



European  
Commission

# Developing the Adult Learning Sector

***LOT 3: OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS***

***Contract EAC 2012-0074***

***Final Report***

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## Prepared by

Karin Dollhausen (co-authors: Susanne Lattke, Felicia Scheliga)

Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen e.V.  
German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning

Andrä Wolter (co-authors: Anna Spexard, Johannes Geffers, Ulf Banscheraus)

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Philosophische Fakultät IV, Institut für  
Erziehungswissenschaften, Abteilung Hochschulforschung

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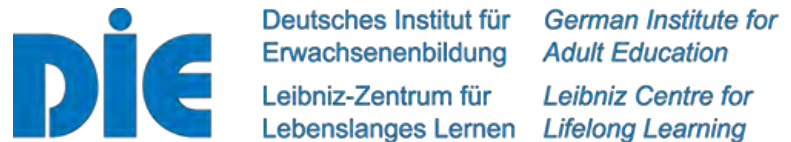
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## Contractors



Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz  
Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen e.V.

German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for  
Lifelong Learning

Heinemannstraße 12-14

53175 Bonn, Germany

T +49 (0)228 3294-121

F +49 (0)228 3294-4121

Email: [dollhausen@die-bonn.de](mailto:dollhausen@die-bonn.de)

URL: [www.die-bonn.de](http://www.die-bonn.de)

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Philosophische Fakultät  
IV, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften, Abteilung  
Hochschulforschung

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Faculty of Arts and  
Humanities IV, Department for Education Studies,  
Section for Higher Education Research

Unter den Linden 6

10099 Berlin

T +49 (0)30 2093-1856

F +49 (0)30 2093-1929

Email: [andrae.wolter@hu-berlin.de](mailto:andrae.wolter@hu-berlin.de)

URL: [www.ewi.hu-berlin.de/hsf/](http://www.ewi.hu-berlin.de/hsf/)

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# 1 Introduction

Increasingly rapid technological change, globalisation, decreasing job tenure periods, and demographic trends have put the need to provide adults with opportunities to enhance their skills high on the political agenda.

According to CEDEFOP (2010, 2011)<sup>1</sup>, the share of highly qualified jobs in Europe will increase from 29 per cent in 2010 to about 35 per cent by 2020. In the same period, the share of jobs requiring low qualifications will decrease from 20 per cent to less than 15 per cent. Given the effects of the current economic crisis on labour markets and employment rates, and given the increasing average age of participants in the labour market, it becomes even more obvious that people need to raise their level of qualification in order to remain employable, especially after phases of unemployment. In the *Europe 2020* strategy for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth<sup>2</sup>, adult learning and skills development are widely acknowledged as key elements in addressing the economic and social challenges of the European Union. In particular, opening higher education to broader student groups, including those who have not previously engaged in studies at this level, is seen as being crucial. One headline target set out in the *Europe 2020* strategy is to boost the share of the population aged 30-34 who have completed tertiary or equivalent education to 40 per cent by 2020.

Higher education institutions are therefore facing new demands in their role as providers of lifelong learning and, in particular, adult education. This raises questions regarding the extent to which higher education is currently open to adult learners, and regarding the need to identify effective and efficient possibilities for policy action. The present study on the *Opening Higher Education to Adults* (HEAD) is devoted to those questions.

The study refers to the need of building the lifelong learning society by allowing people to acquire key competences and update their skills throughout their lives, in subjects of their own choice and at times and places of their convenience.<sup>3</sup> Creating education and training systems (including higher education systems) that will be more responsive to change, more flexible and open to the needs of learners, other stakeholders, and to the community at large, is a major challenge for professionals and policy makers alike. This requires appropriate information, analysis, and advice.

Within this context, the HEAD study provides key data and information on current developments in the higher education sector. Special attention is given to the analysis of

- the extent to which national and regional lifelong learning policies, including higher education and adult education policies, and legislation, as well as institutional policies and missions, enable adult access to higher education,
- good practice concerning the strategies and work of higher education institutions in the development of flexible access arrangements and flexible programme provisions, student services and support, teacher training, and the adoption of new teaching methods,

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<sup>1</sup> CEDEFOP (2010): Skills supply and demand in Europe. Medium term forecast up to 2020. Luxembourg; CEDEFOP (2011): Labour market polarisation and elementary occupations in Europe. Luxembourg

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2011): EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. (COM 2010) 2020 final. Brussels

<sup>3</sup> See Trow, M.A. (2010): Twentieth-Century Higher Education: Elite to Mass to Universal. Baltimore

- the variety of solutions regarding financial provisions at the national level which stimulate adult participation in higher education,
- emerging trends in higher education institutions that facilitate their role as economic, cultural, and social players, such as intensified cooperation with other stakeholders and institutional activities to develop programme provisions for adults in response to the demands of the labour market.

The main empirical basis of the study is built by case studies of higher education institutions and programmes from 15 European and 5 non-European countries and 15 country reports from the European countries the study covers. The empirical basis was prepared by a network of national experts from higher education and adult education research and professional practice.

The conclusions and recommendations drawn from the study should help policy makers make informed choices for future policy activities concerning the development of the adult education sector.



## 2 Study Design

The present study is one of three studies launched by the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) with the aim to support the European Commission by improving background knowledge with a view to planning future cooperation activities and development of the adult learning sector. Each of the three studies covers a key area of development: quality in adult education (lot 1), financing adult education (lot 2), and opening higher education to adults (lot 3).<sup>4</sup>

The overall objective of the present study is to improve and to extend the available knowledge on provisions for adults in higher education, which helps the European Commission to plan future activities to provide support to opening up higher education especially to those who have not been previously engaged in studies at that level. According to the terms of reference, the specific aims of the study are

- to identify the main factors impacting on the participation of adult learners in higher education,
- to identify models for the flexible delivery of higher education programmes and for regulatory frameworks and financial provisions at the national level to facilitate this process,
- to map higher education institutions engaged in adult education (notably through research on flexible learning provisions to facilitate the participation of adult learners),
- to draw conclusions and recommendations for action to be taken at the European, national, and regional levels.

The study starts with the notion that opening higher education to adults is essential to foster lifelong learning in the way it has been conceptualised in the European Union,<sup>5</sup> and indeed worldwide.<sup>6</sup> In particular, the HEAD study is concerned with 'good practices' of widening adult access to higher education and of developing higher education opportunities for adults inside and outside Europe, this with a focus on flexible access arrangements, flexible programme provisions in higher education institutions, and the flexible delivery of such provision.

The main results of the study include

- a description of lifelong learning, higher education, and adult policy and legislation at the national and regional levels, on specific institutional policies and missions, and on financial provisions at the national level to facilitate the process of opening higher education to adults,
- thematically structured in-depth analyses of 20 good practice examples in the area of flexible delivery of higher education programmes and learning provisions for adult learners, including open and distance learning, which are conducive to good adult learner performance and participation in higher education,

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<sup>4</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture (2011): Public open tender EAC/26/2011. Developing the adult learning sector. Brussels  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/doc3032\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/calls/doc3032_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. European Commission (2000). Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. Brussels; European Commission (2001). Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality. Brussels.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. OECD (1996). Lifelong Learning for All. Paris; UNESCO (1996). Learning: The Treasure Within. Paris.

- a detailed description and analysis of factors that facilitate or inhibit participation of adult learners in higher education,
- a mapping of research being undertaken in higher education institutions related to the flexible delivery of higher education programmes and flexible learning provisions within higher education institutions,
- conclusions and recommendations on action to be taken at the European, national, and regional levels to stimulate the participation of adult learners in higher education, based on the outcomes of the study.

## 2.1 Relation to other studies

The HEAD study is meant to complement existing reports, studies, and surveys, especially at European level, concerned with opening higher education to adults in the wider context of lifelong learning.

A review of the pertinent literature shows that the issue has become a central concern in European and international comparative higher education and adult education research during the last decade. Particularly in the past few years, the number of research publications on the topic has increased substantially. A significant part of the European-level research was initiated in the course of the Bologna process and with the support of the European Commission and Eurydice. Similarly, international research perspectives on developments in the higher education sector are often funded by global organisations such as OECD<sup>7</sup> and UNESCO.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, European and international comparative research that could contribute 'independent' empirical findings aside from theoretical reasoning is still few and far between.

The HEAD study builds on findings of reports and studies that deliver relevant aggregated data and information on the key issues treated in this study. Fruitful sources are, for example,

- Adults Learning and Participating in Education (ALPINE)<sup>9</sup>
- Benchmarking Flexibility in the Bologna Reforms (BeFlex)<sup>10</sup>
- Pre-study on the role of higher education institutions as providers of continuous professional learning and adult education delivered by the DG Education and Culture<sup>11</sup>.
- Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies (SIRUS)<sup>12</sup>
- Bologna Process Stocktaking Report 2009<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. OECD (2009): Higher Education to 2030 – Vol. 2: Globalisation. Paris

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. UNESCO (2009): UNESCO Global Report on Adult Education and Learning. Hamburg; Scott, P. (2009): Access in higher Education in Europe and North America: Trends and Developments. *Topical Contributions and Outcomes: UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the European Region*. Bucharest

<sup>9</sup> Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.) (2004): Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe, Bern

<sup>10</sup> Davies, P. (2007). The Bologna Process and University Lifelong Learning: State of Play and Future Directions. Barcelona.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture/GHK (2011): Pre-study on the role of higher education institutions as providers of continuous professional learning and adult education. Brussels

<sup>12</sup> Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011): Engaging in Lifelong Learning. Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies. Brussels

- The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report<sup>14</sup>
- Eurydice study on the modernisation of higher education in Europe<sup>15</sup>
- Eurydice study on adults in formal education<sup>16</sup>
- EUROSTUDENT IV report<sup>17</sup>.

The study also recognises information from reports and case studies generated as part of international, academic comparative studies, i.e. research publications such as<sup>18</sup>:

- Higher Education and Lifelong Learners (2000)
- Higher Education, Non-Traditional Students and Lifelong Learners in Industrialized Countries (2003)
- Experiences of Non-Traditional Students in European Higher Education: Cultural and Institutional Perspectives (2010)
- Global Perspectives in Higher Education and Lifelong Learners (2013).

The above-mentioned reports, studies, and research publications are but a selection of the huge number of available research and should be read as examples indicating the knowledge base on which the HEAD study builds.

The present study's two 'sister' studies, also commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General Education and Culture, are important to the present study as well, but with a different emphasis. Because both of the other studies deal with aspects that are immediately relevant to the topic of opening higher education to adult learners – that is, quality assurance and financing – the research presented in the HEAD study with regard to these aspects has been limited to avoid redundancies. Yet we will discuss financial and quality issues where they are important for understanding the challenge of opening higher education to adults.

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<sup>13</sup> Andrejs Rauhvargers, Cynthia Deane & Wilfried Pauwels (2009): Bologna Process Stocktaking Report. Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve

<sup>14</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

<sup>15</sup> Eurydice (2011): Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe. Funding and the Social Dimension. Brussels

<sup>16</sup> Eurydice (2011): Adults in Formal Education: Policies and practice in Europe. Brussels

<sup>17</sup> Orr, D., Gwosc, C. & Netz, N. (2011): Social and Economic Conditions of Student life in Europe: Synopsis of Indicators. Final Report. Eurostudent IV 2008-2011. Bielefeld

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Schuetze, H.G. & Slowey, M. (eds.) (2000): Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. London; Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-Traditional Students and Lifelong Learners in Industrialized Countries. In: Das Hochschulwesen. Heft 5, S. 183-189; Merrill, B., Armstrong, P., Alheit, P., Schoemer, F., Rheinlander, K., Bron, A., Thunborg, C., Nizinska, A., Kurantowicz, E., Field, J., Morgan-Klein, N., West, L., Monteaguedo, J.G., Ballesteros, M.A., Finnegan, F. & Fleming, T. (2010): Experiences of Non-Traditional Students in European Higher Education: Cultural and Institutional Perspectives. Wroclaw; Slowey, M. & Schuetze H.G. (eds.) (2012): Global Perspectives in Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. London/New York

## 2.2 Terms and concepts

The HEAD study works with key terms and concepts to ensure a common basis of understanding.

### ***Higher education and higher education institutions***

There is considerable variation in education systems and the post-compulsory educational sectors across Europe and worldwide. As a consequence, the terms *higher education* and *higher education institutions* are most probably associated with different programmes and institutions in the European and non-European countries covered here.<sup>19</sup> This is especially true when it comes to identifying higher education as part of the lifelong learning continuum. Higher education may be associated with both 'regular' or mainstream higher education programmes and traditional institutions (e.g. universities) and special university-based continuing education options, other professional learning at the post-secondary level, as well as new types of higher education institutions (e.g. professional schools, open universities, institutions providing distance learning). The present study recognises this variety, particularly with regard to the emerging relevance of provision designed to prepare and facilitate access to higher education programmes (e.g. preparatory and bridging courses). However, due to our central concern with 'opening' higher education to adults, the focus of interest here is higher education in a more narrow sense. To establish a common basis of understanding in this respect, therefore, we define higher education as encompassing programmes and institutions licensed to provide programmes at levels 5A, 5B, and 6 according to the *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)*.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Adult learners in higher education***

Given the variety of national higher education systems and the related variety of understandings of 'adults' in higher education, it is important to clarify what we mean by the term *adults* in the context of higher education. Statistical surveys identify 'adult' learners by referring to the criterion of 'maturity' (mostly 25 to 30 years of age) at the time of enrolment, compared to the average age of entering higher education. However, the age criterion does not reflect the qualitative dimension of being an 'adult learner' in the sense of a 'lifelong learner'<sup>21</sup> in higher education. A more appropriate definition is provided in the *ALPINE* study, which defines adult learners in higher education as learners entering higher education after a period of being non-involved in formal education in order 'to develop skills and knowledge for work, for personal development or for social and community development'<sup>22</sup>. A more complex typology of adult learners in higher education, taking into account their biographical

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<sup>19</sup> See Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.) (2004): *Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe*. Oxford et al., p.12

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO (1997): *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*. Montreal

<sup>21</sup> Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H.G. (2012): *Global Perspectives in Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London/New York

<sup>22</sup> Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.) (2004): *Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe*, Bern, pp.13-14

situation and their typical preferences for particular modes of study, is provided by Slowey and Schuetze.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, 'adults' in higher education

- are mostly older than 25 years at the time of enrolment,
- come from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education,
- enter higher education after a period of biographical discontinuity after initial education,
- enter higher education via alternative admission procedures, e.g. via recognition of prior learning and/or work experience,
- prefer flexible modes of study over the rigid schedules of regular study programmes,
- combine participation in higher education with continuing professional development, often initiated in partnership with their employers,
- select specialist higher education institutions, such as open universities, or special units within public higher education institutions, e.g. Universities of the Third Age.

Where necessary, this typology serves within HEAD to

- a) differentiate 'adults', i.e. 'non-traditional students' or 'lifelong learners', from 'traditional' full-time students who enter higher education directly after leaving initial education via regular entrance procedures,
- b) raise awareness of the fact that 'adults' in higher education are a heterogeneous group with diverse needs and requirements concerning access, higher education provision, student services and support, and financial provisions,
- c) take into account that national and institutional policies, strategies, and activities to expand adult access to higher education might not aim at including adult learners in general but at targeting only specific subgroups of adult learners.

### ***Flexibility in higher education***

Our basic assumption is that the process of opening higher education to adults mainly depends on the extent to which flexibility in a higher education system is enabled. The OECD,<sup>24</sup> for instance, recently recommended that countries review the extent to which 'the tertiary education system is contributing effectively to lifelong learning and assess the flexibility of the system' (p.8).

The nexus of opening higher education and flexibilisation has been widely acknowledged in lifelong learning, higher education, and adult education policy in Europe and worldwide. It was most prominently featured at the 1998 *UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education*.<sup>25</sup> The foreword to the final report notes:

It is now clear that, to fulfil its mission, higher education must change radically, by becoming organically flexible, and at the same time more diverse in its institutions, its structures, its curricula, and the nature and forms of its programmes and delivery systems (p.2)

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<sup>23</sup> Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. G. (2012): All change – no change? Lifelong learners and higher education revisited. In: Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H.G. (eds.): *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London and New York, pp. 15-16

<sup>24</sup> OECD (2011): *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society: Pointers for Policy Development*. Paris

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO (1998): *World Conference on Higher Education. Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century. Vision and Action. Vol. I. Final Report*. Paris

Likewise, European adult learning policy has identified flexible provision as one of the main elements needed to attract more adult learners to higher education. This was stated at the final conference on the first *Adult Learning Action Plan*,<sup>26</sup> held in Budapest in March 2011. Above all, the Council of the European Union, in its *Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning*<sup>27</sup>, has called on member states to focus on promoting flexible learning pathways for adults, including broader access to higher education for those lacking mainstream access qualifications, and on diversifying the spectrum of adult learning opportunities offered by higher education institutions.

We use the term *flexibility* in line with the definitions provided by the *Bologna Process Implementation Report*,<sup>28</sup> and the study on *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education*<sup>29</sup>, delivered by the European University Association (EUA), and findings from academic research.<sup>30</sup> Flexibility indicates the extent to which higher education systems and institutions enable adult access and promote re-entering higher education during the adult years. Flexibility is closely linked to the following questions: To what extent are higher education systems and institutions prepared to accommodate people from a non-traditional background? To what extent do they offer alternative routes to higher education helping adults progress through higher education cycles according to their needs? Furthermore, flexible organisation (e.g. modular programmes and credit accumulation) and flexible programme delivery (e.g. part-time, open and distance learning) are important. Above all, flexibility refers to those kinds of programme provision, support services, and teaching methods that are designed to foster adults' motivation, persistence, and achievement in higher education. Here, the HEAD study is based on a definition of flexible provision and learning provided by the *European Adult Learning Glossary*<sup>31</sup>, where flexible learning is defined as 'education and training that responds to learners' needs and preferences. Flexible learning offers learners choices about how, where and when they learn.'

## 2.3 Geographical coverage

The terms of reference for the present study require the coverage of a representative range of countries among the 27 EU Member States, the EFTA countries, and the accession candidate countries. When selecting the countries to be covered, and after intensive online and literature-based research, we found that the leading selection criterion should be the variety of national higher education systems, strategies, and structures to foster the opening

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<sup>26</sup> See <http://adultlearning-budapest2011.teamwork.fr/>

<sup>27</sup> Council of the European Union (2011): Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning. Brussels

<sup>28</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

<sup>29</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and challenges for policy makers and institutional leaders. Brussels

<sup>30</sup> Slowey, M., Schuetze, H.G. (2012): Afterword: A look around the corner. In: Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H.G. (eds.): Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. London/New York, p 282; Schuetze, H.G. & Slowey, M. (2000): Traditions and New Directions in Higher Education – A Comparative Perspective on Non-Traditional Students and Lifelong Learners. In: Schuetze H.G. & Slowey, M. (eds.) Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. International Perspectives on Change. London, pp. 3-24

<sup>31</sup> NRDC (2010): Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector. European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2. (Call Number: EAC 11/2008), p.24

of higher education to adults. Therefore, after consulting with the contracting body, we decided to include a critical number of European countries that show substantial variety in their higher education systems and national strategies to open higher education to adults. Accordingly, we selected the following countries covered in the HEAD study: Austria, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, the terms of reference require an in-depth analysis of examples of good practice to be part of the study. In addition to 15 examples from the selected European countries, the terms of reference require five further cases from non-European countries. The following countries from different continents were selected for this purpose: Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, and the United States.

## **2.4 Methodology**

The methodological approach of the HEAD study was chosen with respect to the results to be achieved and the research and analyses to be carried out. From the start it was clear that the work to be done would involve a mix of desk research and analyses based on existing sources, partly supplemented by additional fieldwork. That is why we opted for an approach consisting of three work phases, which reflect the required reporting structure. Each phase combines a number of tasks (see appendix A). Moreover, we recognised from the start that conducting the research and analyses within the HEAD study would require the collaborative effort of a network of national experts from different European and non-European countries. We also recognised that we had to install an advisory board consisting of experts from the fields of adult education and higher education to ensure validation and quality assurance (see appendix B).

So the project team started by engaging a cluster of adult education and higher education experts. The experts from the European countries were asked to prepare

- individual country reports providing an overview of the status quo concerning opening higher education to adults, devoting special attention to national higher education systems, policies to open higher education to adults, empirical trends, statistics, factors impacting on the participation of adults in higher education, and existing adult education research related to the opening of higher education to adults (see appendix F);
- case studies providing good practice examples of institutions offering a flexible delivery of higher education programmes and flexible learning provisions. Each of these examples was to focus on a concrete higher education programme, learning provision, or institutional strategy, providing information on special target groups, flexibility, the organisational embedment of the programme/provision, its contribution to enhancing learner achievement and increasing adult participation in higher education, and the regulatory frameworks and financial provisions which contribute to the successful implementation of the programme/provision (see appendix G).

The experts from the non-European countries were asked to prepare case studies and provide background information on the current situation whenever it was relevant to the cases (see appendix G).

At their first meeting, the project team and the members of the advisory board agreed that it was necessary to develop structured research instruments to achieve a shared

understanding of the subject and, in particular, of the case descriptions to allow for comparisons. Consequently, the project team developed a number of instruments, namely

- a glossary containing the key terms and concepts relevant to the study (see appendix C),
- a list of indicators of best practice (see appendix D),
- research manuals providing guidance for the research and analyses carried out by the national experts (see appendix E).

The instruments were drafted on the basis of a comprehensive literature review, which covered three types of materials: academic literature, policy documents, and policy-driven research literature. After they had been sent to the national experts for review, the instruments were fine-tuned accordingly.<sup>32</sup>

Based on the country reports and case studies, the project team carried out the analyses presented in this report. Interim results were presented and discussed at the project workshop on 30 November 2013 in Bonn (see Appendix K). The workshop was attended by 39 participants, including the European national experts and the US expert involved in the study, the members of the advisory group, a number of further experts from European countries not covered by the study, an expert from China, representatives of EUA and the European University Continuing Education Network (EUCEN), representatives of the 'sister studies', and a representative of the Commission. The productive advice and recommendations from the workshop participants have been worked into this report.<sup>33</sup> The work was carried out in close collaboration with DG EAC.

### **3 The Context of Opening Higher Education to Adults**

The effects of a globalised knowledge-based economy and society, as well as the effects of a demographic 'ageing' in many industrialised countries on work content, employment, cultural, and social life have become obvious in recent decades. Academic research has pointed out that in contemporary national economies, social inequalities result from unequal opportunities to access high-quality education and learning.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the 2012 report of the European Commission on *Employment and Social Developments in Europe*<sup>35</sup> highlights social polarisation alongside educational inequalities. Long-term unemployment has increased most notably among low-skilled workers, especially among those employed in declining occupations and sectors.

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<sup>32</sup> To facilitate the exchange of information and data, a Moodle platform was created in early June 2012. However, it turned out that most experts preferred communicating directly with the project team in case of counselling needs.

<sup>33</sup> Furthermore the members of the project team have maintained contact and professional dialogue with members from networks and organisations, such as EUCEN, EUA, EAEA, an OPULL-project as well as with members from national networks like the Hungarian MELLearn (Higher Education Lifelong Learning Network).

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. Rohrbach, D. (2008). Wissensgesellschaft und soziale Ungleichheit: Ein Zeit- und Ländervergleich. Wiesbaden.

<sup>35</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (2012): *Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2012*. Brussels, p.14



International and European policy discourse, mediated by organisations such as OECD<sup>36</sup> and UNESCO<sup>37</sup> and by the European Union, has responded to the threat of increasing educational (and hence social) inequalities since the 1990s. Particularly when the average age of labour market participants and employer demand for high-skilled and academically trained workers are increasing, there is a growing need to widen people's access to high-quality education and learning. Regarding higher education, there is a broad consensus that this educational sector should become 'more "relevant" to the needs of labour markets, more "efficient", more transparent and accountable, and more international and competitive',<sup>38</sup> as well as more inclusive in terms of access possibilities, student diversity, and openness to individual lifelong learning needs.

Against this background, the present chapter sheds light on the context relevant to the HEAD study. The chapter has two sections: The first section summarises the policy context at the EU level; the second gives a data overview of adult participation in higher education and an overview of relevant developments in the higher education sector.

### 3.1 Lifelong Learning and related EU education and training policies

The European Union has a long-standing interest in widening participation in higher education. EU strategies and activities have been largely in line with the worldwide consensus on the key role of adult learning in ensuring equity and inclusion, alleviating poverty, and building equitable, tolerant, sustainable, and knowledge-based societies. These goals were reiterated at the 6th UNESCO World Conference on Adult Education in 2009, CONFINTEA VI.<sup>39</sup> The policy context at the EU level is built on a huge number of documents, the most relevant of which are highlighted below.

Early on, the 1991 *Memorandum on Higher Education*<sup>40</sup> called upon higher education institutions to support an expanding knowledge-based economy, to help meet labour market demand for highly qualified personnel, and to widen access to higher qualifications. It argued, among other things, that higher education institutions should offer continuing opportunities for adults to update and renew their knowledge, that they should establish partnerships with the business community, and shift their policy towards a better balance between initial and continuing education.<sup>41</sup> This was reiterated in the preamble of the 1997 *Amsterdam Treaty*.<sup>42</sup> The *Lisbon Agenda*<sup>43</sup> underlined the importance of achieving high skills for economic development and social inclusion through investment in education and training.

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<sup>36</sup> OECD (2011): *Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society: Pointers for Policy Development*. Paris

<sup>37</sup> UNESCO (1998): *World Conference on Higher Education. Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century. Vision and Action. Vol. I. Final Report*. Paris

<sup>38</sup> Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. G. (2012). *All Change – No Change? Lifelong Learners and Higher Education Revisited*. In: Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H. G. (eds.). *Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London and New York, pp. 3-21, see p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2010). *CONFINTEA VI. Final Report. Living and Learning for a vVable Future: The Power of Adult Learning*. Hamburg.

<sup>40</sup> Commission of the European Communities (1991): *Memorandum on Higher Education in the European Community*. Brussels

<sup>41</sup> Davies, P. (2003): *Widening Participation and the European Union: Direct Action – Indirect Policy?* In: *European Journal of Education*. Vol.38 (1), pp. 99-116

<sup>42</sup> European Communities (1997). *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts*. Luxembourg.

