

PART II

NATIONAL STRATEGIES on THE SOCIAL DIMENSION of THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

I. Definition of the Social Dimension in the London Communiqué

“We strive for the societal goal that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our populations. We therefore pledge to take action to widen participation at all levels on the basis of equal opportunity.”

Equal opportunity, and prohibition of discrimination (on the basis of gender, background, race, country or area of origin, creed, religious or political views, handicaps), are constitutionally enshrined in the Federal Republic of Germany (Art. 3, Art. 6 and Art. 33, Basic Law). These principles thus function as standards for all legal provisions. All persons subject to violations of these principles have recourse to the courts.

As a result, equal opportunity of access to higher education is guaranteed by law. On the other hand, a number of structural and financial problems can hamper equal opportunity with regard to access to higher education, the course of studies and successful completion of studies. At the same time, individual preferences, personal aptitude, the outlook in the employment market and the attractiveness of alternative education programmes all play an important role in decisions for or against studies. Consequently, not every individual decision against higher education studies can be taken as an indication that representatives of a given certain social group are at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, participation in higher education studies in Germany is unbalanced with respect to social background.

In light of the growing requirements for highly qualified higher education graduates, and of the superior employment-market and career opportunities for higher education graduates, efforts need to be focussed on eliminating social barriers for groups underrepresented to date and to offer such groups equal opportunity of participation. Both individual persons and society as a whole benefit from efforts to develop educational opportunities. Equal opportunity, along with the growing demand for higher education graduates, could play a significant role in motivating persons to begin higher education studies.

Efforts relative to the social dimension must be seen in a comprehensive context of social responsibilities and aims. For example, some of the relevant financial and structural problems will call for close co-operation with responsible stakeholders in the school, social affairs, health, internal affairs, economic and financial sectors.

II. AS IS SITUATION (Current state of affairs)

1. Which groups in society are still underrepresented in your national higher education system? What are the main obstacles to participative equity in terms of access and successful completion of studies?

1.1. Students, by gender

In the 2006/2007 winter semester, a total of 54 % of all new students at universities were women, while 40 % of all new students at universities of applied sciences were women. With regard to access to higher education, gender-specific differences have been decreasing by comparison to the levels seen in the past. In the 2006/2007 winter semester, women accounted for a total of 47.8 % of all students (1993/1994: 40.2 %), for a total of 51.7 % of all students at universities and for a total of 37.9 % of all students at universities of applied sciences. At the same time, numbers of women, as a percentage share of all students, vary from subject group to subject group. For example, among students (new students) in the 2006/2007 winter semester, women accounted for a share of 70 % (74 %) of all students in linguistic and cultural sciences and a share of 20 % (21 %) of all students in engineering sciences.

The year 2006 was the first ever in which women outnumbered men among all students who completed higher education studies. As this result shows, the growing numbers of women who undertake higher education studies are being reflected among graduates. The percentages of women who go on for advanced degrees have also increased. Whereas in 2000 only 34 % of all doctoral degrees were earned by women, in 2007 the corresponding figure had increased to 42 %.

Reasons / challenges

In view of the growing numbers of women undertaking higher education studies, the following developments need to be monitored closely:

- The distribution of women throughout the various subject groups, and the resulting consequences for various societal trends (school sector, mathematics and science subjects);
- Numbers of women in master's and doctoral degree programmes.

1.2. Students by social background

Educational level of parents

In 2005, a total of 71% of all young adults who were between the ages of 19 and 25, and whose fathers had earned university degrees, commenced higher education studies. The corresponding figure was 19% for young adults with a father who had earned a secondary modern school qualification (Hauptschulabschluss). While parents with a university entrance qualification account for the smallest segment of each relevant age cohort, they send far and away the largest numbers of children to higher education institutions. In addition, social background has an impact on choices of types of higher

education institutions, on subject choices and on national and international mobility.

