background, type of HEI, study programme, and extent of financial difficulties

Share of students (in %)

	Sex		Educational background			Type of HEI		Study programme		Extent of financial difficulties	
	Female	Male	Low educational background	Medium educational background	High educational background	University	Non-university	Bachelor	Master	With financial difficulties	Without financial difficulties
AT	11	12	9	9	14	12	8	12	10	13	10
AZ	8	10	25	11	7	9	n/a	9	7	12	9
CH	9	10	7	7	11	13	5	8	12	12	9
CZ	13	21	18	13	20	18	4	17	13	19	16
DE	10	16	18	10	14	15	10	10	18	20	11
DK	24	30	22	29	28	31	21	26	29	22	29
EE	15	22	30	17	17	18	16	18	14	18	16
ES	5	5	2	3	8	5	5	5	2	4	6
FI	16	27	9	16	25	29	13	20	20	17	22
FR	11	14	14	13	11	11	15	14	11	14	11
GE	3	5	8	3	6	5	3	3	5	5	5
HR	11	12	17	12	10	12	9	12	9	13	11
HU	16	19	15	17	18	19	9	18	15	18	17
IE	18	16	8	14	22	20	13	21	12	18	16
IS	11	16	8	11	14	12	n/a	13	12	21	7
LT	16	22	t.f.c.	18	18	20	15	20	13	22	18
LV	8	17	12	13	11	12	11	13	11	14	9
MT	0.3	1	1	0.3	0.3	1	1	0.3	1	2	0.1
NL	29	29	18	19	34	42	16	27	39	36	24
NO	14	20	10	16	18	19	12	19	14	18	15
PL	7	10	6	7	10	10	2	10	7	8	9
PT	8	10	8	10	9	10	7	9	7	12	8
RO	19	21	23	20	20	20	n/a	22	13	22	19
SE	22	34	14	23	31	27	n/a	28	34	27	26
SK	20	25	13	22	26	26	1	22	17	23	22
av.	**13**	**17**	**13**	**13**	**16**	**17**	**9**	**15**	**14**	**16**	**14**

t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.2.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.2 Do you live in a student accommodation?*

Note(s): *No non-universities exist in AZ, IS, RO, SE. Decimal points shown for values < .5.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Table B9.3

Regular commuting time from home to the HEI (one way) by type of HEI, size of study location, and form of housing

Mean (in minutes)

		Type of HEI		Size of study location					Form of housing				
	All students	University	Non-university	< 100,000 inhabitants	> 100,000–300,000 inhabitants	> 300,000–500,000 inhabitants	> 500,000 inhabitants	Capital city	Living with parents	Student accommodation	With partner/children	With other persons	Alone
AT	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
AZ	44	44	n/a	22	n.d.	37	n.d.	48	51	22	46	28	37
CH	40	37	43	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	49	20	46	25	35
CZ	50	50	53	58	52	45	n.d.	50	58	44	52	39	48
DE	41	39	45	36	41	37	45	47	56	20	53	26	36
DK	30	28	32	36	30	24	n.d.	30	45	24	35	26	29
EE	33	32	37	32	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	35	38	17	41	27	31
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	44	41	46	55	49	34	38	41	t.f.c.	20	59	37	37
FR	44	44	44	46	38	39	43	58	63	27	44	37	30
GE	46	47	41	37	35	n.d.	n.d.	48	50	36	47	39	39
HR	35	34	37	30	27	n.d.	n.d.	41	42	23	36	23	28
HU	42	41	50	47	36	n.d.	n.d.	45	55	22	50	27	39
IE	38	39	37	34	32	n.d.	n.d.	46	52	17	36	29	36
IS	24	24	n/a	26	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	23	24	12	27	20	24
LT	37	37	38	38	34	n.d.	n.d.	39	42	24	43	29	33
LV	49	47	61	55	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	46	54	36	52	34	51
MT	32	34	26	32	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	35	t.f.c.	26	28	27
NL	46	40	52	41	45	50	47	48	63	23	52	32	38
NO	36	35	38	36	30	n.d.	n.d.	32	43	22	49	22	36
PL	42	41	45	42	42	41	41	44	54	20	42	29	34
PT	38	40	34	23	38	n.d.	n.d.	49	51	20	36	21	30
RO	38	38	n/a	38	34	n.d.	n.d.	46	46	22	44	33	36
SE	33	33	n/a	34	28	38	32	43	50	17	43	30	28
SK	44	43	52	49	43	n.d.	n.d.	39	53	25	51	27	40
av.	**39**	**39**	**43**	**38**	**37**	**38**	**41**	**43**	**49**	**23**	**44**	**29**	**35**

n.d.: no data. t.f.c.: too few cases. n/a: not applicable.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, E.4.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.3 On a typical day, how much time does it take you to get from your home to your higher education institution during the current lecture period?*

Note(s): *No non-universities exist in AZ, IS, RO, SE.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B10
International student mobility

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Key

Types of temporary international mobility

On cross-country average, a total of 24 % of students engaged in temporary forms of international mobility. 5 % of students were enrolled abroad temporarily, with an additional 1 % engaged in both enrolment and internships / work placements. Internships / work placements alone constituted 3 %, while 14 % participated in other study-related activities abroad. Variation between countries not only relates to the overall extent of students who have engaged in international mobility but also to the composition of mobility types.

Social inequalities in international mobility trends over time

Over a quarter-century since the inception of the Bologna Process, international student mobility within the EHEA has seen dynamic shifts. Enrolment abroad for example peaked between 2012 and 2018, stagnating afterwards. Students' educational background influences participation, revealing consistent gaps favouring students from academic households across all mobility types with students from academic backgrounds generally showing higher participation rates.

Diverse socio-demographic and study-related factors in student mobility

International student mobility is influenced by various socio-demographic and study-related characteristics, such as migration background, parental financial status, fields of study, HEI funding, and HEI research activity.

Schirmer, H. (2024). International student mobility. In K. Hauschildt (Ed.), *Social and economic conditions of student life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of indicators 2021–2024*. wbv Publikation. DOI: 10.3278/6001920ew010

findings

Patterns of temporary mobility throughout study

Specifics for each type of international student mobility become obvious when examining trends across degree programmes and years of study. Findings for enrolment periods abroad suggest that students inclined towards studying abroad may also have a tendency to pursue further studies with a second-cycle degree and that students in Bachelor programmes often choose to study abroad towards the conclusion of their first-cycle degree.

Understanding students' intentions for temporary study abroad

While, on cross-country average, 6 % of students are actively planning to enrol abroad, 24 % express general intentions without concrete plans, suggesting a sizeable pool of prospective mobile students. Financing remains a major obstacle, particularly in earlier decision making phases, highlighting the need for targeted support programmes.

Organisation, funding, and characteristics of international mobility

While Erasmus(+) is popular for organisation and funding of study periods abroad (60 %), internships abroad are mainly organised independently (55 %). Internship characteristics vary considerably with regard to degree of obligation and financial compensation. Activities abroad other than studies and internships include research, field trips, summer/winter schools, language courses, and unspecified activities. The rise of unspecified activities, potentially virtual, suggests adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Main issues

Since the initiation of the Bologna Process, decision makers in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have championed temporary international student mobility (ISM) in various forms. This commitment has been fundamental in fostering academic exchange and cultural understanding across borders. Recently, the European Commission has endorsed the proposal for a "Council Recommendation 'Europe on the Move' – learning mobility opportunities for everyone" (European Commission, 2023). This initiative seeks to embed learning mobility as an integral component into all education and training pathways within the European Union. Its ambitious goals include increasing the proportion of EU citizens benefiting from a learning period abroad, particularly targeting those individuals facing fewer opportunities: the proposal sets a new EU-level mobility target for 2030, aiming for at least 25 % of higher education graduates to have experienced learning mobility, up from the current 20 %. Moreover, the recommendation outlines measures to surmount mobility barriers, such as outreach, language enhancement, and improved recognition of learning outcomes. It also embraces emerging learning paradigms, including digital tools, and advocates for environmentally sustainable mobility practices, drawing upon the experiences gleaned from existing exchange programmes like Erasmus+. The new strategy thus builds on, details, and reinforces the principles of ISM formulated in point 8 of Annex II (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2020a) to the Rome Communiqué (2020b).

Indeed, past studies reveal that socio-economic factors, particularly social background (i.e. student's parental educational and economic status) and study-related aspects, such as subject-related cultures, significantly influence students' engagement in temporary international mobility initiatives of the EHEA countries (Finger, 2011; Gerhards & Hans, 2013; Netz, 2015; Netz et al., 2021; Netz & Finger, 2016). These findings underscore the importance of addressing multifaceted barriers to participation and fostering inclusivity in mobility programmes to ensure equitable opportunities for all students. Recent research on ISM reveals emerging trends: Gender disparities persist, with women showing higher intentions and participation rates in study abroad programmes. This can partly be explained by parental characteristics (Van Mol, 2022) as well as gender differences in subject choice during school and in higher education (Cordua & Netz, 2022). However, concerns about family responsibilities and career interruptions may deter women, particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds, from pursuing international experiences (Cordua & Netz, 2022). Socio-economic factors significantly influence participation, with students from higher socio-economic backgrounds being more likely to study abroad. Nonetheless, institutional contexts can play a role in shaping study abroad intent and participation (Entrich et al., 2024; Schnepf et al., 2024): Both high- and low-socio-economic status students can benefit from mobility scholarships when provided by higher education institutions (HEIs); nonetheless, an issue persists where privileged students tend to enrol in institutions with superior scholarship provisions, thereby contributing to their overrepresentation among internationally mobile students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly disrupted the landscape of temporary ISM (Di Pietro & Perez-Encinas, 2023), with measures such as lockdowns in HEIs and travel restrictions having influenced students' behaviour concerning study-related

activities abroad. Vulnerable student groups, already facing socio-economic challenges, may have been disproportionately affected by these disruptions. Consequently, there is an urgent need to monitor trends in temporary study-related student mobility to assess the pandemic's lasting impact and mitigate disparities among student cohorts. However, the COVID-19 pandemic might not in all cases have had negative effects with regard to selection processes in ISM: While efforts of policymakers and HEIs to promote inclusivity and accessibility in mobility programmes continue (De Benedictis & Leoni, 2021; Van Mol & Perez-Encinas, 2022), participation rates among students with disabilities remained low in the past (Van Mol & Perez-Encinas, 2022) – which might have partly been counterbalanced in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (Netz & Völk, 2023).

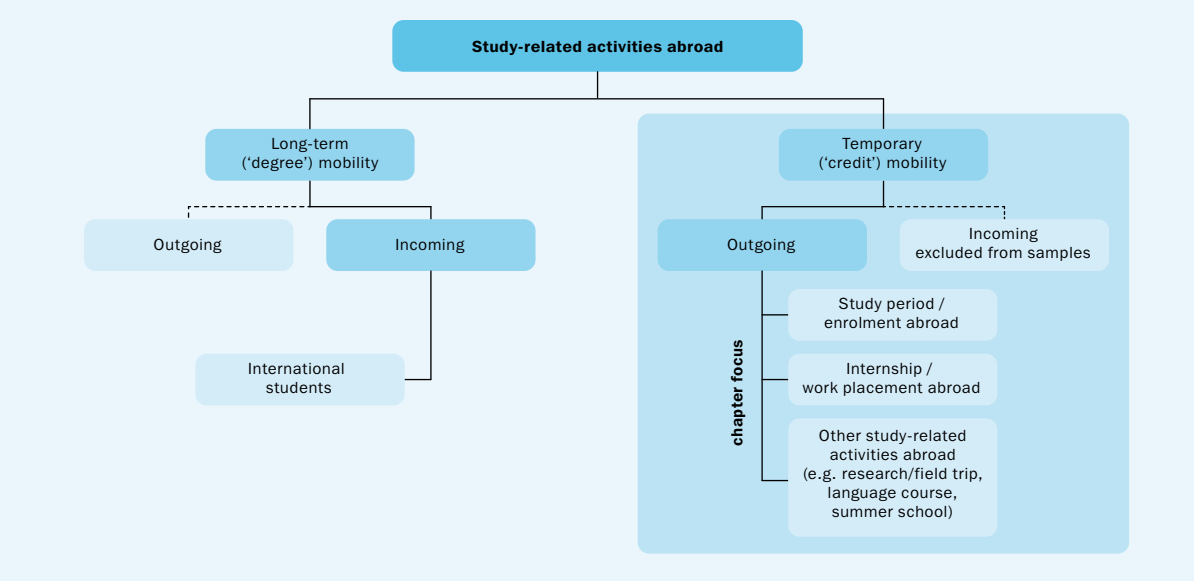
Box B10.1

Methodological note: Types of temporary ('credit') mobility

The analyses in this chapter cover temporary types of mobility, commonly also known as credit mobility. Credit mobility encompasses various forms of study periods abroad ('enrolment abroad'), internships or work placements, and other study-related activities such as research/field trips, language courses, and summer schools (Figure B10.1). It is essential to note that our analyses exclusively encompass students within the EUROSTUDENT target group (see > *Chapter A3* for more details). The EUROSTUDENT target group consists of students pursuing degrees within the country of the respective survey. Consequently, incoming temporarily mobile students are excluded from our analyses. The situation of incoming long-term mobile students (also called 'degree mobility') is covered through analyses of international students throughout the Synopsis of Indicators (e.g. in > *Chapter B1*).

Figure B10.1

Types of international student mobility



Data and interpretation

Types of temporary mobility

24 % of students are engaged in diverse international activities across countries.

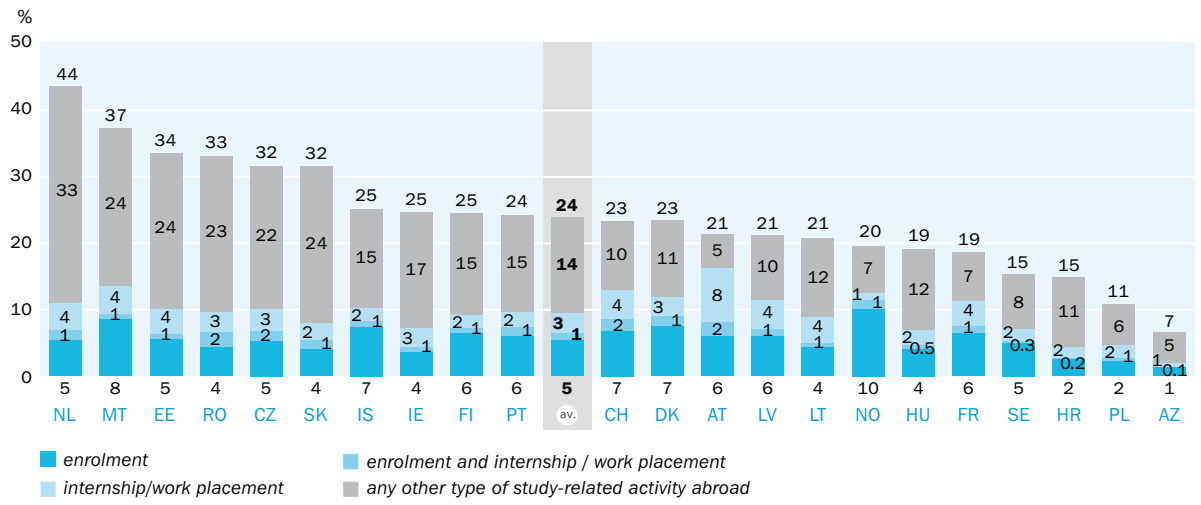
The cross-country data reveal that, on average, 5 % of students were temporarily enrolled abroad, with an additional 1 % engaging in both enrolment and internships or work placements abroad (Figure B10.2). Internships or work placements abroad (and no enrolment periods) were carried out at a cross-country average of 3 %. Moreover, 14 % of students were engaged in other study-related activities abroad (e.g. research/field trip, summer/winter school, language course). When summing up these categories, the total cross-country average of students involved in international mobility amounts to 24 %. This suggests a substantial degree of internationalisation of student experiences, with a significant emphasis on diverse study-related activities beyond mere enrolment.

Examining individual countries sheds light on the variations in ISM. Notably, the Netherlands stand out with 44 % of students having participated in various international activities, showcasing a robust commitment to global educational engagement. In contrast, students in Azerbaijan record the lowest overall percentage at 7 %, indicating a comparatively limited involvement in international mobility.

Figure B10.2

Types of international mobility experience

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.3.* **No data:** *DE, ES, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.18 Have you done any internships (of at least one week, mandatory or voluntary) since you first entered higher education in #country? 5.6 Have you ever taken part in a temporary study period abroad since you first entered higher education in #country (e.g. #semester abroad)? 5.12 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

B 10

Country variation exists not only in terms of the variation in total shares of students who went abroad, but also in terms of their composition. Austria, Latvia, Lithuania, and Norway, for example, exhibit similar total percentages of about every fifth student

having completed some sort of stay abroad, yet the distribution differs when it comes to the different types of mobility, with Norwegian students emphasising enrolment and Austrian students placing a stronger emphasis on internships, while Lithuanian and Latvian students more commonly favour other stays abroad.

Social inequalities in international mobility over time

The Bologna Process was launched a quarter of a century ago and the promotion of ISM has always been an integral part of the political agenda in the EHEA. An overview of the dynamic developments of temporary forms of mobility in the context of social disparities is therefore appropriate. The available data from different rounds of the EUROSTUDENT project reveal a noteworthy evolution in the patterns of mobility (Figure B10.3).

Trends in ISM: From growth to stagnation.

Temporary enrolment abroad rates increased from 4 or 5 % in the early years of the millennium (Euro Student 2000 to EUROSTUDENT III) over 7 % (EUROSTUDENT IV) to a peak of 8 % in the period between 2012 and 2018 (EUROSTUDENT V and VI), demonstrating a substantial growth in students pursuing academic experiences in foreign institutions. Since this phase, however, the proportion of students who undertake temporary studies abroad has slightly decreased (EUROSTUDENT VII to 8). Internships or work placements abroad witnessed a steady rise, reaching 5 % between 2012 and 2021 (EUROSTUDENT VII), showcasing an expanding interest in gaining practical experience in international settings. Similar to studies abroad, the proportion of students with internships abroad has slightly decreased in the current measurement period (EUROSTUDENT 8). A particularly strong increase, however, can be observed in other types of student mobility abroad in the current phase, which at 15 % is significantly higher than the proportions in the previous two survey periods. This increase suggests a diversification of study-related activities beyond traditional enrolment or internship, indicating a broader spectrum of international experiences for students: It can be assumed that, on the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a switch to other mobility formats in many cases; however, this alone is not sufficient to explain shifts in mobility preferences over time, as study and internship abroad shares were already stagnating before the pandemic.