<sup>43</sup> European Parliament (2000): *Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000. Presidency Conclusions*. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm)

The *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*<sup>44</sup> argued that lifelong learning and access to up-to-date information and knowledge were important to learners themselves and the community at large. This was reflected in the 2001 Communication on *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*<sup>45</sup>, the *Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning*<sup>46</sup> and in the *Communication on Adult Learning: It Is Never Too Late to Learn*.<sup>47</sup>

The *Action Plan on Adult Learning: It Is Always a Good Time to Learn*<sup>48</sup> pointed out the importance of adult learning as part of the lifelong learning mix, especially in times of an ageing European population. The Action Plan identified several priority areas for action in relation to adult learners' access to higher education, such as removing barriers to access by providing better information and guidance, enhancing the validation of non-formal and informal learning in higher education, and creating demand-driven financial mechanisms. The final conference on the Action Plan<sup>49</sup>, held in Budapest in March 2011, named additional challenges for further European, national, and regional policies to widen adult participation in higher education. These challenges concerned public investment, provision for adults, the links between adult education participation and the quality of higher education provision, the dissemination of 'good practice', support systems that enable adult learners' participation in higher education, more uniform systems for validating non-formal and informal learning, the upskilling of the higher education staff, 'buy in' from stakeholders, and opening up new educational pathways for adults in higher education.

The *Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning*,<sup>50</sup> adopted by the Council of the European Union in November 2011, reiterates the importance of lifelong learning and the significant contribution of adult learning. Regarding the role of higher education, the Council calls on Member States to encourage 'higher education institutions to embrace less traditional groups of learners, such as adult learners, as a means of displaying social responsibility and greater openness towards the community at large, as well as responding to demographic challenges and to the demands of an ageing society' (p. 3). Moreover, the Council resolution emphasises the shared responsibility of employers, social partners, and civil society to raise awareness of the benefits of adult learning, to articulate adults' diverse training needs, and to promote new learning opportunities and adequate resources, that is, effective financing.

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<sup>44</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2000): A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. SEC (2000) 1832. Brussels

<sup>45</sup> European Commission, DG EAC, DG Employment and Social Developments (2001): Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality. COM (2001) 678 final. Brussels

<sup>46</sup> European Council (2002): Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on Lifelong Learning. Brussels

<sup>47</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2006): Communication from the Commission. Adult Learning: It Is Never too Late to Learn. COM (2006) 614 final. Brussels

<sup>48</sup> Commission of the European Communities (2007): Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Action Plan on Adult Learning. COM (2007) 558 final. Brussels

<sup>49</sup> European Commission, DG EAC (2011): It's Always a Good Time to Learn. Background document with key questions. Budapest, [http://adultlearning-budapest2011.teamwork.fr/docs/Conference\\_Background\\_document.pdf](http://adultlearning-budapest2011.teamwork.fr/docs/Conference_Background_document.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> European Council (2011): Council Resolution on a Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning C 372/1, Brussels

In the area of higher education, as early as 2006, the Communication *Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities*<sup>51</sup> argued that a number of changes must be initiated 'in order to reinforce the societal roles of universities in a culturally and linguistically diverse Europe' (p. 2). Moreover, it was stated that 'universities need to grasp more directly the challenges and opportunities presented by the lifelong learning agenda. Lifelong learning presents a challenge, in that it will require universities to be more open to providing courses for students at later stages in the life cycle.' (p. 7) More recently, in the 2011 Communication on the *Agenda for the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Systems*<sup>52</sup>, it was argued that 'the potential of European higher education institutions to fulfill their role in society and contribute to Europe's prosperity remains underexploited' (p. 2). Among other things, Member States and higher education institutions should encourage outreach to 'non-traditional learners, including adults; provide more transparent information on educational opportunities and outcomes, and tailored guidance to inform study choices' (p. 4). The Council Conclusions of 28 November 2011<sup>53</sup> on the *Modernisation of Higher Education* calls upon Member States to develop clear routes into higher education from vocational and other types of education, as well as mechanisms for recognising prior learning and experience gained outside formal education and training.

Generally, higher education institutions should become more aware of the important role of higher education in society and the economy. Widening access and increasing adult participation in higher education is also pointed out in the Council Recommendation on *Guidelines for the Economic Policies of the Member States of the Union*<sup>54</sup>: 'Higher education should become more open to non-traditional learners and participation in tertiary or equivalent education should be increased' (p. 22). In December 2012, the Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning was adopted, in which Member States agree to put in place not later than 2018 appropriate, national arrangements for validation. This should "enable individuals to:

- (a) have knowledge, skills and competences which have been acquired through non-formal and informal learning validated, including, where applicable, through open educational resources;
- (b) obtain a full qualification, or, where applicable, part qualification, on the basis of validated non-formal and informal learning experiences...."

Within this context, the European Union has been monitoring progress (e.g. through the pre-study on the role of *Higher Education Institutions as Providers of Continuous Professional*

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<sup>51</sup> European Commission (2006): Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Education*. COM (2006) 208 final. Brussels

<sup>52</sup> European Commission (2011): Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *Supporting Growth and Jobs – An Agenda for the Modernisation of Europe's Higher Education Systems*. COM (2011) 567 final. Brussels

<sup>53</sup> Council of the European Union (2011): *Council Conclusions on the Modernisation of Higher Education*. OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p. 36

<sup>54</sup> European Commission (2010): *Council Recommendation of 27.4.2010 on broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and of the Union Part I of the Europe 2020 Integrated Guidelines*. SEC (2010) 488 final. Brussels

*Learning and Adult Education*<sup>55</sup>) and exchanging good practice examples (e.g. through the *European Inventory on the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning*<sup>56</sup>).

### **The Bologna process at the European level**

The European Union plays a key role in the Bologna process, which started in 1999 with the *Bologna Declaration*.<sup>57</sup> The goals of this process are widely shared and supported by the European Commission.<sup>58</sup> The Bologna process aims at creating convergence among the 47 participating countries with regard to the fundamental principles of autonomy and diversity in higher education. The common goal has been to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) to enhance the employability and mobility of citizens and to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education. The 2001 *Prague Communiqué*<sup>59</sup> introduced the issue of lifelong learning as an essential element of higher education, a goal that was reiterated in the 2003 *Berlin Communiqué*. The 2009 *Leuven Communiqué* also referred to the *European Universities Charter on Lifelong Learning*<sup>60</sup>, developed by the European University Association (EUA). The charter commits universities and governments to providing more and better opportunities for lifelong learning. The communiqué and the related conferences and discussions carved out a number of components to build university-based lifelong learning, such as making lifelong learning a recognised mission of higher education institutions, promoting flexible delivery of higher education programmes and flexible learning provisions, recognising prior learning and work experience to make adults eligible for higher education participation, broadening the range of non-traditional routes to higher education, and reorganising higher education to meet the needs of adults by providing information and counselling services, as well as financial aid, for example.

With regard to the *Europe 2020* strategy, the *Bologna Declaration*, the *Leuven Communiqué*, and related Council directives, resolutions, and conclusions, the Council of the European Union, in its *Conclusions on the Modernisation of Higher Education Systems*<sup>61</sup>, reinforces the need for continuing reforms at the institutional level. Among other things, higher education institutions should pay more attention to widening participation in higher education and to addressing the challenges related to quality and diversity.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture/GHK (2011): Pre-study on the Role of Higher Education Institutions as Providers of Continuous Professional Learning and Adult Education. Brussels

<sup>56</sup> Hawley, J., Souto Otero, M. & Duchemin, C. (2011): 2010 Update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning. Final Report (on behalf of the European Commission DG EAC in close cooperation with Cedefop). Brussels

<sup>57</sup> Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and the Association of European Universities (CRE) (1999): The Bologna Declaration on the European Space for Higher Education: An Explanation. <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> European Commission, DG EAC (2007): From Bergen to London. The Contribution of the European Commission to the Bologna Process. Brussels

<sup>59</sup> The Bologna related communiqués are available at [http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/declarations\\_communiques.htm](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/declarations_communiques.htm)

<sup>60</sup> European University Association (EUA) (2008): The European Universities' Charter of Lifelong Learning, Brussels

<sup>61</sup> Council of the European Union (2011): Council Conclusions on the Modernisation of Higher Education 3128th Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council Meeting Brussels, 28 and 29 November 2011. Brussels

<sup>62</sup> Some of cases (see appendix G) included in this study reveal the importance of the development of the EHEA and ECTS. Especially the cases from Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Spain and Serbia mention the benefits of credit transfer or working within EHEA explicitly.

### ***The Copenhagen process and the ET2020 strategic framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training***

The Copenhagen process started with the 2002 *Copenhagen Declaration*.<sup>63</sup> One of the reasons for initiating the Copenhagen process was facilitating access to lifelong learning. Major aims of the Copenhagen process include reinforcing the transparency, comparability, transferability, and recognition of competences and/or qualifications between different countries and at different levels, as well as developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training (VET). The European Union recognised and incorporated the achievements of the Copenhagen process in ET2020, the 2009 *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training*.<sup>64</sup> The 2010 *Bruges Communiqué*<sup>65</sup> referred to the progress made since 2002 at the EU level in terms of developing tools, principles, and guidelines. A most relevant tool is the *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF), adopted as a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the European Council<sup>66</sup> in 2008, covering all education and training qualifications. The EQF encourages countries to relate their national qualification systems to the EQF to facilitate comparison between national qualifications, which has led in many countries to the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQF) and referencing of these NQFs to EQF is well advanced<sup>67</sup>.

Furthermore, the Bruges Communiqué defines priorities for the VET sector to 2020, around the theme of VET excellence. It highlights progress in the development of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET) and a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and sets deadlines for their implementation. These activities might provide new opportunities to facilitate the process of opening higher education to adults, particularly those who opted for the VET route after compulsory or upper secondary education. Indeed, the communiqué promotes flexible pathways from VET to higher education and enhanced permeability by strengthening the links between them as an important objective. The most relevant activities in this context are: developing and maintaining VET at EQF level 5 or higher; promoting flexible pathways between VET, general education, and higher education; establishing and implementing comprehensive national qualifications frameworks based on learning outcomes.

The work and strategies of the European Union firmly establish the significant role of higher education in society, culture, and the economy, as well as the importance of higher education

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<sup>63</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/pdf/doc125_en.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> European Council (2009): Notices from European Union Institutions and Bodies. Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'). Brussels

<sup>65</sup> European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission (2010): The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020. [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

<sup>66</sup> European Parliament & Council (2008): Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the Establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning. Brussels

<sup>67</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf_en.htm). The present study confirms, that that a number of cases included in this study (see appendix G) refer to the positive effect of EQF and NQF.

within the lifelong learning continuum. As the European Union's legislative authority in these areas is rather limited, changes in higher education and adult education can only be promoted by ensuring collaboration with Member States through the Open Method of Coordination.

## **3.2 Developments in the higher education sector**

The on-going transformation of higher education is plain to see. As shown in the previous section, there is a general policy trend aiming at opening higher education to diverse groups of learners, and improving the variety and quality of higher education opportunities for diverse student groups, including adult learners. However, what are actual developments in the higher education sector, compared to the advanced policies of the European Union? To get a more reliable picture of the actual process of opening higher education to diverse groups of learners, in particular adult learners in and across countries, we need to take a closer look at relevant developments in this field. The statistical data presented in the following sections are chosen from various sources, this where possible with regard to the sample of European and non-European countries included in this study.

### **3.2.1 Changing student populations**

Monitoring changes in the student population is very important for institutions, governments, and other actors to be able to capture these changes and develop appropriate policies to enhance social inclusion and economic competitiveness.

Time series are an especially useful tool for following the diversification of the student body. Helpful indicators for capturing these developments include the share of students entering tertiary education after reaching a certain age and the share of part-time students. Both groups differ from the 'traditional' student who enters university immediately after high school and enrolls full time. Additionally, students' socio-economic background can give some indication of the degree of social heterogeneity of the student body and the inclusion of underrepresented groups in higher education. However, statistical data show that in some respects the diversification of the student body can be observed, whereas in other respects the impression there is no significant diversification.

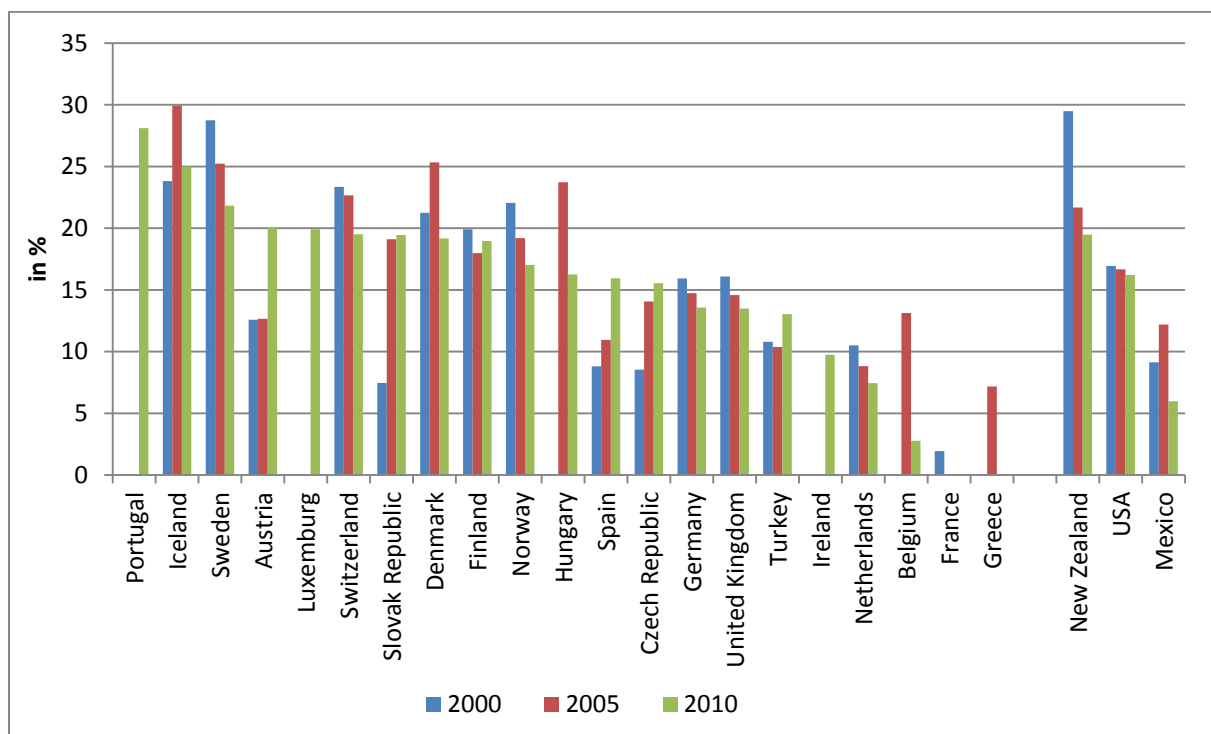
#### ***Adult students in higher education***

We concentrate here on available data on the share of mature or older students entering tertiary education. Across all countries, the average age of students entering higher education is below 25 years. An entrance age of 25 or older, therefore, can serve as an indicator of the proportion of adult students.

Figure 1 presents the share of students entering tertiary education at the age of 25 to 39 for each European country as far as data are available and for the non-European countries included in the present study as good practice examples.



Figure 1: Percentage of students between 25 and 39 years entering tertiary education



Source: UOE, own calculations<sup>68</sup>

The data show no clear trend across the countries:

- The share of adult students entering tertiary education in 2010 varies from less than 5 per cent in Belgium to more than 25 per cent in Portugal.
- The share of adult students evolved differently across the countries. Between 2005 and 2010, it increased in only 6 of the 19 countries that allow for timeline comparison, most impressively in Austria.
- However, in 11 of the 19 countries, the share of adult students in 2010 was lower than it was in 2000. Especially in the northern and western European countries, the share of adult students declined from 2000 to 2010.

The sharp rise of the share of adult students in the Austrian higher education system might, among other things, be a result of the expansion of continuing education at public universities in recent years. The majority of students taking part in continuing education programmes in Austria are older than 30 years. The reasons for the decreasing share of adult students especially in northern and western European countries however, are puzzling. This might be amongst others a consequence of growing numbers of young people leaving secondary education who go directly to higher education over the same period, which in turn could mean that there are less people aged 25-35 undergoing higher education. It could be worthwhile to launch further investigation in the countries in question. It could also be helpful to conduct a comparative study that would focus on the impact of the current crisis e.g. on the motivation of adults to take part in higher education, on HRD strategies in firms and enterprises with regard to supporting employees' participation in higher education and on the sustainability and continuity of higher education programmes. However, even in the countries where rates for mature students have increased, the highest rates did not exceed 20 per cent in 2010. In only a very few countries (e.g. Portugal, Iceland, Sweden) the rates for mature

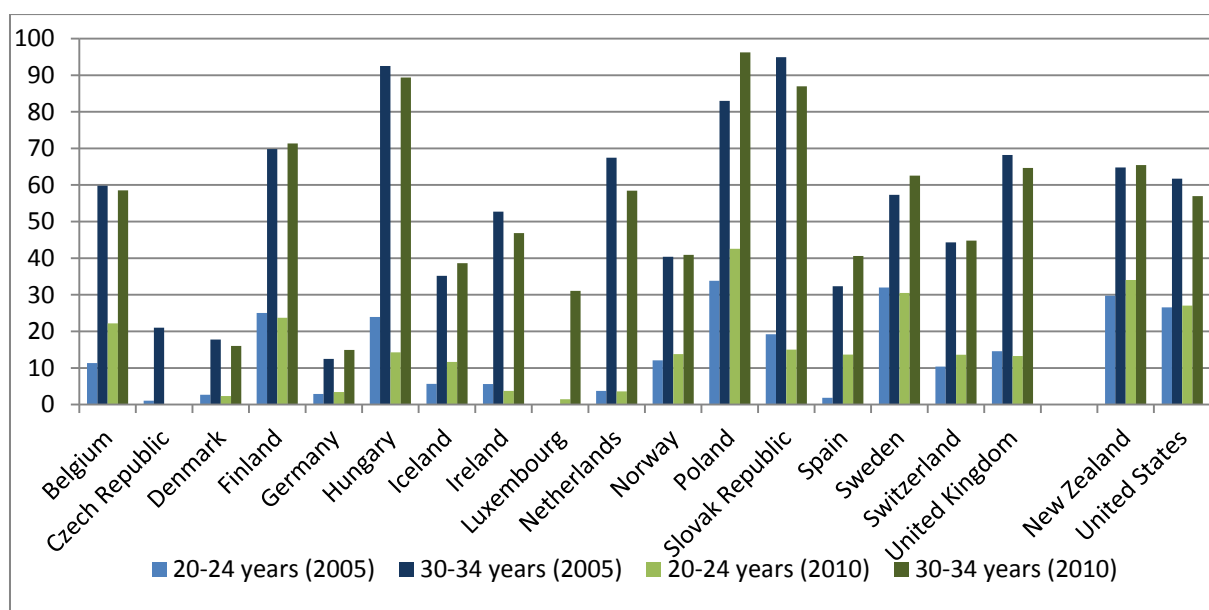
<sup>68</sup> Note: Data not available for missing European countries, South Africa, and Russia.

students were higher than 20 per cent in 2010. After all, the overall progress towards the 2020 benchmark on 40 per cent the 30-34 years olds having completed tertiary education or equivalent education is promising. Latest data from Eurostat demonstrate that the share amounts 35.8 per cent in 2012.<sup>69</sup>

### Participation in part-time studies

The development of flexible higher education programmes has been identified as one effective instrument to open higher education to new target groups, in particular adult learners. The most common flexible learning provision is part-time studies. As shown in the *Bologna Implementation Report*<sup>70</sup>, the older a student is the more likely he or she is to attend part-time studies. Figure 2 shows the share of students aged between 20 and 24, as well as between 30 and 34, enrolled in part-time studies in 2005 and 2010, respectively. For statistical purposes, an individual is considered to be a part-time student if he or she is attending an educational programme that requires less than 75 per cent of a full-time study load.<sup>71</sup> This definition focuses on programme structure; if informal part-time students<sup>72</sup> were included, the numbers would be higher.

Figure 2: Percentage of part-time students in tertiary education by age



Source: UOE, own calculations<sup>73</sup>

<sup>69</sup> See:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/europe\\_2020\\_indicators/headline\\_indicators](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/europe_2020_indicators/headline_indicators)

<sup>70</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p.12

<sup>71</sup> UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat (2010): UOE Data Collection on Education Systems. Manual. Volume 1. Montreal, Paris, Luxembourg

<sup>72</sup> An informal part-time student is a student who is formally enrolled as a full-time student but studies considerably fewer hours than prescribed for full-time students. In the Eurostudent report, a so-called 'de-facto part-time student' is a student who spends less than 21 hours per week on study-related activities.

<sup>73</sup> Note: Data not available for missing European countries, Mexico, South Africa, and Russia.



The data show that both the shares of part-time students and the development over time vary considerably between countries. A general trend towards more flexibility, that is, an increased share of part-time students, cannot be observed on the basis of this time series as developments vary significantly across and even within countries.

- In all countries, the share of part-time students is much higher for students between 30 and 34 years than it is for younger students.
- The 2005 and 2010 shares of part-time students aged between 20 and 24 years is below 30 per cent in most of the countries covered in Figure 2. The only exceptions are Poland, Sweden, and New Zealand.
- Hungary, Poland, and the Slovak Republic have the highest shares of part-time students aged 30 to 34 years.
- In 2010, Poland had the highest share of young part-time students (>40%).

We need to keep in mind that a small share of part-time students does not necessarily reflect a low level of interest in this form of study. The small share of part-time students in Germany, for example, might result from the fact that only a minority of study programmes can be studied part time. This suggests that many higher education systems are still promoting 'regular' full-time studies and, consequently, that the provision of part-time programmes has to be extended and/or made better known and more attractive to interested learners.<sup>74</sup>

### ***Social background of students***

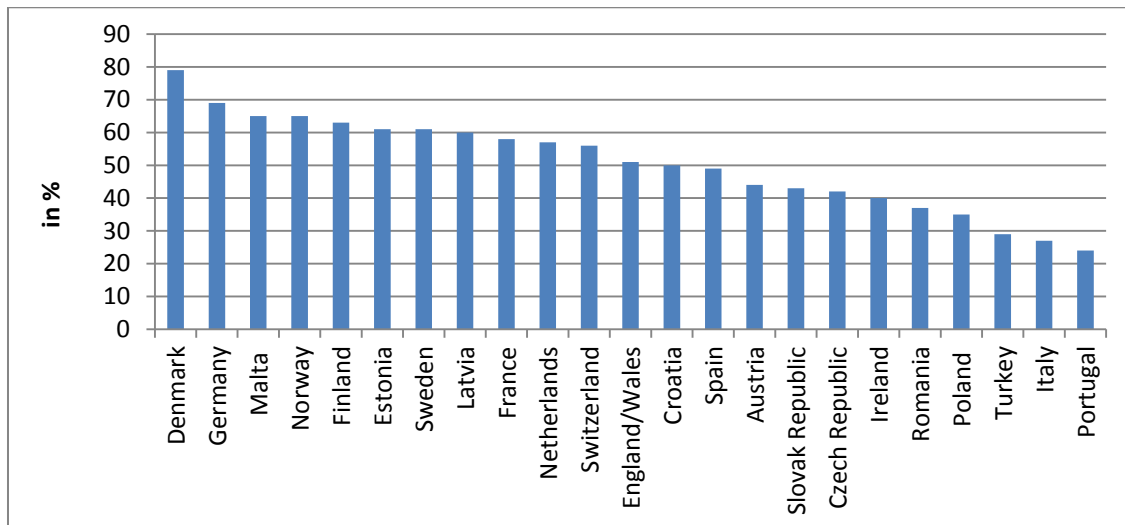
The data referring to the share of students from underrepresented groups provide evidence of the specific barriers to participation in higher education these groups are facing. Relevant information for the analysis of barriers can be drawn from data which refer to the educational background of students, measured by parental educational attainment. A high rate of students with well-educated parents is regarded as an indicator of social selectivity, whereas a low rate of such students indicates the openness of higher education systems. The statistics accumulated in the *EUROSTUDENT* report<sup>75</sup> deliver such information.

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<sup>74</sup> See further evidence from the HEAD case studies in section 4.3)

<sup>75</sup> Orr, D., Gwosc, C. & Netz, N. (2011): Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT IV Synopsis of indicators. Bielefeld

Figure 3: Percentage of students with at least one parent with high educational attainment (2007-2010)



Source: EUROSTUDENT IV<sup>76</sup>

In line with the findings presented above, the share of students with highly educated parents differs across countries. The share of students with at least one parent holding a tertiary degree ranges from almost 80 per cent in Denmark to 24 per cent in Portugal. The difference shows that individual chances to study do not only depend on individual competencies but also from the educational status within the family.

If the share of students with highly educated parents is larger than the share of individuals with highly educated parents in the corresponding age group in a country's population, we may speak of an overrepresentation of such students. According to the *EUROSTUDENT* report students with highly educated parents are overrepresented in most countries. Ireland, Finland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, on the other hand, show an especially high level of social inclusiveness.<sup>77</sup>

Since 2001, Ireland has put a strong policy focus on widening access to higher education for formerly underrepresented groups. A National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education has been established to ensure that the issue of access stays on the political agenda. The strong emphasis on widening participation might have promoted the social inclusiveness of the Irish higher education system.

In the Finnish case, the socially inclusive higher education system might be a result of a school system that provides equal opportunities to all children, regardless of their background.

These findings suggest that the student population in higher education is not as diverse as policy makers envisage it to be; with regard to students' parental education background, it is rather homogenous.

<sup>76</sup> Note: High educational attainment refers to attainment of ISCED levels 5 and 6. The limited country coverage is due to the fact that the *EUROSTUDENT* survey includes only a selection of countries.

<sup>77</sup> Orr, D., Gwosc, C. & Netz, N. (2011): Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT IV Synopsis of indicators. Bielefeld

The developments in student populations reinforce the impression of rather delayed changes in higher education systems, especially with regard to opening higher education to diverse student groups. The findings indicate that the institutional differentiation process must be accelerated, because a more diverse range of higher education institutions and programmes is an indispensable precondition for meeting the needs of diverse student groups and for stimulating participation in higher education.

The need for further institutional differentiation is mirrored in the new roles and functions that have been assigned and re-assigned to higher education institutions in recent years. It is now widely acknowledged that higher education institutions must adapt to the changing societal and economic conditions.