Of the 290,000 new German students in the 2005/2006 academic year, 17 % were children of civil servants, 20 % were children of self-employed people, 43 % were children of salaried employees and 20% were children of workers. By comparison to their share of their age cohort, children of civil servants are overrepresented at higher education institutions (9 % of the population, but 17 % of all new students). Children of self-employed persons account for 20 % of first-semester students, or 1 ½ times their percentage of their age cohort (13%). Children of salaried employees are also overrepresented – slightly (the relevant percentages are 43 % and 37 %).

Children of workers are the societal group that is significantly underrepresented in the group of all new students in 2005. Such children account for a share that is only half as large as their share of their total age cohort (the relevant percentages are 20% and 41 %).

In terms of background levels (a category that takes account of parents' highest general-education qualification, parents' highest vocational qualification and parents' occupations), in summer 2006 a total of 38% of all students came from the level "high", 24 % came from the level "moderately high" ("gehoben"), 25 % came from the level "average" ("mittel") and 13 % came from the level "low" ("niedrig"). Over the past 2 1/2 decades, the percentage share of students from the educational level background "high" has risen continually, while the share for students from the lower two educational level backgrounds has decreased.

Reasons / challenges

Disadvantages begin in childhood already. Financial issues in particular often prevent people from low-income, low-educational-level backgrounds from taking up higher education studies. In addition, orientation to other education pathways and professions – resulting, for example, from parents' own occupational backgrounds and patterns – plays a role in decisions on whether to take up higher education studies.

1.3. Students with migration backgrounds (including students who have earned their higher education entrance qualifications in Germany)

About 1/5 of the population in Germany, and one out of every three children younger than six, have migration backgrounds. At the same time, only 8% of the students at German higher education institutions have migration backgrounds. Of this group, 3 % are students who have earned their higher education entrance qualifications in Germany. For students with migration backgrounds, access to the tertiary educational sector depends significantly on social factors. A total of 41 % of all migrants in tertiary education come from lower social levels (the corresponding figure for students overall is 13 %). A total of 33% of all students with migration backgrounds receive

support under the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG). As a result, the BAföG-support rate for such students is higher than that for students overall, of which some 1/4 receive BAföG support. A total of 67 % of all students with migration backgrounds hold down jobs while they are pursuing their studies. That percentage figure is 4 % higher than the corresponding figure for students overall. As to the educational level of the 25-35-year age group, persons with migration backgrounds achieve lower success rates than Germans with regard to earning of higher education entrance qualifications (32.2 % as compared to 39.3% for Germans) and of higher education qualification (13.4 % as compared to 16.5% for Germans).

Reasons / challenges

The tracks leading to the educational participation of migrant-background students who grow up in Germany and then pursue their education within the country are defined primarily in the primary and secondary educational sectors. The reasons why potential students decide against taking up studies include parents' lack of education, or parents' occupational tradition; the attractiveness of alternative education programmes; concerns with regard to financing of studies; concerns with regard to the demands and workload imposed by studies, and a lack of adequate counselling and support.

1.4. Foreign students with higher education entrance qualifications earned abroad ("education foreigners")

A total of 76 % of the 250,000 foreign students in Germany in 2006 were "education foreigners". In terms of total numbers of foreign students, Germany ranks third worldwide, behind the U.S. and the UK. It has become well-established in the international education market as an attractive location for studies and research.

Germany is an open country that promotes mobility of German students and scientists to other countries and mobility of foreign students and scientists to Germany. In recent years, improvements in laws pertaining to residence have been introduced for foreigners.

Reasons / challenges

Challenges are seen especially with regard to study pathways, to rates of academic success and to counselling and support for foreign students. The pertinent difficulties include financing of studies; problems of finding proper orientation in the academic system; language problems; a lack of contact with the German population; problems in finding rooms and apartments; and limited opportunities for earning money. The central challenge remaining is to shape the relevant social framework and to ensure that an effective social infrastructure is in place for foreign students.

1.5 Students with handicaps and chronic diseases

In the 2006 summer semester, a total of 19 % of all students indicated they

had health problems. A total of 8 % of all students reported feeling that such problems hampered their studies.

Reasons / challenges

Students with health problems that hamper their studies interrupt their studies more frequently, and for longer periods of time, than do students without handicaps. Students with health problems are also more likely to switch major subjects or universities than are students without handicaps. Such students have significantly greater needs for counselling and support.