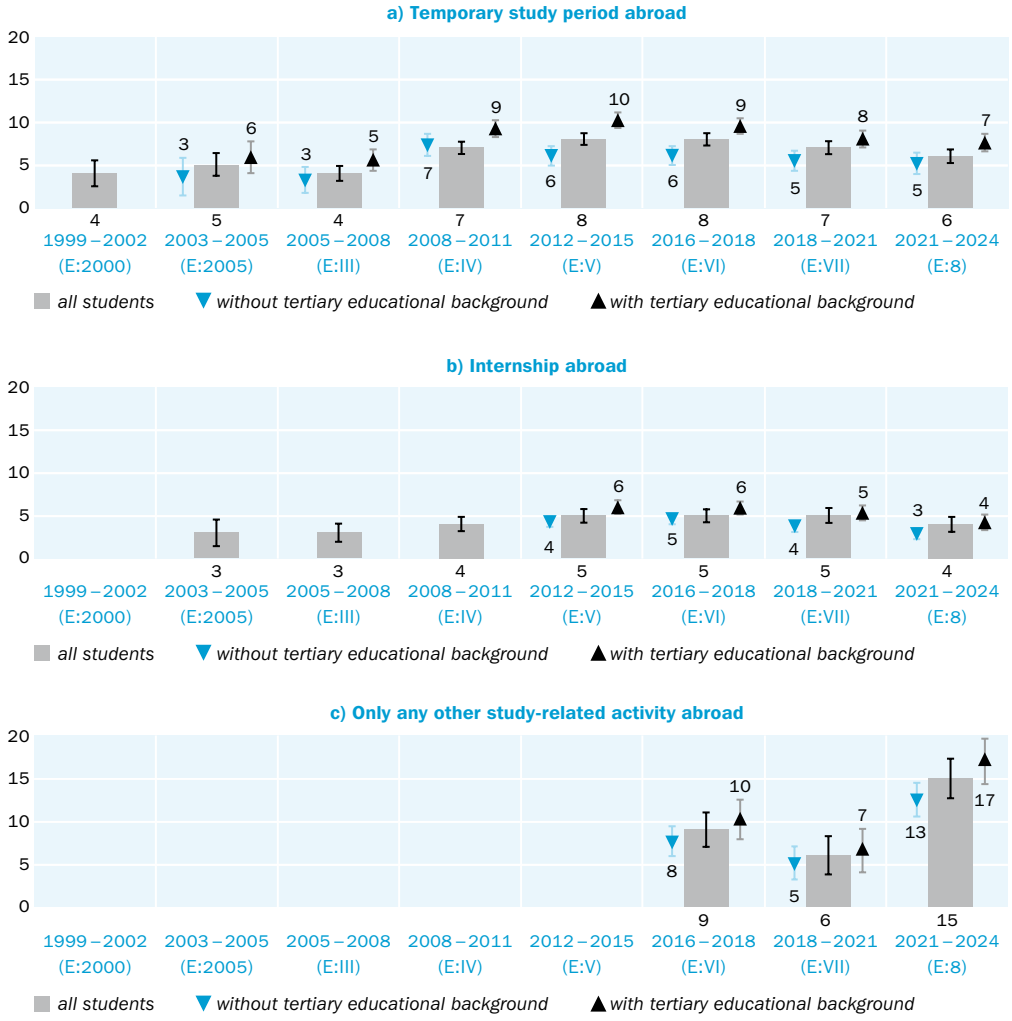
Social inequalities in ISM persist over time.

Investigating how parental education influences ISM sheds light on potential barriers and disparities, which can help in tailoring financial aid and support programmes to address specific needs. The differentiation between students with and without tertiary educational background unveils intriguing insights into social inequalities over the examined periods. For students without parental academic degrees, the data illustrate a consistent participation gap compared to their counterparts from academic households in all types of temporary international mobility. Remarkably, the social differentiation in terms of participation in ISM, especially in studies abroad, goes hand in hand with the overall measured level of stays abroad: The differences between students from non-academic families and academic households are particularly strong during the peak period of studies abroad 2012–2015 (6 % vs. 10 %). Similarly, in internships and work placements abroad, students from academic households consistently demonstrated higher participation rates even though the effect is less nuanced regarding this type of mobility. Notably, for other types of study-related activities abroad, a substantial divergence is observed in the current survey, indicating a burgeoning inequality with 17 % of students from academic households engaging (only) in diverse international activities, compared to 13 % among their counterparts without parental academic backgrounds.

Figure B10.3

Temporary mobility by educational background from E:2000 to E:8

Cross-country averages (in %) with between-country 95 % confidence intervals



Data source: *EURO STUDENT 2000, National Profiles 47; EUROSTUDENT 2005, National Profiles 43, 48; EUROSTUDENT III, Subtopic 53; EUROSTUDENT IV, I.1, I.3, I.4; EUROSTUDENT V, K.1, K.2, K.16, K.17; EUROSTUDENT VI, I.2; EUROSTUDENT VII, I.4; EUROSTUDENT 8, I.3.* ***No data:*** *E:2000, AT, BE(w/b); E:2005, E/W, FI, IT; E:III, E/W, EE, LT, LV, SCO; E:IV, E/W, SI; E:V, -; E:VI, CH; E:VII, AL, CZ, DE, LU; E:8, CH, DE, ES, GE.*

Data collection: *E:8: Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *E:8: 4.18 Have you done any internships (of at least one week, mandatory or voluntary) since you first entered higher education in #country? 5.6 Have you ever taken part in a temporary study period abroad since you first entered higher education in #country (e.g. #semester abroad)? 5.12 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities?*

Note(s): *The percent values shown are 'predictive margins' as computed after a multiple linear regression with the variable 'country' as additional control variable, so that the effect of different country participation in the various project rounds is at least partially corrected.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, RO (E:8).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL (E:8).*

The phenomenon of social disparities in student mobility observed in the previous evaluation at the broad level of cross-country averages over time can also be seen when taking a detailed look at the individual countries in the current measurement period (Table B10.1). Statistically significant differences between students with and without tertiary educational backgrounds exist in all countries. And apart from a very few indi-

vidual countries in specific forms of stays abroad[1], the trend towards higher participation of students with tertiary educational backgrounds in mobility extends across the entire spectrum of participating countries. This finding is particularly pronounced in Malta, Slovakia, and Ireland and much less distinct in Norway and Denmark.

Box B10.2

Methodological note: Statistical tests for between-country differences

Several statistical tests have been performed to validate the findings in this chapter, some of which are also presented in selected figures and tables. In figures where only cross-country averages are presented (e.g. Figure B10.3, Figure B10.5), between-country tests have been performed in order to express the validity of this condensed form of data presentation. The wider the distance between the endpoints of a confidence interval in such a figure, the greater the uncertainty or variability in the individual values of the countries in the EUROSTUDENT sample – the intervals show the range within which we can be 95 % confident that the true cross-country mean lies.

Socio-demographic and study-related differences in temporary mobility

Migration background, income structure, parental prosperity, field of study, and HEI characteristics shape ISM participation.

Although educational background is considered a key determinant of ISM, it is worth taking a broader look at other socio-demographic and study-related characteristics if inclusive and diverse access to stays abroad during studies is to be guaranteed (Netz et al., 2021). Figure B10.4 illustrates some of the conceivable differentiating student characteristics in the form of cross-country averages:

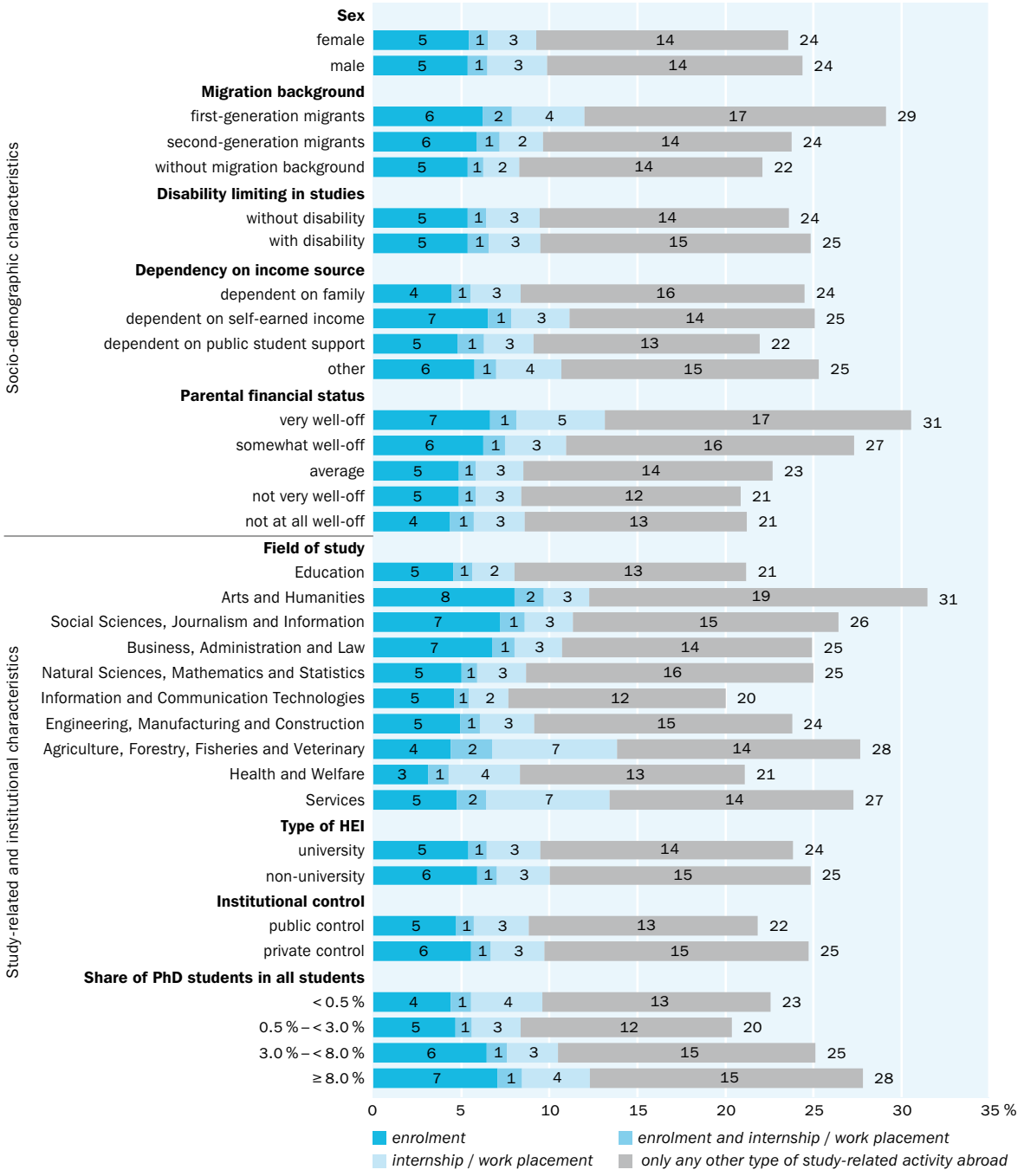
- No notable cross-country differences in international participation emerge regarding students' sex.
- The data reveal distinct patterns in ISM based on migration background. First-generation migrants demonstrate higher engagement in all types of mobility compared to second-generation migrants or students without migration background (see also Netz & Sarcletti, 2021).
- There are no notable differences in mobility participation regarding study-limiting disabilities. However, this finding should not be overinterpreted, because the group of students reporting study-limiting disabilities summarised here encompasses a variety of different conditions (see > *Chapter B1*) with different implications for obstacles to international mobility.
- Students dependent on self-earned income display a high participation rate in temporary enrolment abroad, at first glance a result of a higher level of financial independence and, consequently, greater opportunities for abroad experiences. On the other hand, students dependent on family resources exhibit a higher percentage in the category of other types of study-related activities abroad, suggesting a potential need for additional financial support to encourage a more diverse range of international experiences.

1 *Students without tertiary educational background in the Netherlands more frequently perform both enrolments as well as internships abroad (not, however, when looking at those who only go abroad for enrolment or internship) than students with tertiary educational background. Non-academic background students in Norway more commonly go abroad for internships or any other type of stay than their academic background peers.*

Figure B10.4

Types of students' international mobility experience by student characteristics

Cross-country averages (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.3.* ***No data:*** *DE, ES, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.18 Have you done any internships (of at least one week, mandatory or voluntary) since you first entered higher education in #country? 5.6 Have you ever taken part in a temporary study period abroad since you first entered higher education in #country (e.g. #semester abroad)? 5.12 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

- Parental financial status is clearly related to participation in international mobility. The basic pattern shows that more well-off parents mean greater participation in student mobility (in its various forms).
- Disparities in ISM are observed across various fields of study. Arts and Humanities students show an overall exceptionally high participation rate in mobility (31 %), while students in the fields of Information and Communication Technologies (20 %), Education (21 %), and Health and Welfare (21 %) overall engage comparatively seldom in stays abroad. In addition, different preferences for certain types of stays abroad can be observed in the different fields of study.
- On average across countries, there are only minor differences in participation in international mobility between students at universities and non-universities.
- In contrast, the type of HEI funding source is associated with variations in ISM. Students enrolled at privately funded institutions are overall more commonly engaged in abroad activities.
- Overall, it can be said that higher research activity of an HEI (here operationalised as the proportion of PhD students to all students) is also accompanied by an increased degree of ISM (especially studies abroad).

Findings regarding fields of study and institutional characteristics are problematic if access to them is socially selective (e.g. in case certain study subjects, private universities, or academically excellent HEIs are only accessible to a wealthy population group; > *Chapter B4*). They can therefore provide information about selection processes that remain hidden when only looking at socio-demographic characteristics.

All these group differentiations may be interconnected with other student characteristics, influencing the observed patterns. For instance, students with a migration background might be overrepresented in certain fields of study, or private institutions might offer specific fields of study more commonly (> *Chapter B4*), impacting the highlighted trends. Possibly most important to keep in mind: students' income structure is highly related to students' age (> *Chapter B7*) and, in consequence, their study progress and duration (> *Chapter B3*) in which a stay abroad could have taken place (Figure B10.5).

Furthermore, it should be noted that only overarching or prevailing trends are analysed here, as only cross-country averages are presented. This does not mean that in some countries, for example, there may be differences in mobility behaviour based on gender.

Development of participation in different types of temporary mobility over the course of studies

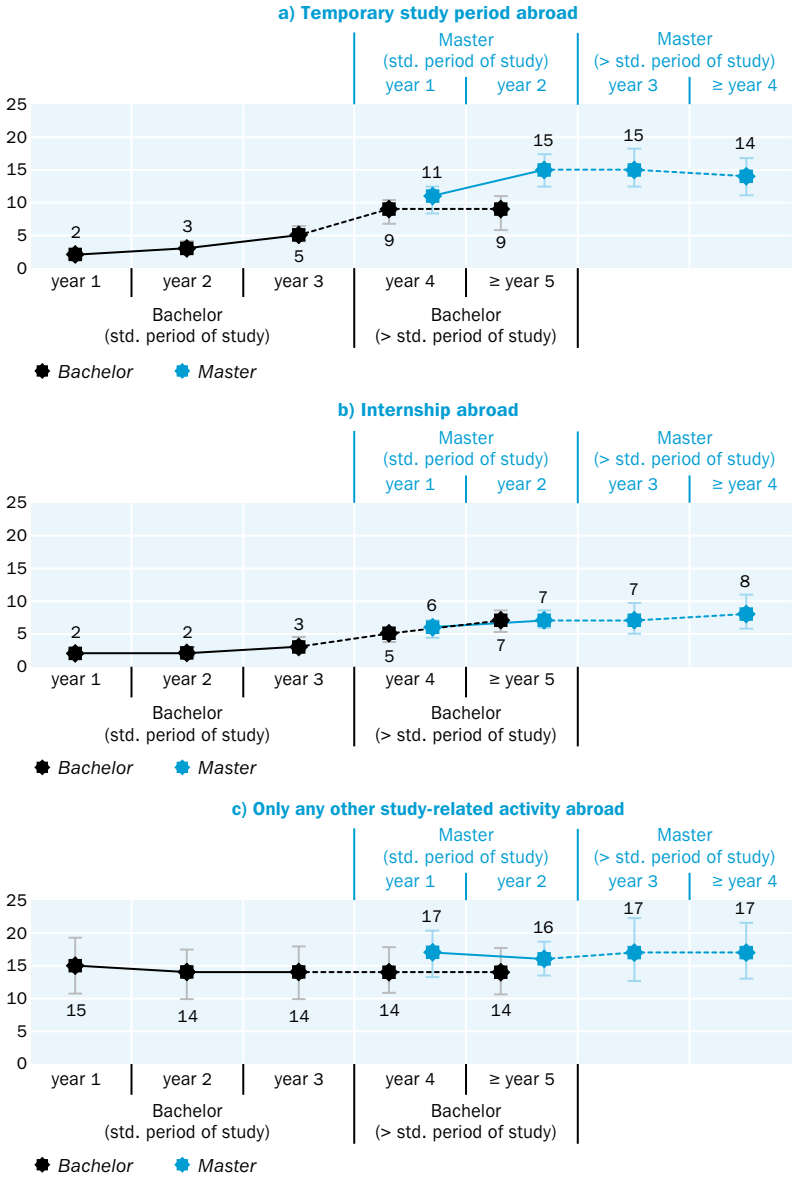
Distinctive patterns of ISM across degree programmes and study years.

While graduate surveys (e.g. 'Eurograduate') are the suitable source of information in assessing the progress towards reaching European student mobility goals, cross-sectional data among student populations (as presented in Figure B10.5) can offer valuable supplementary insights into the patterns of ISM throughout the course of studies, even for those students who might drop out of studies later along the student lifecycle and not graduate after all (> *Chapter B4*). Certain specifics for each of the investigated temporary types of ISM become obvious when examining the distinctive trends across degree programmes and years of study.