### 3.2.2 New roles for higher education institutions

The *European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning*<sup>78</sup> highlights the European universities' role as providers of lifelong learning opportunities and their obligation to help widen adult participation in higher education by providing continuing education opportunities. The EUA report on *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education*<sup>79</sup> names several new roles and tasks for higher education institutions in Europe, such as widening access to educate more qualified workers for the knowledge-based economy and promoting business innovation, knowledge transfer, and continuing professional development.

In a 2009 survey of 118 higher education institutions in England, France, Norway, Slovakia, and Switzerland, the increasing importance of new functions of higher education was identified as a key development. The large majority of higher education representatives believe that continuing professional development will become more and more important in the years to come. Likewise, addressing societal challenges will become an important mission of higher education institutions.<sup>80</sup>

In the last decade, the so called 'third mission' of higher education institutions has regained prominence in public debate. The authors of the green paper on *Fostering and Measuring 'Third Mission' in Higher Education Institutions*<sup>81</sup> define 'third mission' as activities related to research, education, and social engagement. In particular, 'third mission' refers to higher education institutions' responsibility towards society and their need to cooperate with other institutions in social and cultural activities at the local and regional levels, including the development of academic learning opportunities for adults together with adult education institutions. Examples of activities in the area of education are lifelong learning, continuing education, and training.

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<sup>78</sup> EUA (2008): *European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning*. Brussels

<sup>79</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and Challenges for Policy Makers and Institutional Leaders*. EUA: Brussels

<sup>80</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and Challenges for Policy Makers and Institutional Leaders*. EUA: Brussels

<sup>81</sup> e3m (2012): *Green Paper. Fostering and Measuring 'Third Mission' in Higher Education Institutions*. <http://www.e3mproject.eu/docs/Green%20paper-p.pdf>

### 3.2.3 Need for flexible learning provisions

Fulfilling new roles and functions successfully requires the supply of flexible learning opportunities. The authors of the EUA study on *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education*<sup>82</sup> conclude that programme diversity is the direct response of higher education institutions becoming aware of their new roles and functions as well as their competitive position, which requires responding to the demands of students and stakeholders.

In the *SIRUS* report<sup>83</sup>, developing suitable educational provisions to help different groups access and participate in higher education throughout their lives is identified as crucial. Diversity is identified as one of the key characteristics of educational provision, and the range of provision on offer is directly linked to a higher education institution's strategy, its perception of lifelong learning, and the targeted configuration of the student body. The introduction of flexible teaching and learning modes, recognition of formal and non-formal learning and student services and support are pinpointed as a key approach for diversifying educational provision.

In academic and political discussions, open educational resources (OER) and massive open online courses (MOOCs) are especially prominent. According to the OECD/CERI report *Giving Knowledge For Free*<sup>84</sup>, 'OER initiatives might serve higher educational institutions as vehicles for outreach to non-traditional groups of students, widening participation in higher education, and providing learning opportunities for those unable to use more traditional offers or who are not part of the traditional groups of higher education entrants' (p. 19f). These types of learning provisions certainly have interesting implications for higher and adult education but go beyond the scope of this study.

The EUA study on *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education*<sup>85</sup> states that recognising the importance of programme diversity does not yet constantly go hand in hand with recognising the need to diversify learning modes as well. This indicates that higher education representatives are aware of the importance of diversification, but still have a predominant focus on programme and/or provision profiles, and thus a tendency to disregard the diversity of learner types and the learning needs of adult learners.

## 3.3 Conclusions

To set the context of opening higher education to adults, we outlined the relevant policy context and developments in the higher education sector on the basis of available data and information.

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<sup>82</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and Challenges for Policy Makers and Institutional Leaders*. EUA: Brussels

<sup>83</sup> Smidt, H. & Surssock, A. (2011): *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*. Brussels

<sup>84</sup> OECD/CERI (2007). *Giving Knowledge for Free. The Emergence of Open Educational Resources*. OECD: Paris

<sup>85</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and Challenges for Policy Makers and Institutional Leaders*. EUA: Brussels

Compared to the advanced policies of the European Union, the actual developments in the higher education sector have been shown to differ in many respects, and on the whole seem rather delayed. Apparently, there is still a gap between the goals formulated in European policy documents and the realities observable at the national level.<sup>86</sup>

The statistics presented provide a first impression of how the student body has developed in the past decade and what the situation is today, with special emphasis on student diversity. The following main results can be derived:

- The diversification of the student body takes place in very different contexts and under varying conditions.
- There is no general trend towards opening higher education to diverse student groups including adult learners.
- There is still a need to reinforce policy actions at the national, regional, and institutional levels.

Even if the presented statistics do permit preliminary conclusions, we should keep in mind that the available data provide only limited insights into developments and the present situation. The UOE database, for example, has the potential to provide very useful information on the situation and development of adult learners, but for many countries numbers are missing or data over a period of time is not available. Likewise, the EACEA/Eurydice report on the *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Funding and the Social Dimension* refers to the limitations of monitoring the composition of student populations in Europe. In many countries, adult learners are not specifically targeted and not included in the standard data collections.

Developments at the institutional level hint at changes within higher education systems and the institutional landscape. New tasks and functions have been assigned to higher education institutions within the framework of lifelong learning and the 'third mission'. In order to address the new challenges, higher education institutions must, among other things, develop flexible learning provisions.

However, the extent to which higher education institutions respond to the new requirements varies across Europe. The results of the EUA study *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education*<sup>87</sup>, for instance, indicate that achieving a diverse student body is not the main focus of the majority of institutions. The provision of flexible learning opportunities for adult learners can certainly still be improved, however, there are many higher education institutions that have developed innovative models to meet the need for flexible learning provisions, as the case studies show (see appendix G).

Given these contextual conditions, the challenge is to improve and to establish a knowledge base of promising and innovative developments related to widening participation, particularly through flexible higher education provision within European countries. Such knowledge should, among other things, help to attune further strategies and activities in the framework

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<sup>86</sup> See also: Mark, R (2004). Increasing Adult Participation in Higher Education. In: Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.). *Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe*. Oxford et al., pp. 29- 48, p.29; Davies, P. (2007): *The Bologna Process and University Lifelong Learning: State of Play and Future Directions*. Barcelona

<sup>87</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and challenges for policy makers and institutional leaders*. EUA: Brussels

of European cooperation regarding the different situations and pathways of development at the national and regional levels.

## 4 Factors Driving Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Thematic Analyses

This chapter of the HEAD study provides topical analyses of the case studies from the 15 European countries and the five non-European countries, as well as complementary information from 15 country reports (one for each of the European countries the study covers (see section 2.3 and appendices F and G), which were prepared by a network of national experts. The analyses are informed and enriched by statistical data and information from pertinent research. Each sub-section ends with conclusions. An overview of the countries and case studies covered in the present study is given below.

The following sections aim at providing comprehensive thematic analyses, thereby using the case studies and country reports as the main source of information, and thus reflecting the input and assessments of the experts who prepared the country reports and case studies. Where productive in terms of classifying and contextualising the HEAD findings and in order to achieve better traceability for the reader, the findings from the case and country studies are combined with selected information and data taken from other sources. Therefore, some sections start by highlighting general tendencies that are apparent from a literature review and then proceeds to discuss related findings from the HEAD material which provides further differentiations and insights.

Table 1: Case studies included in the HEAD study

| European Case Studies |   |   |                            |
|-----------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Country               | Institution   | Programme   | Degree                     |
| <b>Austria</b>        | Alpen-Adria-University Klagenfurt   | Master Adult Education/ Continuing Education  | Postgraduate               |
| <b>Cyprus</b>         | Open University of Cyprus   | Msc in Information and Communication Systems  | Postgraduate               |
| <b>Finland</b>        | Centre for Training and Development, University of Eastern Finland/ School of Information Sciences, University of Tampere | Qualification studies for library personnel in Eastern Finland                            | Undergraduate              |
| <b>France</b>         | Departments of continuing education at various HEI throughout France  | DEAU (Access diploma for entering higher education)                                       | Secondary education degree |
| <b>Germany</b>        | Fachhochschule Münster, Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin   | BASA-online (Bachelor Social Studies)   | Undergraduate              |
| <b>Greece</b>         | Hellenic Open University  | Master in Education   | Postgraduate               |
| <b>Hungary</b>        | Regional Adult Education Centre, University of Miskolc  | Special course on logistics management  | Certificate                |
| <b>Ireland</b>        | National University of Ireland Maynooth   | Part time honours degrees in local and community studies                                  | Undergraduate              |
| <b>Italy</b>          | Telematic University UNINETTUNO   | Bachelor of Engineering Managerial  | Undergraduate              |
| <b>Latvia</b>         | University of Latvia  | Joint MA Educational Treatment of Diversity   | Postgraduate               |
| <b>Serbia</b>         | Singidunum University Belgrade  | Master programmes: Business economics; marketing and trade; business systems in tourism + | Postgraduate               |

|                                  |  |   |   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|
|                                  |  | hospitality; contemporary IT; engineering management  |   |
| <b>Slovenia</b>                  | University of Ljubljana  | Business Administration   | Professional Degree                                 |
| <b>Spain</b>                     | Universidad Oberta de Catalunya  | Business Administration and Management  | Undergraduate                                       |
| <b>Sweden</b>                    | Dalarna University and Next Generation Learning Centre   | Development of E-Services   | Undergraduate                                       |
| <b>United Kingdom (UK)</b>       | Birkbeck College University of London  | Higher Education Introductory Studies   | Certificate, allows access to undergraduate studies |
| <b>Non-European Case Studies</b> |  |   |   |
| <b>Mexico</b>                    | Open University and Distance of Mexico (UnAD),   | Management of Small and Medium Business (Superior University Technician, Bachelor or Engineering Degree)      | Undergraduate                                       |
| <b>New Zealand</b>               | Te Wānanga O Aotearoa  | Diploma in Adult Education  | Undergraduate                                       |
| <b>Russia</b>                    | Moscow State Technical University, Institute of Radio engineering, Electronics and Automation                | BA and MA Programmes of the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Informational Technologies                | Undergraduate and Postgraduate                      |
| <b>South Africa</b>              | School of Public Health, University of Western Cape  | Master in Public Health   | Postgraduate  |
| <b>USA</b>                       | Edward R. Murphy Centre for Continuing Education and Distance Learning, Elizabethtown College (Pennsylvania) | Accelerated Degree Programs - BS in Business Administration, BS in Accounting, MBA in Business Administration | Undergraduate                                       |

While focusing on the flexibility of access arrangements and programme provisions the authors of the HEAD study take into account that opening higher education to adults within the wider perspective of lifelong learning is a complex or multi-level process. According to Schuetze and Wolter<sup>88</sup> the adoption of lifelong learning, hence opening higher education to adults has far reaching implications for higher education. The main aspects of change singled out are the following:

Table 2: Organisation of higher education – from traditional to lifelong learning modes

| <b>Traditional mode</b>                    | <b>Lifelong learning mode</b>             |
|--|---|
| Restricted access                          | Open access                               |
| Admission with academic credentials        | Assessment of prior learning              |
| For the young only                         | For young and adults                      |
| Undergraduate centred                      | Wide range of programmes                  |
| Full-time studies                          | Full-time and part-time                   |
| On-site, campus based                      | Also off campus and distance learning     |
| Linear studies & final examinations        | Module based curriculum and credit system |
| Curriculum and discipline centred          | Problem solving and competence based      |
| Degree studies                             | Degree and non-degree studies             |
| Focus on initial higher education          | Includes continuing higher education      |
| Non-diversified system of higher education | Diversified higher education system       |

<sup>88</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-traditional Students and Lifelong Learning in Industrialized Countries. In: Das Hochschulwesen (5), pp. 183-189

Source: Schuetze and Wolter,<sup>89</sup> p. 189

The present chapter retraces these issues of change while also recognising the fact that opening higher education requires the cooperation of actors from different levels and areas of responsibility for policy making and action taking. In line with the European strategies and work, the detailed analyses reveal eight key factors driving adult participation in higher education which can be associated with favourable action taken at different levels:

| <b>factor</b>                          | <b>level</b> | <b>national</b> | <b>regional</b> | <b>institutional</b> |
|--|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| policy and legislation                 |              | X               | X <sup>90</sup> | X                    |
| flexible access arrangements           |              | X               |                 | X                    |
| flexible programme provision           |              |                 |                 | X                    |
| student services and support           |              |                 |                 | X                    |
| teaching methods and teacher training  |              |                 |                 | X                    |
| financial provision                    |              | X               | X               | X                    |
| cooperation with external stakeholders |              |                 | X               | X                    |
| response to labour market needs        |              | X               | X               | X                    |

#### 4.1 Policy and Legislation

National and regional<sup>91</sup> policies and legislation, as well as institutional policies and strategies, shape the relevant conditions under which the opening of higher education to adults can take place. At the national and regional levels, the existence of a lifelong learning policy to widen adult participation is a relevant precondition for fostering that process. Furthermore, legislation, particularly specific regulations concerning flexible access, RPL, validation of non-formal and informal learning, and flexible higher education provision, is crucial to assess the possible range and forms of making higher education attractive to adult learners. At the institutional level, having a lifelong learning policy or mission in place is a driving factor to promote the development of institutional regulations and procedures to widen access and to increase the flexibility of admission requirements and learning provisions.

However, it is worth noting that effective policies and legislative measures depend on the context in which they are developed and implemented. Therefore, policies and legislative measures in favour of opening higher education to adults are developed and implemented in response to specific country contexts, including historical and socio-economic backgrounds and the structure of higher education systems. There is no general answer to the question of what may be considered effective policy and legislation regarding the opening of higher education to adults. What counts as effective policy and legislation has to be investigated separately for each country.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-traditional Students and Lifelong Learning in Industrialized Countries. In: Das Hochschulwesen (5), pp. 183-189

<sup>90</sup> This refers especially to the fact that in some countries education policies and legislation are due to regional governments (e.g. in Germany).

<sup>91</sup> This applies especially to countries with a federal form of government, including the decentralised (regional) governance of education.

<sup>92</sup> Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies. In: International Journal of Lifelong Education. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417



Here the focus is on developments in policy and legislation to widen adult participation in higher education in the countries covered in the HEAD study.

#### **4.1.1 Lifelong learning policies at the national/regional level**

In the context of the *Lisbon Agenda*<sup>93</sup>, most EU Member States have developed national lifelong learning policies or a lifelong learning strategy (i.e. a strategic framework on lifelong learning) over the past decade. The country-by-country overview provided in the *SIRUS report*<sup>94</sup> shows that 31 out of 36 countries and regions (i.e. the Wallonie and Vlaanderen in Belgium and Scotland in the UK) have developed a lifelong policy or strategy, or are in the process of developing such a policy/strategy. According to the *SIRUS report*, Switzerland does not have a lifelong learning policy/strategy in place, and no information is available on that topic for Serbia and Russia. However, the overview reflects the 2007/2008 status quo.

#### ***The pace of developing lifelong learning policies/strategies differs from country to country***

As the 15 European countries covered in the HEAD study were also studied in the *SIRUS report*, some comparisons are possible with regard to progress. The country reports and supplementary information reveal that progress has been made in many countries since 2007/2008, whereas some countries are reported to experience difficulties with developing and implementing lifelong learning policies/strategies.

In Serbia, for example, significant steps towards developing an overall strategic framework for lifelong learning have been made since 2009. According to Isec and Pesikan,<sup>95</sup> this involves

the development of the *Strategy of Education Development in Serbia to 2020+* (Ministry of Education and Science of Serbia, 2012). In August 2009 a New 'Umbrella Law' was adopted, and in July 2011 the Parliament adopted certain changes to this law: *Amendments and Additions to the Law on the Foundations of the Education System in Serbia*. (p. 49)

The country report on Cyprus states that since 2007 progress has been achieved in creating a coherent lifelong learning strategy that covers all forms and levels of education, including links to the labour market. Special attention is given to opening higher education by promoting RPL and improving cooperation between higher education institutions and the labour market. France and Greece are reported to have adopted laws on the development of lifelong learning in 2009 and 2010, respectively. The Austrian country report states that a national lifelong learning strategy, *LLL 2020 – Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Austria*, was adopted by four federal Ministries in 2011.

On the other hand, there are countries where the development of national/regional lifelong learning policies or strategies appears to be progressing rather slowly. This might hint at specific context-related problems and unfavourable conditions for making lifelong learning an

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<sup>93</sup> European Parliament (2000): Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March 2000. Presidency conclusions. [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm)

<sup>94</sup> See e.g. Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011): *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*. Brussels, Appendix 6

<sup>95</sup> Ivic, I. & Pesikan, A. (2012): *Education System Reforms in an Unstable Political Situation: The Case of Serbia in the First Decade of the 21st Century*. In: CEPS Journal Vol. 2(2), pp. 31-53

effective policy. The country reports from other countries such as Italy or Finland reveal that despite elaborate rhetoric on lifelong learning, or even despite having a lifelong learning strategy in place, it is difficult to implement lifelong learning strategies and objectives, particularly in the higher education sector. In contrast, the Swedish country report, even though it does not explicitly refer to the development of a lifelong learning policy, reveals that the Swedish education system, including adult education and higher education, already complies with the principles of lifelong learning. In the United Kingdom, there is no specific lifelong learning strategy, but we do see a number of targeted strategies and actions to widen participation in education, including widening adult participation in higher education.

### ***The levels of education and training covered by policies/strategies vary***

The national and/or regional policies/strategies of lifelong learning vary in their focus on education and training. In some countries, the focus is on adult education and training, including continuing professional development at the tertiary level. This is, for instance, pointed out in the country reports from France, Ireland, and Latvia.

The country report from France reveals that in 2009 a law on lifelong orientation and professional training was adopted, which aims at the flexibilisation of professional pathways by validating qualifications. The Irish *National Development Plan 2007-2013*<sup>96</sup> reveals that the Irish government is committed to implementing a lifelong learning policy. The objectives to be achieved by 2016 refer to training, upskilling, and support especially for adult learners to help strengthen the workforce and promote the modernisation of the workplace. The Latvian lifelong policy is currently based on the *Guidelines for Lifelong Learning Policy for 2007-2013*. This strategy aims at improving the preconditions for individuals to acquire competencies for personal growth, self-development, and integration into the labour market at every life stage.

In other countries, lifelong learning policies/strategies are not necessarily targeted exclusively to adults, but refer to the national education system as a whole.<sup>97</sup> Germany, for example, has a lifelong learning strategy that covers all educational sectors. The 2004 *Strategy on Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany*<sup>98</sup> embraces all learning, from early childhood to later life. The German strategy focuses on teaching and learning issues, support structures and counselling, and cooperation at the institutional level. As a consequence, it tends to neglect the lifelong learning responsibility of the higher education sector. However, in the last few years, Germany has implemented sector-related initiatives at the regional and national levels to foster the opening of higher education institutions to adult learners.<sup>99</sup> The Serbian *Strategy of Education Development in Serbia 2020+* addresses the education system from early childhood to adult life. Specific solutions are developed for each education level (preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary, doctoral studies, and LLL) with the aim of building a consistent system of lifelong learning. However, considering the average level of educational attainment in Serbia, the current focus is on widening the education participation and upskilling of the younger population.<sup>100</sup> The Austrian strategy, *LLL 2020 –*

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<sup>96</sup> See <http://www2.ul.ie/pdf/932500843.pdf>

<sup>97</sup> Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies. In: International Journal of Lifelong Education. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417, p.9

<sup>98</sup> See <http://www.blk-bonn.de/papers/heft115.pdf>

<sup>99</sup> See e.g. <http://www.oh.uni-oldenburg.de/>; <http://www.wettbewerb-offene-hochschulen-bmbf.de/>

<sup>100</sup> Ivic, I. & Pesikan, A. (2012): Education System Reforms in an Unstable Political Situation: The Case of Serbia in the First Decade of the 21st Century. In: CEPS Journal Vol. 2(2), pp. 31-53

*Strategy for Lifelong Learning in Austria*, embraces the entire education system, plus related sectors relevant to ensure lifelong learning, such as workplace learning and community education. The aim is to achieve synergies across the board and to implement lifelong learning by using strategic objectives and benchmarks.

Slovenia has made progress over the last few years by formulating a lifelong learning policy intended to implement a coherent lifelong learning strategy covering all educational sectors. In practice, however, this seems to be more difficult. The Slovenian country report and other sources<sup>101</sup> point out that a white paper analysing the Slovenia's entire education system was prepared in 2010, which was supposed to serve as the basis for defining the lifelong learning strategy and for adopting legislation regulating all levels of the educational system. The draft strategy was created primarily within the Ministry of Education and Sports, so the main emphasis is on solutions and measures directly connected to the field of education and training. Education policy makers found it difficult to accept that the issue of lifelong learning also calls for an intersectoral approach. It seems that policy makers still find it hard to accept the comprehensive nature of the concept of lifelong learning.

In a nutshell, the analysis of the country reports reveals that the process of developing and implementing national lifelong learning policies/strategies is making progress, though with differences regarding the pace of change and with differences in focus regarding the educational sectors that are seen as responsible for lifelong learning. Some policies or strategies seek to develop a coherent system of lifelong learning, encompassing all educational sectors. Other countries address mainly further education as an important educational sector to make lifelong learning a reality, thereby taking the risk of neglecting cross-sectoral mobility and progression as one of the core ideas of lifelong learning.

#### **4.1.2 Higher education/adult education policy and legislation at the national/regional level**

All countries covered by this study have developed higher education policies and legislative measures referring to higher education provision, including higher education for adults, funding mechanisms, teaching formats, and so on. The role of national higher education policies and legislation varies between countries in terms of higher education governance and management<sup>102</sup> (meaning the degree of autonomy enjoyed by higher education institutions), and in terms of the structure of each higher education system.<sup>103</sup> As a consequence, higher education can be seen as a direct outcome of national/regional higher education policy and legislation in some countries, whereas in other countries, national/regional higher education policies and legislation function more in the sense of 'contextual' frameworks guiding higher education institutions that act independently.

During the last decade, most European countries have seen their higher education policies and legislation challenged by the goals of the *Lisbon Agenda*, the *Bologna process*, and their

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<sup>101</sup> See also: GHK/Research voor Beleid (2011): Country Report on the Action Plan on Adult Learning: Slovenia. [http://adultlearning-budapest2011.teamwork.fr/docs/Country-report\\_SI\\_final.pdf](http://adultlearning-budapest2011.teamwork.fr/docs/Country-report_SI_final.pdf); Štremfel, U. & Lajh, D. (2012): Development of the Slovenian Education Policy in the European Context and beyond. In: Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy (BJSEP), Vol. 6 (1), pp. 130-153

<sup>102</sup> Wolter, A. (2010): State, Market and Institution in German Higher Education – New Governance Mechanisms beyond State Regulation and Market Dynamics. In: Piekarskiego, J., /Urbaniak-Zajac, D. (eds.): *Innowacje w Edukacji Akademickiej*. Lodz, pp. 123-144

<sup>103</sup> Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies. In: *International Journal of Lifelong E*. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417

implications for reforming higher education systems.<sup>104</sup> Opening higher education institutions to adult learners has become a particularly relevant, yet not the only issue for higher education policies in most European countries. So, higher education policies at national or regional level do not necessarily focus on adult education and lifelong learning. The EUA report on *Trends 2010*<sup>105</sup> reveals that the representatives of 26 national and regional (Belgium, UK) rector's conferences mostly identify quality assurance, research policies, institutional autonomy and funding reforms as most important policy changes alongside the implementation of the Bologna process. However, the *Bologna Process Implementation Report*<sup>106</sup> states that 'in the majority of EHEA countries steering documents related to higher education refer to lifelong learning', although 'they do not necessarily provide a definition of this term' (p. 128).

After all, in most European countries, issues related to the opening of higher education to adults are reflected in higher education policies and legislation.

### ***Implementation of National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) and European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)***

Implementing Bologna tools such as the National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) and the ECTS system through legislative frameworks has been considered particularly important since the beginning of the Bologna process. Both tools reflect the intention to foster the implementation of lifelong learning. Promoting mobility between different educational levels as one aspect of lifelong learning through the European Qualification Framework (EQF), in particular the related mapping of NQFs is a controversial issue, however. The *Bologna Process Implementation Report* gives an account of the progress made regarding the realisation of these tools. Up to now, the Flemish Community of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland) fully implemented NQFs. The NQF was replaced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2010 with the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Another 13 higher education systems in the EHEA are close to completing the process of implementation; 18 countries completed a majority of the steps; 6 countries (Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Greece, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine) are still in the early stages. Even if most countries are on a promising way, the report concludes that developing the qualification frameworks and putting them into practice is still one of the major challenges for the countries of the EHEA.<sup>107</sup>

The ECTS supports the use of learning outcomes earned at other national or foreign higher education institutions but also outside the formal education system. This can prove conducive to learning provisions becoming more flexible. Most EHEA countries have by now

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<sup>104</sup> Wolter, A. (2010): State, Market and Institution in German Higher Education – New Governance Mechanisms beyond State Regulation and Market Dynamics. In: Piekarskiego, J., /Urbaniak-Zajac, D. (eds.): *Innowacje w Edukacji Akademickiej*. Lodz, pp. 123-144

<sup>105</sup> Sursock, A./Smidt, H. (2010): *Trends 2010. A Decade of Change in European Higher Education*. Brussels

<sup>106</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

<sup>107</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

established ECTS as a transfer and accumulation system, but the linking of credits and learning outcomes is much less advanced.<sup>108</sup>

### **Regulations on flexible learning provision**

Flexibility in forms of provision is a crucial factor in widening participation in higher education to adults. Regulations on flexible learning provision shape the process of opening higher education. However, implementing more flexible provision comes at a time of reforms in higher education systems affecting funding models and allocation procedures. As described in the *Bologna Process Implementation Report*, countries include different legal frameworks in their policy approaches aiming at the provision of flexible learning. Some countries mainly follow the objective of creating conditions that allow higher education institutions to offer flexible programmes and/or enable students to prolong their studies. In other countries, regulatory frameworks aim especially at the promotion of higher education institutions which particularly focus on flexible learning provisions. Further prevalent directives regulate the recognition of prior learning, the modularisation of study programmes, and financial support.<sup>109</sup> The results presented in the EACEA/Eurydice report on adults in formal education show that the funding schemes for flexible higher education programmes vary significantly between the EHEA countries.<sup>110</sup> In some countries, funding conditions apply to traditional full-time and flexible programmes; in other countries, different funding methods are in use. Flexible learning provisions consequently often require a higher private financial investment.<sup>111</sup> In the study on *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe*, only a few countries report having implemented funding instruments to help part-time students who may not be eligible for the same funding as full-time students. Some countries introduced targeted instruments such as income assessed grants (UK), incentive grant and fee-waiver schemes (Scotland), or fiscal arrangements for employers and employees (Netherlands).<sup>112</sup>

### **Regulations on eLearning/distance learning**

National/regional policies and regulations on the use of ICT to enable flexible delivery systems are important factors to reinforce the process of opening higher education to adults.<sup>113</sup>

The connections between higher education policy and ICT-based higher education reforms are also reflected in the country reports included in this study, although the overall impression is that in many countries there is still a need for the development of coherent strategies and regulations to enhance the use of ICT for the flexible delivery of higher

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<sup>108</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

<sup>109</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union

<sup>110</sup> EACEA/Eurydice (2011). Adults in Formal Education. Policies and Practices in Europe

<sup>111</sup> EACEA/Eurydice (2011). Adults in Formal Education. Policies and Practices in Europe

<sup>112</sup> EACEA/Eurydice (2011). Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Funding and the Social Dimension. Brussels

<sup>113</sup> See e.g. Kozma, R. B. (2005): National Policies that connect ICT Based Education Reform to Economic and Social Development. In: Human Technology. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Humans in ICT environments. Vol 1 (2), pp. 117-156

education programmes. Specific regulations on eLearning provided by public universities are reported from Spain, Italy and Serbia. The country reports highlight regulations and legal amendments to public universities to provide higher education programmes via distance learning. In Spain which already has a strong tradition of distance learning since the 1970ies the role of ICT based distance learning provided by universities was reinforced by law in 2001 and by a Royal Decree in 2011. From Italy it is reported that a 2006 Ministerial Decree regulates eLearning provision by universities and distance learning universities. Although the Decree does not mention adult students it directly affects adult participation in higher education. The country report from Serbia highlights the national Law on higher education which was adopted in 2005 and amended in 2008 and 2010. According to this law higher education institutions are permitted to provide distance learning courses. Standards of accreditation of distance learning study programmes were adopted by the Serbian National Council for Higher Education. Other country reports (e.g. the reports from Austria, Cyprus, Latvia and Greece) refer to achievements concerning regulations on founding open universities and private higher education institutions specialised in providing continuing higher education programmes during the last decade. The Finnish country report states that there are no specific regulations on the use of ICT and eLearning provision. The report refers to an existing national ICT policy and specific initiatives.<sup>114</sup> It is pointed out that most important is the fact that the long-standing interest in distance education in the Finnish Open University has generated a good basis for the use of ICT and eLearning in university adult education.