The sites in which higher education institutions are located often still present a wide range of obstacles to such students, including problems in areas such as access to buildings; opportunities for housing; teaching methods; availability of aids and resources; access to information; and mobility.

New obstacles arise via the more restrictive scheduling and formal requirements of the two-cycle degree programmes, as well as via the new procedures for admission to bachelor's and master's degree programmes.

Problems are encountered in financing of additional facilities and resources required by persons with handicaps, including financing of mandatory and voluntary internships. A diverse range of funding sources have responsibility for this group. This can hamper organisation of financing of studies and, thus, can prove to be an obstacle in commencement of studies.

What is more, stakeholders in the higher education sector have not yet become sufficiently sensitive to the needs of these students.

1.6 Students with children

In the 2006 summer semester, a total of 7 % of all students had children. The corresponding figure in 2003 was 6 %. A total of 5% of all students in their first period of studies have (at least) one child. Nearly half of all children of students in their first period of studies are no older than three.

Reasons / challenges

Problems for students with children result from a lack of part-time study programmes, from inflexibility in organisation of studies, from a lack of child care and from difficulties in financing of studies. Since students with children are four times as likely to interrupt their studies as are students without children, students with children need added support for recommencement of studies.

1.7 Vocationally qualified persons without formal higher education entrance qualifications

Only about 1 % of all students are vocationally qualified persons who lack

formal higher education entrance qualifications.

Reasons / challenges

The prerequisites and procedures whereby vocationally qualified persons can obtain access to higher education vary throughout the Länder. In addition, practical problems arise in crediting vocational achievements toward studies.

Graduates of the "second-chance educational pathway" (Zweiter Bildungsweg), and vocationally qualified persons, can encounter problems in financing their studies. BAföG support is provided for students who are not older than 30 when they commence their studies, although some exceptions apply.

2. Please describe what measures your Government is taking to increase the representation of the groups identified in the question above. Please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document).

Aspects of the social dimension have been taken into account in numerous measures enacted by the Federal Government and the Länder and by other stakeholders within the Bologna process. Examples of such consideration include efforts being made in the school sector to assure the educational success of all social groups; and implementation of the National Integration Plan approved in 2007, which includes measures for promoting young people with migration backgrounds in all phases of their training and education.

In addition, all measures in the higher education sector that promote the feasibility of bachelor's and master's degree programmes, that support mobility and that assure quality can be considered measures that make higher education more attractive also for social groups that have been underrepresented in the past.

The measures aimed at all students and potential students include

- Increasing numbers of available study places, via the Higher Education Pact 2020 and corresponding programmes of the Länder;
- Provision of transparent, simplified admission procedures for vocationally qualified persons;
- Provision of options for crediting skills acquired outside of higher education to higher education studies (up to 50 %);
- Provision of suitable services and counselling / advising prior to studies, and in all phases of studies;
- Provision of subject-related and socially oriented advising and additional support, also with regard to financing;
- Enhancement of opportunities for support via the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG); provision of loans for financing tuition fees and study-

related expenses; implementation of criteria for granting exemptions in connection with loan repayment (BAföG and tuition-related loans);

- Enshrinement of handicap-compensation provisions for students with handicaps and chronic diseases, in admission to higher education and in various phases of studies; and review of handicap-compensation provisions in the framework of accreditation;
- Improvement of the structural and organisational framework for studies, also with consideration of the needs of students in special life situations; strengthening of vocationally relevant skills;
- Promotion of mobility, via efforts including provision of grants and promotion of integrated study programmes;
- Establishment and expansion of career services, with the aims of reinforcing a practical orientation during studies, imparting workplace-relevant qualifications and supporting transitions into the workplace;
- Support of associations for the promotion of the gifted, as well as of agencies working to internationalise studies, science and research.