Figure B10.5

Temporary mobility by years of study in Bachelor and Master programmes

Cross-country averages (in %) with between-country 95 % confidence intervals



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.3.* ***No data:*** *DE, ES, FR, GE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.18 Have you done any internships (of at least one week, mandatory or voluntary) since you first entered higher education in #country? 5.6 Have you ever taken part in a temporary study period abroad since you first entered higher education in #country (e.g. #semester abroad)? 5.12 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Regarding temporary study periods abroad, there are strong differences between students in the standard period of study (increase in both Bachelor and Master programmes) and those who exceed the standard period of study (stagnation in the case of Bachelor programmes, decrease in Master programmes). At the same time, it becomes apparent that there is a connection between studying abroad and the transi-

tion to a Master's degree programme, because students in a Master's degree programme very often state that they have already completed study periods at HEIs abroad. On the one hand, this underscores that students inclined towards studying abroad may also have a tendency to pursue further studies with a second-cycle degree. On the other hand, it suggests that students in Bachelor programmes often choose to study abroad towards the conclusion of their first-cycle degree.

There are no connections between (non-)compliance with the standard period of study and internships abroad or any other types of international mobility. Instead, the proportion of students who complete an internship abroad gradually increases over the course of first- and second-cycle studies. In contrast, other types of stays abroad seem to be feasible almost constantly throughout the entire course of study, probably because they might be more easily embedded at any point of studies due to their typically shorter length.

Temporary study abroad decision making

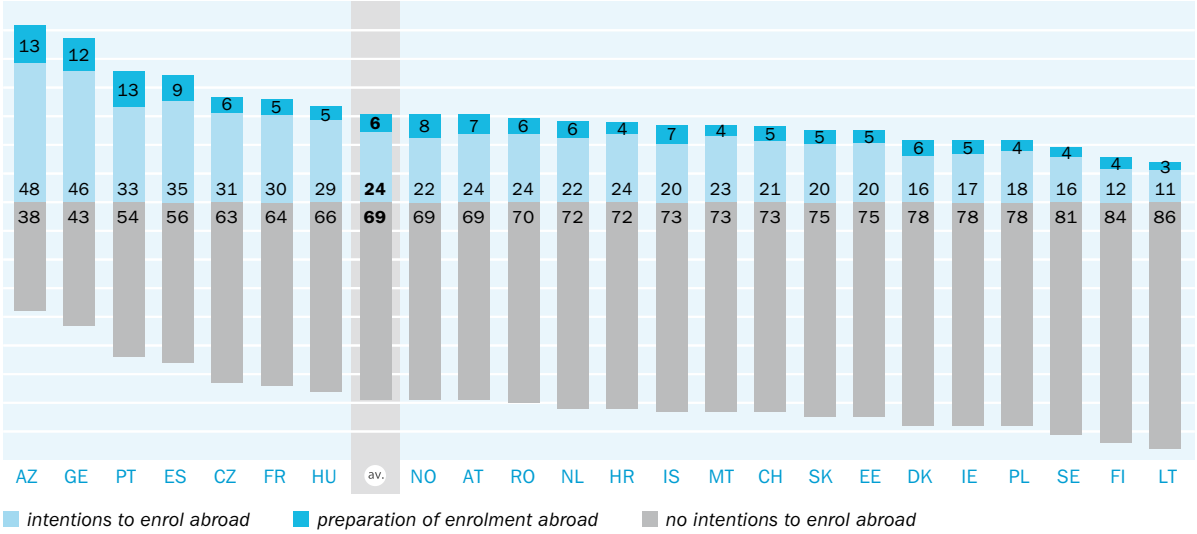
Investigating students' intentions to pursue temporary study abroad experiences is crucial for assessing countries' enrolment abroad potential. On average, 6 % of students without study abroad experience have progressed to actively planning their enrolment abroad, while a substantial 24 % express general intentions to study abroad without concrete plans, indicating a sizeable pool of students potentially becoming internationally mobile (Figure B10.6). Notably, a significant majority, at 69 %, currently have no intentions to enrol abroad.

69 % of students without study abroad experience do not plan to enrol abroad.

Figure B10.6

Students' intention to study abroad for limited periods

Share among students without experience of studying abroad temporarily (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.10.* ***No data:*** *DE, LV.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *5.10 [Only students who have not done a temporary study period abroad yet] Taking a closer look at temporary study periods abroad: How would you best describe your intentions?*

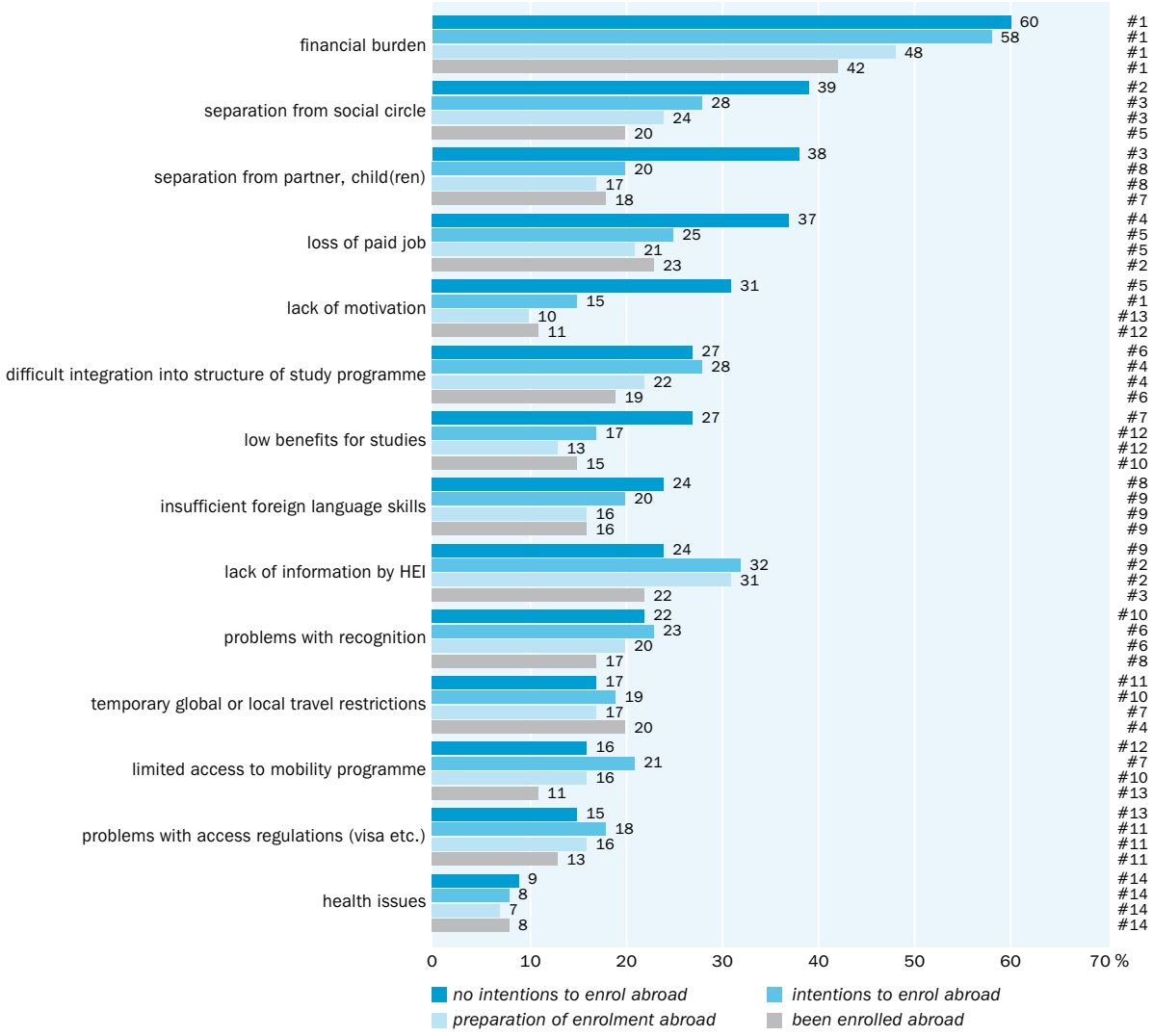
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, DK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Figure B10.7

Obstacles to temporary enrolment abroad by status of planning

Cross-country averages (in %), # = rank of obstacle within reference group



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.12, I.14, I.16, I.18.* ***No data:*** *DE, LV.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023)*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *5.11 To what extent are or were the following aspects an obstacle to you for enrolment abroad?*

Note(s): *Shares relate to the percentage within the respective reference group of students (e.g. those without intention to enrol abroad).*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, CH, NO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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- Countries such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Portugal exhibit high percentages of students actively planning to study abroad, at 13 % to 12 %, respectively, as well as considerable shares of general intentions to study abroad (between one third and almost half of hitherto non-mobile students).
- In contrast, countries such as Finland and Lithuania show low shares in both active planning and general intentions, hinting at a less pronounced interest in temporary study abroad experiences among those not yet having been enrolled abroad – their enrolment abroad potential seems to have been almost exhausted with those who have already enrolled abroad (Figure B10.2).

The findings at hand underscore the importance of understanding country-specific factors that may influence students' attitudes and decisions regarding studies abroad.

Acknowledging the challenges students face in realising their plans is essential, as it provides a realistic perspective on the obstacles that may impede the attainment of the projected international mobility goals. However, what are the actual obstacles, determining the degree of intention to study abroad?

Financing remains top obstacle across study abroad phases.

A differentiation of various obstacles for studying abroad according to the decision making phases ((non-)intention, planning, realisation) reveals some patterns. For example, financing problems are the biggest hurdle in all four groups; however, the proportion of those who cite financing difficulties as a (big) obstacle decreases with progressing degree of realisation (Figure B10.7). However, this is not because funding studies abroad is not such a big problem but rather reveals a selection process: Students who have the basic intention of studying abroad do not have to struggle with financial bottlenecks to the same extent as those who rule out studying abroad. According to this pattern, the assessment of the different obstacles relates to an increasingly selective group with each successive step towards actual realisation of studies abroad.

A similar general pattern holds true for most obstacles. Exceptions relate mostly to the less commonly mentioned obstacles, which are mostly related to external factors, i.e. a lack of information, which emerges to be especially relevant for students with the intention to enrol abroad or in the planning phase of an enrolment period abroad, or temporary global or local travel restrictions, which is a general obstacle across planning stages.

Organisation, funding, and characteristics of international mobility

60 % choose Erasmus+ for studies abroad.

On cross-country average, 60 % of students opt for the Erasmus+ programme to facilitate their temporary study periods abroad, indicating widespread popularity and accessibility (Figure B10.8). Meanwhile, 6 % of students leverage other EU programmes. Notably, a considerable proportion of 16 % of students choose non-EU programmes. Independently organised study periods abroad account for 18 %. Comparing the data among different countries sheds light on varying approaches to facilitating ISM. While vast majorities of students in a large number of countries make use of the Erasmus+ programme to organise their studies abroad – headed by Lithuania, Spain, and Croatia, with percentages surpassing 80 % – there are some distinctive patterns in a small group of certain (typically non-EU) other countries. Students in Georgia, for example, frequently organise studies abroad through EU programmes other than Erasmus+, while students in Azerbaijan predominantly organise studies abroad through a non-EU programme. A majority of Norwegian students, however, tend to organise their study stay abroad independently.

Majorities opt for independent organisation of internships abroad.

Distinct patterns also emerge when looking at the organisational frameworks of internships abroad. On average, 29 % of students engage in internships abroad through the Erasmus+ programme, indicating a significant but comparatively lower utilisation than in temporary study periods. 5 % of students utilise other EU programmes for internships, while 11 % of students opt for non-EU programmes. Remarkably, independently organised internships constitute the majority at 55 %, indicating students' initiative

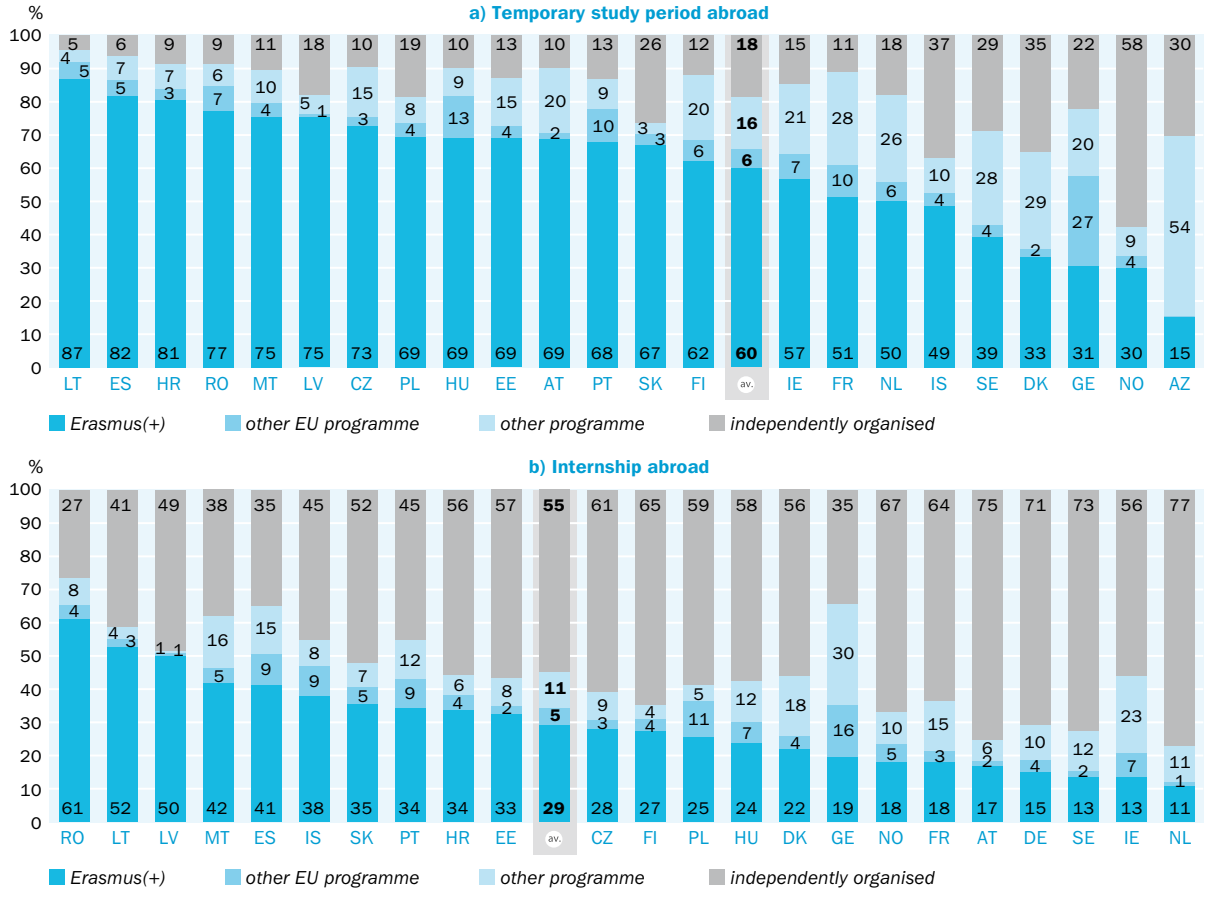
and proactive approach in securing international work experiences autonomously on the one hand and a possible lack of (easily accessible) programme frameworks for internships on the other hand.

- While students in countries like Romania, Lithuania, and Latvia exhibit a comparatively high reliance on the Erasmus+ programme, with percentages equal to or exceeding 50 %, countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, and Sweden demonstrate a remarkable preference for independently organised internships, with percentages around 75 %.
- Interestingly, countries like Georgia or Ireland present contrasting dynamics, where a significant portion of students opt for non-EU programmes, potentially reflecting strategic alliances beyond the European borders or distinct institutional partnerships.

Figure B10.8

Organisational framework of enrolment periods and internships abroad

Share of students who have been abroad for the respective activity (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.9, I.24.* ***No data:*** *CH; DE (temporary study period abroad).* ***Too few cases:*** *AZ (internship abroad).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *5.7 [Only students who did a study period abroad] Within which of the following organisational frameworks was your most recent temporary study period abroad organised? 5.1 [If internship done abroad indicated in 4.18] Within which of the following organisational frameworks was your most recent internship abroad organised?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *AT, DK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

The findings highlight that internships abroad differ considerably from temporary studies abroad in terms of their organisational and financial structure and that the opportunities for students to acquire global labour market experience depend not only on students' wishes and institutional support but also on their individual financial scope (Figure B10.9).

Characteristics of internships abroad

Varied distribution of mandatory vs. optional and paid vs. unpaid internships abroad.

Cross-country average data regarding the character and remuneration of internships abroad reveal that 17 % of internships are mandatory and paid, while 26 % are mandatory and unpaid. In contrast, 26 % of internships are voluntary and paid, with 31 % being voluntary and unpaid.

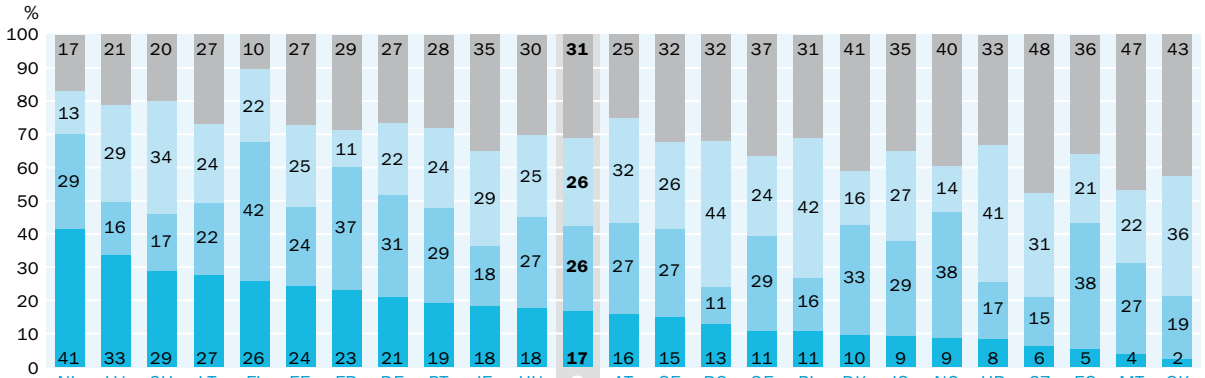
- Regarding mandatory internships, the Netherlands display 41 % as mandatory and paid, contrasting with shares of mandatory but unpaid internships in Finland, Norway, Spain, and France (around 40 %).
- Romania, Poland, and Croatia notably show more than 40 % of voluntary internships as paid. In contrast, the Czech Republic and Malta demonstrate a significant portion (almost half) of unpaid voluntary internships, indicating potential challenges in accessing remunerated opportunities abroad.