#### **4.1.3 Specific policies and missions of higher education institutions**

Higher education institutions are not a single species and have proliferated into a number of different institutional types, such as research universities, technical universities, university colleges, regional universities, open universities, polytechnics, universities devoted to continuing higher education and so on. As already pointed out in chapter 3, the further diversification of higher education institutions is crucial to widening participation in higher education. Institutional diversity does not only refer to structural issues, including legal status, funding and financing, programmes and curricula and so on, but also to policies, strategic and cultural issues which form the mission (not: mission statement) of higher education institutions. It is worth mentioning here that there might be some structural determinants (e.g. curricula, entitlements to award degrees) which influence institutional missions. This applies also to the way and the extent to which lifelong learning and adult education are regarded in higher education institutions' policies and missions.

This is reflected by the case studies prepared for this study. All cases are characterised by a specific policy to open higher education to adults and to enhance lifelong learning, yet the strategic approaches or missions are different. Furthermore it is worth mentioning here that institutional policies to open higher education to adults are not necessarily documented in a coherent institutional strategy defining clear targets for further development. The following paragraphs provide information on accentuations in institutional policies and strategies emerging from the case studies prepared for this study.

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<sup>114</sup> See, for more information, [http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Finnish\\_Virtual\\_University](http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Finnish_Virtual_University); Kylämä, M. (2005): The Finnish Open Virtual University and Finland's Path to a Learning Society. In: McIntosh (ed.): Perspectives on Distance Education. Lifelong Learning & Distance Higher Education. Vancouver/Paris, pp. 107-120

### ***Accent on the social dimension***

Several case studies reveal a prior interest in opening higher education to adult students either from diverse social and educational backgrounds or from underrepresented groups in higher education which in the Bologna context is addressed as the 'social dimension'.

The case study from Birkbeck College, University of London, reveals the specific mission of the institution to provide part-time higher education courses which meet the changing educational, cultural and personal career needs of adults and to enable participation for adult students from diverse social and educational backgrounds. Similarly in the case study from the National University of Ireland Maynooth it is reported that the university has built a profile of an adult friendly university.

The case studies from New Zealand and South Africa refer to higher education institutions with a strong focus on the social dimension, i.e. opening higher education to adult students from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in higher education. The New Zealand case is exceptional as it presents a higher education institution which was founded for the purpose of reinforcing the Maori heritage and human resource of the Maori population in New Zealand.

### ***Accent on skills enhancement and professional development***

Many of the cases included in this study respond to a demand for career advancement and job requirements, which reflects the tendency in higher education institutions to implement higher education programmes for skills enhancement and professional development.

There are especially two case studies which reveal a strong accent on skills enhancement – Finland and Germany. Though related to specific branches and occupational contexts both case studies reveal a similar strategic approach. The aim is to provide higher education programmes, not exclusively but particularly for experienced workers, who without a required formal qualification cannot advance their careers in the field in which they have been working for years. In the case study from Germany this approach is reflected with regard to the skills enhancement of workers in the field of social services; the Finnish case refers to improving the workforce in libraries.

Several case studies prepared for this study reveal a country specific or regional strategic approach to professional development. The aim of fostering professional development is combined with a wider aim to improve human resources in a country or region, though with different scope. In the case study from Russia the institutional policy accent on improving 'the Russian' potential of human resources is pointed out. The case study from Italy reveals the strategic aim to attract adult students from the countries throughout the Mediterranean area. In contrast, the case study from Cyprus accentuates the aim to improve Cypriot human resources in order to attract attention from regional companies. The Spanish case study from the University of Catalunya targets adult students from the region and from abroad. To make the provision attractive for students from the region the University has decided to offer programmes also in the regional language, Catalan. Regarding the historical and political background of the Catalonian region within the Spanish nation state this might also be a form of displaying responsibility for the regional heritage.



#### **4.1.4 Conclusions**

The analyses presented above reveal the on-going development of policy making and legislation in the field of opening higher education to adults. In many European countries changes towards a greater openness of higher education systems can be observed. The development of NQFs and regulations on flexible learning provision including distance learning has been brought forward during the last decade. Many changes and developments are underway, but there is still a lot to be done. At national and/or regional levels there is a need to improve the inter-sectoral coherence of lifelong learning policies and strategies. This is closely linked to the need for the further elaboration of concepts of lifelong learning, particularly in the higher education sector. Regarding the policies and missions of higher education institutions to open higher education to adults, much seems to depend rather on initiatives by the university management and/or single departments and institutional units than on concerted action towards the development of an institutional lifelong learning strategy. Further policy should therefore focus on aligning national lifelong learning policies and strategies and on supporting countries in adopting the idea of lifelong learning as embracing all educational sectors. Furthermore there is a need to support higher education institutions to develop strategies of opening higher education to adults more systematically, from the perspective of lifelong learning.

#### **4.2 Flexible access arrangements**

Opening higher education to adults is closely linked to access issues – that is, the opportunity for adults without an upper secondary education certificate to enrol in higher education courses or to pursue a tertiary degree, even in those areas where they already have the knowledge, skills, and competencies to be gained in some units. In the context of the Bologna process, flexible access arrangements are seen as part of the social dimension of higher education institutions, meaning ‘equitable access to and successful completion of higher education’ by a diverse range of student populations.<sup>115</sup> The response to these issues is often seen in

- regulatory aspects at the national level, including formal entrance requirements and the definition of selection criteria and procedures for admitting learners to higher education programmes,
- the recognition of prior learning and the validation of non-formal and informal learning at the institutional or even programme level for progression in higher education studies,
- offering specific types of programmes such as bridging courses as a means to widen access and to open up alternative pathways into higher education.

This chapter presents an overview of current efforts to enable adult access and provide alternative pathways into higher education through the flexibilisation of access arrangements.

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<sup>115</sup> See Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels, p. 8

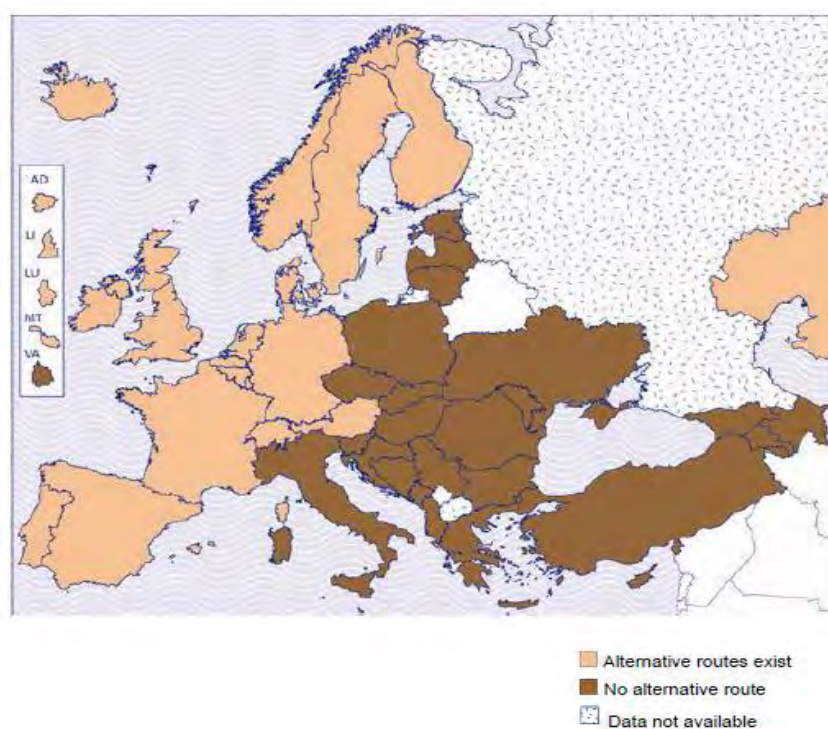


#### 4.2.1 Alternative routes into higher education

Although the recruitment of non-traditional learners has been identified as an important policy concern in various communiqués of the Bologna Process<sup>116</sup>, the pace of development of alternative pathways into higher education is rather moderate. In other words, access into higher education is still focused on traditional entrance procedures, i.e. granted to those holding an upper secondary school leaving certificate (general or vocational).

The *Bologna Implementation Process Report*<sup>117</sup> states that out of 47 higher education systems for which 2010/11 data were available just slightly fewer than half had implemented at least one alternative route to higher education. These countries tend to be found in the Western and Northern parts of the EHEA. Figure 4 shows the geographical distribution of countries with and without alternative pathways into higher education.

Figure 4: Alternative routes to higher education for non-traditional candidates, 2010/11



Source: European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 84.

The *EUROSTUDENT IV* report<sup>118</sup> additionally delivers information on the share of students entering higher education according to the type of alternative route. Data are not available for all European countries. Among the countries for which data are available the share differs

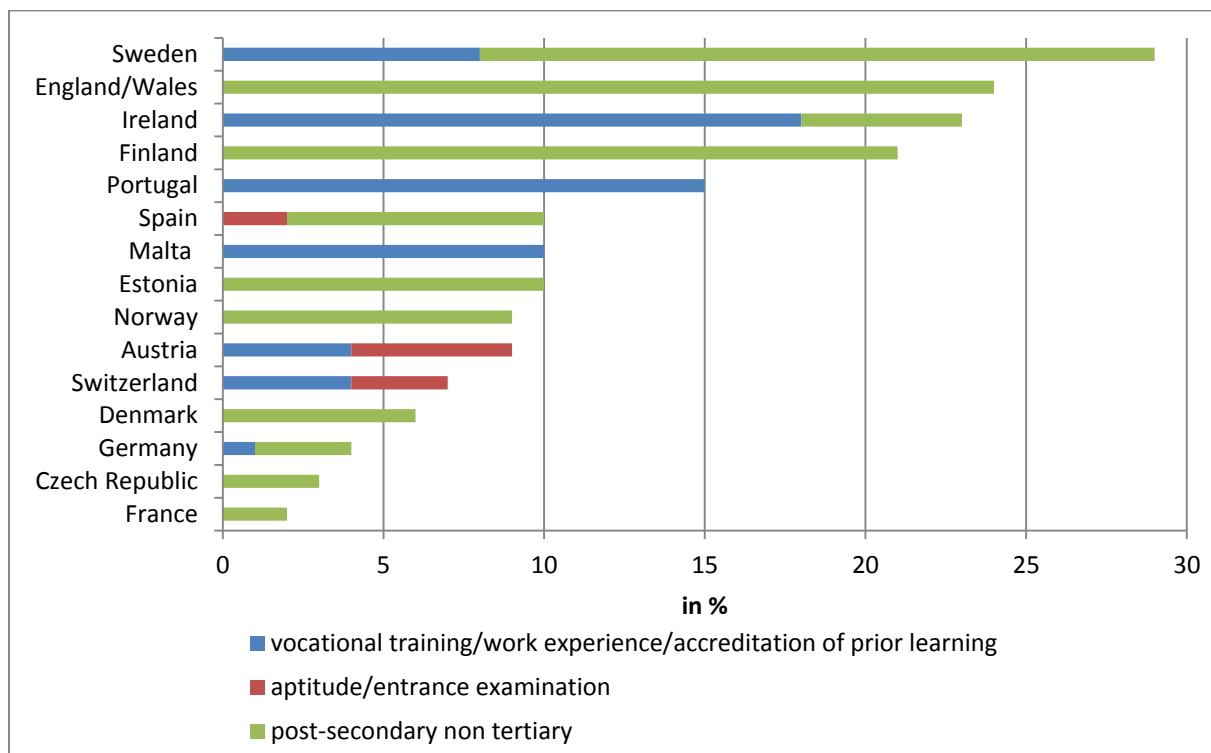
<sup>116</sup> The Bologna related communiqués are available at [http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/declarations\\_communiques.htm](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/declarations_communiques.htm)

<sup>117</sup> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels

<sup>118</sup> Orr, D., Gwosc, C. & Netz, N. (2011). Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe. EUROSTUDENT IV Synopsis of Indicators. Bielefeld: Bertelsmann.

considerably. Sweden, England/Wales, and Ireland are especially advanced, whereas non-traditional students in other countries less often take advantage of alternative routes<sup>119</sup>.

Figure 5: Share of students entering higher education through an alternative route



Source: EUROSTUDENT IV<sup>120</sup>

A clear geographical pattern emerges from these data: higher education systems in the western European countries are more flexible in terms of opening up alternative access routes into higher education, whereas the eastern European countries and Italy lag behind. However, regardless of whether an alternative route into higher education exists or not, the aim of significantly raising the number of students entering higher education via an alternative route has not been achieved in most countries. The *Bologna Process Implementation Report*<sup>121</sup> notes that even in the western European countries ‘it is seldom more than one in ten students who have entered higher education through an alternative pathway’. This indicates that even in countries where alternative routes are in place, it does not suffice to merely provide legal options of accessing higher education via an alternative

<sup>119</sup>The EUROSSTUDENT Survey covers 25 countries in the EHEA. It draws on data obtained from more than 200,000 students surveyed by the 25 national partners between 2008 and 2011. The fact that EUROSSTUDENT gives a share of students entering through alternative paths for the Czech Republic and for Estonia even though the Bologna Process Implementation Report states that alternative pathways do not exist in these countries can be explained by differences in operationalisation. In the Bologna Process Implementation Report, countries that grant alternative access only in exceptional cases, and often only in certain fields of study (e.g. access to art programmes for particularly talented candidates), are not counted as offering alternative pathways. The EUROSSTUDENT survey, by contrast, does take such cases into account.

<sup>120</sup> Orr, D., Gwosc, C. & Netz, N. (2011): Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe. EUROSSTUDENT IV Synopsis of indicators. Bielefeld

<sup>121</sup> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels, p. 9

route. Higher education institutions and the individuals must also take advantage of those options.

The *SIRUS Report* emphasised that in order to mainstream and sustain widening access and participation, institution-wide efforts, including policies and strategies, as well as shared responsibilities, are necessary.<sup>122</sup>

### ***The relationship between national and institutional regulations for flexible access varies from country to country***

Access may be regulated at various levels, in particular at the national level through legislative frameworks and at the institutional level through the admission policies of the respective higher education institutions. Which level is more influential in a given country depends on the degree of autonomy granted to higher education institutions. This degree varies between countries. The possibility to make access to higher education more flexible significantly depends on enabling legislative frameworks and structures within the education system but also on the initiative of higher education institutions and the will to make use of the degree of autonomy granted to them. Legislation may therefore constitute one important factor for improving access but more deeply rooted cultural and historical context factors also have a considerable impact.<sup>123</sup>

Two countries from our sample of case studies serve to illustrate this point. According to the country information gathered, Germany introduced legislation to create a number of alternative access routes in recent years. Especially between 2009 and 2011, the states (Länder) significantly improved the legal conditions under which vocationally qualified persons can enter higher education. The share of first-year students without a formal higher education entrance qualification rose from 1.27 per cent in 2000 to 2.91 per cent in 2010. This means their share more than doubled over the past decade; nevertheless, the numbers are still relatively small. The UK, by contrast, has no specific legislation with regard to alternative entry; rather, it is entirely up to higher education institutions to define their admissions criteria. In the UK, admission of non-traditional students is common practice, and within the EHEA, the UK has by far the highest share of students entering through non-traditional entrance routes.<sup>124</sup>

Nevertheless, even if their short-term impact potential must not be overestimated, enabling legislative frameworks can be seen as an important prerequisite for stimulating change and making higher education more open and accessible. Relevant reforms can be found in many countries of the HEAD study. In Spain for example, legislation has introduced alternative entrance options for different age groups, including admissions tests for adults over 25, recognition of work experience for adults over 40 years, and an entrance examination for adults over 45 years.

European developments play a major role in this process. In particular, the on-going implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and its national counterparts, together with the accompanying shift of perspective towards learning

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<sup>122</sup> Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011): *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*. Brussels

<sup>123</sup> Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): *Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies*. In: *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417

<sup>124</sup> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012): *The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report*. Brussels

outcomes, can be seen as an important driver for creating more upward mobility in education systems throughout Europe, and for creating links between different sectors of the education system.

#### **4.2.2 Recognition of prior learning (RPL)**

The recognition of prior formal, non-formal and informal learning is a valuable tool to provide flexible access to higher education programmes and thereby widen participation. So, RPL has become a key issue in higher education policies and legislation. In many European countries, RPL and validation practices are or are about to become part of lifelong learning policies and legislation at the national and regional levels. However, in a number of countries RPL and validation practices is still regulated only at institutional level and in some countries there is still no legislative regulation in place. The Eurydice report on *Adults in Formal Education*<sup>125</sup> presents evidence of both, the dissemination of legislative frameworks for the validation of prior non-formal and informal learning in the higher education sector and the differences between countries. The following categories are differentiated according to how validation rules are implemented in the national legislation:

- (1) In Estonia, the Flemish Community of Belgium, France, Slovenia, and Sweden, higher education institutions are explicitly required to implement procedures for the recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning.
- (2) In the French Community of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Iceland, and Norway, higher education institutions are allowed to implement procedures for the recognition of prior non-formal and/or informal learning. The institutions are free to decide on the extent of such regulations; in many countries, only a minority of higher education institutions makes use of this possibility.
- (3) In Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Liechtenstein, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, legislation does not mention the recognition of prior learning. Despite the non-existence of regulations, however, the recognition of prior learning is widespread in some of these countries, most notably Ireland, Poland and the United Kingdom. The other countries in this group have limited experiences with recognition procedures.

These findings show that the legislative regulations across Europe address the recognition and validation of prior non-formal and informal learning in the field of higher education in various ways. The country reports and case studies which refer to validation and recognition also reveal considerable differences in implementing flexible access arrangements:

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<sup>125</sup> Eurydice (2011): *Adults in Formal Education: Policies and practice in Europe*. Brussels

|         | <b>RPL and validation are common practice</b> | <b>limited experience with RPL and validation</b> | <b>regulations on RPL and validation in progress / only recently introduced</b> |
|---------|---|---|---|
| Austria |   | X   |   |
| Cyprus  |   |   | X   |
| Finland | X   |   |   |
| France  |   | X   |   |
| Germany |   | X   |   |
| Greece  |   |   | X   |
| Hungary |   | X   |   |
| Ireland | X   |   |   |
| Italy   |   | X   |   |
| Spain   |   | X   |   |
| Sweden  | X   |   |   |
| UK      | X   |   |   |

Legislation may be directive or enabling or it may not refer to RPL at all. This shows that there is still a need for the further enhancement of higher education legislation and regulations on RPL in order to achieve comparable conditions across the European countries. This is set to change as countries work to implement the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 and put in place arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.<sup>126</sup>

The institutional level becomes relevant as well. According to the 2010 OECD report, 'providers of learning in the formal context and providers of certified qualifications are at the forefront of recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes' (p. 55). Especially with regard to higher education, the 2010 *Update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning* report<sup>127</sup> states that 'the role of individual education and training prior providers is particularly relevant within higher education' (p. 21). So, there is a broad consensus on the significant role of higher education institutions in the implementation of RPL and validation practices, which aim at making non-formal and informal learning visible and transferable, thus allowing a greater flexibility for students to access into higher education and to progress through higher education programmes. It is worth mentioning here that RPL can have two different objectives: to gain access to higher education, or to progress through higher education programmes. The latter refers to the fact that students can have certain courses waived if they prove that they have already acquired the skills elsewhere. In the EHEA, the majority of countries enable the recognition of formal, non-formal, and informal learning for progression through a higher education programme. Credit transfer, which has been facilitated by the introduction of ECTS, is a relevant precondition. In our sample of countries, RPL and the accumulation of credits are accepted practices. However, in most cases included in this study, the recognition of credits from previously earned certificates, bachelor's, and even master's degrees is still limited, ranging from 20 ECTS (e.g. in the Austrian case) to 60 ECTS (e.g. in the Italian and in the Irish case). In Latvia, students can receive credit for up to 30 per cent of the programme based on prior non-formal learning

<sup>126</sup> European Council (2012): Council Recommendations of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Official Journal of the European Union, C 398/1. Brussels

<sup>127</sup> Hawley, J., Souto Otero & Duchemin, C. (2011): 2010 Update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning – Final Report (a project of the European Commission, DG EAC in cooperation with Cedefop). Brussels, pp. 21-22

and practical experiences, although implementation has only started in the 2012/13 academic year.

The sample of the European countries and cases included in this study shows that there are considerable cross-country and cross-institutional variations in the implementation of RPL and validation practices. Universities in Finland use APEL principles<sup>128</sup> and individual assessments to improve access to higher education for diverse groups, including learners without a formal entrance credential ('National Matriculation Examination Degree'). The University of Helsinki and Aalto University in Helsinki, for example, only use assessment tests as a standard admissions requirement.<sup>129</sup> The Finnish case study included here (the programme 'Qualification for Library Personnel in Eastern Finland', organised collaboratively by the 'Centre for Training and Development' at the University of Eastern Finland and the 'School of Information Sciences' at the University of Tampere) targets library staff with a bachelor's and master's degree, but without a formal qualification in library science, and older people with many years of work experience in that field. Admission to the programme is based on APEL principles and self-assessment (e.g. writing an essay based on relevant previous work experience).

The French case study included in this study, the DEAU ('Diplôme d'Accès aux Études Universitaires' / Access diploma for entering higher education), is a nationwide programme provided by universities. The DEAU targets people who did not graduate from secondary school with a *baccalauréat* diploma, the regular university entrance qualification. Admission to the programme is based on an interview with a university teacher and a series of tests on specific knowledge and skills designed to assess whether a candidate might successfully progress through the programme. As the DEAU is not an official diploma, employers or higher education institutions are not required to accept it. However, some French universities have decided to acknowledge it as part of the RPL procedure. The French system of RPL and learning outcome validation has reached a high level of development. The 'Validation des Acquis de l'expérience' (VAE) was established in 2002 as a right of every French citizen. Since then a significant investment has been made in the higher education sector to produce standardised descriptors of learning outcomes for validating work experience and allowing access to individuals who do not meet the formal entrance requirements. The VAE is well organised and widely applied in France. It usually takes 3 to 12 months to complete and has proven especially attractive to people aged between 30 and 49 years.

RPL is also practiced in higher education institutions in Germany, Ireland, Italy, UK, Spain, and Sweden. Other countries such as Austria and Slovenia report further developments. Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, and Serbia report some progress.

For example, in Greece, recent (2010) legislation was passed to allow for linking accredited VET programmes to formal higher education programmes via the recognition and transfer of credit points. The reforms should enable the recognition and validation of learning outcomes from 'long-term' vocational programmes to help adult learners qualify for higher education entry. In Cyprus, individual higher education institutions are entitled to award credits for prior formal learning even though a national framework for RPL still does not exist. Furthermore, the case studies from Greece and Cyprus show that the higher education institutions also

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<sup>128</sup> Hill, S. & Merrill, B. (2003): Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). In: Report. Literatur- und Forschungsreport Weiterbildung. Vol. 26 (4), pp. 55-69

<sup>129</sup> See Fischer, H. (2012): Flexibilität ein Leben lang – Lebenslanges Lernen im finnischen Hochschulsystem. In: Kerres, M., Hanft, A., Wilkesmann, U. & Wolff-Bendik, K. (eds.): Studium 2020. Positionen und Perspektiven zum lebenslangen Lernen an Hochschulen. Münster et al. pp. 124-134

look out for possibilities to foster equitable access. In both cases, candidates are required to have formal qualifications, but selection procedures and criteria have been designed in a way to facilitate access for candidates from certain underrepresented groups. In the Greek case, where the number of applicants by far exceeds the number of available seats, the university made a conscious decision not to use performance criteria when selecting students but to conduct random public electronic draws. In Cyprus, candidates from underrepresented groups are accepted on the basis of special criteria (e.g. low marks or age).