The ongoing measures that are aimed at selected groups include the following:

- Students by gender (cf. 1.1)

Schools and higher education institutions are co-operating intensively in efforts to awaken further interest in studies, especially studies in MINT subjects (mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, technology). Such efforts include project weeks, "Girls' Days", summer workshops, pupils' societies, open houses, exploratory courses, pupils' laboratories, pupils' computer centres, training and further training courses, pupils' competitions in mathematics, physics and natural sciences, establishment of Internet platforms and education portals, and development of self-tests that can be downloaded from the Internet.

- Students by social background (cf. 1.2)

The measures being carried out in this area include early provision of information to parents and young people, regarding opportunities for studies and for relevant support; special support for school pupils; financial aid programmes for higher education; socially oriented structuring of fees (where fees are levied), via introduction of socially oriented exemption criteria and/or repayment options for loans; improvement of opportunities for mobility between vocational and academic education (access to higher education for vocationally qualified persons; crediting of relevant past achievements).

- Students with migration backgrounds (cf. 1.3)

This effort is seeking to increase educational participation by approaching children directly in pre-school and school. Options for migrant-specific support in support for education and for gifted students have been expanded; since January 2007, persons seeking such support can apply directly to associations for the promotion of the gifted. Under the 22nd Act for amendment of the Federal

Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG), as of 1 January 2008 students with migration backgrounds, including both students with higher education entrance qualifications earned in Germany and students with higher education entrance qualifications earned abroad ("education foreigners"), have easier access to BAföG support. The main criterion on which support is now based is whether applicants have options, within their status under residence laws, for long-term residence in Germany. In addition, private foundations have been playing a growing role in supporting young people with migration backgrounds. The Academics Programme (Akademikerprogramm; AKP), in conjunction with the Federal Government's "Berufsrückkehrer/innen" project, a pilot project for persons re-entering the labour force, offers supplementary qualification programmes for migrants with higher education qualifications.

- Students with higher education entrance qualifications earned abroad ("education foreigners") (cf. 1.4)

The emphasis in this effort is on counselling and support, with the aim of intensifying information provision and of enhancing integration. Intercultural Competence (Interkulturelle Kompetenz), a service centre that is housed within the Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW; umbrella organisation of the Studentenwerke student services organisations) and that is supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), supports student services organisations in their efforts to enhance the quality of services and counselling and to provide a hospitable framework for international students. It does so by offering counselling, information and publications, as well as training courses for promoting intercultural skills. It thus helps to intensify interaction between foreign students and German students.

The existing services and counselling programmes for international students include: a services package for new students; contact and sponsor programmes; student tutorials; assistance for persons in difficult financial situations; and advising and support programmes, including efforts using multi-lingual Web sites and intercultural programmes. "Studienkollegs" (programmes providing special preparatory courses) play an important role in integration of foreign students, in imparting key qualifications and, thus, in shortening the time foreign students need to complete their studies.

- Students with handicaps and with chronic diseases (cf. 1.5)

All higher education institutions have the task of ensuring that students with handicaps suffer no discrimination and are able to pursue their studies with little or no outside assistance. In addition, regulations for examinations must take account of the special needs of students with handicaps, to ensure that such students receive equal opportunity (Federal Framework Act on Higher Education (HGR) higher education acts of the Länder). A total of six Länder now have legal provisions in place calling for the appointment of commissioners for the needs of students with handicaps and with chronic diseases. Deutsche Studentenwerk's "Studies and Handicaps Information and Counselling Centre" ("Informations- und Beratungsstelle Studium und Behinderung"; IBS), which operates nation-wide,

adds to the available information and counselling. In addition, IBS, in co-operation with other experts, represents the interests of students with handicaps to the policy and administration sectors.

As of January 2008, study programmes are eligible for accreditation only if the pertinent examination regulations explicitly take account of the needs of students with handicaps, in connection with studies and examinations.

- Students with children (cf. 1.6)

Under the 22nd Act for amendment of the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG) of 23 December 2007, BAföG-support recipients who have at least one child that has not yet turned 10 are eligible to receive a monthly, non-repayable child-support allowance of € 113 for their first child and of € 85 for each additional child.