The data underscore potential socio-economic disparities among European countries, where the prevalence of unpaid internships alongside the predominance of independently organised internships without programme funding may exacerbate inequalities in access to valuable international work experiences, especially among economically disadvantaged students.

Figure B10.9

Character and remuneration of internships abroad

Share among students who have been abroad for (an) internship(s) (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.22.* ***Too few cases:*** *AZ.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *5.2 [If internship done abroad indicated in 4.18] Was your most recent internship abroad ... (Mandatory part of the curriculum; Voluntary (= not part of the curriculum)) 5.3 [If internship done abroad indicated in 4.18] Was your most recent internship abroad paid or unpaid?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Composition of other study-related activities abroad

Based on the cross-country average data, it is evident that approximately 5 % of students across the surveyed countries engaged in research or field trips abroad (Figure B10.10). 2 % of students participated in summer or winter schools, while language courses accounted for approximately 4 %. Notably, another – unspecified – activity constituted a substantial proportion at 10 %. Comparing the data across different countries reveals varying patterns in types of mobility apart from enrolment periods and internships abroad:

- For instance, the Netherlands show a high proportion of students participating in research or field trips (24 %), while students in Spain, the Czech Republic, and Switzerland commonly go abroad for language courses (15, 11, and 10 %, respectively).
- What is particularly significant in this context, however, is that students in the vast majority of countries (apart from the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Portugal, Switzerland, and Austria) most often indicate that they went abroad for another activity.

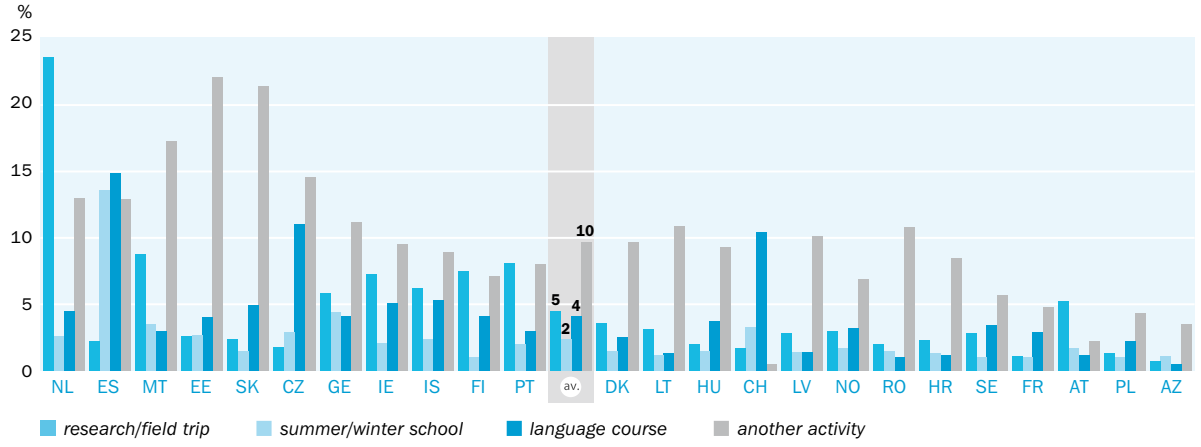
10 % of students engage in unspecified activities, possibly reflecting virtual mobility amid COVID-19.

Given the sharp increase in the proportion of students who have only undertaken types of stays abroad other than enrolment periods or internships abroad (Figure B10.3) in combination with the measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a strong assumption that these unspecified activities abroad are in fact virtual forms of student mobility. However, this assumption could not be verified.

Figure B10.10

Composition of stays abroad other than enrolment or internship

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.4.* ***No data:*** *DE.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *5.12 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *CH, RO.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Recognition practices

77 % enrolment vs. 44 % internship average recognition rates.

The cross-country average data reveal variations in the recognition of temporary enrolment periods and internships abroad (Figure B10.11). On cross-country average, 64 % of temporary enrolment periods abroad are fully recognised at the home institution, while 14 % are partially recognised. In contrast, internships abroad show lower recog-

nition rates (at least regarding credit points), with an average of 44 %. When comparing recognition practices across different countries, notable differences emerge.

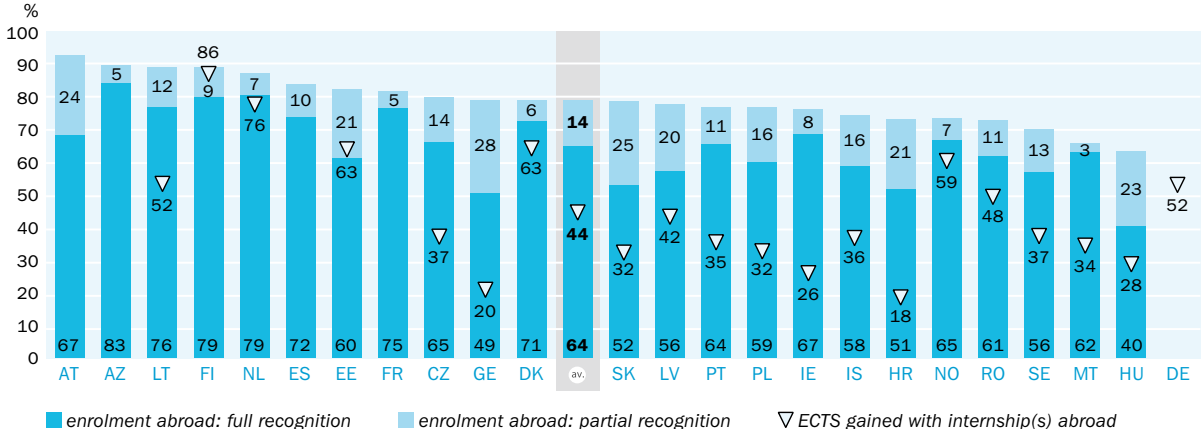
- While enrolment periods abroad in a vast majority of countries are fully recognised by (considerably) more than 50 %, this is not the case in Hungary (40 % fully recognised) and Georgia (49 %).
- Internships abroad are usually recognised in the form of credit points in Finland (86 %) and – at the other end of the spectrum – only seldom in Croatia (18 %) and (again) Georgia (20 %).

These discrepancies underscore the importance of standardising recognition protocols (European Commission et al., 2023) and enhancing transparency to ensure equitable opportunities for ISM across diverse educational landscapes.

Figure B10.11

(Partial) recognition of credits gained with study-related activity abroad

Share among students who have been abroad for the respective activity (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.8, I.25.* ***No data:*** *CH; AT, ES, FR (internship abroad); DE (temporary study period abroad).* ***Too few cases:*** *AZ (internship abroad).*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except DE (summer 2021), AT, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *5.9 [Only students who did a study period abroad] Were the credits (ECTS, competences, certificates) you gained in your most recent temporary study abroad period recognised towards your study programme in #country? 5.5 [If internship done abroad indicated in 4.18] Was your most recent internship abroad recognised in the form of ECTS towards your study programme in #country?*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT survey conventions: *SK.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

Discussion and policy considerations

The findings in this chapter highlight significant trends and factors influencing temporary ISM within the EHEA. We found that approximately 24 % of students engage in temporary forms of international mobility, with considerable variation between countries. Over the past quarter-century, enrolment abroad experienced dynamic shifts, peaking between 2012 and 2018 but stagnating thereafter. Despite all the differences between countries in terms of participation in international mobility, there is a persisting commonality in terms of social exclusion in relation to studies and internships abroad as well as other forms of mobility, i.e. with regard to students' educational background. Various further (and interconnected) socio-demographic and study-re-

lated factors influence student mobility participation, such as migration background, parental prosperity, and fields of study. Understanding these factors is crucial for designing inclusive mobility programmes. Patterns of temporary mobility evolve throughout students' academic journeys, with distinct trends emerging across degree programmes and years of study. While a significant proportion of students express intentions for temporary study abroad, financing remains a major obstacle, underscoring the need for targeted support programmes. Additionally, the findings reveal insights into the organisation, funding, and characteristics of international mobility. While Erasmus+ is popular for study periods abroad, internships abroad are predominantly organised independently. The rise of unspecified activities, potentially virtual, suggests adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic. Temporary enrolment periods abroad are fully recognised by 64 % across countries, while internships abroad have lower recognition rates at 44 %. Standardisation of recognition protocols is crucial for equitable opportunities in ISM.

Considerations for policymakers

The identified general and persisting social differences, especially regarding educational background / parental financial status, underline the necessity of a solid funding structure for stays abroad, which remains the cornerstone of ISM promotion. Valuable insights for policy improvement for each EHEA country are laid down in the Mobility Scoreboard reports (European Commission et al., 2023).

In recent years, the efforts of institutions entrusted with ISM have also focused on promoting virtual forms of mobility (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2020b). The information now available also suggests that these offers have been accepted with great student participation, at least during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure B10.10; Geifes et al., 2024). Overall, however, it remains highly questionable to what extent such non-physical, usually digital exchange formats should be a strong focus of mobility promotion. Students who have been virtually mobile can for sure add an item to their curriculum vitae that may have a signalling effect on their labour market entry. However, recent findings suggest that the formation of social networks is restricted by digital teaching and learning (Schirmer, 2024) – therefore, while non-physical forms of international mobility may be suitable for "enhancing the competences, knowledge and skills of those involved", it can be assumed that "promoting (...) personal development of the mobile people and strengthening the cultural identity of Europe" (EHEA Ministerial Conference, 2012) is more easily achieved by actual physical mobility. In this respect, it is important to consider whether virtual exchange should be seen as a compromise that has come into focus simply due to the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic, which can – at best – complement physical forms of mobility (O'Dowd, 2021).

Erasmus+ remains the major organisational framework for temporary studies abroad, while the impact of national initiatives, such as the Pannónia Scholarship Programme[2] in Hungary, should be subject to future evaluations. The establishment of funding schemes specifically aimed at supporting internships abroad could incentivise and facilitate greater participation in international work experiences in case employers abroad are not willing to remunerate interns.

2 *https://pannoniaosztondij.hu/about-the-pannonia-scholarship-programme.*

Considerations for HEI staff

HEI staff should prioritise ensuring the accessibility of and raising awareness about their international office and available funding schemes, such as Erasmus+ or national initiatives. Additionally, they should consider the integration of mobility windows, recognising the challenges of enrolling abroad during Bachelor courses (Figure B10.5), which may explain the trend of students going abroad towards the end of their first-cycle programme. Lastly, it is important to establish programme frameworks that support and facilitate internships abroad, enhancing the overall mobility experience for students.

Considerations for researchers

Many explanatory approaches in the present analyses are limited by the aggregate data structure of the underlying indicators. More in-depth, micro-data-based research so far has been limited to few countries at best, e.g. Netz (2015). Therefore, the EUROSTUDENT Scientific Use Files from project round VII (Cuppen et al., 2023) and 8 (forthcoming) should be further exploited to explore identified determinants on broad-scale cross-national level against each other.

Tables

Table B10.1

Types of students' international mobility experience

Share of students (in %)

	All students				Educational background								Test statistic
					Without tertiary educational background				With tertiary educational background				
	Enrolment	Internship/work placement	Enrolment and internship / work placement	Any other type of study-related activity abroad	Enrolment	Internship/work placement	Enrolment and internship / work placement	Any other type of study-related activity abroad	Enrolment	Internship/work placement	Enrolment and internship / work placement	Any other type of study-related activity abroad	Chi² test (*p*-value)
AT	6	8	2	5	5	7	2	5	7	9	2	5	0.000
AZ	1	1	0.1	5	1	0.1	0.0	2	2	1	0.1	6	0.000
CH	7	4	2	10	6	3	1	10	8	5	2	11	0.000
CZ	5	3	2	22	4	2	1	19	6	4	2	24	0.000
DE	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.
DK	7	3	1	11	6	3	1	10	8	3	2	12	0.003
EE	5	4	1	24	4	4	0.4	20	6	4	1	26	0.000
ES	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.
FI	6	2	1	15	4	2	1	14	7	2	1	16	0.000
FR	6	4	1	7	5	3	1	6	7	4	1	8	0.000
GE	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.	n. d.
HR	2	2	0.2	11	2	1	0.1	8	3	2	0.2	14	0.000
HU	4	2	0.5	12	3	2	0.3	9	5	3	1	15	0.000
IE	4	3	1	17	3	1	1	13	4	4	1	21	0.000
IS	7	2	1	15	5	2	1	12	9	2	1	17	0.000
LT	4	4	1	12	4	2	0.1	10	5	5	1	12	0.001
LV	6	4	1	10	5	3	1	8	7	5	1	11	0.000
MT	8	4	1	24	9	2	1	19	9	4	1	30	0.001
NL	5	4	1	33	4	4	2	30	6	5	1	34	0.000
NO	10	1	1	7	8	2	1	7	11	1	1	6	0.005
PL	2	2	1	6	1	1	0.2	4	3	2	1	8	0.000
PT	6	2	1	15	4	2	1	13	8	3	2	17	0.000
RO	4	3	2	23	3	2	2	22	6	4	3	26	0.000
SE	5	2	0.3	8	3	1	0.2	6	6	2	0.3	9	0.000
SK	4	2	1	24	3	1	1	21	5	4	2	28	0.000
av.	**5**	**3**	**1**	**14**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**12**	**6**	**4**	**1**	**16**	

n.d.: no data. Rounded values are shown. Decimal points only shown for values < .5.

Data source: *EUROSTUDENT 8, I.3.*

Data collection: *Spring 2022 – summer 2022 except CH (spring 2020), DE (summer 2021), AT, ES, FR, PT, RO (spring 2023 – summer 2023).*

EUROSTUDENT question(s): *4.18 Have you done any internships (of at least one week, mandatory or voluntary) since you first entered higher education in #country? 5.6 Have you ever taken part in a temporary study period abroad since you first entered higher education in #country (e.g. #semester abroad)? 5.12 Have you ever been abroad for other study-related activities?*

Note(s): *The Chi² test is a statistical method used to determine if there is a significant association between categorical variables by comparing the observed frequencies in a contingency table to the expected frequencies under the null hypothesis.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *CH, RO, AT.*

Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *IE, NL.*

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Chapter B11
Policy considerations

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This chapter synthesises key findings from the preceding chapters, aiming to provide a panoramic view of cross-cutting issues affecting students in European higher education. This chapter highlights relevant issues and intends to inspire national policymakers to reflect on the identified patterns and insights from 25 countries in their own national contexts. Two perspectives are taken: firstly, the situation of different student groups is comprehensively described, underscoring the diversity of student experiences. Secondly, key issues affecting many students are identified and outlined. By then linking the project and its results to the 'Principles and guidelines to strengthen the social dimension of higher education in the EHEA' (Annex II to the Rome Communiqué, 2020; 'Principles and guidelines' in the following), it is presented how EUROSTUDENT can inform ongoing efforts to enhance the social dimension of higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Addressing diverse student realities – how do different student groups study?

The latest EUROSTUDENT survey highlights again the diversity of students in the EHEA (> *Chapter B1*). Students' ages vary widely, with a 10.5-year span between countries with the youngest (Azerbaijan) and oldest (Iceland) average age populations. While women form the majority of students in most countries, a significant gender disparity can be found across different subjects and institutions. About 12 % of students are parents, and they tend to study at a lower intensity, often due to childcare responsibilities. Roughly a quarter of students (24 %) have an international background, either through family or education. Limitations to their studies due to a disability, functional limitation, or health problem are reported by around every fifth student (19 %), with mental health issues being most prevalent. Over half of the students have tertiary educated parents, with 41 % coming from non-tertiary backgrounds (> *Chapter B2*). Across countries, people from non-tertiary backgrounds are typically underrepresented in higher education, compared to their expected levels based on the population.

While fully understanding student needs requires an intersectional approach that recognises how multiple characteristics intersect to shape their experiences (Gross et al., 2016; Gross & Hadjar, 2024), analysing a specific student groups' situation comprehensively, even if based only on one characteristic, can serve to gain an understanding of their situation.

Students' parental background

Many similarities relating to the study behaviour and circumstances of students without tertiary educational background are apparent across countries (> *Chapter B2*). They are more likely to have entered through alternative access routes, often also enrolling later

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than their peers due to time spent in the workforce or other training (> Chapter B3). Financially, these students often have less support from their families and rely on self-earned income or public aid to a higher degree, leading to higher vulnerability to financial difficulties (> Chapter B7). This reliance on employment can limit their study time and increase their risk of dropping out (> Chapter B5, Chapter B6). Academically, students from non-tertiary backgrounds are more likely to pursue short-cycle degrees, where these exist, and more commonly than their peers with tertiary educational background study part-time or at lower intensity to balance their education with work and family responsibilities (> Chapter B2). Flexible study options such as distance and online learning are of particular importance for them (> Chapter B4). In terms of living conditions, in several countries these students more often lack access to adequate study resources such as required electronic devices, quiet study spaces, and stable internet, which may hinder their ability to study effectively (> Chapter B2). Additionally, their participation in international mobility programmes is generally lower due to financial constraints and limited access to support programmes (> Chapter B10).

Also, students' financial difficulties vary significantly based on their parents' financial status (> Chapter B7). On average, 59 % of students whose parents are not at all well-off experience serious financial difficulties, compared to only 15 % of those whose parents are very well-off. Similarly, 48 % of students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds report being unable to cover an unexpected major expense, more than twice the share of all students (> Chapter B8). This highlights the critical influence of parental financial status on students' ability to finance their studies and manage unexpected costs.