The cases from Cyprus and Greece reveal that in countries without nationally established regulations on RPL, institutions are likely to get into the uneasy situation of being forced to struggle for enabling equitable access (instead of being enabled and supported by the national government in doing so). Another problem especially in countries where the responsibility to implement RPL and validation practices is given to the higher education institutions is the lack of systematically implemented validation procedures. The striking point here is that RPL and validation procedures depend on institutional policies or even on decisions made by the administrative staff. Validation procedures are individualised, i.e. depending on the relationship between single aspirants and members of the academic staff. This might prevent students from applying for the validation of their competencies and/or the accumulation and transfer of credits.

The German example seems to be a case in point. The BASA online programme (Bachelor of Arts in Social Work), successfully implemented in 2003 and collaboratively provided by seven universities and universities of applied sciences across Germany, is explicitly geared towards people who already work in the field of social work. The accumulation of credit points is possible, but subject to individual approval by the programme coordinators. Flexibility with regard to choosing courses, accumulating credit points, and earning credit for learning outcomes from previous studies is restricted. Where flexible options do exist in principle, students tend not to use them.

The examples above illustrate the problems with RPL and validation in countries where higher education institutions are left to developing their own solutions. On the one hand, the possibility of doing so does contribute to widening adult participation in higher education. On the other hand the lack of mainstreaming RPL and credit accumulation and transfer involves obvious limitations concerning a widespread use of these opportunities. So, there is a need for the development and dissemination of concepts and models for a systematic design and implementation of RPL and validation procedures in order to promote RPL and validation practices becoming a common practice at institutional level.<sup>130</sup>

The fact that RPL and validation practices are still at an early stage of development in many countries shows that there is also a need for a better monitoring of that kind of provision at the non-governmental level. Relevant examples of countries where RPL and validation practices are monitored by specific education bodies are presented in the 2010 *Update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning* report<sup>131</sup>. In the UK,

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<sup>130</sup> Freitag, W. K., Hartmann, E.A., Loroff, C., Minks, K.-H., Völk, D. & Buhr, R. (2011): Resümee aus der Sicht der wissenschaftlichen Begleitung. In: Freitag, W.K., Hartmann, E.A., Loroff, C., Stamm-Riemer, I., Völk, D. & Buhr, R. (eds.): Gestaltungsfeld Anrechnung. Hochschulische und berufliche Bildung im Wandel. Münster et al., pp. 239-250

<sup>131</sup> Hawley, J., Souto Otero & Duchemin, C. (2011): 2010 Update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning – Final Report (a project of the European Commission, DG EAC in cooperation with Cedefop). Brussels, pp. 21-22

for example, the 'Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education'<sup>132</sup> monitors RPL and validation practices. In other countries, networks of higher education institutions have been formed with the aim of achieving greater coherence in RPL and validation (e.g. in Belgium, Scotland, Denmark, Ireland).<sup>133</sup>

#### **4.2.3 Specific programmes widening access for potential Higher education students**

Besides regulatory aspects concerning admission to higher education, designing specific programmes can be an important tool for making access to higher education more flexible. The HEAD case studies feature good practice examples that may be broadly clustered in two groups: a) programmes aiming to provide potential students with the competencies and/or qualifications needed to take up tertiary study, and b) programmes building bridges to the world of work.

##### ***Bridging and preparatory courses***

The first type of programme can be found in France and the UK. In France, prospective students may obtain a special access diploma, the DEAU. Launched in 1994, this specific programme is mainly organized around four domains (mathematics, French, a foreign language, geography/history) and delivered through distance learning and/or evening study. This type of diploma was introduced on the basis of a 1994 government decree and is currently available at most French universities. The DEAU targets people who did not graduate from secondary school with a *baccalauréat* diploma, the regular university entrance qualification. Admission to the programme is based on an interview with a university teacher and a series of tests on specific knowledge and skills, designed to assess whether a candidate might successfully progress through the programme. As the DEAU is not an official diploma, employers and higher education institutions are not required to accept it. However, some French universities have decided to acknowledge it as part of the RPL procedure.

The UK case also features a special preparatory course, the 'Higher Education Introductory Studies' programme, offered by Birkbeck College, University of London. In this case, the programme is not based on a specific piece of legislation but grounded in Birkbeck College's long history and established mission as a provider of higher education for adults. The programme is accompanied by active outreach programmes explicitly aimed at recruiting students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. The outreach programmes focus on nurseries in East London, because this area has traditionally seen rather low levels of participation in higher education. Working primarily with nurseries has another advantage: student mothers can be offered childcare service while they are studying.

##### ***Transitions from VET to higher education***

The second type of programme figures even more prominently in the HEAD sample. Many policy documents highlight the importance of the economy and labour market needs as a

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<sup>132</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>133</sup> Hawley, J., Souto Otero & Duchemin, C. (2011): 2010 update of the European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning – Final Report (a project of the European Commission, DG EAC in cooperation with Cedefop). Brussels, pp. 21-22



reference point for designing study programmes. Creating bridges between vocational education and training and higher education can contribute much to making higher education more accessible to wider groups of students and to making academic programmes more relevant to the world of work. Such bridging can take many forms. The HEAD studies include cases where higher education institutions themselves act as providers of VET (including the option of upgrading one's studies towards a degree) and cases where a programme specifically seeks to recruit students with a VET background in order to upgrade their qualifications to the tertiary level.

Examples of the first possibility include the Hungarian and the Swedish cases, both of which link continuing vocational education and higher education. In both countries, the respective higher education institutions offer diploma-level programmes for specific industries (logistics, ICT based services). These programmes may lead to an academic degree, if students wish to pursue their studies further.

The second possibility can be found in the cases of Austria and Germany. The Austrian case presents an interesting example where a higher education programme (the Master in Adult Education) has been developed as a 'natural' extension of existing vocational continuing education programmes (the wba Certificate/Diploma in Adult Education). In this case, the combination of a formal (vocational) training programme with a tertiary-level programme has led to a coherent qualification pathway which supports the upskilling of the workforce in one particular sector. By integrating RPL mechanisms, this pathway has been made even more flexible and adaptable to individual learning needs.

Another way of linking higher education and VET can be seen in the German example. To be admitted to the BASA programme in social work, students are not required to have the formal university entrance diploma, but they need to have worked in an appropriate institution for at least three years. Although there is no formal link to a particular VET programme, most students entering BASA have completed a programme of vocational training.

#### **4.2.4 Conclusions**

Alternative routes into higher education have been developed in a number of EHEA countries. However, there are still many countries where alternative routes into higher education do not exist. Even in countries where alternative routes exist, the number of students entering higher education via these routes is still low. There is an evident need to encourage countries to foster the development of alternative routes into higher education.

The flexibilisation of access regulations can take place at different levels. Both policy makers and higher education institutions are called upon to act within their remit to design more flexible and open admission schemes. Where centralised legislation regulates access to higher education, this legislation should be designed in a way to enable alternative entrance routes to higher education. Where higher education institutions are largely free to decide on their own admission policies, the overall institutional policy can actively support the recruitment of various types of adult learners, such as mature students, second-chance learners, and the like. Flexible admission criteria may be accompanied by active outreach activities in order to maximise the impact. Furthermore, non-governmental bodies and networks at the institutional level can help monitor and foster the coherence of RPL and validation practices at the institutional level.

Designing special types of programmes is another powerful way to open up access to higher education. Successful types include bridging and preparatory programmes as well as access courses, which provide low-threshold alternative pathways to students without the traditional formal entrance qualifications. Several cases included in this study show that higher education institutions fostering bridges to VET can make higher education both more accessible and more relevant to the labour market.

The development and implementation of such programmes should be encouraged by decision-makers at both the national/regional and institutional policy level.

### 4.3 Flexible programme provisions and modes of delivery

Researchers and policy makers agree that the lack of flexibility in higher education provision and delivery modes is a major barrier to adult participation.<sup>134</sup> The need for flexibilisation has been widely communicated during the last ten years. For example, from the point of view of lifelong learning in higher education, Schuetze and Wolter<sup>135</sup> pointed out:

Programmes will need to become more diverse and modularized. Studies will need to be organized in a more flexible form including part-time and distance studies using the opportunities of modern learning technologies, new media and of credit accumulation and transfer procedures. (p. 188)

The *ALPINE*<sup>136</sup> project highlighted the flexibilisation of learning provisions as a relevant precondition for attracting adult learners, especially those from disadvantaged groups.<sup>137</sup> More recently, the EUA study on *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education*<sup>138</sup> underlined the necessity of providing flexible programmes and modes of delivery with a focus on enabling adult learners to follow educational paths adapted to their needs.

There is evidence to suggest that higher education programmes and delivery modes have become more flexible over the past few years. According to the *Pre-study on the Role of Higher Education Institutions as Providers of Continuous Professional Learning and Adult Education*<sup>139</sup>, higher education institutions have responded to the greater demand for flexible programme provisions and delivery through several strategies, such as 'the flexibilisation of their admission requirements, and educational offer, increasing part-time provision, modularisation, eLearning and provision at non-standard hours' (p. 13).

This section analyses the case studies with a focus on these aspects of flexible programme provision and modes of delivery and highlights some additional aspects of programme flexibility that contribute to widening adult participation and to creating flexible pathways through higher education.

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<sup>134</sup> Research voor Beleid (2010): Impact of on-going reforms in education and training on the adult learning sector. Zoetermeer

<sup>135</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-traditional Students and Lifelong Learning in Industrialized Countries. In: *Das Hochschulwesen* (5), pp. 183-189

<sup>136</sup> Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.) (2004): *Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe*, Bern

<sup>137</sup> See Mark, R. (2004): *Increasing Adult Participation in Higher Education*. In: Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.): *Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe*. Oxford et al., pp. 29- 48

<sup>138</sup> Reichert, S. (2009): *Institutional Diversity in European Higher Education - Tensions and challenges for policy makers and institutional leaders*. EUA: Brussels

<sup>139</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture/GHK (2011): *Pre-study on the role of higher education institutions as providers of continuous professional learning and adult education*. Brussels

### 4.3.1 Flexible time structures and duration of higher education programmes

The constraints of time and place that adults often face in their learning are well-known barriers to their participation in higher education. There is evidence that adult learners, particularly those with work and family duties, prefer studying part time and at non-standard hours. Higher education systems have responded to this demand. According to the *Bologna Implementation Report*<sup>140</sup>, the majority of countries formally recognise at least one other student status in addition to the traditional ‘full-time’ status. Most commonly, this is the part-time student status. Several countries, including Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey, do not have an official part-time student status but ‘provide possibilities for students to apply for a limited number of credits and follow de facto part-time studies’ (p. 137).

A similar picture emerges for the HEAD sample of case studies. The programmes from Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Mexico, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the United States offer students a choice between full-time and part-time study. The other programmes are exclusively run on a part-time basis, with the exception of the Serbian case, where the programme is only available in a full-time format. Here, online tools are used to allow for asynchronous teaching and learning activities to make the programme more flexible in terms of individual study, and thus more accessible to working students. Besides part-time formats, alternative approaches and formats designed to meet the needs of adult learners in terms of time flexibility and efficiency can be found in the case studies.

#### ***Part-time study formats imply different degrees of flexibility***

Apparently, part-time studies allow adult learners greater flexibility in organising their studies over time. However, there are also research findings on the topic<sup>141</sup> proving that the existence of part-time studies does not necessarily imply greater flexibility in terms of study and programme organisation. This can be partly explained by the fact that, apart from the fixed statistical definition,<sup>142</sup> definitions of ‘part-time studies’ are not provided by all countries and that they, where provided, vary across countries. The *Bologna Process Implementation Report*<sup>143</sup> states that part-time studies can be defined in terms of a certain number of ECTS per semester (e.g. in Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta), a workload of about 21 hours per week (e.g. in UK, England, Wales, Northern Ireland) or less than 40 hours per week (e.g. in Scotland and Latvia), or in terms of limited direct participation in course sessions (e.g. Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldavia). The different definitions of part-time studies partly determine the flexibility of programme organisation.

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<sup>140</sup> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels

<sup>141</sup> See Hanft, A. (2012): Studienorganisation und Programmgestaltung als Balance zwischen Neuem und Bewährtem. In: Kerres, M., Hanft, A., Wilkesmann, U. & Wolff-Bendik, K. (eds.): Studium 2020. Positionen und Perspektiven zum lebenslangen Lernen an Hochschulen. Münster et al., pp. 28-35

<sup>142</sup> UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat (2010): UOE Data collection on Education Systems. Manual. Volume 1. Montreal, Paris, Luxembourg

<sup>143</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 134

Also in countries which do not have a formal distinction between full-time students and students with other statuses<sup>144</sup>, the practice of part-time study may vary considerably. In the sample of cases included in this study this is reflected for example by the German and Swedish cases. The degree of temporal flexibility in the selected programmes ranges from a fixed overall time frame with rather strict schedules (German case) to a format allowing students to choose study periods and to define their study pace independently. The programme ‘Development of eServices’ at Dalarna University, Sweden, features the highest degree of flexibility: students can apply for the programme twice a year, they can start their individual coursework whenever they want to, and can complete the requirements at their own pace and schedule. Participants may set their pace of progressing through the programme at between 10 per cent and 100 per cent.

The UK case, the ‘Higher Education Introductory Studies’ at Birkbeck College, University of London also offers varying degrees of study intensity. Students may choose between a two-year ‘normal track’ and a one-year ‘fast track’ option.

### ***Extension vs. compression of study duration***

In other cases, part-time studies are primarily meant to increase time flexibility by reducing workload requirements and/or extending the total duration of studies compared to a full-time programme. In the HEAD sample of case studies, the total duration of part-time studies ranges from nine months in the case of a diploma programme (New Zealand) up to a maximum of five years in the case of a Bachelor-programme (Russia).

Several programmes, including the Irish ‘Local and Community Studies’ programme, the Mexican ‘Management of Small and Medium Businesses’ programme, and the programmes offered by the Open University of Catalonia (Spain), offer the opportunity of opting out with an interim qualification. This option is especially attractive for learners who may not be sure whether they will be able to complete a full study programme, and who would nevertheless like to see their achievements certified in some way.

Among the higher education programmes considered in the HEAD study, the New Zealand case study, the ‘Diploma in Adult Education’ offered by the Te Wānanga O Aotearoa (University of New Zealand) is exceptional insofar as it is explicitly committed to the principles of social justice and equity, which are highlighted in the university’s mission, and to a lifelong learning approach that considers learning to be an on-going activity embedded in peoples’ life courses. In this context, the university’s academic offers include intensive student support services designed to facilitate student progression and achievement. The duration of studies should be appropriate for supporting students in achieving their goals. As a consequence, course schedules are set out in a flexible way to enable learning pathways which suit students’ learning needs, instead of requiring them to complete requirements within a fixed time period. Accordingly, students may defer their studies for a certain period of time and then come back to complete the programme without additional fees.

The US case study, by contrast, is an example of a programme going in the opposite direction by offering accelerated study programmes that may be completed in both a full-time and a part-time format. Accelerated, condensed study formats represent a useful addition to

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<sup>144</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, Eurostat & Eurostudent (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, p. 134

other programmes offering the possibility of extending the time taken to acquire a degree. Accelerated programmes help adults overcome some of the time constraints they often face in their learning. Faced with the prospect of having to study longer to obtain the degree, adult learners may refuse to engage in higher education. On the other hand, to complete an accelerated programme requires a specific personal disposition as such programmes are mostly geared towards highly motivated, high-performing, and outcome-oriented learners. These programmes primarily address adult learners who are employed or wish to gain a degree within a limited time-span. So it can be assumed that these programmes are not really catering for a broad and diversified student population, e.g. adult learners who attend higher education for reasons of personal enrichment and students who study without the intention of earning a degree.

### ***Evening programmes***

A further possibility to overcome the time constraints typically faced by adult learners in higher education is to provide programmes outside the normal daytime hours usually reserved for work and/or family activities. Among the sample of cases prepared for the HEAD study, only the Russian example makes use of this possibility. Furthermore, that case study shows that programmes can be provided in more than one mode to increase flexibility. The BA programmes offered by the Faculty of Economics and Management and the Faculty of Informational Technologies at Moscow State Technical University are run in different modes, including daytime programmes, distance learning, or full-time or part-time evening programmes. The range of study modes is based on the experience that only few adult learners participate in full-time daytime programmes, that is, most prefer distance learning or evening studies. Some BA programmes are also offered for companies. These study programmes are run in the evenings or on a part-time, distance learning basis, partly combined with workplace training provided in facilities specifically equipped for that purpose. The evening programmes are provided through a special evening study department.

### **4.3.2 Distance learning / eLearning: An emerging standard for the flexible delivery of higher education programmes**

It is well known that distance learning, and particularly eLearning, is very important for widening adult participation in higher education. Lifelong learning and higher education policies at the international and EU level have long sought to make higher education programme delivery more flexible by making intensive use of ICT. Likewise, academic research has repeatedly pointed out the need for achieving greater flexibility by using ICT. Against the backdrop of the evolving global knowledge-based society and an increased cross-border participation in higher education programmes, especially in the non-European parts of the world (e.g. Asia, Arabic peninsula, Australia),<sup>145</sup> distance learning based on the intensive use of ICT will become even more important.

At the EU level, there is evidence that distance education, including distance education via the traditional correspondence mode, is a well-established means of providing higher education opportunities to adult learners in many European countries. Over the past decade,

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<sup>145</sup> McBurnie, G. & Ziguas, C. (2009): Trends and Future Scenarios in Programme and Institution Mobility across Borders. In: OECD (ed.): Higher Education to 2013. Volume 2: Globalisation. Paris, pp. 89-108

distance learning has become ITC-based to a high extent, even though it may in some cases still be successfully delivered by postal mail, as the case studies from Russia and South Africa demonstrate.

Almost all case studies included in the HEAD study refer to ICT-based distance learning as the preferable mode for a flexible delivery of higher education programmes.

Several cases (e.g. Sweden, Italy, and Spain) refer to programmes entirely delivered online. All teaching, interaction, and personal support is computer-based. For example, degree programmes at the Open University of Catalonia, Spain, are completely delivered as ITC-based distance learning. The fact that this university is well integrated into an (inter-)national network of distance learning providers and into research in ITC-based teaching and networking helps explain why its individualised, interactive education programmes for working adults are characterised by such high quality and on-going improvement. It is worth noting that the significant role of distance learning is also emphasised in the Spanish country report. According to the country report, one of the most relevant actors in the field of distance learning is The National Distance Education University (UNED) which also offers specific support to 50 per cent of college students with disabilities and students in prison.

However, the majority of cases in this study apply a blended learning approach, that is, a combination of eLearning, face-to-face sessions, and tutorials or seminars. After all, face-to-face interaction and learning has proved to be an important factor for increasing students' reflection in the learning process and improving their personal commitment to completing a programme. Though rather moderate in terms of programme flexibility and scheduling, the German case, BASA-online, shows that periods of face-to-face interaction might lead to a kind of 'cohort-effect', that is, the formation of learner cohorts, which fosters social integration and mutual counselling between programme participants. Similarly, the case reported from the National School of Health at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa highlights the importance of summer and winter schools, which serve as an opportunity for intensive and at the same time collaborative learning.

Moreover, the case study from Serbia confirms the assumption that the university's decision to offer ICT-based learning might also be a vehicle for effectively opening up the institution for adult learners. In the case of Singidunum University in Belgrade, ICT-based distance learning is reported to be the only flexible study format that could be introduced in what is overall a rather restrictive higher education environment, where seeing an adult or older person at a higher education institution is still highly uncommon. Together with an effective tutoring and support system, distance learning at Singidunum University is able to respond to the individual needs of adult students. This is backed up by systematic quality assurance mechanisms at the institutional and national levels.

The widespread use of ICT-based distance learning in higher education hints at eLearning becoming an emerging standard of flexible adult learning in higher education. However, it is still an open question what that trend means in terms of quality assurance in higher education provision, teaching, and learning materials, as well as in terms of assessing learning outcomes from eLearning. The Mexican case, the Open and Distance University of Mexico, has reported a special need for further development in this regard.

### **4.3.3 Local support centres with ICT facilities**

While Internet-based provision has great potential to offer more flexibility to students concerning the time and place of studying, it may also pose additional barriers when the needed technical equipment is not easily available, or when students are not familiar with the use of ICT. Especially in the Nordic countries, there is a well-developed infrastructure of facilities providing support for adults to become accustomed to ICT and ICT-based learning. But even if adult learners are accustomed to ICT, there are regions, and even local communities, where no appropriate technical infrastructure is available to support individuals' participation in higher education. To counteract these potential barriers, the cases from Italy and Mexico in particular report the possibility of overcoming local constraints by collaborating with local centres providing ICT support. As a result, students have the (additional) opportunity to visit a local support centre, where they are provided with both Internet access and guidance on how to use the equipment, if needed. The Telematic University UNINETTUNO in Italy, for example, provides people who do not have Internet access of their own with high-speed access in multiple technological pools throughout Italy and in ten other countries around the Mediterranean Sea (France, Greece, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco). As an additional benefit, these facilities offer the opportunity for students, teachers, and staff to meet face to face and build learning groups. The Open and Distance University of Mexico runs similar Centres for University Support and Access throughout the country.

Some universities, such as the Open University of Catalonia, Spain, have backed up their ICT support with specialised research centres. The mission of these centres is to support the continuous improvement of eLearning offers through research, innovation, training and networking. This is complemented by the development of specific software solutions. Another example from Spain which is mentioned in the country report, the UNED, is mainly a provider of distance learning but runs also 62 support centres in Spain and also various support centres in 11 other countries.

The pedagogical perspective is strengthened in the 'Next Generation Learning Centre' at Dalarna University in Sweden. Here the focus is on developing pedagogical solutions for eLearning. Moreover, the Centre offers courses for students and teachers on how to use modern technology. ICT supports such as web-based discussion groups also enable communication and networking between students and staff where support centres are not available.

### **4.3.4 Curricular flexibility to meet the needs of adult learners**

The *ALPINE* project<sup>146</sup> identified the need for a flexible curriculum as crucial precondition for widening adult participation in higher education. This is particularly true in the face of changing labour market demands for highly qualified personnel working at the intersection of research and practice. Higher education institutions have responded to this demand by developing programmes for adult learners combining academic (i.e. theoretical and research-

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<sup>146</sup> Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.) (2004): Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe. Bern et al.

based) issues and professional (i.e. experiential and practice-related) issues.<sup>147</sup> For example, the BA programme in 'Management Engineering' at the International Telematic University UNINETTUNO in Italy or the programme 'Management of Small and Medium Businesses' offered by the Open and Distance University of Mexico focus on the integration of academic and professional knowledge.

Furthermore, the HEAD case studies prove that there is a wide variety of curricula that respond to the demand for flexible learning, in terms of contents and particular subjects of study. Almost all of the programmes presented in the case studies offer some optional courses or modules added to compulsory core modules to ensure that the programmes meet the needs of their students. The 'Master in Public Health' at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, for instance, consists of six compulsory core modules, and students may choose two elective modules from over 20 different subjects relevant to their curriculum. The 'Master in Information and Communication Systems' at the Open University of Cyprus offers two alternative study paths: an advanced path featuring a strong research orientation and a basic path featuring a focus on continuing professional learning. The Swedish programme 'Development of eServices' offers each student a tailor-made curriculum, which they are largely free to design according to their personal needs. According to student feedback, that approach fits very well with each student's individual situation and previous experience. The programme can draw on well-functioning support structures at the institutional level.

Other cases show that higher education programmes are strongly based on the demand for special groups of employees. The Finnish case presents a programme explicitly designed to secure and improve the employability of a specific group of employees, namely library staff, while in Austria teachers are the target group. The programme on 'Logistics Management' of the University of Miskolc in Hungary, or the BA in social work (BASA) in Germany are especially attractive for employees who wish to advance in their career.

#### **4.3.6 Linguistic diversification of programmes**

Many higher education institutions in Europe and worldwide have responded to the linguistic and cultural diversity across and within countries as a means to overcome linguistic barriers to participation in higher education. In the European Union, the topic of multilingualism is acknowledged in two respects. On the one hand, there is a need to overcome linguistic barriers and enhance cross-border mobility by providing instruction in widely used languages to foster integration and employability. On the other hand, multilingualism is valued as a shared heritage and a cultural asset for Europe. Promoting less widely used European languages is therefore even more relevant. The Council Resolution on a *European Strategy for Multilingualism*<sup>148</sup> considers linguistic and cultural diversity as part of the European identity and as a major cross-cutting theme encompassing the social, cultural, economic, and therefore educational spheres. The Resolution states that efforts should be made to promote language learning and to value the cultural aspects of linguistic diversity at all levels of education and training.

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<sup>147</sup> EACEA (2012). The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels

<sup>148</sup> Council of the European Union (2008): Resolution on a European Strategy for Multilingualism, 2905th Education, Youth and Culture Council Meeting, Brussels, 21 November 2008



With regard to higher education, acknowledging linguistic diversity in higher education provision within and across countries is an important factor for widening participation. In the sample of cases prepared for this study, several higher education programmes provide the opportunity to choose the language of teaching and learning, even though the underlying strategic concepts are different.

The private Telematic University in Italy, for example, offers all of its distance courses in four languages: Arabic, English, French, and Italian. In doing so, the university hopes to attract wider students groups from other European countries, from neighbour countries outside the European Union, and migrants whose first language is not Italian. Similarly, the programmes presented in the case studies for Cyprus and Latvia offer bilingual study opportunities in other major European languages (English, German, Spanish), thereby making their programmes more attractive to adult students with a European and international orientation.

The Spanish case, by contrast, presents a model for making tertiary study more attractive for students from the region. In addition to offering programmes in Castilian Spanish, the Open University of Catalonia also delivers all of its study programmes in Catalan, the regional language. The programme presented in the case of New Zealand is based on a mainstreaming integrative teaching approach that aims at the inclusion of students with a minority background. The particular focus here is on the recognition of indigenous heritage, language, culture, and philosophy to increase the participation of Maori and older learners.

However, much progress is still needed in the area of providing programmes for students with disabilities and their special linguistic needs, such as sign language. The only example of an inclusive approach for disabled students in the HEAD case studies comes from Mexico. The Open and Distance University's countrywide access and support centres facilitate physical access for people with disabilities. Likewise, the university's online platform is designed with regard to the needs of people with hearing, visual, and mobility disabilities.

#### **4.3.7 Conclusions**

Higher education institutions have responded to the need for flexible programme provision and flexible programme delivery. The programmes presented in the case studies prepared for the HEAD study show a wide range of programme specialisation and diversification as well as modularisation, thus offering opportunities for adult learners to configure their studies according to their needs.