Pregnant women and female students taking maternal leaves normally have the option of taking leaves of absence. By agreement with the responsible examination authorities, women who are pregnant or who are rearing small children can obtain extensions of the time within which they must complete their examinations. Similar extensions are normally available for examination "free attempts" ("Freiversuche"). Higher education institutions, students' associations, authorities for youth affairs, student government organisations and commissioners for equality (Gleichstellungsbeauftragte) all offer counselling and support. Nation-wide, students' associations maintain some 180 day-care facilities for children, with total space for about 5,500 children. University service offices for parents provide assistance for university staff and guest scientists and academics.

Along with BAföG-based support and housing allowances, parental and child benefits are available.

The "Family-friendly University" ("Familiengerechte Hochschule") audit has been available since 2002. The audit is offered under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSJ) and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWV), and it is supported by the European Social Fund. The audit covers existing measures for helping people to balance their work and family life, and it identifies opportunities for expanding such support. Practical implementation at audited institutions is reviewed annually. Numerous higher education institutions have already earned the audit seal.

In September 2007, the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs (BMVBS), working in co-operation with the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Centre for Higher Education Development (Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung; CHE), launched the "Family at Universities" ("Familie in der Hochschule") competition. The competition will provide up to € 100,000, over a two-year period, to each of eight higher education institutions. The effort is designed to encourage higher education institutions to become more family-friendly and to make it easier for students to balance studies and family life.

The Federal Government's report on families (Familienbericht) regularly reports on the situations of students with children.

- Vocationally qualified persons without formal higher education entrance qualifications (cf. 1.7)

Procedures for giving vocationally qualified persons access to higher education are to become simpler and more transparent.

Work is currently underway on practical instruments for crediting previous work completed outside of higher education toward higher education studies (up to 50 % of a programme) (the ANKOM pilot project).

3. Describe what measures are being taken by the Government to help students complete their studies without obstacles related to their social or economic background. Again, please refer to the possible actions listed in the Bologna Working Group report on the Social Dimension and Mobility (see Annexes A and B to this document). Please indicate whether the measures apply to all students or only to certain levels or types of higher education institutions.

A majority of the measures listed under II.2 are also measures for ensuring academic success (structural and organisational framework, financing, counselling and other assistance). The reader's attention is thus called to II.2. Specific financial aid that continues through to the end of study programmes is provided both under the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG; assistance is income-dependent) and via the Federal Government's loan programme (assistance is income-independent).

4. Does your country have statistical and/or other research evidence at disposal to underpin the identification of underrepresented groups and the main obstacles to participative equity (see Q 1) ? If yes, please specify. Or are regular student survey organised with the aim to provide data concerning the social dimension?

Statistical data and pertinent explanatory information are regularly collected and made available in Germany. Examples of such efforts include:

- The social surveys of Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW; umbrella organisation of the Studentenwerke student services organisations) relative to the economic and social situation of students, and pertinent special analyses;

The social surveys ("Sozialerhebungen") have been carried out for over 50 years, at three-year intervals. They provide a comprehensive picture of the social and economic situation of students in Germany. The continuity of the surveys makes long-term comparisons possible. As a whole, the time series in the chapter on education participation ("Bildungsbeteiligung") are one of the most important indicators of changes in equal opportunity in higher education access. Two special analyses appeared in connection with the 2007 Social Survey, which was the 18th such survey: "Students with children" ("Studieren mit Kind"); "Internationalisation of studies – foreign students in Germany and German students abroad" ("Internationalisierung des Studiums – ausländische Studierende in Deutschland und deutsche Studierende im Ausland"). The data collected via these efforts also serve as the basis for EUROSTUDENT, an

international comparative study that provides key information relative to the further design of the social dimension of the European Higher Education Area.

- Education in Germany

"Education in Germany" ("Bildung in Deutschland") is an independent experts' report that is prepared every two years, under commission to the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) and to the BMBF, by an interdisciplinary team of researchers under the leadership of the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF). The report's main focus in 2008 was on the transitions in the education sector. The 2006 report provided indicators and an analysis relative to education and immigration. The reporting on the education sector is part of a comprehensive monitoring system that also includes comparisons of scholastic achievement – such as PISA – and contributions provided by education research.