Working students

Working alongside studies is a reality for many students. On average, 59 % of students in the EUROSTUDENT countries work during the lecture period, and every fourth of them sees themselves primarily as worker, rather than as student (> Chapter B5). Working more than 10 hours per week goes hand in hand with a reduced study time, with the most significant reduction in those working over 20 hours weekly, leading to lower study intensity. Financially, many rely heavily on their jobs to cover living expenses, with 29 % stating they could not afford to study without working (> Chapter B6). Students from less well-off families and non-tertiary backgrounds, as well as older students tend to be particularly reliant on work income. Students relying on income from paid employment make considerable use of flexible study modes (part-time, distance, or online studies), in order to balance studies and work (> Chapter B4). Academically, students working over 20 hours per week have a higher risk of considering dropping out, likely due to the challenges of balancing work and study. Career alignment with their studies varies; Education, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), and Health and Welfare students find more job alignment, while those in Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics and Arts and Humanities experience less (> Chapter B6).

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities in higher education face notable financial challenges and discrimination. They are more likely to report severe financial difficulties compared to their non-disabled peers, partly due to potential work limitations that result in lower income (> Chapter B7). Their overall monthly income is slightly lower, with some coun-

tries showing a more pronounced gap. Additionally, students with disabilities incur higher health costs, further adding to their financial burden (> *Chapter B8*). Discrimination is another issue they face, with nearly every tenth disabled student reporting they have experienced discrimination due to their disability (> *Chapter B1*). In terms of international mobility, there are overall no significant differences in participation between students with and without disabilities (> *Chapter B10*).

Challenges for the social dimension – what hinders access, progress, and success?

Besides the group-specific challenges outlined in the previous section, throughout the previous chapters, several cross-cutting challenges stand out. They can clearly be identified as obstacles to the successful participation and completion of higher education and affect relatively many students.

Financial difficulties

As in previous EUROSTUDENT reports, students' financial difficulties remain a concern. Around a quarter of students report to be currently experiencing serious financial hardship, with higher shares among students from lower socio-economic backgrounds or reliant on public student support (> *Chapter B7*). These difficulties were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a (very) negative impact on the financing of their studies for again around a quarter of students. As mentioned above, 29 % of students rely on their job to finance their studies and could not afford to study without working (> *Chapter B6*). Responses to the question whether students could afford to cover an unexpected expense (themselves or through someone else) show that 18 % of students would not be able to (> *Chapter B8*). Students depending on national public student support, international students, and students with less well-off parents reported the highest inability to cover unexpected expenses, underscoring that many study situations are precarious. Housing costs also place a large burden on the budget of many students, with, on cross-country average, every fourth student spending more than 40 % of their budget on housing (> *Chapter B8*). Financing also remains a major obstacle for student mobility, particularly in earlier decision-making phases, highlighting the need for targeted support programmes (> *Chapter B10*). Financial difficulties are presumably also behind the fact that students from lower educational backgrounds have less access to study resources such as reliable internet, electronic devices, and quiet study spaces in many countries, limiting their ability to engage in (online) learning (> *Chapter B2*).

Challenges to inclusivity and mental health

Not all students feel like they belong in higher education. Students' sense of belonging varies according to their educational background, with students from non-tertiary educational backgrounds being more likely to question their enrolment compared to those from tertiary educated families (> *Chapter B2*). These students also have a slightly higher tendency to consider dropping out in many countries, underscoring a clear gap in inclusivity that needs to be addressed. Students' sense of belonging also weakens as study durations extend beyond the standard duration, along with lower self-assessed academic performance, and an increased likelihood of contemplating drop-out

(> *Chapter B4*). Analyses in the EUROSTUDENT 8 topical module report on digitalisation (Schirmer, 2024) point towards the fact that online learning formats can disrupt peer integration, therefore potentially hampering students' sense of belonging and well-being.

Discrimination poses a clear challenge to inclusivity in higher education. A striking 22 % of students report having felt discriminated against in their studies (> *Chapter B1*, see also the EUROSTUDENT 8 topical module report on discrimination, Menz & Mandl, 2024, for more analyses). Gender and age are commonly cited reasons for discrimination, with women, older students, and those with disabilities experiencing higher rates of mistreatment.

Mental health challenges are also prevalent among students, with 13 % of students reporting issues that affect their studies. Analyses based on the EUROSTUDENT 8 topical module (Cuppen et al., 2024) also show that poor subjective well-being is common among students in the EHEA, with students who report a poor sense of well-being making up the majority in every third country. A significant proportion of students, at the time of survey, also expected a negative ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health (see the EUROSTUDENT topical module report by Haugas & Kendrali, 2024). Students with high study intensity often have lower mental well-being than those with a lighter workload (> *Chapter B5*), indicating that intensive study demands are related to students' mental health. Similarly, students who work more than 20 hours a week are more likely to consider dropping out, presumably due to the stress from balancing work and academic commitments.

Improving the social dimension of higher education – EUROSTUDENT and the 'Principles and guidelines'

The 'Principles and guidelines' provide comprehensive guidance on relevant action areas for improving the social dimension. The following sections relate key themes and recommendations outlined in the 'Principles and guidelines' to the EUROSTUDENT project and its findings.

Fostering equity and inclusion to reflect the diversity of society

A key tenet of the 'Principles and guidelines' is that the approach to strengthening the social dimension in higher education should be strategic and embedded in a set of coherent national strategies (Principle 1) and institutional policies (Principle 7). This commitment extends to specific initiatives, such as promoting inclusive student and staff mobility (Principle 8). It is highlighted that an effective strategic approach requires coordination between education policies and broader social policies (e.g. education, finance, employment, health, housing) across all educational stages, from early childhood to lifelong learning (Principle 3). Finally, student counselling and guidance services, particularly for students from non-tertiary backgrounds, those facing disabilities or mental health challenges, and those balancing work and/or family responsibilities with their studies, are assigned a key role in improving the access, progress, and completion of studies for these groups.

EUROSTUDENT findings indeed underscore that inequalities start even before higher education, as evidenced by background-dependent study intentions (> *Chapter B2*). Tracked school systems also perpetuate inequalities that manifest early in life, influencing students' intentions to pursue higher education (Strello et al., 2021). Guidance counselling for pupils can therefore serve an important function in encouraging potential students and ensuring that study decisions can be made based on accurate information. Research has also highlighted that educational inequalities are linked with social policies, highlighting interdependencies between education, family, and labour markets (Gross & Hadjar, 2024). EUROSTUDENT findings also clearly show that issues such as housing (> *Chapter B9*), health (> *Chapter B1*), and employment (> *Chapter B6*), which are not traditionally viewed within the education policy framework, are significantly related to students' access and progression within higher education, as they shape their study situation. Collaboration across policy areas is therefore crucial in order to develop interventions providing targeted support for students that fits their needs, even if the problems lie outside of the educational realm. Again, adequate counselling on such study-adjacent aspects should be implemented to support students in understanding and accessing the support systems available to them. Considering the challenges to inclusivity and mental health outlined above, a focus should also be placed on support for students struggling with mental health issues or discrimination experiences.

Flexibility of higher education systems

The second 'Principle on flexibility of higher education systems' strongly emphasises the need for institutions to be granted flexibility in the design and implementation of study programmes in order to serve the diverse needs of students. The EUROSTUDENT data in this report indeed show that flexible study options such as part-time courses, online learning, and distance education help students with diverse responsibilities, such as older students, student parents, and working students (> *Chapter B4*). By accommodating different schedules and learning needs, these options enable students to balance work, family, and education. Across the EUROSTUDENT countries, 15 % of students are enrolled as part-time students, 9 % in distance learning, and 23 % study predominantly or entirely online (with several modes potentially applying at the same time). Flexible study modes are particularly favoured by older students, those without tertiary educational backgrounds, and students with significant work or personal commitments. They play a crucial role in promoting diversity within higher education by offering pathways for lifelong learning and enabling those who did not follow the standard route into higher education to participate. These flexible study formats, however, often go hand in hand with lower study intensity as students balance their studies with other responsibilities, which can lead to extended study durations and potentially impact their sense of belonging and progression. Students reliant on their own income and those in fields like Education or Business, Administration and Law tend to prefer flexible study modes. Public institutions often offer part-time studies, while private institutions are more focused on distance or online learning. Despite two thirds of students in flexible study programmes recommending their study programme, these students may require additional support to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for success. When developing flexible options, it is essential to consider the diverse needs of students, provide adequate support, and ensure that these paths maintain academic standards and progression opportunities.

Student funding

The 'Principles and guidelines' state that sufficient and sustainable funding for higher education systems, institutions, and students should be employed strategically to support the social dimension of higher education and foster equity and inclusion (Principle 6). EUROSTUDENT data in this report show clearly that many students are experiencing financial difficulties (see above and > *Chapters B7* and *B8*). Currently, private sources provide the main share of student funding, family/partner contributions and students' self-earned income together accounting for 81 % of students' total monthly income on cross-country average. Students' financial situation varies with their personal characteristics, creating unequal study conditions. As EUROSTUDENT only covers currently enrolled students, it cannot be determined how many did not enter or dropped out of higher education due to insecure or insufficient financing – particularly among vulnerable, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups, this is likely a non-negligible share of (potential) students. While tuition fees affect only around half of all students in EUROSTUDENT countries (46 %), rising indirect costs such as housing and transportation affect all (> *Chapter B8*). Again, the relatively strong reliance on private sources of funding, particularly parental/familial support, places a higher strain on low-income parents/families in times of rising costs. In developing or reforming the called-for funding systems, EUROSTUDENT data can serve an important purpose for monitoring the consequences on students' budgets.

Data for policy insights

Principle 4 emphasises the importance of reliable data as a prerequisite for evidence-based improvement of the social dimension in higher education. The EUROSTUDENT data presented above provide valuable insights into general patterns across countries. However, cross-country differences exist: the described pattern may be stronger or weaker (or non-existent), and other topics may yield notable results for only a specific country or group of countries. Therefore, when crafting national-level policies, the specific national questions and challenges should be considered. EUROSTUDENT data can provide a solid foundation for informing decisions on national policies, providing a comprehensive understanding of student demographics as well as their living and study situation. In addition to the comparative EUROSTUDENT reports, analyses based on EUROSTUDENT 8 microdata can take into account intersectionalities as well as national specifics in order to gain deeper insights. Moreover, qualitative research methods can complement quantitative data, offering deeper insights into student experiences and perspectives, thus enriching the policy development process (see for example Mandl et al., 2024). By integrating these approaches, policymakers can ensure that policies are not only evidence-based but also responsive to the diverse contexts and realities within each country's higher education landscape. The insights derived from EUROSTUDENT 8 data, particularly regarding social and study mode disparities across various types of higher education institutions (HEIs), highlight the significance of combining this data with sources like ETER for enhanced analysis. This synthesis reveals notable trends, such as universities and research-intensive institutions enrolling higher proportions of students from affluent backgrounds, while non-universities and less research-intensive HEIs exhibit higher rates of flexible study formats among their student populations (> *Chapter B4*). This integrated approach not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the European higher education landscape but also represents a crucial step towards the establishment of the European Higher Education Sector

Observatory[1]. By consolidating data from EU tools and capacities, including ETER, U-Multirank, and the Erasmus+ database, among others, the Observatory aims to provide policymakers and stakeholders with comprehensive insights and benchmarks for evidence-based decision-making. This underscores the value of combining data from multiple sources to gain nuanced insights in the European higher education landscape. The EUROSTUDENT 8 Scientific Use file, containing data from 24 countries and hosted at the Research Data Centre of the German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW), for example, also allows for cross-country comparisons supplemented with national-level indicators.

Future Directions

EUROSTUDENT 8 has highlighted the diversity of students' living and study conditions. Inequalities in access and study situations, financial difficulties, and mental health concerns and discrimination pose challenges to achieving a fully inclusive and diverse EHEA. With the adoption of the Tirana Communiqué, a strong commitment by EHEA ministers to further improving the social dimension of higher education has been made (Tirana Communiqué, 2024). Addressing the identified challenges, in line with the 'Principles and guidelines', requires coherent strategies.

EUROSTUDENT data present a solid evidence base for monitoring and evaluating the social dimension of higher education, both at the national level as well as comparatively in the EHEA. The topical modules introduced in EUROSTUDENT 8, focusing on key topics of interest identified by stakeholders, additionally provide the opportunity to gain insights into emerging or specific topics not covered by other data sources. What could emerge as new focus areas to be covered in the EUROSTUDENT 9 questionnaire? The topical modules would provide the chance to build on EUROSTUDENT 8 findings and delve deeper into the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, or further investigate the reasons behind low student well-being and mental health problems. In light of ongoing geopolitical conflicts, students' values might be put at centre of attention. How students make use of artificial intelligence in their learning process, and any potential social disparities associated with its use, are also conceivable as potential topical modules of interest. In any case, EUROSTUDENT will remain committed to providing high-quality data and analyses for monitoring and supporting the advancement of the social dimension in higher education.

1 *https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/first-steppingstone-towards-creation-european-higher-education-sector-observatory-call-tenders-2023-07-03_en*

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Appendix

Part C

C

Appendix C1
Glossary

Note: Hashtags (#) are used in the EUROSTUDENT core questionnaire to indicate that the national questionnaire should be adapted to the national context (if necessary). Therefore, the exact wording in these instances may differ across countries.

A

Access routes to higher education: Entering higher education using the #SMAR is considered to be the standard entry route. Students entering higher education without #SMAR, or who did not obtain the qualification in direct conjunction (within 6 months) with leaving the school system for the first time, are defined as having used alternative access routes. See ▸ (Higher education) entry qualification, #SMAR.

Age: Age groups are based on students' age at the time of survey.

Alternative access route: See ▸ Access routes to higher education, ▸ (Higher education) entry qualification.

B

Bachelor's degree [ISCED 6]: ▸ Degree programmes.

C

Cash/bank transfers: Any cash money or deposit money students receive. It is – de facto – not tied to a purpose and usually used to cover their living and study-related costs.

Children, students with: Based on students' self-report on whether they have any children. The question text did not include any specification on parental relation, genetic relation, guardianship, etc.

Correspondence student: ▸ Distance learning programmes.

Credit mobility: Short-term mobility with the aim of completing a part of a study programme outside of the country of observation. See ▸ Temporary study period abroad, ▸ Degree mobility, ▸ Study-related activities abroad.

Credits: A unit of formal recognition of students' academic achievements. Within the EHEA, credits are generally gained in form of ECTS credit points, competences, certificates. See ▸ ECTS.

Current (main) study programme: The specific (main) study programme students are enrolled in at the indicated HEI leading to the indicated degree in #country.

D

Database: All EUROSTUDENT indicators are available for download in the database: *https://database.eurostudent.eu/drm/*.

Degree mobility: Long-term mobility with the aim of completing an entire degree in the country of observation. See ▸ Credit mobility, ▸ Temporary study period abroad.

Degree programmes: ▸ Short cycle degree [ISCED 5], ▸ Bachelor's degree [ISCED 6], ▸ Short national degree [up to 3 years, ISCED 6], ▸ Master's degree [ISCED 7], ▸ Long national degree [more than 3 years, ISCED 7], ▸ Other postgrad-

uate degree [ISCED 7], ◘ PhD/Doctoral degree [ISCED 8]. PhD students, doctoral or equivalent level (ISCED 8) are not part of the EUROSTUDENT target group. ◘ ISCED.

Delayed transition: A delay of more than 24 months after leaving school for the first time and entering higher education. See ◘ Transition duration, ◘ Direct transition.

Dependency on an income source: A student is dependent on an income source if one of the three sources family/partner contributions (including transfers in kind), self-earned income or national public student support provides more than 50 % of the student's total monthly income (including transfers in kind). Students with a mixed budget (i.e. no source providing more than 50 % of total income) are not assigned to a group. See ◘ Dependent on family/partner contributions / national public student support / self-earned income.

Dependent on family/partner contributions: See ◘ Dependency on an income source.

Dependent on national public student support: See ◘ Dependency on an income source.

Dependent on self-earned income: See ◘ Dependency on an income source.

Direct transition: Students who entered higher education for the first time with a delay of less than 2 years after leaving the regular school system. See ◘ Transition duration, ◘ Delayed transition.

Disabilities, students with: All students with a disability, long-standing health problems, and functional limitations that are at least somewhat limiting in their studies. Disabilities include physical chronical diseases, longstanding health problems, functional limitations, mental health problems, sensory, vision or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, and mobility impairments. Categorisation is based on an adaptation of the Global Activity Limitation Indicator (GALI), a measure that is also used in official European statistics.

Distance learning programme: Study programmes that do not provide any physical face-to-face interaction during lectures. Formally refers to the design of the programme. Included in the EUROSTUDENT target group for the first time in EUROSTUDENT 8.

Domestic student: Domestic students hold a higher education entry qualification from the country of survey or have last attended the regular school system there (with or without graduating). See ◘ Educational origin, ◘ International students.

E

ECTS: The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. See ◘ Credits.

Educational background: Educational background of students can be categorised into two types: with tertiary educational background and without tertiary educational background. Occasionally, a more detailed grouping further distinguishing 'low' (ISCED levels 0–2), and 'medium' (ISCED levels 3–4) educational backgrounds are used. See ◘ Students with/without tertiary background.

Educational origin: Educational origin of the student is determined based on the origin of the higher education entrance qualification or – in the absence of such a qualification – the place of leaving the school system for the first time. See ◘ International students, ◘ Domestic students.

EUROSTUDENT target group: See *> Chapter A3*.

F

Family/partner contributions: Economic support to students from their parents, other relatives, or the partner. This support can be provided in various ways: a) cash/bank transfers (= transfers in cash), b) bills paid directly to the students' creditors by the family/partner or c) goods and services that are provided partially or completely free of charge (b + c = transfers in kind). See ○ Transfers in cash, ○ Transfers in kind.

Fees: Contributions paid to HEIs that include tuition fees, registration fees, and administrative fees.

Field of study: Students can be distinguished within the EUROSTUDENT dataset based on their field of study according to ISCED-F 2013 as well as a more detailed grouping with 19 subgroups.