Furthermore, the case studies prove that the degree and mode of flexibility vary a lot. There is no overall understanding of 'flexible programme provision' and no 'one-size-fits-all' solution to making higher education programmes more flexible and more responsive to the needs of adult learners. Some remarkable achievements have been made in supporting adult learners in higher education to design their own curriculum (Sweden), to choose the appropriate delivery mode (Russia), and to select the language of teaching and learning.

Further policy making should therefore seek to achieve a balance between fostering flexibility of programme provision and delivery and recognising the diversity of programmes targeting different groups of adult learners in higher education. Overall, progress is needed in the area of including adult learners with disabilities. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to develop flexible modes of delivery with regard to the special needs of students with disabilities.

## 4.4 Student services and support

Among the European Union's activities and strategies related to opening higher education to adults, student services and support are widely acknowledged as an important factor for motivating adult learners to participate in and progress through higher education. The *Bologna Process Implementation Report*<sup>149</sup> associates student services and support with the social dimension of higher education and with the goal of making higher education more inclusive.

Student services and support encompass a wide range of activities and services covering the entire period from students' accessing higher education, their progressing through their course of study, and their developing further career pathways after graduation. Student services and support include various forms of services, such as guidance and counselling services, as well as more 'tangible' support services, such as financial aid, child care facilities, or local study centres and branch campuses to facilitate students' physical access to study facilities. Such services play an important role in addressing various barriers (lack of information, lack of funding) that prevent adult learners from taking up higher education. The *SIRUS Report*<sup>150</sup>, among others, considers support services to be essential for enhancing access and improving student retention and performance.

Opening higher education to adults also implies a fairer distribution of 'outcomes (in terms of academic performance, career prospects and, more generally, life chances)'.<sup>151</sup> Student services and support can contribute much to improving both the study experience itself and the outcomes that adult learners can gain from their studies. These services, therefore, can be seen as an especially important component when it comes to addressing the dispositional barriers that recent research has found to be a comparatively neglected issue. Policy interventions mainly target institutional and situational barriers but tend to devote much less attention to dispositional barriers.<sup>152</sup> Encouraging students and keeping up their motivation is an important task of guidance and counselling, and a key complement to learner-centred teaching strategies and methods, which are equally important for the motivation and retention of students, including adult students.

### 4.4.1 Guidance and counselling play an important role for adult learners in higher education

The importance of guidance and counselling is thoroughly confirmed by the cases examined in the HEAD study. Virtually every case ascribes an important role to these services, and good practice examples abound.

Some cases, in particular those involving a higher education institution specialising in provision for adult learners, feature differentiated systems of institutionalised support. Spain, for instance, has set up a complex system involving different professional roles (counsellors,

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<sup>149</sup> Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (2012): The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels

<sup>150</sup> Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011): Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies. Brussels

<sup>151</sup> Scott, P. (2009): Access in Higher Education in Europe and North America: Trends and Developments. In: Sadlak u.a. (2009): UNESCO Forum on Higher Education in the Europe Region, Bucharest, pp. 125-150

<sup>152</sup> Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): Increasing participation of adults in higher education: factors for successful policies. In: International journal of lifelong education. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417

tutors) with clearly defined responsibilities regarding student support, and with tutorial plans set up for each programme, continuously monitored by a tutorial function development group.

However, successful guidance and counselling does not necessarily depend on differentiated institutional structures. Another, equally crucial factor, emerging from the Irish case, concerns staff attitudes. The Irish case emphasises 'an ethos of guidance and counselling' prevailing in the department offering the programme. Based on that ethos, department staff consider it a key part of their job to provide advice and counselling. The Department of Adult and Community Education at the National University of Ireland Maynooth offers rather informal guidance and counselling services that seem to work equally well. Whereas the Open University of Catalonia, for example, has a very strong formal system of guidance/counselling in place, the informal guidance/counselling services at the National University of Ireland Maynooth are seen as an integral part of *all* staff interactions with students. However, in both cases, as well as those from New Zealand and the USA, the role of teachers in guiding and counselling students is important.

Guidance and counselling services are related to many different fields, most importantly

- programme characteristics and students' needs,
- academic and study skills support,
- ICT-based and online study support,
- financial advice,
- career guidance.

In most higher education institutions, such guidance and counselling services are part of the institution's regular student services and available to all students. In addition, guidance and counselling is often provided at the faculty or department level, where it can be more specifically related to students' situation in a particular programme. The more the characteristics of a given programme differ from the mainstream programmes, the more such programme-specific guidance/counselling gains importance.

### ***Guidance on programme characteristics***

Providing guidance on programme characteristics is an important measure to ensure that prospective students are able to find a programme which best matches their needs. Pre-enrolment guidance in this field therefore involves not only providing information on programme content and structure but also identifying prospective students' needs and expectations. Furthermore, guidance counsellors need to find out whether a student has the resources (in terms of skills, time, funding, etc.) needed for successful programme completion.

Such guidance usually takes place before students enrol in a programme. Most higher education institutions offer such guidance as part of their regular student support services, and students are free to make use of such services or not. The Irish case shows how such guidance can be effectively combined with an admission policy designed to widen access to higher education. Maynooth University does not require applicants to have any prior formal learning when they come to the programme. The only requirement for admission is a personal interview. One of the purposes of the interview is to advise applicants on course contents, explain how the course works, inform them about the costs involved, and provide tips on how to cover those costs over a period of time. The department staff explain how the course operates, and discuss with students if the course meets their needs.

Such counselling can involve a strong motivational component, especially if it goes hand in hand with a widening access policy. Students with no (or poor) prior higher education experience, or with few formal qualifications, often have excessive doubts whether they will be able to succeed on the programme. Experienced guidance staff can help them overcome these doubts and encourage them to enrol in a programme that matches their needs. The US case from Elizabethtown College shows that students who were properly encouraged to enrol were then able to build confidence and self-esteem after successfully completing a few courses.

### ***Academic and study skills support***

Academic and study skills support is a frequent component even in mainstream provision. This kind of support is particularly crucial for adult learners who have been out of formal education for a longer period of time.

All programmes described in the HEAD case studies offer academic advice as an integral part of the student experience. Academic advisors or tutors offer their support online or via phone or office appointments. They guide learners through the programme and help them select (or drop) courses, prepare for exams, or use effective strategies for learning and improving academic performance. Sometimes, mentoring and writing skills support are offered as well.

Some cases point out specific study skills modules, in particular related to those programmes that are accessible for students without a formal university entrance qualification. But accelerated programmes such as the US case frequently feature such modules as well. Study skills modules aim at equipping students with the core skills required to be academically successful, such as writing, academic literacy, critical reading, exam preparation, and time management. During such courses, students also have the opportunity to get accustomed to assessment formats such as critical analyses, essays, timed in-class assessment, or oral presentations. Often, students are required to take such a study skill module or foundation course at the very start of the programme (e.g. cases from Austria, UK, US), particularly those who have not previously completed a university degree.

Another model which is based on peer support can be seen in the Austrian case. In study circles, small groups of students focus in detail on the contents of the respective modules. Half of the study circles are integrated into the phases of personal attendance. Lecturers introduce the issue to be tackled and students can present, discuss and reflect upon the results of their work. The remaining units are dedicated to working on the questions posed, and are organised entirely by the small groups themselves.

### ***ICT and online study support***

Increasingly, academic and study support is provided with the help of information and communication technology (ICT). This is particularly true of distance learning programmes, which are partly or entirely delivered online. For example, in the joint international Master in 'Educational Treatment of Diversity' in Latvia, e-tutoring and e-mentoring sessions are used as flexible intercommunicative opportunities for students to speak to their professors directly and receive specific and definitive answers to their questions. In the entirely web-based Swedish programme, 'Development of eServices', all personal support is computer-based as

well. Students receive support and mentoring services through ICT to help them deal with problems that may arise.

ICT-based and online study requires specific guidance that goes beyond generic study skills support. To use ICT tools such as virtual classrooms and to communicate effectively in an online learning environment, students (and teachers) need specific skills. This is especially true of students who are not 'digital natives' and may be unfamiliar with these tools. Since many programmes geared towards adult students nowadays involve online components to some extent (up to complete online delivery), providing support along the way is highly important.

In the HEAD case studies, most higher education institutions offering blended-learning or complete online programmes provide ITC support as an integral part of the programme, facilitated by programme tutors or administrative staff. In some cases, this does not only involve technical support but also includes didactical guidance on how to make the most of technology for effective learning.

Elizabethtown College (USA) offers workshops and guidance to individual adult students with limited prior exposure to technology. At the Mexican Distance Learning University, all students must take a preparatory module designed, among other things, to train prospective students in the use of the learning platform.

### ***Financial advice***

Financial advice or guidance on funding opportunities is not frequently highlighted in the case studies. This is remarkable, considering the fact that lack of funding has been identified as one important barrier for adult students. As a consequence, one would expect advice on available opportunities to be an urgent matter. All across Europe, there still seems to be room for improvement in this particular field.

The UK case, which is embedded in an overall institutional context characterised by the specific mission to widen access and participation, is an example of how financial advice is systematically integrated in the range of student support services. Birkbeck College has been a leader in terms of ensuring that adequate information is made available to prospective students. Such information turned out to be essential, because recent changes in funding regimes in the UK have had a negative impact on programme enrolment.

### ***Career guidance***

Career guidance is offered in virtually all cases. Providing students with information on possible career paths after graduation is usually part of a programme's general advice services. Career counselling may be among the responsibilities of a student's programme tutors, or it may be provided by special career services connecting students and alumni with potential employers.

A number of cases in the HEAD sample have set up rather extensive career services. In the Serbian case, the university recently established a Centre for Career Development as an outcome of an EU-supported project. The Centre represents both a starting point for students' personal career development and a long-term resource for career development throughout their working lives. The Centre is staffed by a professional advisory body in the field of corporate human resources management. Thus the Centre helps connect students

with potential employers. After graduating, students may join an alumni association. A database helps former students communicate and network not only among themselves but also with potential employers.

The importance of including a networking component in the career services portfolio is also highlighted by the Spanish case. Career guidance at the Open University of Catalonia aims at fostering interaction between students, university staff, and companies to create a network of contacts to facilitate professional development and exchange. UOC career guidance comprises a number of basic services: job placements, internships, information about educational opportunities and resources offered in the labour market, and spaces for exchange between UOC students and graduates and interested companies.

This focus of career services is particularly relevant to adult students most of whom already have a job. Their career related need therefore does not consist in finding a first job but rather in developing and extending their professional network.

#### **4.4.2 Conclusions**

Student services and support are most important to adult students who enter higher education for the first time in their lives or after a period of absence from formal education.

Counselling and guidance are needed to supply adult students with the formal and technical information they need to successfully progress through a course of study. However, student support cannot be provided as a one-size-fits-all solution. Different types of adult learners (for example learners who decide to enter higher education for the first time after a phase of employment or learners who drop-in to higher education, having 'dropped-out' previously) have specific needs, which require group-specific or even individualised support. Moreover, counselling and guidance need to vary according to the different stages of entering and progressing through higher education:

- pre-enrolment counselling (with the major aim of ensuring the best possible match between student needs and programme offer),
- academic advising and support throughout the course of study (with the main aims of helping students cope with learning challenges, addressing upcoming problems, preventing drop out, and keeping up motivation),
- career counselling (with the main aim of enabling students to make the most of existing contacts and opportunities for their further career).

The case studies included in the HEAD study show that most institutions offering flexible higher education programmes are prepared to provide guidance and support to facilitate adult learners' participation in higher education. However, the forms of guidance and support vary a lot. On the other hand, systems that involve legal entitlements – are still scarce. The same is true of quality assurance schemes in the field of student guidance and support. This may be because higher education institutions do not yet regard guidance and support as a distinctive professional task in its own right but mostly as an auxiliary service.

Furthermore, student services that take into account adult learners' specific biographical situation and the needs resulting from work and/or family duties, for example, have yet to be systematically developed. In the HEAD sample of case studies, some particular types of service such as child and elderly care, as well as comprehensive financial advice, are hardly mentioned as part of support systems designed to enable adult learners' participation. In

summary, then, services and guidance in these particular fields seem to be underdeveloped and should in general be given more attention.

#### 4.5 Teaching methods and teacher training

Both policy makers and representatives of the scientific community expect that recognising higher education institutions as providers of continuous professional learning and adult education within the lifelong learning continuum will significantly push these institutions to go beyond the traditional pathways of academic teaching. Ten years ago, Schuetze and Wolter<sup>153</sup> were among the first who claimed that 'the mission of higher education will need to include both discipline/subject orientated academic education of youth (or young adults) and competence- and problem-oriented professional training and continuing education of a multi-age population' (p. 188). In the same text, the authors called for changes in education – that is, in teaching and learning modes – as part of a comprehensive organisational change of higher education institutions. According to the aspects lifelong learning model which was presented in table 2 in the introduction to chapter 4, teaching methods and professional teaching competencies should be changed. Instead of the traditional teaching and learning modes in higher education which focus on ex-cathedra teaching, knowledge transfer and cognitive adoption of information and knowledge, teaching and learning should become a dynamic process in order to achieve flexible, problem solving and competence based learning processes, which meet the needs of the individual learner.<sup>154</sup>

Only recently, the authors of the green paper on *Fostering and Measuring the 'Third Mission' in Higher Education Institutions*<sup>155</sup> underpinned the necessity 'to develop teaching and learning modes that address the needs of a broader range of learners – indeed that engage with the societal need for lifelong-learning more generally' (p. 7). The teaching modes addressed in the green paper and in other academic literature and research documents are referred to as 'learner-centred'<sup>156</sup> or 'student-centred' modes of teaching, with a focus on learner autonomy and learning outcomes. The *SIRIUS Report*, too, puts special emphasis on student-centred teaching,<sup>157</sup> arguing that implementing lifelong learning at higher education institutions requires a shift towards student-centred approaches in teaching. In terms of didactical conceptualisation, these teaching modes aim at activating individuals' learning potential and creating possibilities for self-directed learning and flexibility of provision.<sup>158</sup>

An inventory of flexible types of learning is presented in appendix H. It should be mentioned here that these modes are not at all new, but belong to the standard didactical knowledge of professionals in adult education.<sup>159</sup> However, these teaching modes are still not widely

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<sup>153</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-traditional Students and Lifelong Learning in Industrialized Countries. In: *Das Hochschulwesen* (5), pp. 183-189

<sup>154</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-traditional Students and Lifelong Learning in Industrialized Countries. In: *Das Hochschulwesen* (5), p. 189

<sup>155</sup> e3m (2012): Green Paper. Fostering and Measuring 'Third Mission' in Higher Education Institutions. <http://www.e3mproject.eu/docs/Green%20paper-p.pdf>

<sup>156</sup> Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies. In: *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417

<sup>157</sup> Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011). *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*. Brussels

<sup>158</sup> See e.g. Osborne, M. & Young, D. (2006): *Flexibility and Widening Participation*. Bristol

<sup>159</sup> See Knowles, M. (1980): *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*. New York; Knowles, M. (1984): *Andragogy in Action. Applying Modern Principles of Adult Education*. San Francisco; Jarvis, P. (2004): *Adult Education and Lifelong Learning. Theory and Practice*. London

accepted in educational practice, neither in general adult education nor in higher education targeting adult learners. But, as initially mentioned, making lifelong learning part of the mission of higher education institutions will increase the pressure to develop teaching modes open to adult learners' needs and modes of acquiring knowledge.

#### **4.5.1 Conditions conducive to implementing 'new' teaching modes**

The cases included in this study show that higher education programmes targeting adult learners often imply a renewal of teaching modes at least to some extent. Furthermore, the cases confirm the impression that the shift towards learner- or student-centred teaching modes is linked to the institutional conditions under which a higher education programme for adults is developed and marketed. Variations can be observed between the more 'traditional', academically oriented higher education institutions and the 'modern' institutions (e.g. open and distance universities), including centres and departments mainly devoted to accommodating adult students. Particularly the case studies from Sweden, New Zealand, and the United States prove that the successful implementation of student-centred approaches requires changes in the curricula, assessment procedures, the meaning of teaching in general, and the qualification of the teaching staff. These cases show that the implementation of teaching modes open to adult learners' needs is closely linked to institutional strategies of developing human resources, marketing, and quality assurance.

In some cases, a disposition towards implementing teaching modes other than traditional academic teaching appears, when a particular programme is developed as an exceptional model or pilot project. The Hungarian Regional Adult Education Centre at the University of Miskolc is a case in point. The 'Special Course on Logistics Management' was designed to meet the needs of companies and their employees and was developed in cooperation with the French Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers. Though the course is largely based on traditional teaching, it also applies a problem-solving approach by asking students to analyse authentic problems arising at work. Another example is the Latvian 'Joint MA Educational Treatment of Diversity'. It was developed on the basis of a highly interactive teaching concept designed to suit learning preferences of older and experienced students. The Latvian example has been developed and offered by an international consortium of universities from four countries (Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, and Latvia).

#### **4.5.2 Curricula: Bridging theory and practice**

Except for the French and British case studies, all cases included here refer to higher education programmes aimed at enabling the continuing professional development and upskilling of adult learners according to specific fields of employment. Hence this study is equally relevant to the VET sector and the Bruges communiqué objective of promoting flexible pathways between VET and higher education. This work-related aspect implies a challenge to develop curricula that are, on the one hand, theoretically specialised and, on the other hand, open to include the practical dimension of work, namely by applying problem-solving approaches.

The examples of higher education programmes presented in this study prove that bridging theory and practice becomes a key curricular concern. Compared to traditional academic curricula, which largely rely on theoretical issues, the curricula of the examples included here feature an emphasis on transferring theoretical knowledge into practice. Almost all



programmes integrate teaching methods such as working on authentic problems occurring in participants' fields of employment, learning by means of (preferably authentic) case studies, or engaging in collaborative learning and group learning.

In the Hungarian case, the 'Special Course on Logistics Management', students are encouraged to work on authentic logistic problems occurring at their respective companies as part of their studies and theses. Furthermore, the course combined company visits with high-quality logistic innovations. In the US case study, this approach was chosen to serve a niche in the MBA market for working adults; it is even reflected in the college's mission statement: educating for service. Throughout the entire programme, students are expected to focus their learning experiences by applying theoretical issues to authentic problem solving in their social environment. The bachelor programmes include a compulsory course module which students are recommended to take at the end of their studies. The module integrates concepts, principles, practices, and applications from prior courses in order to allow for an analysis of the interrelationships between theory, problem solving, and strategy formation. In the German case, the aim of the bachelor programme is to enable participants to reflect on their daily work experience by using theoretical knowledge and by applying methods of social research. Students' reflection on their professional role is part of their regular learning activities. This is supplemented by a study project in which students are asked to apply their new theoretical knowledge to a selected problem in their field of employment.

To strengthen the links between theory and practice, several case studies highlight the role of experienced practitioners as guest lecturers or part-time teachers complementing the regular teaching staff of the higher education institutions (e.g. in the German case) or as tutors in local study groups (e.g. in the Finnish case).

#### **4.5.3 Self-assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning process**

Within the conceptual framework and practice of learner-centred or student-centred teaching, self-assessment is an essential tool for structuring the teaching and learning process and for enhancing learners' autonomy by enabling self-directed learning while progressing through a programme. That is why almost all cases included in this study emphasise the necessity of structuring learning processes by individual self-assessment, for instance by means of assignments, tests, and/or regular feedback by teachers and/or tutors on students' individual learning.

Self-assessment is even more important in distance learning, which strongly relies on learners' ability to progress through a programme independently. Distance learning has a long tradition and is well established in many European countries, often organised as, or within the context of, Open Universities at the national level. The majority of open and distance learning programmes are based on didactical principles which delegate the task of structuring the individual learning process to the learners. Given that most adult learners in higher education have an increased need for flexible arrangements to balance learning, work, and family duties, the advantage of 'open' learning is clear. On the other hand, distance learners often need the right support to keep up their reflection on the learning process and their motivation to progress further. Scheduled and partly guided self-assessment might help provide this support.

The distance learning programme of the Hellenic Open University, for example, provides guidance on the aims, syllabus, study outcomes, and assignment processes of each module.

Regular tutorials support students in their reflection on their individual learning process. The authors of the case study point out that students are provided with a certain number of self-assessment questions designed to assist them with developing critical thinking strategies, connecting theory and practice, and embracing the rationale of the learning material.

One instrument associated with the need for self-assessment is pointed out in the US case study: the 'learning contract'. In that case study, learning contracts are described as learners' written commitment to what they aspire to learn, how they will achieve the envisaged learning outcome, and when. Furthermore, the learning contract contains information on the evidence and criteria to be used when assessing the learning process and its outcomes.<sup>160</sup> Drawing up a learning contract is in itself part of the self-assessment process and needs clear guidelines, often involving a coaching session. The US case study points out that the learner works independently with a tutor or 'facilitator' to achieve the learning outcomes of a selected course.

#### **4.5.4 Selected approaches to meeting learners' needs and producing wider benefits of adult higher education**

Within the sample of case studies prepared for the HEAD study, there are some specific approaches that refer to the learners' situation in higher education and to the specific learning and teaching demands resulting from this situation. In particular, three different, partly divergent approaches should be pointed out here. They were implemented in three non-European countries: New Zealand, South Africa, and the United States. Though closely linked to the respective national and institutional contexts of teaching and learning, the approaches might provide impulses for higher education institutions running programmes for adult learners

- under tight market conditions,
- from disadvantaged and underrepresented ethnic groups in higher education, or
- with a wider focus on building capacities necessary to strengthen the community.

#### ***Accelerated learning***

The US case study, 'Accelerated Degree Programs: BS in Business Administration, BS in Accounting, MBA in Business Administration', exemplifies a teaching and learning approach based on enabling accelerated learning. The programme is provided under tight market conditions; tuition fees amount to the equivalent of up to €19,200. The programme targets students, in particular adult learners, who are, or wish to become, employed in organisational contexts that will ensure a middle income anywhere in the United States.<sup>161</sup> Furthermore, the approach aims to meet the needs of adult learners with multiple commitments (study, family, work) who might be deterred from participating in higher education by the prospect of spending many years on a 'normal' speed, part-time programme before earning a degree. Under these conditions, increased learner demand for successful learning within a manageable time frame can be expected.

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<sup>160</sup> Berger, N.O., Cafarella, R.S. & O'Donnell, J.M. (2004): In Galbraith, M.W. (ed.): *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Malabar, Florida

<sup>161</sup> According to the salary survey developed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers starting salaries.

<http://secure.nacweb.org/salary-survey-data/?referral=research&menuID=71&nodetype=4>

According to the US case study of Elizabethtown College (Pennsylvania), effective accelerated degree programmes feature instructors who value the experience, perspective, and opinions of adults and utilise student-centred teaching principles. The teaching and learning process has a focus on

- the relevance of content to adult lives,
- the pragmatism of adults who value learning that reflects their current responsibilities,
- adult prior knowledge and experiences as part of the learning engagement.

Accelerated learning comprises experiential learning and testing of learning achievements in adult work and life situations as well as collaborative learning among the adult learners. The courses are 'intensive' in nature because of the limited time duration, hence implying intensive reading, exercises, and writing assessments. The instructional part focuses on the transfer of key theory issues to adult learners' authentic work environments.

The teaching and learning process in accelerated learning programmes depends heavily on student commitment and motivation, as well as on the specific competencies of the teaching staff to keep up learners' motivation and to ensure effective learning. This may represent a certain barrier to a wider implementation of this approach.

### ***Equity-oriented teaching and learning***

The term *equity-oriented teaching and learning* is not a fixed technical term. It is used here to describe the didactic approach used in the New Zealand case study. The approach is conceived as a response to persistent economic, social, and cultural inequalities in New Zealand vis-à-vis the indigenous Māori population, and thus highlights the social responsibility of higher education.

In New Zealand, the Te Wānanga O Aotearoa, a Māori tertiary education institution with multiple campuses and courses, is outstanding for its ability to attract younger working-aged and mature Māori, many of whom are undertaking higher education for the first time. The programme 'Diploma in Adult Education' exemplifies a didactical approach which takes into account the nation's history and heritage and, in particular, the specific social situation and cultural context of the Māori population – the main but not the only ethnic target group of the programme. With its explicit focus on Māori heritage, language, culture, and philosophy, the programme intends to increase the chances of academic success for Māori and for mature learners.

The specific didactical approach of the programme follows the institution's equity-centred mission. The approach is based on a comprehensive teaching and learning concept that consistently recognises teacher (*kaiako*) and learner (*ākonga*) as equal contributors to the teaching and learning process. The assessment of learning processes has been developed under the premise of personal appreciation and with a focus on motivation. As a consequence, the traditional 'pass/fail' grading code was substituted by the more egalitarian and encouraging code of 'achieved'/'yet to achieve', thus aligning learners' higher education attainment with an underlying concept of lifelong learning as a 'journey', that is, a long-term activity.

Furthermore, the 'Diploma in Adult Education' programme at Te Wānanga O Aotearoa aims at the long-term application and development of the teaching and learning approach outlined above by employing graduates as teachers and teacher trainers. Above all, the programme aims at supporting cultural change in the wider sense, namely by disseminating the

knowledge and competencies of its graduates, which is essential for fostering an overall awareness of New Zealand's Māori heritage and for enhancing the social cohesion and social inclusion of the country's indigenous population.

### ***Community and problem-solving oriented teaching and learning***

The case of the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, shows a teaching approach that follows the principles of student-centred teaching with a focus on problem solving. The majority of accepted students in the Master of Public Health programme are employed and have their employer's permission to study on a self-funded basis. Most students have already achieved good to excellent academic results in previous academic studies. Participants' motives often go beyond professional development and upskilling. Many students are committed to improving their practice with the aim of relieving suffering in the underprivileged communities where they are employed. The School of Public Health not only responds to this commitment but is dedicated to the mission of contributing 'to the health of populations living in healthy and sustainable environment in developing countries, particularly Africa, with access to an appropriate, high quality, comprehensive and equitable health system, based on a human rights approach.'<sup>162</sup>

The programme offers detailed, relevant, and timely support and feedback on assignments in addition to face-to-face attendance at the annual summer school courses. Furthermore, an annual mini-thesis week provides active support to students with the writing of their thesis. Teaching and learning is supported by a number of media, including online discussion groups and Open Education Resources, podcasts, and the use of case studies via an online referencing system.