- Publications of HIS GmbH

The firm of HIS GmbH regularly conducts surveys of persons with higher education entrance qualifications, as well as surveys of students and of graduates. It also carries out studies of special issues. Examples of such studies include "Academic biographies of foreign students" ("Studienverlauf im Ausländerstudium"; HIS 2004); "Aspects of internationalisation of German higher education institutions" ("Aspekte der Internationalisierung deutscher Hochschulen"; HIS 2007); "Trends in the study-termination rate at German higher education institutions" ("Die Entwicklung der Studienabbruchquote an den deutschen Hochschulen"; HIS 2008).

- Regular publications of the Federal Statistical Office and of the Länder statistical offices (such as "Higher education institutions at a glance" ("Hochschulen auf einen Blick"); "Students at higher education institutions" ("Studierende an Hochschulen"); "Examinations at higher education institutions" ("Prüfungen an Hochschulen"); "Non-monetary index statistics for higher education institutions" ("Nichtmonetäre hochschulstatistische Kennzahlen");
- In addition, Germany participates in relevant international comparative studies, and it publishes the results of its own supplementary national surveys (PISA, OECD);
- The task of developing the education system necessitates solidly founded empirical education research. The Federal Government's framework programme for promotion of empirical education research supports measures for structural reinforcement of such research, and it promotes thematically focused research emphases. The programme has been developed in close co-operation with the Länder and with the science sector. The Federal Government and the Länder also plan to co-operate closely in implementation of the framework programme.
- The long-term study "Study situation and student orientation" ("Studiensituation und studentische Orientierung"), at universities and universities of applied sciences:

Ongoing monitoring, since the 1982/1983 winter semester, of trends in the situation (for studies) at German higher education institutions. Relevant surveys are carried out at intervals of 2 to 3 years. The 10th survey of students was

carried out in the 2006/2007 winter semester, and the results were published in August 2008.

III. PROCESS TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM (strategy for the future)

5. How do you plan to tackle the challenges identified under Q 1 in the near future (2008-2010)?

(a) Which concrete goals do you want to achieve?

Goals:

- 1. Increase the relevant percentages of people who have higher education entrance qualifications and increase the rate of new students to 40 %, via measures that include increasing participation of students from educationally and economically disadvantaged households and of students with migrant backgrounds;
- 2. Improve the structural and organisational framework for studies, also with consideration of the needs of students in special life situations;
- 3. Increase rates of academic success;
- 4. Enhance access to higher education for vocationally qualified persons without formal higher education entrance qualifications;
- 5. Ensure that long-term financing for studies is available;
- 6. Strengthen the social infrastructure;
- 7. Work to make schools, parents, higher education institutions, the public and – especially – young people aware of the importance of education and of the occupational opportunities that a higher education degree can provide;
- 8. Increase the percentages of new female students in MINT subjects.

(b) What actions are planned for the different target group identified above to overcome the obstacles in access, participation and completion of studies by students? Please refer to Annex B and to the suggested approach outlined in the 2007 report from the Bologna Process Working Group on the Social Dimension and Mobility (Annex C to this document).

In a first step, efforts should be concentrated on continuing the measures described under II.2 and II.3 and on reinforcing them if necessary. In addition, the following measures are planned:

- Implementation of the Qualification Initiative for Germany – and, especially continuation of the Higher Education Pact; implementation of measures for facilitating transitions between vocational training and higher education institutions; restructuring of the Central office for the allocation of study places in

higher education (Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen; ZVS), to produce a highly effective services agency that would begin operations as of the 09/10 winter semester and that would help make use of the available study places more efficient.