Financial difficulties: Students were asked to assess the extent of their current financial difficulties on a 5-point scale ranging from 'very seriously' to 'not at all'. The EUROSTUDENT focus groups distinguish between students with and without financial difficulties.

Financial status of students' parents: Students were asked to assess their parents' current financial situation compared with other families on a 5-staged scale ranging from 'very well-off' to 'not at all well-off'. This item drawn from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), was used to assess the financial status of students' parents[1].

G

Gender: See ○ Sex/gender.

Grant: Non-repayable monetary form of specific student support.

Guardians: Grandparents, uncles, aunts, or similar.

H

(Higher education) entry qualification: Proof of qualification that grants access to higher education, usually an upper secondary qualification at ISCED level 3. In most countries, a common entry qualification exists. This qualification is generally obtained in school or in a nation-wide test usually taking place around the point in time of finishing upper secondary school. Many national names for this type of qualification are related to the terms 'Matura/maturità' or 'Baccalauréat'. In EUROSTUDENT terms, this qualification represents the standard entry qualification. This qualification (or an equivalent) can in most countries also be obtained outside of the regular school system, e.g. via bridging courses, second chance/adult education, etc. In some countries it is also possible to enter higher education entirely without this standard entrance requirement, but based on the students' abilities (e.g. in Arts), or the students' vocational experience (recognition of prior learning). See ○ Access routes into higher education, ○ Alternative access route, ○ #SMAR.

I

Income, total: Total income is the sum of family/partner contributions (in cash and in kind), national public student support (grants, loans, and scholarships geared towards students), self-earned income, means from other national public and private sources (e.g. child benefit, income

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from capital), and support from non-country sources, i.e. public or private support items from abroad or international entities (e.g. the EU).

International students: International students are studying in the country of the survey and have left the school system for the first time outside of the country of the survey. That means the status as international student is not related to place of birth, nationality, or citizenship. See ○ Educational origin, ○ Domestic students.

Internship: Main purpose is gaining practical experience on the labour market. Practical courses or lab exercises at the HEI are excluded.

ISCED: The International Standard Classification of Education is an instrument to categorise educational programmes by assigning them to levels of education (ISCED 2011), based on the highest attainable degree. The ISCED-F 2013 additionally offers a classification for fields of education and training, at and above the secondary educational level.

L

Lecture-free period/holidays: All periods without lecturing, regardless of any possible legal distinction between lecture-free periods and holidays.

Lecture period: Usually 3–4 months, during the course of the semester, when lectures are held.

Living costs: Students' monthly living costs include expenses on accommodation (rent or mortgage and utilities), food, transportation, communication, health, childcare, debt payment (except mortgage), social and leisure activities, and other regular living costs (e.g. clothing, toiletries).

Long national degree [more than 3 years, ISCED 7]: ○ Degree programmes.

Long-standing health problem: A health problem that has lasted or is likely to last for at least 6 months.

M

Master's degree [ISCED 7]: ○ Degree programmes.

Median: The median is a parameter that divides an ordered statistical observation series into two equal parts.

Metadata: Data describing the studies and data (e.g. project title, project participants, questions, supporters, research design, methods of data collection, collection instruments).

Migration background: EUROSTUDENT categorises students according to their migration background based on their own and their parents' place of birth. In addition, in order to be able to distinguish international students, EUROSTUDENT considers the place of attainments of the higher education entry qualification, or, in absence of this, the place of last attending the regular school system. The following groups can be distinguished: domestically educated students without migration background and domestically educated students with second-generation migration background. See ○ Second-generation migration background, domestically educated.

N

National public student support: Monetary support especially designed for students in higher education granted from the state in which the respondent is permanently studying. The support includes public grants, scholarships, and public loans. See ○ Public support, ○ Other national public support.

Non-university: Type of HEIs other than universities, depending on national legislations, may include universities of applied sciences, polytechnics, professional HEIs and similar institutions, which offer higher education programmes covered in the EUROSTUDENT standard target group. See ◘ Type of HEI, ◘ University.

O

Other national public support: General monetary support from the state that is also available for students in higher education under certain conditions. This includes, for instance, child benefit and housing allowance. See ◘ Public support, ◘ National public student support.

Other postgraduate degree [ISCED 7]: ◘ Degree programmes.

Other regular living costs: These include expenses on clothing, toiletries, tobacco, pets, insurance [except medical insurance], or alimony.

Other regular study-related costs: These include expenses on e.g. field trips, books, photocopying, private tutoring, and contributions to student unions.

Other savings: These include inheritance, gifts of money, capital income, sales, or prize money which have not yet been spent.

P

Paid job during the current lecture period: Paid work alongside studies during the lecture period. Two kinds of jobs fall under this category: a) jobs during the entire semester and b) jobs from time to time during the lecture period.

Paid jobs before entering higher education: Labour market experience prior to entering higher education for the first time is separated into three categories: a) periodical prior work experience (that lasted less than 1 year), b) casual prior work experience (of at least 1 year, with less than 20 hours of work per week), and c) regular prior work experience (of at least 1 year, with at least 20 hours of work per week).

Parental family: Parents, siblings, relatives.

Parents/Guardian: These terms include all types of legal guardianship, such as own parents, stepparents, foster parents, and guardians.

Part-time status/Full-time status: Formal status of enrolment.

Personal study time: Time students spend on self-preparation separate from taught studies. This includes studying, homework, reading, learning the material, and unpaid internships. See ◘ Studies, taught, ◘ Study-related activities.

PhD/Doctoral degree [ISCED 8]: ◘ Degree programmes.

Programme, Long national degree: National degree programmes in higher education at level ISCED 7. This type of degree might be a traditional degree, e.g. a Diploma or a Lizentiat. The traditional long courses, awarding equivalents to Master's degrees in certain subject areas, are still common in e.g. Law, Medicine, Architecture and sometimes Teacher Training. See ◘ Programme, Short national degree.

Programme, Short cycle: Short cycle higher education programmes (ISCED level 5) are usually practice-based, occupation-specific and prepare for direct labour market entry. These programmes have a minimum duration of 2 years, which is also the typical length but can also last for 3 years and may provide a pathway to other higher education programmes. The EUROSTUDENT standard target group

covers short cycle programmes if they are regarded to be higher education in a country. In determining students' ◘ educational background, no differentiation between short cycle tertiary and short cycle higher education is made. See ◘ Programme, Long national degree.

Programme, Short national degree: In contrast to short cycle programmes (ISCED 5), some countries also offer short national degrees at level ISCED 6. This type of degree is traditional for the country but does not comply with the Bologna agreement. Therefore, the programme is not a Bachelor programme, but equivalent to a Bachelor. More information can be found in the ISCED 2011 Operational Manual.

Public support: Financial contributions from the state. This includes student-specific support such as grants, loans, and scholarships but also more general support available also for students, such as child benefit or housing allowance. Public support may be national, i.e. from the country in which the student is permanently studying, or from non-country sources which means it is paid by a foreign state or an international entity such as the EU. See ◘ National public student support, ◘ Other national public support, ◘ Support from non-country sources.

R

Recognition of prior learning (RPL): The process of granting official status to experiences and competences gained outside of the formal education system (e.g. work experience, non-formal courses, self-study, and volunteer work).

#Regular school system: Regular school means the (upper) secondary school system for teenagers. It can be a public or a private school, an academic school, or a vocational or professional school. It can be a 'classical' school or a school with alternative forms of learning (e.g. Montessori). Regular school may be compulsory but does not have to be. Schools targeting only adults (mostly on evenings or weekends) are not regarded as regular schools – even if they are public schools and part of the national education system. Consequently, any kind of preparatory classes for obtaining the #SMAR 'later in life' are not regarded as regular schools.

S

Savings from previous jobs: Money earned by the student, e.g. during holidays, that has not yet been spent.

Scholarship: Non-repayable monetary form of specific student support, usually granted for meritocratic reasons.

Second-generation migration background, domestically educated: Students with at least one parent born abroad, who were born in the country of survey themselves, and who attended/completed the national school system. See ◘ Migration background.

Self-earned income / own earnings: All self-earned income from gainful employment, be it dependent employment or self-employment. This also includes savings from previous self-earned income.

Sex/gender: EUROSTUDENT data is based on officially registered sex/gender at entry to higher education.

Short cycle degree [ISCED 5]: ◘ Degree programmes.

Short national degree [up to 3 years, ISCED 6]: ◘ Degree programmes.

Standard access route: See ◘ (Higher education) entry qualification, ◘ Access routes to higher education.

Standard deviation (SD): A measure that is used to quantify the amount of variation or dispersion of a set of data values.

Standard Minimum Access Requirement (#SMAR): Every country has a Standard or Minimum Access Requirement (#SMAR) for accessing higher education. It is 'standard' because there might be alternatives and it is 'minimum' because there might be additional requirements. The #SMAR is obtained in different countries in different ways: It can just be the positive passing of the last year in upper secondary school, it can be a specific exam at the end of secondary schooling (matriculation exam, e.g. *Matura*, *Abitur*, *Baccalaureat*) or a state exam, or maybe on another way. Some countries have different upper secondary school types (usually academic or professional tracks) and sometimes these different schools lead to different types of #SMAR. The different types of SMAR may be the minimum requirement to enter any higher education (general #SMAR) or allow only to access specific types of higher education or specific fields of study (specific #SMAR). In any case, one type of #SMAR is needed to access higher education (however, there might always be additional requirements like admission exams or specific grades).

Student accommodation: Accommodation that is provided especially for students in higher education, e.g. dormitories or halls of residence. It is often subsidised by government, churches, HEIs, or other organisations. See ○ Types of student housing.

Students in paid work: Two groups are distinguished based on the extent of their regular paid work during term time, not considering working from time to time during the semester or paid jobs during the holidays. See ○ Paid job during the current lecture period.

Students with/without tertiary educational background: Students with tertiary educational background have parents of whom at least one has attained a tertiary education degree. In terms of ISCED 2011, this means that at least one of these students' parents has successfully completed a short cycle tertiary degree (level 5), a Bachelor's (level 6) or Master's degree (level 7), or a doctorate (level 8) or their national equivalent. In some countries, these national equivalents may not be considered to be a part of higher education (Box B2.1). Students without tertiary educational background have parents whose highest educational degree is no higher than ISCED 2011 level 4 (post-secondary non-tertiary education). See ○ Educational background.

Studies, taught: Students' contact hours. Including lectures, tutorials, seminars, lessons, etc. Taught studies are reported in clock hours (60 min./hour) regardless of course hours, which may differ from this format. These include lessons, seminars, labs, tests, live online courses of a study programme, etc.

Study-related activities: See ○ Studies, taught, ○ Personal study time.

Study-related activities abroad: All kinds of study-related activities abroad during course of study. The category comprises ○ temporary study period abroad, internship/work placement, language course, research stay / field trip, summer/winter school, and other study-related activities abroad. See ○ Temporary study period abroad, ○ Credit mobility.

Study-related costs: Costs that are directly related to participating in higher education studies. Three categories are distinguished: a) tuition ○ fees, b) other ○ fees (for registration and administration), and c) other regular study-related

costs (e.g. for field trips, books, photocopying, private tutoring, and contributions to student unions).

Support from non-country sources: These are private or public support items that a student receives either from abroad or from an international entity such as the EU. See ◦ Public support.

T

Temporary study period abroad: See ◦ Credit mobility, ◦ Study-related activities abroad.

Topical module: The EUROSTUDENT 8 questionnaire included four topical modules focused on the topics 'Discrimination of students in HE', 'Well-being and mental health of students in HE', 'Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic', and 'Digitalisation of teaching, learning and student life'. A report on each of these topics is available on the EUROSTUDENT website: *www.eurostudent.eu*.

Transfers in cash: Cash money or bank transfers that students receive from their parents, other relatives, or the partner without specification of what to spend it on. See ◦ Family/partner contributions, ◦ Transfers in kind, ◦ Total income.

Transfers in kind: Transfers in kind are living and study-related costs that are not paid by students themselves, but by other persons such as the students' parents, partners, or other relatives. The payments go directly to the students' creditors, i.e. the respective money is intangible for the students. Transfers in kind can also be provided by students' parents, partners, or other relatives as goods and services free of charge or below market price, e.g. free/discounted accommodation, food, clothes, phone, or car use. See ◦ Family/partner contributions, ◦ Transfers in cash, ◦ Total income.

Transition duration: Duration of transition between leaving school for the first time and entering higher education. See ◦ Delayed transition, ◦ Direct transition.

Type of HEI: Types of HEIs are distinguished based on national legislation and understanding. Types of HEIs include universities and non-universities. See ◦ University, ◦ Non-university.

Type of study programme: Study programmes are classified according to their highest attainable degree in line with ISCED 2011. ISCED 2011 differentiates between short-cycle tertiary education programmes (ISCED 5), Bachelor or equivalent (ISCED 6), and Master or equivalent (ISCED 7) programmes. PhD students, doctoral or equivalent level (ISCED 8) are not part of the EUROSTUDENT target group. See ◦ ISCED.

Types of savings: See ◦ Savings from previous jobs, ◦ Other savings.

Types of student housing: Five forms of student housing are distinguished which are mutually exclusive: living a) with parents, b) alone, c) with partner/children, d) with other persons, e) in student accommodation (e.g. dormitories or halls of residence).

U

University: If a distinction between types of HEIs exists within a country, institutions classified as universities are typically allowed to award doctoral degrees. See ◦ Type of HEI, ◦ Non-university.

W

Work experience: Employment for more than 1 year without interruption and at least 20 hours per week. See ◦ Paid jobs before entering higher education.

Appendix C2
Methodological notes on figures and tables

Chapter B1: Characteristics of national student populations

Figure B1.1, Table B1.1, Table B1.2
CH, DK, NO: Register information used. **IS:** The information was taken from the sample.

Figure B1.2, Table B1.3, Table B1.4
AT: This variable is based on students' answers to the question 'Which sex are you officially registered with at your HEI?'. For students who did not choose 'Female' or 'Male', values were imputed. **CH, DK, NO, RO:** Register information used. **GE, HU, LV, PL:** Only used the categories 'Female' and 'Male'.

Figure B1.4
AT: The question was only answered by students with children (or children of their partner) living at their household under the age of 15.

Figure B1.5, Figure B1.6, Table B1.7
AT: The answer category 'Don't know' for the country of birth of students was not included.

Figure B1.3, Table B1.5, Table B1.6
CH: In the Swiss survey, the information on the number of children of students is collected in a separate question after a filtering question.

Figure B1.7, Table B1.8
AT: Students were presented with a long list of various types of disabilities which were then classified to the categories used in EUROSTUDENT. **CH:** Response options differ from EUROSTUDENT questionnaire. Category 4 = 'Poor' and category 5 = 'Very poor'. **RO:** Last option ('No') was not asked explicitly, but created later, based on students' responses. **SE:** The responses 'Sensory impairment' and 'Learning disability' have been split to be comprised of more possible subquestions: 'Yes, sensory': severe hearing impairment / severe vision impairment.

Figure B1.8
FR: Positive discriminations could also be reported. **PL:** 'Gender' translated to 'Sex', not to 'Sex/gender identity'. **RO:** There is no comparable information on who discriminated the students.

Chapter B2: Socio-economic background of students

Figure B2.1, Figure B2.2, Figure B2.3, Table B2.1, Table B2.2, Table B2.3

AT: In Austria, people who graduate from a 'Berufsbildende Schule (BHS)' with a Matura (SMAR) are classified as ISCED 5, whereas people who graduate from an 'Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (AHS)' with a Matura (SMAR) are classified as ISCED 3. In the EUROSTUDENT dataset, all people with SMAR as highest degree (i.e. AHS and BHS) are classified as ISCED 3. **CH:** Phrasing deviation in the question. More response options in the Swiss survey. Students are asked to report the level of education of their mother and father in two separate questions. Master's degree and PhD are joined into one category. **FR:** No differentiation between ISCED levels 6–8. **NL:** Distinction between ISCED 3 and 4 not possible. Respondents with this category were assigned ISCED 4. **SE:** The information is gathered from register data. If this was not possible, the following was done: Response option 'Up to lower secondary (ISCED 0, 1, 2)' was split into 'Have no primary education or equivalent' and 'Primary and lower-secondary school or equivalent' and recoded into 'Up to lower secondary education'. Three response options added regarding the professional degree 'Yrkesexamen', corresponding to ISCED levels 5, 6, and 7 respectively.

Figure B2.4, Figure B2.5

GE: Additional response category 'Don't know'.

Figure B2.6, Table B2.4

NO: Use of labels for all answer categories.

Chapter B3: Transition into and within higher education

Figure B3.1, Table B3.2

AT: Different phrasing of question ('Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent from the regular school system?') and more response options due to the diverse school system in Austria which have been classified to the three answer categories of this variable. The category 2 'SMAR or equivalent obtained abroad' includes university degrees of international students. **CH:** Register data from the Swiss Higher Education Information System. **GE:** Different phrasing of question ('Where did you obtain a General Education Diploma/Abitur – in Georgia or abroad?') since it is impossible to enter higher education without having #SMAR. Last response options not in questionnaire. **SE:** The 'No' answer is comprised by two questions: 3. 'No, my upper secondary diploma does not qualify me for entry into higher education.' 4. 'No, I do not have a completed upper secondary education or a foreign equivalent.' The response (3.) is deemed specific for the Swedish context.

Figure B3.2, Table B3.1, Figure B3.5, Figure B3.6, Table B3.2

AT: [2.1] Different phrasing of question ('Do you have a #SMAR or foreign equivalent from the regular school system?') and more response options due to the diverse school system in Austria which have been classified to the three answer categories of this variable. The category 2 'SMAR or equivalent obtained abroad' includes university degrees of international students. [2.2] Question was not asked but it was possible to extract the information from other questions for domestic students only. **CH:** [2.1 + 2.2 + 2.6] Register data from the Swiss Higher Education Information System. [2.3] Question not asked. **DK:** [2.2] Different phrasing of question ('What is your entry qualification to your HE programme?', followed by the comment 'If you have an upper secondary school examination, but also took a class on a higher level in order to get into the programme, please also answer'). Using the following response options: 1. 'An upper secondary school examination (e. g. general/stx, commercial/hhx, technical/htx, higher preparatory examination/hf, International Baccalaureate)', 2. 'Higher preparatory subject course (hf-enkeltfag).' **GE:** [2.1] Different phrasing of question ('Where did you obtain a General Education Diploma/Abitur – in Georgia or abroad?') since it is impossible to enter higher education without having #SMAR. Last response options not in questionnaire. [2.2] This filter is irrelevant for Georgia since all students have obtained a #SMAR. [2.3] Question not asked. **LV:** [2.3] Routing error – question was presented to respondents with #SMAR. **SE:** [2.1] The 'No' answer is comprised by two questions: 3. 'No, my upper secondary diploma does not qualify me for entry into higher education.' 4. 'No, I do not have a completed upper secondary education or a foreign equivalent.' The response (3.) is deemed specific for the Swedish context.