Although the programme is specialised theoretically, the teaching emphasises learners' engagement with the challenges of implementation and the development of (health) programmes and processes. The content of the curriculum is based on problem solving. Students are encouraged to plan and implement (health) programmes by learning to identify, quantify, analyse, and prioritise the health problems of local communities in order to develop suitable health systems. Additionally, teaching activities are largely organised around key components of health system planning and management, including health information, human resources, and the application of these to particular health programmes.

#### **4.5.5 Teacher training: A critical factor to successful adult learning in higher education**

It is widely known that successful learning is highly dependent on teachers' competencies to plan and manage courses professionally, to motivate learners, and to facilitate learning processes by providing guidance and counselling. During the last three decades, academic research and literature on the practice of education and, in particular, adult education, has provided findings and arguments underlining the crucial role of teachers' competencies and performance for learner achievement. Likewise, the European Union has a long-standing interest in improving teachers' competencies and performance in adult education and higher

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<sup>162</sup> See message from Prof Helen Schneider (director of the Public School of Health).  
<http://www.uwc.ac.za/Faculties/CHS/soph/Pages/Dean's-Message.aspx>

education and has supported a huge number of projects in this field.<sup>163</sup> However, the members of the teaching staff in higher education institutions do not always appreciate importance of these competencies, particularly in the face of concurrent challenges such as earning academic merits and producing excellence in research. Earlier studies on the topic proved that the academic staff has many difficulties 'adapting to new teaching methods and to a new professionalism that encompasses not only the use of information and communication technology (ICT) but also addresses a new student population whose needs and expectations are markedly different from those of school leavers.'<sup>164</sup> These considerations and findings show that teacher training, even though a critical factor when it comes to enabling successful adult learning in higher education, has remained underdeveloped for a long time.

Among the HEAD case studies, the most developed systems for staff recruitment and professional development can be found in more market-oriented examples, such as the US case, and in higher education institutions with a pronounced mission of making higher education more flexible, combined with a focus on online provision, such as the cases from Sweden and Spain. In the US case, the members of the teaching staff are selected on the basis of their credentials and performance in a variety of assessments, including teaching simulations. New members of the teaching staff are given a senior mentor to advise them on instructional practices and related aspects of being an accelerated degree instructor to working adults. They are furthermore required to participate in two professional development sessions each year, offered by the college. The teaching process is supported by module guidelines, which teachers are expected to follow. Various forms of performance feedback are further means of supporting the professional development of the teachers.

Higher education institutions focusing on online provision sometimes have special units for research into and the development of innovative (online-based) teaching. Such units, like the eLearn Centre (eLC) at the Open University of Catalunya, Spain, or the 'Next Generation Learning' Centre at Dalarna University, Sweden, also provide relevant training to the teaching staff at these institutions.

Specific training in teaching methodology is mentioned less often in the case studies. A few examples do exist, though. In the South African case, for example, a specialist in education was employed to assist with making learning material accessible for distance learning students. She also provides on-going staff training in teaching methods. In the Irish case, the teaching staff from across faculties may usually attend short, one-day training courses on adult learning and pedagogical approaches, including teaching methods. In the Spanish case competence-development training is given for teaching in eLearning environments. In the case from Serbia systematic skills improvement and training of university staff is mentioned.

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<sup>163</sup> See e.g. recent and current projects such as QF2Teach <http://www.qf2teach.eu/>, Capival <http://www.capival.eu/> or Dialogue <http://dialogue.eucen.eu/>

<sup>164</sup> Pouget, M. (2004): New Opportunities and Challenges. In: Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.): Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe. Oxford et al., pp. 429-454; Thomas, E. (2004): European Higher Education for Adults, an Overview. In: Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.): Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe. Oxford et al., pp. 455-502

#### 4.5.6 Conclusions

The analyses of the case studies included in this study show that higher education programmes designed to attract adult learners are most often found in the field of continuing professional development and upskilling. The majority of programmes seek to match the needs of adult learners who are, or wish to become, employed in diverse fields of professional activity. The main challenge here is to develop and implement teaching methods appropriate for the needs of adult learners in higher education. The overall goal is to change from traditional modes of academic teaching to learner- or student-centred teaching modes that support adult learners' autonomy and self-direction, especially with regard to putting theoretical knowledge into practice.

The case studies included here provide a number of solutions for improving teaching and learning in line with the need to generate 'transferable knowledge'. However, the teaching approaches and guiding ideas 'behind' these solutions – remarkable as they may be in some cases – are still 'individual', that is, context-dependent. To make teaching and learning modes more suitable for the situation and needs of adult learners, it is necessary to enhance

- stocktaking in teaching modes particularly within continuing higher education
- analyses on impacts related to specific teaching and learning modes.

Furthermore, following analysis of the cases and country reports it can be concluded that there is a lack of specific teacher training and professional development dedicated to teaching. There is a need to promote more systematic teacher training in higher education, particularly continuing higher education, to bring teaching at that level more in line with the principles of learner- or student-centred approaches. It should also provide training in the broader role for teachers in supporting adult learners which emerges from the previous section.

#### 4.6 Financial provisions

In the context of opening higher education to adult learners, financial conditions have been identified by the European Union<sup>165</sup> and within the Bologna process<sup>166</sup> as main factors to promote the integration of lifelong learning opportunities into the core development processes of higher education institutions, to facilitate individual adult participation in higher education, and to achieve greater equity in adult access to higher education. This section provides an overview of relevant trends in the European countries and highlights examples of good practice drawn from the case studies prepared as part of the HEAD study.

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<sup>165</sup> See e.g. Commission of the European Communities (2007): Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Action Plan on Adult Learning. COM (2007) 558 final. Brussels; Commission of the European Communities (2007): Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Action Plan on Adult Learning. COM (2007) 558 final. Brussels

<sup>166</sup> See e.g. the Leuven communiqué from 2009; the Bologna related communiqués are available at [http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/declarations\\_communiqués.htm](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/documents/declarations_communiqués.htm)

#### 4.6.1 Considerable cross-national variety in public funding

The available statistical information on the public funding of higher education and analyses of funding schemes shows that the European countries vary considerably in their approaches. There is still a way to go to assure appropriate funding for lifelong learning in the context of higher education. For instance, the 2011 *SIRUS Report*<sup>167</sup> concludes that only a minority of European countries have specific funding policies in place to support lifelong learning activities. Other reports (*Trends 2010*, *BeFlex*, *BeFlex+*) point out that the lack of funding inhibits the development of institutional strategies for lifelong learning.

The cases included in the present study confirm that in many countries, funding regulations put flexible learning provisions at a disadvantage. In many cases, higher education programmes for adult learners, such as continuing education programmes or access courses, are offered separately from the regular courses of study, and under special financial provisions. In Austria, for example, continuing education programmes cannot be financed from the higher education institution's regular budget but must break even. The same is true of funding for part-time studies in many countries, including non-European countries. In Hungary, part-time education and training programmes do not receive public funding. In Ireland, there is a lack of core grant funding for part-time education. The absence of core grant funding for part-time education is one of the biggest barriers to the participation and retention of adult learners in higher education in Ireland. Likewise, state regulations in South Africa inhibit the provision of public funds for part-time programmes.

Given the increased proportion of adult students studying part-time, the disadvantage of flexible study programmes in terms of public funding effectively impacts the opening of higher education to adult learners. The cases included in this study show that many continuing education programmes aim at professional development and/or target individuals who are employed. Most adult learners rely on flexible learning provisions such as part-time and continuing education programmes to enable their participation in higher education, and are hence exceedingly affected by unfavourable legal frameworks regulating mainstream university provision and higher education funding.

If public funding is not available at all or only to a limited extent, higher education institutions are forced to charge tuition fees unless other sources of funding are available. Research has shown that the lack of financial means is a main barrier for adult learners to participate in education<sup>168</sup>. Tuition fees, charged as a result of insufficient public funding for higher education, inhibit the process of opening higher education to adult learners.

Continuing education and part-time programmes targeting employed individuals appear to be a crucial instrument to enable upskilling and the transfer of new knowledge. However, there is still a need to build better funding schemes in higher education to support these learning provisions.

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<sup>167</sup> Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011). *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*. Brussels.

<sup>168</sup> See for example Cross, K. P. (1981): *Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. San Francisco; McGivney, V. (1991): *Access to Education for Non-Participant Adults*. NIACE: Leicester; Broek, S. & Hake, B. J. (2012): *Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies*. In: *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, pp. 1-21.

#### 4.6.2 Decrease of public investment in education in times of crisis

Public spending on tertiary education relative to GDP rose from 1.05 to 1.12 per cent in the EU-27. Compared to public spending on all levels of education, the numbers related to tertiary education spending vary greatly between the countries. Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Finland, and Sweden even report a decreasing share of GDP spent on tertiary education between 2000 and 2007.<sup>169</sup> Given the significant increase in higher education enrolment during the last years, it can be assumed that funding per student in higher education has even gone down. Furthermore, it can be assumed that due to the global economic crisis, the current levels of spending are decreasing. According to the Eurydice report *Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012*<sup>170</sup>, budget cuts of more than 5 per cent occurred in Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, the United Kingdom (Wales), and Croatia in 2011 and/or 2012. For the French Community of Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom – Scotland, spending on education was reduced by 1 to 5 per cent over the same period.

Furthermore, the available data presented in *Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012*<sup>171</sup> shows that, between 2010 and 2011, tertiary and adult education budgets were reduced in nearly half of the 28 countries compared in that report. Czech Republic (excluding R&D funds), Ireland, Italy, the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland), and Iceland reduced their budgets by more than 5 per cent, Slovakia even by more than 15 per cent. In 2012, the greatest cutbacks occurred in Lithuania (over 30%) and Greece (25%).

The development of public spending on education in the European countries has to be thoroughly monitored. A majority of the international experts who attended the workshop mentioned the negative impact of the economic crisis on institutional budgets and on the participation of adult learners in higher education.<sup>172</sup>

#### 4.6.3 Tuition fees for continuing and/or part-time higher education programmes are common practice

In times of on-going economic crisis, accompanied in many countries by increasing unemployment and decreasing personal financial means, it becomes even more difficult for individuals, institutions, and governments to pay for education. Introducing tuition fees is a common practice, especially to finance higher education programmes for adult learners.

According to the report on *National Student Fee and Support Systems*<sup>173</sup>, Austria, Cyprus (bachelor's level), Denmark, Finland, Germany (except Bavaria and Lower Saxony), Greece and Malta (bachelor's level), Norway, Scotland (bachelor's level) and Sweden did not charge tuition fees for initial higher education in 2011-12. In Croatia, Lithuania, and Slovenia, only a

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<sup>169</sup> EACEA/Eurydice (2011): *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Funding and the Social Dimension*. Brussels

<sup>170</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2013): *Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012: The Impact of the Economic Crisis*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg

<sup>171</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2013). *Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012: The Impact of the Economic Crisis*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg

<sup>172</sup> See, e.g. for UK Osborne, M. & Houston, M. (2012): *United Kingdom: Universities and Lifelong Learning in the UK – Adults as Losers, but Who Are the Winners?* In: Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H.G. (eds.): *Global Perspectives in Higher Education and Lifelong Learners*. London/New York, pp. 112-132

<sup>173</sup> European Commission (2012): *National Student Fee and Support Systems 2011/12*. Brussels



minority of students have to pay fees. In all other European countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey), a majority of students or all students have to pay fees.

As a consequence of diverging financial provisions for different study modes and study programmes, regulatory frameworks regarding tuition fees differ between initial and continuing education programmes and/or between full-time and part-time studies. In almost all countries, regardless of the regulations for initial education, students enrolled in continuing education programmes have to pay fees. The same applies to part-time studies, even at the bachelor's level.

The information gained from the case studies illustrates the current practice. When looking at the full range of degree programmes (bachelor's and master's level), only the Dalarna University (Sweden) and the Open and Distance University of Mexico provide their education free of charge. At the Hellenic Open University (Greece), only the costs for learning, information, and study materials are charged.

It is rather difficult to compare tuition fees across case studies because programmes differ in duration, educational level, and financial provisions. At some institutions, fees are charged per academic year, for instance at International Telematic University (Italy) and Singidunum University (Serbia). At the Open University of Catalonia (Spain) and Elisabethtown College (USA), fees are calculated per credit. Most institutions, however, chose to raise fixed tuition fees for the whole programme.

Tuition fees for a bachelor's degree range from zero, for instance at Dalarna University (Sweden) and the Open and Distance University of Mexico, to the equivalent of €48,750 at Elisabethtown College (USA). For a master's degree, Elisabethtown students have to pay up to €19,200.

The cost of tuition is a major factor influencing the participation of adult learners in higher education. In the United Kingdom, for example, the introduction of a new funding regime in higher education institutions beginning in the 2012-13 academic year of 2012/13 had a significant impact on enrolments at Birkbeck College. The fees (in euros) increased from 350 to 1,120 per 15 ECTS, and fewer people are eligible for fee waivers.

There are many good practices of how institutions try to ease the financial burden for their students. At the Open University of Catalonia (Spain), the Open University of Cyprus, and the Hellenic Open University (Greece), students can choose to pay tuition in several instalments. At the International Telematic University (Italy), students with a recognised disability (to a degree of 66 per cent or higher) can be exempted from paying fees and contributions. The Hellenic Open University (Greece) reduced tuition fees to assure participation of adult learners in the face of the economic crisis.

Financial support provided by employers is another effective measure to encourage adult learners to participate in education. Especially in programmes aiming at professional development, employers regularly cover participants' tuition fees. In the Austrian, French, and Finnish case studies, some students receive financial support from their employers. In the study programme at the University of Miskolc (Hungary), employers cover the tuition fees for the majority of participants. At Moscow State Technical University (Russia), employers often pay for tuition fees and the development costs of study programmes. At the National

University of Ireland Maynooth, the tuition fees of students working in the public sector are often covered by their employers.

For a comprehensive analysis of the burden tuition fees might pose to adult learners, we need to look at the specific national, regional, and institutional grant and loan systems.

A list of tuition fees referring to the case studies included in this study is presented in appendix I.

#### **4.6.4 Developments in financial support for adult learners vary across European countries**

Especially if students have to pay tuition fees, financial support is an important factor impacting on participation in higher education. As can be seen in appendix I, the fees as such are not exorbitant but the financial burden often derives from having to support oneself, especially if there is no employer support or educational leave. A wide-ranging and inclusive system of grants and loans might reduce the deterrent effects of tuition fees.

Public spending on student financial aid is an indicator of the extent of financial support for students. Across the EU-27, public spending for financial aid, measured as a percentage of total public spending on education, increased from 13 to 17.4 per cent between 2001 and 2009. During that same period, Germany, Portugal, Slovakia, and Norway saw a strong increase of more than 5 percentage points.<sup>174</sup>

Considerable differences can be observed between the countries, however. In Germany, Cyprus, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Norway, and Turkey, the share of public funding spent on student financial aid increased between 2000 and 2007. In Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, Finland, and Iceland, that share remained stable; whereas in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, and Sweden, the proportion of funding for student financial aid decreased over the same period.<sup>175</sup>

We do not know yet whether, and if so how, the economic crisis has had an impact on public spending on student financial aid. A reduction of financial support might adversely affect the capability of adult learners to participate in higher education.

#### **4.6.5 Limited access to grants and loans**

According to the *National Student Fee and Support System*<sup>176</sup> report, all European countries except Iceland and Turkey provide some types of grant to at least some students enrolled in full-time higher education programmes. Eligibility for aid differs across countries, however. In Denmark, Cyprus, and Malta, all domestic and EU students enrolled in a full-time higher education programme are eligible for financial aid. In Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), a majority of students receive aid. In most European countries, only a minority of students, ranging from 1 per cent of the

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<sup>174</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2013): *Funding of Education in Europe 2000-2012: The Impact of the Economic Crisis*. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg

<sup>175</sup> EACEA/Eurydice (2011). *Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Funding and the Social Dimension*. Brussels

<sup>176</sup> European Commission (2012). *National Student Fee and Support Systems 2011/12*. Brussels.

student population in Greece to around 40 per cent in Hungary, receive aid. As previously mentioned, eligibility depends of the type of programme in many countries.

The regulations on student financial aid mirror the regulatory frameworks regarding the funding of higher education systems and tuition fees. The *Bologna Process Implementation Report*<sup>177</sup> concludes that in several European countries, loans and grants are only available to students enrolled in certain study programmes (e.g. only to students in first-cycle or full-time programmes). This is also true of some cases included in this study. For example, in South Africa, bursaries also favour full-time over part-time students. Furthermore, age restrictions apply in some countries. In Germany, a national need-based loan and grant system exists to help students cover their living expenses. To be eligible for the loan, students enrolled in bachelor's and master's programmes have to be younger than 30 or 35 years, respectively.

However, our sample of case studies also contains some good examples of how institutions and governments provide financial support to adult learners. Despite the disadvantageous framework conditions, several countries have developed special measures for adult learners. Many of these measures target groups of adult learners often underrepresented in higher education, such as individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Within the framework of a special 'student financial support package', the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a grant for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds to widen participation in higher education. The grant covers living expenses as well as expenses for books and computers. In Mexico, students may apply for annual need-based scholarships awarded by the federal government through the Ministry of Public Education. Intended to improve students' economic conditions, the scholarship consists of the equivalent of €298 granted in three parts over the years. The scholarship is awarded based on academic and social criteria.

The Spanish government recently introduced a loan specifically targeting adult learners who already have a higher education degree and want, for instance, to update their skills or change careers. The Ministry offers an interest-free loan to students who earned a university degree in 2003 or later. The loan may be used to cover initial expenses of up to €6,000 associated with the master's programme. Optionally, students may borrow an additional €800 per month to cover other expenses for a maximum of 21 months. Repayment starts two years after graduation if the income exceeds a certain level.

Some institutions such as the Open University of Cyprus and the Hellenic Open University (Greece) have increased the number of scholarships to sustain the participation of adult learners in the face of the economic crisis.

Other institutions try to raise external funds for their students. A small share of students in the Master of Public Health programme at the University of Western Cape (South Africa), for example, receives funds from a joint programme with the World Health Organisation, which provides financial aid to students from each participating country, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Ethiopia. At the University of Latvia, students have the possibility to receive social grants, sponsor grants, and grants awarded by the 'University of Latvia Angels'.

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<sup>177</sup> EACEA (2012). The European Higher Education Area in 2012: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Brussels.

#### **4.6.6 Institutional funding models**

To cover programme development costs and reduce tuition fees, many higher education institutions have established collaboration with a variety of stakeholders. Our case studies provide several interesting examples of such cooperation.

In some cases, federal or regional authorities provide support. In the Austrian case, the study programme is partly financed by the university's partner, the Federal Institute for Adult Education St. Wolfgang (bifeb). The bifeb in turn receives funds from the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts, and Culture. This financial arrangement reduces the amount of tuition that participants have to pay and allows the University of Klagenfurt to cover the costs of developing the study programme. The development of the bachelor's programme offered at the University of Applied Sciences Münster (Germany) was co-funded by several public institutions, including the Federal Ministry for Education and Research and the state governments of Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate. Additional programme funds came from various federal funding programmes. Similarly, the programme in France is partly funded by regional governments. The exact amount varies by region. Most often, the regional government pays 50 per cent of the costs; the other half has to be covered by the participants.

Funding programmes at the European level are also very important. Though not always explicitly mentioned in our study sample, it can be assumed that EU funding has become a relevant component of cost-effective programme development and initial implementation of programmes in many countries and higher education institutions. The significant role of EU funding is particularly underlined in the Latvian country report which refers to funding by the European Commission and the importance of the European Structural Funds. The programme presented in the Finnish case study, the programme for training library personnel, is mainly funded through the European Social Fund, resulting in low tuition fees for participants. As a consequence, the funding period is limited, meaning the programme may have to be discontinued.

Financial support may also be provided by international organisations and foundations. In the South African case study, student bursaries, mentors, travel, and personnel, as well as curriculum and materials development and translations were covered through a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and funds from the World Health Organisation.

Although cooperation with companies is wide spread in general, it did not play a major role in financing the programmes presented in this study. Exceptions are the cases from Russia and Latvia, where continuing education programmes or professional development trainings are also developed for companies to enhance the knowledge and skills of their employees. In these cases, the companies pay for development costs and tuition fees. Another type that might be worth a mention can be drawn from the Irish case study. Due to the lack of core grant funding for part-time education in Ireland, all students have to source funding for themselves either from their own resources or from partner companies to enable them to participate in the programmes.

#### 4.6.7 Conclusions

Many European countries reduced public spending on (tertiary) education in recent years. Budget cuts might affect the provision of flexible study programmes for adult learners and severely endanger the goals formulated in the 2020 benchmarks.

Furthermore, adult learners are systematically disadvantaged if they pursue part-time studies or are older than the 'normal' student, for example. Many national funding schemes for students (grants, loans, bursaries, etc.) do not consider part-time students and/or students beyond a certain age to be eligible target groups. In many countries, part-time programmes come with tuition fees even if the corresponding full-time programmes are offered for free. These conditions inhibit the participation of adult learners in higher education and thereby endanger the process of opening higher education. Furthermore, it will not be possible to satisfy the demand for skilled labour resulting from demographic changes and the emergence of knowledge-based societies.

However, several higher education institutions and governments try to ease the financial burden by providing special grants and generating financial support from external partners to reduce tuition fees.

The funding barrier is highlighted as an important aspect in most of the country reports created for the HEAD project. Adapting funding schemes to the needs of adult learners is a major policy challenge. It is essential to introduce facilitating financial conditions for the implementation of flexible learning provisions. Along with reforming state funding regulations, policy makers should also encourage employers (e.g. through tax incentives) to provide financial assistance to employees who are willing to study part-time to get a higher qualification. Achieving sustainable education funding in times of financial crisis is another challenge.

#### 4.7 Cooperation with external stakeholders

Opening higher education to adults gives rise to the issue of higher education institutions becoming significant economic, social, and cultural players at the local, regional, national, and global levels.<sup>178</sup> Recent thinking on the 'third mission' of universities<sup>179</sup> has reinforced the acknowledgement of the role of higher education institutions in relation to their environment, including stakeholders from the higher education sector, industry, other fields of professional practice, civil society, and the community at large. The importance of fostering relationships between higher education institutions and external stakeholders was also pointed out at the 34<sup>th</sup> EUCEN Conference in November 2007.<sup>180</sup> At this conference, Schuetze<sup>181</sup> in particular highlighted the significant contribution higher education institutions can make to

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<sup>178</sup> Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. G. (2012): All Change – No Change? Lifelong Learners and Higher Education Revisited. In: Slowey, M., & Schuetze, H.G. (eds.): Global Perspectives on Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. London and New York, pp. 15-16

<sup>179</sup> e3m (2012): Green Paper. Fostering and Measuring 'Third Mission' in Higher Education Institutions. <http://www.e3mproject.eu/docs/Green%20paper-p.pdf>

<sup>180</sup> Mitschke-Collande, P. & Mark, R. (eds.) (2008): The University as a Regional Actor. Partnerships and Professional Development in Europe. Hildesheim/Berlin

<sup>181</sup> Schuetze, H.G. (2008): Producers of Knowledge, Centres of Learning, Drivers of Change: Universities Serving their Regions. In: Mitschke-Collande, P. & Mark, R. (eds.): The University as a Regional Actor. Partnerships and Professional Development in Europe. Hildesheim/Berlin, pp. 11-17

- regional development,
- innovation and technology transfer,
- serving the community in terms of enhancing 'active citizenship' and attracting business from abroad to settle in the region.

#### **4.7.1 Cooperation from the point of view of opening higher education to adults**

In this study, the cooperation of higher education institutions with external stakeholders is primarily seen from the point of view of widening adult participation in higher education, making higher education provision more flexible, and creating conditions to sustain such provision. A number of country reports show that cooperating with external stakeholders might have a considerable impact on these aspects.

##### ***Fostering and sustaining innovation in higher education provision to adults***

Some of the case studies prepared for this study highlight the significant role of alliances of different higher education institutions and of intensified cooperation between higher education and adult education organisations. Particularly in countries where higher education legislation restricts innovative developments in higher education provision to adults, and where innovation mainly takes place via projects and programme planning under market conditions, establishing cooperative structures can contribute to overcoming obstacles.

The German case study is a good example. The BASA-online programme was developed by a consortium of universities and is now delivered by the participating universities. The relevance of cooperation lies a) in the increased outreach of the programme in terms of geographical spread and b) in the reduced risk of being forced to phase out this market-oriented programme because it does not attract enough participants in one city or another.

The case study from Austria shows that cooperation between a university and a responsible VET organisation can help enhance innovation in higher education provision for adults under restrictive conditions in the public higher education sector. In this case, the collaboration of the University of Klagenfurt and the ifeb institute, which involved practitioners, researchers, and policy makers, has contributed to the success of this programme in terms of a high level of acceptance by students and professionals.

##### ***Improving knowledge transfer and teaching modes***

Cooperation between higher education institutions and employers from industry and other fields of professional practice is a means to improve the linkages between higher education programmes, particularly contents and curricula, and the needs of employers to hire highly qualified personnel for specific jobs. In that sense, the cooperation between higher education institutions and employers can be seen as a successful strategy to improve knowledge transfer between higher education (i.e. science and research) and the world of work. On the other hand, close cooperation between higher education institutions and employers might provide incentives for reviewing traditional higher education curricula and teaching modes, and for developing teaching and learning approaches that suit the needs and requirements of adult learners. It is widely known that the majority of adult learners in higher education are quite different from the traditional university student; they 'are now older, more interested in

“applied” rather than purely academic programmes, looking out for employment skills rather than education and academic qualifications’, as Schuetze<sup>182</sup> pointed out.

The sample of case studies prepared for this study feature several cases that reflect the coincidence of improving knowledge transfer and teaching modes in various ways. The cases from Finland and Russia might reveal the variety of solutions.

The Finnish case is an example of universities cooperating closely with employers in a specific field of professional practice: libraries. The professional development programme for library staff was developed collaboratively by the Centre for Training and Development at the University of Eastern Finland, the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tampere, and a regional administrative organisation in charge of library services. The region’s libraries are integrated in the programme through work placements (offering some study time, topics for learning tasks, etc.) and participants already working there. Some library professionals also work as tutors for the local study groups established as part of the programme.

The case reported from Russia is quite different and larger in scale, in part because of the technological nature of the subjects of study. Here, the higher education institution cooperates very closely with the private business sector to provide upskilling opportunities for working adults. The Institute of Radio Engineering, Electronics, and Automation at Moscow State Technical University has agreements with 52 major business and globally operating industrial companies, such as Microsoft, Cisco, and Novell. All programmes open to adult learners are strongly based on the needs of the cooperating companies and industries; all are co-funded or fully funded by private companies. To a lesser extent, close ties to industry are also reported in the Latvian case study. Here, some programmes for adult learners are being created according to employers’ requests.