- Since July 2008, vocationally qualified persons are eligible to apply for grants oriented to promotion. Grants for full-time studies provide a monthly allowance of € 650, plus a book allowance of € 80. For studies they carry out along in parallel with their regular occupations, students receive an annual allowance of € 1,700. A first group of 1,000 grantees are to be admitted into the programme by the end of 2009.
- In June 2008, a pact aimed at increasing numbers of women in MINT occupations ("Come on, do MINT" ("Komm, mach MINT!")) was launched by a group of 40 partners from the areas of industry, science and policy-making. The effort's immediate aim is to increase the numbers of new women students who major in science and technology.
- Information campaign of the "Pathways into studies" ("Wege ins Studium") network, aimed at encouraging people to take up higher education studies;
- Expansion, with quality assurance, of counselling and support for all students, especially for students in special life situations and for foreign students. Student services play an important role in these areas. The DAAD's programmes also fulfil an important function for foreign students.
- Reinforcement of students' own sense of responsibility; intensified provision of information about existing services (exercises, tutorials, orientational events, events for examination preparation);
- Intensified consideration of the needs of students in special life situations, in connection with admissions, workloads and examinations – and also in the framework of accreditation of study programmes and of system accreditation of higher education institutions;
- Efforts to make higher education institutions more aware of the specific needs of students in special life situations – such as students with children, and students with handicaps / chronic diseases;
- Review of any need for action with regard to the situation, under employment law and residence law, of foreign students and graduates;
- Increasing of flexibility in organisation of studies; expansion of programmes for part-time study; and review of the necessary framework conditions for such efforts;
- Ongoing evaluation and review of relevant impacts, with respect to specific target groups, and of any need to make adjustments in laws governing support and assistance for education and training;
- Adjustment of the Federal Government's education-loan programme to the needs of students;
- Expansion of integrated studies programmes, in the interest of promoting mobility;

- Analysis of studies of the reasons why students discontinue their studies, with a focus on both foreign and German students;
- Efforts to encourage higher education institutions to credit previous work and achievements toward higher education studies, to the extent possible (up to 50 %);
- Establishment and expansion of career centres.

(c) Is there a specific budget for these measures for underrepresented groups ? If yes, please provide details.

Because of the differences in responsibilities involved, there is no separate budget for implementation of the action plan. Federal, Länder and municipal budgets include funding for that purpose. What is more, a majority of the relevant measures are supported by all stakeholders.

d) Is there a timeline for action? If yes, please provide details.

For a number of goals and measures mentioned above a timeframe has been agreed upon in the Qualification initiative for Germany.

6. What arrangements are planned for monitoring progress towards more equitable access, participation and success?

Further trends and developments will be made known via a range of measures, including continuation of the statistical surveys and publications, as listed under 4., of the Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW; umbrella organisation of the Studentenwerke student services organisations) and of HIS-GmbH, and continued publication of results of empirical education research. In addition, education reporting of the Federal Government and the Länder will be continued. Additional topic-specific special assessments will accompany the regular social surveys of the DSW.

Trends in financial support for education are a focus of the Federal Government's reports, which appear at two-year intervals, to the Bundestag and Bundesrat (upper and lower houses of parliament).

In addition, relevant trends are being monitored in the framework of Bologna-Process reporting (national reports); of country reports for the European Union and the OECD, on education and social issues; in international comparisons of scholastic achievement and in supplementary national surveys; and in reports for the German Bundestag and for the Länder parliaments. In addition, stakeholders are monitoring implementation of measures relative to equal opportunity participation, along with the success of such measures.

IV. INFORMATION ON THE NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PREPARATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGIES

Please indicate which authority or other actor is responsible for the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the national strategy and describe the way in which the various stakeholders are involved. Did your country designate (a) contact point(s) for the national strategy? If so, please add the coordinates of the national contact point(s).

The responsibility for the "Social Dimension" action plan lies with the Federal Government and the Länder.

The plan was prepared, with the participation of all Bologna-Process stakeholders, by a sub- working group of the national Bologna Follow-up Group.

The various individual measures within the plan are being implemented by the Federal Government, the Länder and by other Bologna Process stakeholders, in each case in keeping with participants' responsibility.

The Federal Government and the Länder are responsible for pertinent evaluation. The Federal Government and the Länder plan to continue such evaluation, with the participation of stakeholders, within the framework of reporting on progress in implementation of Bologna-Process goals.

The contact persons for the action plan are
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Ministerialdirigent Dr. Birger Hendriks, Schleswig-Holstein