Figure B3.3, Table B3.2

AT: The question had an additional information ('Please exclude military/community service and internships'). The answer categories didn't differentiate between 'Less than a year' and 'Less than 20 hours/week for at least a year'. Both are included in category 2. 'Working within vocational training' was included as answer category. Those answers are included in category 1. **CH:** Phrasing variations in the question. Time reference is 'Before you started your current degree programme'. Minor phrasing variations in the response options.

Figure B3.4

AT: Question was only answered by national students and it referred to entering higher education in Austria only. **CH:** Register data from the Swiss Higher Education Information System. The data is approximated. **FR:** Data approximated with other data.

Figure B3.7, Table B3.3

AT: Some students inserted half-semesters. Those were adjusted upward. Question was only presented to students who were not in the first semester at the time of the questionnaire. **FI:** Information was supplemented with register data on semesters during which the student has been absent. **GE:** Deviation in phrasing of the question ('Have you ever interrupted your current #(main) study programme?') because there is no practice to unofficially interrupt your studies in Georgia. **NO:** Split the question into a 'Yes/No' question. Those who had a break were asked about the number of semesters in a follow-up question.

Figure B3.8

CH: The response options are more detailed in the Swiss survey and have been aggregated to correspond to the EUROSTUDENT questionnaire.

Chapter B4: Types and modes of study

Figure B4.1, Table B4.1, Figure B4.2, Figure B4.5

AT: This question (1.8) was not asked because there are only full-time students in Austria. Question 1.2 was not included. Specific study programmes have been a priori categorised as distance learning programmes and were coded accordingly. Additionally, some study programmes that are either online or in person have only been classified as distance learning programmes if students indicated the courses to be more online than in person. **CH:** Register data (1.8) from the Swiss Higher Education Information System. **CZ:** The part-time form of study (1.8) corresponds to the Czech combined form of study (i.e. min. of 80 hours of direct instruction per semester, usually block lessons every 14 days). **DK:** Only full-time students (1.8) were included. **FI:** This information (1.8) is derived from register data concerning the type of degree studied. In Finland the Master's as well as a specific type of Bachelor's degree programmes are designed to be studied alongside work during semester. Phrasing of this question (1.2) was altered. Students were asked to indicate, whether their current degree programme's main mode of study is online or distance learning. **HR:** Question (1.8) differs because the status part-time student only exists in public higher education institutions (HEIs). **NO:** Answer options (1.2) differentiated between those who have online programmes with and without physical meetings. Question was also divided into two separate questions. **PL, SE:** Response option (1.8) 'Other' was skipped.

Figure B4.4, Table B4.3, Table B4.4

AT: In Austria, people who graduate from a 'Berufsbildende Schule (BHS)' with a Matura (SMAR) are classified as ISCED 5, whereas people who graduate from an 'Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (AHS)' with a Matura (SMAR) are classified as ISCED 3. In the EUROSTUDENT dataset, all people with SMAR as highest degree (i.e. AHS and BHS) are classified as ISCED 3 (6.7). **CH:** Phrasing deviation in the question. More response options in the Swiss survey. Students are asked to report the level of education of their mother and father in two separate questions. Master's degree and PhD are joined into one category (6.7). **FR:** No differentiation between ISCED levels 6–8 (6.7). **GE:** Additional response category 'Don't know' (6.8). **NL:** Distinction between ISCED 3 and 4 not possible. Respondents with this category were assigned ISCED 4 (6.7). **SE:** The information is gathered from register data. If this was not possible, the following was done: Response option 'Up to lower secondary (ISCED 0, 1, 2)' was split into 'Have no primary education or equivalent' and 'Primary and lower-secondary school or equivalent' and recoded into 'Up to lower secondary education'. Three response options added regarding the professional degree 'Yrkesexamen', corresponding to ISCED levels 5, 6, and 7 respectively (6.7).

Table B4.2

AT: Only the following categories were asked (1.6): 'Bachelor's degree', 'Master's degree' and 'Long national degree/integrated Master'. **AZ:** 'Generic programmes and qualifications PLUS unknown' was not used as a response option (1.7). Only the response options (1.6): 'Bachelor's degree', 'Master's degree', 'PhD/Doctoral degree' and 'Other, e.g. single subjects' were given. **CH:** Register date from the Swiss Higher Education Information System (1.7) was used. **CZ:** Short-cycle programmes, short national degree, 'Other' postgraduate degrees and other (e.g. single subjects) were not included in the sample (1.6) since they do not exist. **DK:** Use of register data. Professional programmes were not included in the survey (1.6), long national degrees had too few cases to be included in the dataset. **FR:** Study programmes were described, not specifically named (1.7). **IS:** Information was approximated with information about the sample (1.7). **GE:** Answer options (1.6): 'Bachelor's degree', 'Georgian language education program diploma', 'Teacher's training educational program diploma', 'Master's degree', 'One Stage Medical Program Diploma', 'Veterinary Integrated Master Program Diploma', 'Teacher's Training Integrated Bachelor-Master Program Diploma', PhD. **LT:** Adaption of national degree names (1.6). Non-existing study degrees were excluded. **NO:** Question about the field of study. Answers were compared with register data (1.7). **PL:** Additional response option (1.7): 'If you have comments to the answer, write here [open field, optional]'. Response options skipped (1.6): 'Short-cycle degree', 'Short national degree', 'Other' (e.g. single subjects). **RO:** 'Teacher Training' is not differentiated in the national programmes (1.7). National Registry Data used to replace missings or inconsistent information. **SE:** Question (1.7) was only asked when there was no confirmed information from register. Question 1.6 was only presented to students who responded that they study 'Separate courses'. For everyone else the data were gathered through register data.

Chapter B5: Students' time budget

Figure B5.1, Figure B5.3, Figure B5.7, Table B5.1

CH: Students are asked to report weekly hours devoted to five different activities: academic programme, other academic work, paid employment, volunteering, domestic and family work. Internships are considered as part of the academic programme. All students (including non-working students) were asked to indicate the weekly hours devoted to paid employment. **FR:** Time spent on each type of activity was asked overall between Monday and Sunday.

Figure B5.2, Figure B5.5

FR: Time spent on each type of activity was asked overall between Monday and Sunday.

Figure B5.4

CH: Students are asked to report weekly hours devoted to five different activities: academic programme, other academic work, paid employment, volunteering, domestic and family work. Internships are considered as part of the academic programme. All students (including non-working students) were asked to indicate the weekly hours devoted to paid employment.

Figure B5.6

CH: Students are asked to report weekly hours devoted to five different activities: academic programme, other academic work, paid employment, volunteering, domestic and family work. Internships are considered as part of the academic programme. **FR:** Time spent on each type of activity was asked overall between Monday and Sunday.

Figure B5.8

FR: Question and answer categories rephrased. Question focused on the past 4 weeks instead of 2, and response options 'Most of the time' and 'More than half the time' where presented as one item (coded 2 while 3 is empty). **NO:** Labels for all categories.

Chapter B6: Students' employment

Figure B6.1, Figure B6.2, Figure B6.3, Table B6.1, Table B6.2

AT: Question text (4.4) included 'All forms of employment, excluding mandatory internships and holiday jobs. Please do not indicate any employment, if you are currently taking a leave of absence from job.' **CH:** Only working students were asked to answer this question (4.4). In order to approximate the EUROSTUDENT question, two questions of the Swiss survey were combined. 1) [All students] 'During the last 12 months did you have (a) paid job(s)?' 2) [Students who did have a paid job during the last 12 months] 'Do you have a paid job during the lecture period?' **FR:** Deviation in response options. Internships were included in 'Time to time' activities (4.4).

Table B6.2

CH: Students are asked to report weekly hours devoted to five different activities: 'Academic programme', 'Other academic work', 'Paid employment', 'Volunteering', 'Domestic and family work'. Internships are considered as part of the academic programme. All students (including non-working students) were asked to indicate the weekly hours devoted to paid employment. **FR:** Time spent on each type of activity was asked overall between Monday and Sunday.

Figure B6.6, Table B6.3

AT: The question was 'To what extent do the following statements apply to your situation?', followed by the item 'My job is related in content to my studies' with answer categories from '1 = Applies totally' to '5 = Does not apply at all' (including other questions in the same block that are not part of EUROSTUDENT 8). **CH**: Phrasing deviation in the question, phrasing deviation in the response options. **NO**: Use of labels for all answer categories.

Figure B6.7, Figure B.6.8

NO: Use of labels for all answer categories.

Figure B6.9

CH: Phrasing deviation in the question and response options.

Figure B6.10

CH: No definition of internships provided. Additional response options. **RO:** Last option ('No') was not asked explicitly, but created later, based on students' responses.

Figure B6.11, Figure B6.12, Table 6.4

CH: Students were asked to report on their 'Last internship' without distinguishing 'Internship in country' and 'Internship abroad'. Students who report internships abroad or who report together internships in country and abroad were excluded to correspond to the EUROSTUDENT definition. Phrasing deviation in question and response options.

Chapter B7: Students' resources

Figure B7.2

NO: At the time of the data collection, there were no longer restrictions in Norway due to the pandemic. It was, therefore, asked in which way the pandemic has had an impact on the different aspects. Labels for all response categories were used.

Figure B7.4, Figure B7.5, Figure B7.9c, Table B7.1

CH: Students were asked to report the expenses that are paid by their parents/family, but not explicitly asked to indicate the monetary value of the goods and services they receive from their parents/family. **FR:** Transfers in kind provided by the family have been approximated with other variables. No information is available regarding transfers in kind from the partner. **SE:** Another response option was added to the questionnaire: 'I do not receive this kind of support from family or partner.' This was set to missing in the E:8 Swedish data set.

Table B7.1

DK: In the Danish survey, the questions on study fees have been omitted. In Denmark, only international students from outside EU/EEA pay fees. This group has not been surveyed on this topic.

Chapter B8: Students' expenses

Figure B8.2

CH: Students were asked to report the expenses that are paid by their parents/family, but not explicitly asked to indicate the monetary value of the goods and services they receive from their parents/family. **DK:** In the Danish survey, the questions on study fees have been omitted. In Denmark, only international students from outside EU/EEA pay fees. This group has not been surveyed on this topic. **FR:** Transfers in kind provided by the family have been approximated with other variables. No information is available regarding transfers in kind from the partner. **SE:** Another response option was added to the questionnaire: 'I do not receive this kind of support from family or partner.' This was set to missing in the E:8 Swedish data set.

Figure B8.4, Figure B8.5b

CH: Students were asked to report the expenses that are paid by their parents/family, but not explicitly asked to indicate the monetary value of the goods and services they receive from their parents/family. It was not distinguished between the family and partner. **FR:** Transfers in kind provided by the family have been approximated with other variables. No information is available regarding transfers in kind from the partner. **SE:** Another response option was added to the questionnaire: 'I do not receive this kind of support from family or partner.' This was set to missing in the E:8 Swedish data set.

Figure B8.8

AT: For students at private universities, the response categories for tuition fees and all other fees have been merged. The question on 'Other university fees' was only presented to students from non-universities. **CH:** The category 'Other university fees' has not been asked separately in the Swiss survey, instead it was included in the category 'Tuition fees'. **DE:** The category 'Tuition fees' contains also some items relating to registration/ administration costs in higher education. **DK:** In the Danish survey, the questions on 'Study fees' have been omitted. In Denmark, only international students from outside EU/EEA pay fees. This group has not been surveyed on this topic. **NO:** In the Norwegian survey, no distinction was made between 'Tuition fees' and 'Other university fees'. All data on fees are included in the category 'Tuition fees'.

Figure B8.9, Figure B8.10, Table B8.3

AT: For students at private universities, the response categories for tuition fees and all other fees have been merged. The question on 'Other university fees' was only presented to students from non-universities. **CH:** The category 'Other university fees' has not been asked separately in the Swiss survey, instead it was included in the category 'Tuition fees'. **DK:** In the Danish survey, the questions on 'Study fees' have been omitted. In Denmark, only international students from outside EU/EEA pay fees. This group has not been surveyed on this topic.

Figure B8.10, Table B8.3

DE: The category 'Tuition fees' contains also some items relating to registration/ administration costs in higher education.

Figure B8.11

CH: In the Swiss survey, only the response options 'Yes' and 'No' were available. The amount for an unexpected required expense was 2,500 Swiss Franc (Survey on Income and Living Conditions' threshold). Students were asked to report the expenses that are paid by their parents/family, but not explicitly asked to indicate the monetary value of the goods and services they receive from their parents/family. **SE:** Another response option was added to the questionnaire: 'I do not receive this kind of support from family or partner.' This was set to missing in the E:8 Swedish data set. **SK:** In the Slovakian questionnaire, the amount selected for an unexpected required expense was 300 Euro.

Table B8.2

DE: In E:VII, the survey in Germany did not cover payments of students and others for the following categories: 'Debt payment (except mortgage)', 'Social welfare contributions', and 'Most other regular study-related costs'. This may have influenced the amount of shares that were calculated on the basis of total monthly expenses. **RO:** Study-related expenses were not recorded. This may have influenced the amount of shares that were calculated on the basis of total monthly expenses.

Chapter B9: Students' housing situation

Figure B9.2, Figure B9.7, Figure B9.8, Table B9.1

AT: The category living alone contains also single parents who are living with their children. This refers to 2.8 % of all persons in single households.

Figure B9.5b

CH: Students were asked to report the expenses that are paid by their parents/family, but not explicitly asked to indicate the monetary value of the goods and services they receive from their parents/family. **FR:** Transfers in kind provided by the family have been approximated with other variables. No information is available regarding transfers in kind from the partner. **SE:** Another response option was added to the questionnaire: 'I do not receive this kind of support from family or partner.' This was set to missing in the E:8 Swedish data set.

Chapter B10: International student mobility

Figure B10.2, (Figure B10.3, only E:8), Figure B10.4, Figure B10.5, Table B10.1

AT: Question 5.6 was a multiple-choice question and included the following answer categories: 'Yes, for a temporary study period abroad as part of my study programme in Austria such as a semester/year abroad', 'Yes, for other study-related stays abroad that lasted at least 5 days, e.g. excursion, research stay, summer/winter school, language course', and 'No, I had no study-related activities abroad'. **CH:** No definition of internships provided. Additional response options. Students are asked to report any study-related activities (including temporary study period) in the same question (5.12). Phrasing deviation in the question. Phrasing deviation in the response options: asked to indicate whether they have done these 'In another language region of Switzerland', 'In another country', 'In the language region where I am studying', or whether they haven't done any of these 'No'. Additional study-related activity: 'Volunteering'. **RO:** Last option 'No' was not asked explicitly but created later based on students' responses.

Figure B10.6

AT: The question was rephrased as 'Do you plan to go abroad for a temporary study period?' with the answer categories: 'Yes, I have concrete plans', 'Yes, probably', and 'No'. **CH:** Phrasing deviation in the question and response option. Additional response options in the CH survey: 'No, probably not' and 'I don't know yet'. **DK:** A note was added: 'Do not include internship(s) abroad'.

Figure B10.7

AT: Only students who indicated to have done a temporary study period abroad or answered the question 5.10 saw this question. Deviation in answer categories. Differentiation for the answer category 'Lack of information by HEI as (no) obstacle to mobility' between 'Lack of information on options for studying abroad' and 'Lack of information on funding options'. Answer categories 'Visa/residence permit problems for the preferred country' and 'Temporary global or local travel restrictions' were not included. **CH:** Only students who have not been abroad were asked to report obstacle for enrolment abroad. Reversed scale. Answer categories 'My health status/disability' and 'Temporary global or local travel restrictions' were not included. Additional answer categories: 'Difficulties in obtaining information about possibilities for support', 'Difficulties in finding housing in the host country', 'No or few mobility exchange vacancies in my academic programme or HEI', 'Failed to meet selection criteria (e.g. insufficient grades, etc.)', 'Loss of social benefits (grant, allowance, etc.)', and 'Prolongation of the duration of my degree programme'. **NO:** Use of labels for all answer categories.

Figure B10.8

AT: Deviation in phrasing of the question: 'Did your semester abroad take place as part of a mobility programme?'. Deviation in answer categories; 'Yes, ERASMUS (+)', 'Yes, CEEPUS', 'Yes, another EU programme', 'Yes, a direct exchange programme between my university/my country with another university/another country (e.g. Fulbright)', 'Yes, another programme', and 'No'. CEEPUS and direct exchange programme were classified as 'Other programme', 'No' was classified as 'Independently organised'. **DK:** Addition of extra answer category 'Nordic programme (e.g. Nordplus)', but the option was merged with 'Other programmes' during the coding.

Figure B10.9

CH: Students were asked to report on their 'Last internship' without distinguishing 'Internship in country' and 'Internship abroad'. Students who report internships in country or who report internships in country and abroad together were excluded to correspond to the EUROSTUDENT definition. Phrasing deviation in the question and response options.

Figure B10.10

CH: Students are asked to report any study-related activities (including temporary study period) in the same question. They are asked to indicate whether they have done these 'In another language region of Switzerland', 'In another country', 'In the language region where I am studying' or whether they haven't done any of these ('No'). Phrasing deviation in the question and in the response options. Additional study-related activity: volunteering. **RO:** Last option 'No' was not asked explicitly but created later based on students' responses.

Figure B10.11

SK: In the earlier questionnaire, there was a category 6 for question 5.9 'I never planned on getting any credits recognised' but not in the handbook. Category 6 was therefore recoded into -11.

Appendix C3
Metadata

Table C3.1

Information on survey execution and weighting

	Return rate (gross)	Sampling method	Field phase	Survey method	Weighting variables
AT	At least 14 %	Census	May/June 2023	Online	Unit non-response weighting in which post-stratification weights were calculated. Variables used (in different combinations): type of HEI, sex, age, field of study, type of study programme, citizenship, international students, first-year students
AZ	0.96 % (net)	Sampling	22 April – 31 May 2022	Tablets: data filled in by interviewers	Post-stratification weighting by formal status (full-time or part-time), sex, qualification studied for, age
CH	72 %	Sampling	25 March – 31 May 2020	Online	Type of HEI, sex, age, field of study, place of residence before the beginning of the study programme
CZ	6.15 %	Census	24 May – 15 July 2022	Online	Raking based on type of HEI, formal status (full-time or part-time), sex, qualification studied for, age
DE	19.6 %	Sampling	Summer semester 2021	Online	Type of HEI, sex, age, federal state, field of study, international students
DK	28 %	Sampling	10 May – 10 June 2022	Online, telephone and CATI	Post-stratification weighting by type of HEI, sex, age
EE	0.12 %	Census	April – June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, sex, qualification studied for, age
ES	0.34 % (net)	Census	14 March – 7 April 2023	Online	Raking method. Variables used: type of HEI, sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study, size of city of study location
FI	26.3 %	Sampling	March – April 2022	Online	Sex, age, field of study, type of study programme, year of enrolment, tuition fee payer, HEI, language (Finnish/Swedish/other), scholarship, level of previous degree
FR	19 %	Sampling	March – May 2023	Online	Data are weighted using the CALMAR method of calibration by type of HEI (in case of universities also by location). Weighting variables: sex, age, field of study (for universities), level of studies, citizenship, location of institution, type of higher education access qualification
GE	11.9 %	Sampling	11 May – 24 July 2022	Online and tablets: given to students to fill in	Type of HEI, region, sex, age, level of education, field of study, citizenship
HR	5.9 %	Census	13 May – 1 July 2022	Online	Marginal raking of type of HEI, sex, age, field of study + cell weighting level of studies x type of HEI
HU	6.65 %	Census	2 May – 15 June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, study location, sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study
IE	8.6 %	Census	April – May 2022	Online	Type of HEI, formal status (full-time or part-time), sex, age, level of education
IS	18.3 %	Census	13 April – 8 June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study
LT	1.8 %	Census	May – June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study
LV		Census	1 March – 15 June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, formal status (full-time or part-time), sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study
MT	6.57 %	Census	April 2022	Online	Type of HEI, sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study, citizenship
NL	3.93 %	Sampling	16 May – 27 June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, formal status (full-time or part-time), sex, qualification studied for, field of study, study year, international student
NO	33.1 %	Sampling	29 April – 7 June 2022	Online	Type of HEI, sex, age
PL	1 %	Census	17 May – 11 July 2022	Online	Type of HEI, region, size of study location, formal status (full-time or part-time), sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study,
PT	2.5 %	Census	10 May – 19 June 2023	Online	Raking with SPSS extension – sex, age, public support per month
RO	4.02 %	Census	15 May – 15 July 2023	Online	Sex, field of study, qualification, age, size of the city
SE	17.8 %	Sampling	24 April – 17 August 2022	Online	Sex, type of degree, age, field of study, migration background, parents' highest level of education, stratum (full time/part time/ international students).
SK	0.06 %	Census	2 May – 1 July 2022	Online and telephone	Type of HEI, sex, qualification studied for, age, field of study

Table C3.2

Key data on national student surveys by socio-demographic characteristics of students and living conditions

Share of valid responses, weighted (in %)

	Socio-demographic characteristics of students											Living conditions							
		Sex		Age groups				Parental education	Disability	Migration background		Dependency on income source			Financial difficulties	Housing	Paid job during the lecture period as well as in lecture-free period		
Country/Source	Students in sample (n)	Female students	Male students	Up to 21 years	22 to <25 years	25 to <30 years	30 years or over	No higher tertiary education (ISCED 2011 0–4)	Disabilities limiting in studies	Students without migrant background, national ed. background	Second-generation migrant students with national ed. background	Dependent on family	Dependent on self-earned income	Dependent on public student support	With financial difficulties	Living with parents	0 hrs.	1–20 hrs.	>20 hrs.
AT	43,316	56	44	21	29	29	21	46	21	61	11	33	42	7	29	20	31	42	28
AZ	2,505	51	49	77	15	5	3	34	16	88	5	74	16	2	25	68	72	9	19
CH	22,903	53	47	17	37	32	14	40	16	50	26	51	37	3	13	45	41	42	17
CZ	14,798	57	43	36	37	16	11	48	25	78	6	54	37	0	26	32	30	41	28
DE	6,390	50	50	24	29	28	19	38	18	69	13	40	43	10	18	26	38	50	12
DK	14,060	58	42	14	39	34	13	23	24	68	11	7	19	56	27	6	34	59	7
EE	3,681	61	39	28	27	16	29	33	20	80	9	35	48	2	22	21	31	26	43
ES	8,893	57	43	50	22	11	17	n.d.	18	n.d.	n.d.	63	27	3	25	51	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.
FI	6,752	58	42	12	27	27	34	31	31	88	3	6	44	36	23	0.1	40	30	31
FR	44,451	56	44	61	24	10	6	32	22	70	16	51	18	23	25	35	51	31	18
GE	4,664	53	47	48	33	15	4	n.d.	17	82	2	75	14	4	43	61	61	13	25
HR	7,796	59	41	37	37	15	11	57	14	74	19	22	64	4	18	48	48	20	31
HU	14,839	55	45	36	31	17	16	42	10	83	5	43	40	5	23	32	44	23	33
IE	20,961	53	47	49	18	10	23	41	21	53	14	36	48	5	33	42	35	35	30
IS	3,816	66	34	10	22	25	43	41	30	79	5	20	61	8	31	24	24	37	39
LT	1,773	58	42	42	31	11	15	41	16	89	5	56	29	3	26	31	42	21	37
LV	2,664	58	42	39	20	15	26	35	15	83	9	49	33	1	33	30	37	16	47
MT	1,003	59	41	38	21	14	27	48	15	75	9	40	47	1	27	59	33	30	38
NL	8,844	54	46	46	33	14	7	32	25	73	9	31	26	20	26	44	24	59	17
NO	7,919	61	39	19	28	22	30	23	21	75	11	3	38	49	26	9	27	44	29
PL	11,396	59	41	41	35	13	11	50	21	93	1	43	48	2	33	40	40	17	42
PT	10,603	54	46	53	24	11	13	60	12	74	13	77	14	5	21	49	69	13	18
RO	16,109	56	44	42	33	11	15	55	5	94	1	59	27	5	34	28	52	15	33
SE	7,122	61	39	19	30	24	27	37	30	64	17	10	17	60	20	17	51	36	13
SK	7,557	59	41	36	36	14	14	56	14	89	4	58	31	2	28	44	37	33	30

n.d.: no data

Note: *Rounded values are shown. Decimal points are only shown for values below 0.5.*

Table C3.3

Key data on national surveys by study conditions

Share of valid responses, weighted (in %)

	Study conditions																								
	Field of study (ISCED-F)										Study intensity			Type of HEI		Type of study programme		Study experience	Access route		Educational origin		Transition route		Distance study programme
Country/Source	Education	Arts and Humanities	Social Sciences, Journalism and Information	Business, Administration and Law	Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics	ICTs	Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary	Health and Welfare	Services	Low intensity	Medium intensity	High intensity	University	Non-university	Bachelor	Master	First-year students	Alternative access route	Standard access route	International students	Domestic students	Delayed transition	Direct transition	Distance learning student
AT	15	11	10	21	9	7	13	1	12	1	27	46	27	79	21	59	30	14	9	91	24	76	23	77	2
AZ	21	11	9	18	3	4	19	2	7	6	11	65	24	100	n/a	90	10	21	1	99	2	98	11	89	n/a
CH	12	10	11	23	10	4	13	1	14	1	20	47	34	57	43	71	28	22	14	86	17	83	12	88	n.d.
CZ	13	9	9	21	6	7	11	4	13	6	24	49	28	91	9	64	25	8	1	99	14	86	10	90	n/a
DE	5	13	9	24	10	8	18	1	9	2	18	48	34	63	37	57	32	18	17	83	15	85	20	80	10
DK	6	9	10	19	7	6	15	1	25	2	10	55	35	53	47	64	26	14	8	92	15	85	24	76	3
EE	8	14	9	15	7	10	15	1	15	5	23	51	26	78	22	67	25	18	5	95	9	91	18	82	7
ES	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	16	44	40	66	34	66	15	7	n.d.	n.d.	4	96	16	84	18
FI	6	10	6	19	4	11	19	3	19	4	37	45	17	46	54	72	26	13	6	94	6	94	34	66	9
FR	3	13	9	30	12	3	15	1	12	3	30	44	26	70	30	40	22	11	1	99	8	92	4	96	3
GE	4	10	15	27	4	5	10	3	20	4	21	48	31	87	13	71	11	17	3	97	9	91	6	94	34
HR	7	9	5	29	4	7	16	3	14	5	20	47	33	83	17	59	24	11	6	94	3	97	11	89	n/a
HU	11	8	10	25	3	9	13	3	13	5	27	45	27	84	16	62	15	17	4	96	11	89	12	88	n/a
IE	5	14	6	20	13	9	13	2	16	3	26	47	27	57	43	72	14	19	9	91	17	83	14	86	14
IS	15	12	13	22	5	5	9	1	17	1	23	43	34	100	n/a	66	24	12	25	75	10	90	32	68	23
LT	4	10	10	28	4	7	14	2	19	2	22	49	28	69	31	75	16	12	3	97	6	94	14	86	10
LV	7	8	7	26	2	8	14	2	18	8	23	48	28	84	16	57	16	25	8	92	7	93	22	78	4
MT	11	10	10	28	4	7	6	0	20	4	31	36	33	66	34	53	30	14	18	82	12	88	19	81	17
NL	9	8	14	26	7	5	10	1	16	4	20	54	26	48	52	76	20	14	9	91	14	86	16	84	3
NO	19	9	10	20	4	5	10	1	20	2	34	43	23	63	37	47	18	16	14	86	6	94	24	76	7
PL	7	10	13	24	4	6	14	2	14	8	17	55	29	78	22	62	22	25	8	92	4	96	12	88	15
PT	4	10	12	20	7	3	19	3	18	5	10	43	47	60	40	67	18	24	7	93	7	93	13	87	4
RO	4	8	10	21	4	7	23	5	18	1	16	46	38	100	n/a	66	21	18	5	95	2	98	12	88	11
SE	15	11	14	12	6	6	19	1	16	1	23	51	26	100	n/a	27	13	17	9	91	10	90	33	67	12
SK	13	6	10	19	4	6	11	3	21	6	22	48	30	87	13	64	27	23	7	93	6	94	15	85	14

n.d.: no data. n/a: not applicable.

Appendix C4
National contributors

Table C4.1

Country name	Project sponsor	Implementation	Contact person	Research team	National report/website
AT	Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF)	Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS)	Martin Unger (IHS)	Vlasta Zucha, Johanna Dau, Anna Dibiasi, Philipp Droll, Judith Engleder, Ilinca Fage, Kathrin Fenz, Georg Fochler, Nora Haag, Sylvia Mandl, Cordelia Menz, Kerstin Rieder, Bianca Thaler, Martin Unger, Theresa Weinöhrl, Sarah Zaussinger	www.sozialerhebung.at
AZ	Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Center for Sociological Research	Vladimir Rodin, Senior Researcher	Rajab Sattarov, Senior Researcher Lala Huseynova, Researcher Konul Kerimova, Researcher	N/A
CH	The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)	Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO)	Yassin Boughaba	Yassin Boughaba, Philipp Fischer, and Véronique Meffre	www.students-stat.admin.ch
CZ	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS)	Centre for Higher Education Studies (CHES)	Michaela Šmídová (CHES) and Samuel Jezný, Gabriela Uchytilová (MEYS)	Michaela Šmídová and Lucie Hündlová (CHES)	https://www.csvs.cz/aktualni-projekty/eurostudent-viii/
DE	Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)	German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW)	Hendrik Schirmer	Hendrik Schirmer (execution of EUROSTUDENT survey, within the project context of "The Student Survey in Germany"; https://www.dzhw.eu/en/forschung/projekt?pr_id=650)	https://www.dzhw.eu/pdf/ab_20/Soz22_Hauptbericht.pdf
DK	Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science	Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science	Amanda Weber (Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science)	Amanda Weber	https://ufm.dk/en/education/analyses-and-statistics/education-in-an-international-perspective/eurostudent/?set_language=en
EE	Republic of Estonia Ministry of Education and Research	Think tank Praxis	Sandra Haugas	Sandra Haugas, Elisabeth Kendrali, Tali Kletter, Andi Kiissel	https://www.praxis.ee/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/EUROSTUDENT8_Lopparuanne.pdf
ES	Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities	Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities	Margarita de Lezcano-Mújica	Ernest Pons	www.eurostudent.es
FI	Ministry of Education and Culture	Statistics Finland	Juhani Saari	Juhani Saari, Sara Koivuranta, Varpu Vuoristo	https://okm.fi/en/project?tunnus=OKM019:00/2022
FR	Centre national des œuvres universitaires et scolaires (CNOUS)	National Observatory of Student Life (OVE)	Odile Ferry (OVE)	Odile Ferry (OVE)	https://www.ove-national.education.fr/
GE	Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MES)	Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA)	Dr. Mzia Tsereteli	Prof. Iago Kachkachishvili, Ana Papiashvili, and Bela Rekhviashvili	https://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EUROSTUDENT_8_Georgia_Analytical_Report_georg.pdf https://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EUROSTUDENT_8_Georgia_Analytical_Report_eng.pdf
HR	Ministry of Science and Education	University of Zagreb – Faculty of Law	Ivan Rimac		www.eurostudent.hr
HU	Educational Authority	Educational Authority	Renáta Vanó (Educational Authority)	Edit Goldfárthné Veres, Ádám Hámori, Júlia Seli, Matild Sági, Marianna Szemerszki	https://www.felvi.hu/felsooktatasimuhely/EUROSTUDENT
IE	The Higher Education Authority	Insight Statistical Consulting	Dr. Stephen Erskine, Insight Statistical Consulting	Dr. Stephen Erskine, David Harmon	https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2023/04/Eurostudent-8-Final-Report.pdf
IS	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation	Maskina Research	Hrafn Ingason	Hrafn Ingason and Thora Asgeirsdottir	

Table C4.1 (continued)

Country name	Project sponsor	Implementation	Contact person	Research team	National report/website
LT	The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport	Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences, Institute of Sociology	Assoc. Prof. dr. Rūta Brazienė	Assoc. Prof. dr. Rūta Brazienė, Vaida Saukeckienė	
LV	Ministry of Education and Science (IZM)	Institute of Philosophy and Sociology University of Latvia (LU FSI)	Diāna Laipniece (IZM)	Ilze Koroļeva, Aleksandrs Aleksandrovs, Ilze Trapenciere, Rita Kaša, Ansis Pētersons (LU FSI)	https://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/petijumi-0
MT	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA)	Dr Jana Kazarjan	Dr Jana Kazarjan, MFHEA	https://mfhea.mt/fhe-statistics
NL	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	ResearchNed	Joris Cuppen	Joris Cuppen, Ardita Muja, and Myrthe Hendrix	www.studentenmonitor.nl
NO	Ministry of Education and Research	Statistics Norway	Anna-Lena Keute	Anna-Lena Keute, Eirik Fredborg	https://www.ssb.no/utdanning/hoyere-utdanning/den-europeiske-studentundersokelsen
PL	Ministry of Education and Science (since 13.12.2023 Ministry of Science and Higher Education and Ministry of National Education are separate)	PBS Sp. z o.o.	Barbara Fabisiak	Małgorzata Drozd-Garbacewicz, Project Manager Barbara Fabisiak, Researcher Marta Jankowska, Researcher Ewa Piotrowicz, Researcher Patrycja Rumińska-Zając, Researcher Monika Studzińska, Project Coordinator	
PT	Directorate-General of Higher Education/Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (DGES/MCTES)	The Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology/Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia (CIES-Iscte) of the Iscte-University Institute of Lisbon	Susana da Cruz Martins (CIES-Iscte)	Susana da Cruz Martins (CIES-Iscte), Bernardo Machado (CIES-Iscte), Rosário Mauritti (CIES-Iscte), and Pedro Ramos (ISTAR-Iscte)	
RO	Ministry of Education	Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding (UEFISCDI) and National Centre for Policy in Evaluation in Education (CNPEE)	Gabriela Jitaru (UEFISCDI), Marius Lazăr (CNPEE)	Marius Lazar, Ancuţa Plaeşu, Ana-Maria Dalu, Oana Iftode and Delia Goia (CNPEE), Elena Trifan, Oana Dervis, and Gabriela Jitaru (UEFISCDI)	http://eurostudent.uefiscdi.ro/ and https://www.ise.ro/Eurostudent
SE	Ministry of Education and Research	Swedish Council for Higher Education	Jari Rusanen	Jari Rusanen, Erica Finnerman, Sara Ahlstedt, Madelen Charysczak, Sofia Scholler, and Frederik Witte	
SK	Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information	František Blanár (Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information)	František Blanár, Dávid Pelošjan	https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/skolstvo/vysoke-skoly/medzinarodny-projekt-eurostudent.html?page_id=10707

Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe

EUROSTUDENT 8 Synopsis of Indicators 2021–2024

The EUROSTUDENT 8 – Synopsis of Indicators is the central publication of the EUROSTUDENT project and the result of the collaboration of a European-wide network including researchers, data collectors, representatives of national ministries, and other stakeholders. It comprises data from student surveys conducted in 25 countries in the European Higher Education Area during the eighth round of the EUROSTUDENT project. Adopting a broad, comparative perspective, the EUROSTUDENT 8 – Synopsis of Indicators provides information on students' socio-economic and study-related backgrounds, their study conditions and experiences, including international mobility, and their living conditions. It aims to inspire policy debates on the topic of the social dimension and lay the ground for further research.

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