It is worth noting here that close cooperation between higher education institutions and employers in general carries the specific risk of higher education becoming more or less a service for the respective organisations. As a result, academic offers and curricula may be scaled down to only those subjects that the respective organisations require, at the expense of academic discourse and reflection. So this trend presents the special challenge of balancing the different interests of higher education institutions and cooperating employers in the knowledge transfer process enabled by higher education programmes.

### ***Information and communication technologies (ICT)***

Information and communication technology has made learning at a distance a real option. This has influenced the way higher education institutions teach and the way students learn. Particularly in the context of opening higher education to adults, the rapid spread and widespread use of ICT has helped higher education institutions build regional, national, and international networks, often organised as open universities, providing distance learning programmes for adult students.

The case studies included in this study feature a number of examples (e.g. Italy, South Africa, Cyprus, Latvia, Russia, and Spain) that show how higher education institutions use

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<sup>182</sup> Schuetze, H.G. (2008): Producers of Knowledge, Centres of Learning, Drivers of Change: Universities Serving their Regions. In: Mitschke-Collande, P. & Mark, R. (eds.): The University as a Regional Actor. Partnerships and Professional Development in Europe. Hildesheim/Berlin, pp. 11-17 (pp.11-12)

the possibilities of ICT for disseminating their programmes, thus opening up to new target groups and market opportunities. In the Italian example, the focus is on making programmes accessible throughout the Mediterranean area. Similarly, the case study from South Africa states that the programme reaches out to students in all of Africa and some parts of Europe. The Russian example, which takes distance learning courses and programmes as an opportunity, is more focussed on the vast national higher education market but with a strong impetus to open up for the international market, as proved by the cooperation with some of the leading 'global players' in the field of developing ICT. The examples from Cyprus, Latvia, and Spain prove that using ICT to increase programme outreach is also combined with a strong interest in improving regional development, that is, regional employers and labour markets.

### ***Fostering social welfare and equity***

The importance of cooperation between higher education institutions and external stakeholders is not limited to assistance with matters related to economic development and improving higher education market conditions, although these are important parts of it. But cooperation can also help promote higher education's significant role with regard to social policy. This is particularly evident in the case studies from UK, South Africa and New Zealand.

The case study from UK highlights the outreach of the programme to students from disadvantaged groups. In the South African case study, the role of cooperation with international NGOs and social policy actors is highlighted as a relevant precondition for bringing forth and sustaining the Master in Public Health, which in turn aims at improving social welfare, particularly with regard to disadvantaged populations. The case study from New Zealand highlights cooperation with responsible bodies of the indigenous community, which is a necessary precondition for showing social responsibility and reaching potential students from the indigenous community, who have traditionally been underrepresented in higher education in New Zealand.

### **4.7.2 Conclusions**

Cooperation between higher education institutions and external stakeholders plays a significant role in the context of opening higher education to adults. The analysis presented above shows that higher education institutions can engage with the economy and society in various and complex ways. The advantages of cooperation cannot be underestimated. Even though we only looked at the limited range of countries covered in the HEAD study, we already see a considerable set of arguments for fostering stakeholder cooperation emerge, such as

- overcoming obstacles to innovation,
- improving teaching and learning modes,
- opening up new target groups of adult learners,
- fostering social welfare and equity
- extending the outreach of provision across national, regional and local borders.

However, the examples presented in the case studies provide only limited information on how stakeholder cooperation actually influences programme planning, curricula, and teaching modes in higher education. So it would be worthwhile to support further research



and analysis on emerging types of cooperation in the context of opening higher education to adults and on their impact on adult learning in a lifelong learning perspective.

## 4.8 Response to labour market needs

Global economic and social trends such as the rise of the knowledge-based society, demographic changes, and globalisation have set new tasks for education systems, making the links between both systems even more obvious. The emergence of economies based on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge and information, as well as challenges resulting from demographic changes, such as skill shortages and decreasing economic competitiveness, make the transformation of higher education systems necessary. The close relationship between education and the economy is also mirrored in the influence of the general economic situation and economic changes on the provision of education and participation in education<sup>183</sup>. The economic context of a higher education system might have a strong impact on the process of opening that system towards adult learners. The *ALLUME Study*<sup>184</sup>, for example, shows that national and regional economic conditions might negatively affect the readiness of higher education institutions to lifelong learning strategising. Higher education has become an ‘economic player’, and as such is forced to respond to changing labour market needs, increasing employer demand for highly skilled personnel, and increasing career-driven demand for educational opportunities on the part of individuals.

### 4.8.1 Reacting to labour market needs

To meet these expectations, flexible programmes aiming at upskilling and academic professionalisation have to be developed with an eye on labour market needs. It is of utmost importance, therefore, that higher education institutions collaborate with employers and regard that collaboration as a useful instrument to increase participation.<sup>185</sup> The sample programmes included in the present study provide a variety of examples of how regional, national, and international labour market demands can be taken into account when developing flexible learning provisions for adult learners.

The master’s programme in information and communication systems at the Open University of Cyprus was designed to respond to the demands of a thriving ICT industry in Cyprus. The programme ‘Qualification Studies for Library Personnel in Eastern Finland (KIPA)’ was implemented as a reaction to the demand for the academic professionalisation of library personnel in Eastern Finland, and therefore is an example of how regional labour market needs can be satisfied. The Open University of Catalonia maintains close relationships with over 200 companies in the region and tries to respond both to their demand for specialist expertise and their need for training. The large majority of graduates find employment in Catalonia.

The programmes offered at the Moscow State Technical University (Russia) respond to the internationalisation of the labour market in the high-tech branch. The programmes aim at skills enhancement and professional development of the local and regional workforce – this

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<sup>183</sup> See for example Roosma et al. (2011): Adult learners in formal adult education. Experiences and perceptions from thirteen European countries. Tallinn

<sup>184</sup> EUCEN (2011): ALLUME Pathways and Policies – Recommendations. Barcelona

<sup>185</sup> See for example Broek & Hake (2012): Increasing participation of adults in higher education: factors for successful policies. In: International Journal of Lifelong Education, Vol. 31 (4), pp. 397-417.

with a view to making the region more attractive for known global players of the high-tech branch, thus revitalising the regional labour market.

A few study programmes in the HEAD sample were even created to serve the labour market needs of neighbouring countries. The South African Master in Public Health was initiated in response to the fact that public health education in South Africa did not address the needs of the broad range of allied health professionals working in the health services; nor were people aware of the inadequate supply of equitably distributed and competent personnel to address the public health challenges across the country and the African continent.

Many institutions aim at developing programmes that combine theoretical content with real-world applications to prepare students for the labour market. In the Hungarian case students solve logistics problems at their own companies as part of their studies; they visit companies with high-quality logistic innovations, and usually reflect on such problems (and their solutions) in their final thesis. In the programme 'Qualification Studies for Library Personnel in Eastern Finland (KIPA), libraries offer work placements for students. At Elisabethtown College (USA), students are expected to consistently focus their learning experience on applying their knowledge to their specific work settings and to solving problems in their communities. The bachelor's programmes include a compulsory course module that students are recommended to take at the end of their studies, because it integrates concepts, principles, practices, and applications from prior courses in order to analyse the interrelationships between theory, problem solving, and strategy formation.

#### **4.8.2 Professional development as main motivation for individual participation**

Adult learners' specific motivation for participating in higher education further illustrates the need to establish close relationships with employers when designing study programmes.

Labour market demands and career perspectives are first and foremost on the minds of the majority of adult learners participating in higher education<sup>186</sup>. Their motivation to enrol is often directly linked to their professional life. The decision to participate in higher education might, for example, be driven by the desire to reflect on and explain professional activities with the help of theory and research. Many individuals decide to pursue a tertiary degree because it will allow them to earn a higher income or to reach a higher position in their profession.

To meet the expectations of adult learners, higher education institutions must develop study programmes that facilitate career advancement or professional re-orientation. This requirement becomes even more evident if we consider the funding situation for many higher education programmes for adult learners. The majority of such programmes involve tuition fees, and financial support through grants and loans is rarely available. Pursuing the degree thus implies a large financial investment for participants, an investment that needs to pay off. Programme content must therefore respond to labour market demands to ensure that participants will in fact benefit from it.

As outlined above, it is crucial for higher education institutions to consider labour market demands when initiating study programmes for adult learners. Employers, on the other hand, also have a strong influence on the participation and retention of adult learners in higher education.

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<sup>186</sup> See for example Roosma et al. (2011): *Adult Learners in Formal Adult Education. Experiences and Perceptions from Thirteen European Countries*. Tallinn

### **4.8.3 Employers can facilitate participation**

Employers play an important role in enhancing the participation of adult learners in higher education. Most potential adult students are employed and need to coordinate study and work. Employers can facilitate their participation in educational programmes by offering educational leave or financial support. Participation in continuing education may be enhanced if employers guarantee employment security, that is, if they enable their employees to return to their jobs after a period of educational activities. In the Hungarian country report, employers' limited resources are named as an inhibiting factor: they cannot allow their employees to take educational leave because they do not have the capacities for replacing them.

Educational programmes must be able to react to changing knowledge bases and to create attractive conditions for working professionals that allow them to upgrade their education throughout their active life.

### **4.8.4 Conclusions**

To address the tasks confronting the higher education systems in the industrialised countries against the backdrop of demographic change, globalisation, and the emergence of knowledge-based societies, higher education programmes for adults have to be designed with a stronger focus on labour market demands. The development of such programmes should be based on the analysis of actual and expected labour market needs in order to better address regional, national, and/or international labour market demands, to facilitate professional development, and to ensure that participants do in fact benefit from their investment.

## **5 Factors Inhibiting Adult Participation in Higher Education**

The thematic analyses of case studies presented in the previous chapter have shown that higher education systems and higher education institutions are responding to barriers which actually prevent adults from returning to learning or which adults might experience when returning or even intending to return to learning. These barriers are well documented in research.<sup>187</sup> They prove that adults' decisions to participate in higher education depend on a

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<sup>187</sup> See e.g. Cross, K. (1981): *Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. San Francisco; McGivney, V. (1991): *Access to Education for Non-Participant Adults*. Leicester; Pont, B. (2004): *Improving Access to and Participation in Adult Learning in OECD countries*. In: *European Journal of Education*, Vol. 39(1), pp. 31-45; Woodrow, M. (2000): *European Experience of Good Practice in Widening Access to Young People from Disadvantaged Backgrounds*. In Osborne, R. & Leith, H. (eds.): *Evaluation of Targeted Initiative on Widening Access for Young People from Socio-economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds*. Dublin; Broek, S./Hake, B. J. (2012): *Increasing Participation of Adults in Higher Education: Factors for Successful Policies*. In: *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Vol. 31(4), pp. 397-417; Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds.) (2004): *Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe*. Bern; European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture/GHK (2011): *Pre-study on the Role of Higher Education Institutions as Providers of Continuous Professional Learning and Adult Education*. Brussels

wide range of prerequisites and touch on all levels of the higher education reality. Based on common categorisations<sup>188</sup>, the following table shortly summarises barriers well documented in research.

Table 4: Main barriers to widening adult participation in higher education

| <b>Barriers</b> | <b>Specifications</b>  |
|-----------------|--|
| Personal        | attitudes, perceptions, expectations that affect the ability to participate, lack of motivation, low aspiration, low self-esteem, lack of a culture of study, bad previous educational experiences, lack of incentives to study  |
| Dispositional   | lack of confidence in individual capabilities, the feeling that one is too old to learn, a sense that learning is not for 'our kind of people', lack of awareness of positive returns to learning  |
| Situational     | lack of time, distance from educational provision, lack of appropriate facilities, cost of study   |
| Informational   | difficulties in accessing information about the educational provision available  |
| Institutional   | rigid admission criteria, rigidity of programmes and programme delivery, selection of students in favour of the 'regular' or 'traditional' student, lack of student services and support catering for the needs of adult learners (e.g. ethnic minorities, other underrepresented groups), lack of supportive institutional cultures to embrace adult learners (e.g. adults' experience of a sense of alienation), buildings not adaptable to handle disability, organisational resistance to change |
| Professional    | Staff lack of awareness about diversity and adult learners' needs, staff fears about lowering standards  |
| Systems level   | division of secondary education into vocational and academic strands creates obstacles which are difficult for those in the vocational stream to overcome later, governments regulating (low) proportions of adult learners in higher education, lack of resourcing/funding of institutional commitment to include students from underrepresented groups in higher education, adults being differentially located across the higher education system, lack of transport for students in rural areas  |

Source: own summary

Regarding these barriers the thematic analyses presented in chapter 4 show that much has been achieved in removing obvious barriers, yet much progress is still needed. Besides the findings on case specific solutions to overcoming barriers the analyses of the country reports and case studies also reveal some more factors which still inhibit the participation of adult learners in higher education. These factors fall into three categories: contextual, institutional, and individual.

<sup>188</sup> Cross, K. (1981): *Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. San Francisco; McGivney, V. (1991): *Access to Education for Non-Participant Adults*. Leicester

## 5.1 Contextual factors

The process of opening higher education to adults, and hence adult participation in higher education, is determined by a number of contextual factors that fundamentally shape the conditions under which the processes of opening higher education can take place. Pertinent studies, as well as the thematic analyses carried out within the framework of this study, confirm the assumption that the following factors have a significant influence on the quality and continuity of developing and providing flexible higher education programmes: the absence of coherent lifelong learning policies, a negative culture of learning in a country or region, the insufficient availability of ICT, slow economic growth and economic instability, saturated labour markets and employers not appreciating their employees' engagement in further education, and lack of higher education systems designed to support lifelong learners.

### *Lifelong learning policies*

Incoherent lifelong learning policy is likely to impede a continuous movement towards the opening of higher education to adults. If higher education systems and institutions have to satisfy the goals of both lifelong learning policies and policies designed to increase competition, productivity, and the need for external funding, they frequently struggle with conflicting values and performance targets, as the experience in many European countries has shown. The country report from Finland, for example, shows that the government's current policy encourages universities to focus on young students, a short completion time of degrees, and excellent research rather than on adult learners. In such a situation, the existence of adult learning policies can tip the scales decisively. In the cross-country analysis carried out by *Research voor Beleid*, the authors point out<sup>189</sup> that a lack of policies in the field of adult learning also impacts on the possibilities of raising awareness of adult learners in higher education.

### *Cultures of learning*

Cultures of learning indicate historically evolved, collectively shared values, normative orientations, and attitudes concerning the role and benefits of education and learning in a country or region. Referring to adult learning in general, the *Research voor Beleid* report<sup>190</sup> emphasises the importance of history, and hence culture. In countries with an established learning culture, the appreciation of adult learning in general, and adult learning and education in higher education in particular, might be much higher than in countries without a distinctive learning culture.

In Serbia, for example, adult people are not considered to be lifelong learners, and seeing an adult or older student at a higher education institution is still highly uncommon. In Italy, educational programmes for adults at higher education institutions do not always enjoy a good reputation. Rather, they are regarded as an option for less talented students and

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<sup>189</sup> Research voor Beleid (2010). Impact of Ongoing Reforms in Education and Training on the Adult Learning Sector. Zoetermeer.

<sup>190</sup> Research voor Beleid (2010). Impact of Ongoing Reforms in Education and Training on the Adult Learning Sector. Zoetermeer.

students who dropped out of regular university studies. These perceptions negatively affect the establishment of lifelong learning structures.

However, cultures of learning are evolutionary phenomena, and there is evidence to suggest that the various cultures of learning that have evolved in the European countries and regions are undergoing a change – in part, it seems, as a result of the European Union’s strategies and work concerning the implementation of lifelong learning. Particularly in countries traditionally characterised by rural structures, higher education is gaining prestige. The country report and case study from Cyprus, for example, reveal that there is a strong cultural trend in favour of higher education. The report on Hungary states that higher education degrees and certificates are considered very valuable. Moreover, research findings show that the evolution of the national and/or regional awareness of the importance of higher education as part of the lifelong learning continuum might outpace the development of higher education institutions. The ALLUME study<sup>191</sup>, for example, identified societal pressure on the universities as one of the most important drivers for higher education institutions to develop lifelong learning strategies.

### ***Access to ICT and ICT-skills***

Advancements in ICT have a strong influence on the increase of informal learning activities as well as on the development of learning provision and delivery systems. Consequently, technological advancements also affect adult learning and the participation of adult learners in higher education, particularly in open and distance learning. However, an increase in distance learning opportunities in a given country is not enough to remove barriers to adult participation in higher education. Only if mobile technological devices are widely used and available will eLearning and distance learning opportunities be appreciated by individuals who do not have the possibility to follow a full-time, on-site study programme.

Some of the case studies included in this study refer more implicitly than explicitly to the fact that unequal access to ICT and ICT skills of the adult population as well as uneven availability of eLearning/distance learning via internet undermine the aim of including broader and diversified student groups into higher education. For example, the case from Serbia reveals that only the wide distribution of computers and Internet connections in the last years has made the opening of higher education possible in the first place. The Spanish case study mentions both, the importance of eLearning to improve accessibility for people from remote places, including prisons, and the importance of local facilities which offer access to ICT and eLearning, if students have no appropriate access to ICT and ICT-skills. Particularly this case reveals that widening participation in eLearning depends also on accompanying measures to facilitate students’ access to ICT and/or to ICT-skills required. More implicitly the Russian case study highlights the fact that many programmes are provided online, but that on-site attendance is still required.

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<sup>191</sup> EUCEN (2012). ALLUME Executive Summary. Barcelona

## ***Economy and labour markets***

Opening higher education to adults mostly implies providing flexible adult learning provision under (quasi) market conditions and on a self-paying basis. Even though financial aid may be available in some countries (but often fails to outweigh the (potential) financial benefits of full-time employment), the successful and sustainable implementation of higher education learning opportunities depends to a large extent on potential adult students' purchasing power. A country's economic situation, therefore, doubtlessly affects the possibilities of opening higher education to adults.<sup>192</sup> This is not only a matter of economic growth. Given the economic crisis and its precarious effects, economic stability can be identified as one major factor to foster continuity in the context of opening higher education to adults in some European countries. The ALLUME study shows that national and regional economic conditions might negatively affect higher education institutions' readiness for lifelong learning strategizing.<sup>193</sup>

Some of the study country reports point to a difficult financial situation as an impediment to investments in education, which also affects higher education provision for adult learners. In the country reports, the economic crisis is assumed to be very influential, and it is identified as a most important factor for governments and institutions withdrawing from opening higher education to adult learners in many countries. In the country reports and case studies from Greece and Cyprus, the authors point out that budget cuts in the educational sector adversely influence the process of opening higher education to adult learners. Recognising that fewer individuals have the means to finance tertiary study, or that individuals are less prepared to invest in their upskilling and/or continuous learning at the tertiary level, higher education institutions tend not to develop their adult learning provision any further at this point. Then again, it is worth mentioning that an economic depression is also a time for many people to return to education or to prolong their studies to 'wait out the crisis' due to poor employment prospects. The country report from France refers to this issue. Given the changing job and skills requirements and the ageing workforce, this may be crucial for their successful return to the labour market, or to remain in employment.

## ***Higher education systems***

Obviously, the design of a higher education system needs to be considered as a relevant factor impacting on adult participation in higher education. In general, a highly differentiated higher education system provides a wide range of possibilities for adult learners to access into and to progress through higher education. However, differentiation can also lead to segmentation at institutional level.

In the UK for instance, widening adult participation in higher education has been one of the most relevant policy targets during the last decade. Higher education institutions in the UK have developed a great number of solutions to widen participation especially for adult learners from disadvantaged groups (lowest social classes, one parents, migrants etc.). However, this has also contributed to a greater diversity and segmentation between higher education providers and to the fact that widening participation and access "are embraced

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<sup>192</sup> Research voor Beleid (2010). Impact of On-going reforms in Education and Training on the Adult Learning Sector. Zoetermeer

<sup>193</sup> EUCEN (2011). ALLUME Pathways and Policies – Recommendations. Barcelona.

more tightly by some institutions than by others”<sup>194</sup> Moreover, the country report from the UK reveals that institutional diversity and the existence of a variety of institutional profiles and institutional strategies of widening participation causes also the need for orientation. Finding one’s way through the system and its possibilities appears complicated, opaque, and often de-motivating to interested students. The system of education governance is reported to be over-centralised and too instable. Furthermore, the infrastructure is inadequate; buildings, technologies, and services are not well integrated. In some countries, the barriers between Open University-type education and full-time study programmes keep adult learners from participating in higher education.

The need for orientation is also reported in the Finnish case study. It concludes that a lack of guidance during the transfer phase keeps students from progressing through the system. In Germany, making it easier for students to progress through successive levels or sequences of education has likewise been identified as being crucial for further participation in education and learning.

Furthermore, the lack of official information (e.g. TV advertisements) on the possibilities for adult learners to enrol in higher education has been named as another inhibiting factor. According to the Irish case study, comprehensive educational guidance services for Irish adults who may be thinking about pursuing part-time tertiary study are fragmented, which turns out to be an inhibiting factor.

These examples show that the structural makeup of higher education systems, that is, their suitability for lifelong learners and the availability of information and guidance, are relevant factors with regard to facilitating participation, especially during the adult years.

The contextual factors described above are no doubt subject to general political, economic, and social trends, but they can be influenced by comprehensive policy actions. In order to improve the conditions for adult learners and to change the contexts to their benefit, effects and interdependencies have to be thoroughly analysed. Above all, it is important to contextualise the individual’s decision to participate in higher education and, likewise, the higher education institution’s decision to offer flexible learning provisions. Only if we consider the framework conditions when designing policies will the opening of higher education be successful.

## **5.2 Institutional factors**

Contextual factors strongly influence the possibilities and the willingness of higher education institutions to provide flexible higher education programmes and flexible learning conditions. The higher education institutions in turn create additional framework conditions which might facilitate or inhibit adult participation in higher education. So the institutional factors meant here refer to the governance and control of organisational structures within higher education institutions as well as to the preparedness of higher education institutions to create and to sustain conditions conducive to adult participation in higher education. In this context,

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<sup>194</sup> See, e.g. for UK Osborne, M. & Houston, M. (2012): United Kingdom: Universities and Lifelong Learning in the UK – Adults as Losers, but Who Are the Winners? In: Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H.G. (eds.): Global Perspectives in Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. London/New York, pp. 112-132 (126)



Schuetze and Wolter<sup>195</sup> underline the need to design the institutional context from a lifelong learning perspective, which recognises adult learners' different needs and requirements.

Pertinent research, as well as the HEAD country and case studies, reveal two components that are particularly relevant to making higher education institutions more attractive to adults, to supporting adult retention in higher education, and to improving adult learner performance in the wider sense:

- the organisational embedding of adult education programmes and learning provision within the context of a higher education institution,
- the implementation of lifelong learning as a guiding principle in higher education institutions' core development processes.

### ***Organisational embedding of higher education programmes***

The participation of adult learners may be influenced by how higher education programmes and learning provisions for adults are integrated in higher education institutions. In theory and practice, different concepts for the organisational embedding of higher education programmes and provisions for adult learners become relevant. Some concepts suggest that adult students can make a valuable contribution to teaching and learning; hence higher education programmes for adult students should be fully integrated into an institution's mainstream programmes, as demonstrated in the Swedish country report. Other concepts underline the specific needs of adult learners, arguing that all educational offers for adults should be organised and managed in a centralised fashion, for instance by a special unit or sub-organisation. Proponents of this concept therefore wish to disconnect adult learning programmes from mainstream higher education. However, this might keep institutions from embracing strategies to adopt lifelong learning as part of their mission for the institution as a whole. At Elisabethtown College (USA), for example, programmes for adult learners are provided by separate units exclusively dedicated to adults. These units, therefore, have a special commitment to, sensitivity for, and practices of serving adult learners. There are several additional institutional characteristics which influence the participation of adult learners. In Germany, this type of higher education institution is important as well. The universities of applied sciences in particular attract more adult learners than universities.

### ***Lifelong learning as guiding principle***

The implementation of lifelong learning as a guiding principle within higher education institutions has been reported as important. The strategic aims and the profile of the higher education institution, the faculty, the institute, or the programme might be influential as well. In many higher education institutions, the concept of lifelong learning may be found in the institutional strategy, but it is not applied in practice. To open higher education, lifelong learning ideas need to be implemented at all levels of higher education institutions. Many higher education institutions still focus on the 'traditional' student.

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<sup>195</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Wolter, A. (2003): Higher Education, Non-traditional Students and Lifelong Learning in Industrialized Countries. In: Das Hochschulwesen (5), pp. 183-189

The Finnish country report shows that attending lectures and seminars is expected at many higher education institutions, and some lecturers have never considered offering alternative study models. Similar aspects are reported for Ireland, where the systems at most universities and institutes of technology are geared towards the interests, needs, and study patterns of full-time students. Because teachers have a strong impact on the retention of adult learners in higher education programmes, the teaching staff also needs to adopt the idea of lifelong learning. It is important to assure that teachers value the experience, perspective, and opinions of adults, and apply adult learning principles. In Serbia, universities are not used to meeting the needs of adult students in terms of scheduling, methods, specific guidance, and so on. The *SIRUS Report*<sup>196</sup> points out that mainstreaming and sustaining widening access and participation will require institution-wide efforts, including policies, strategies, and shared responsibilities.

The organisation of support structures, the organisational embedding of adult learning, and the institutional implementation of lifelong learning are for the most part the responsibility of each higher education institution, but their configuration is influenced by external factors.

### **5.3 Individual factors**

The framework conditions created by a variety of contextual and institutional factors have an impact on adult learners' individual decision to participate in higher education or not. Additionally, there are various factors at the individual level that influence the adult learner's willingness and ability to enrol in higher education. Many of the factors referred to in the previous paragraphs directly translate into individual barriers inhibiting participation in higher education.

Corresponding to results found in the relevant literature, three different groups of factors have been identified: situational, personal/dispositional, and motivational factors.

#### ***Situational factors***

Situational factors are always mentioned when barriers to participation in adult education are discussed. In the *Adult Education Survey* (AES), which includes non-formal and informal learning at different educational levels, non-participants who wanted to participate were questioned about their reasons. The most important barriers were work and family duties as well as costs of participation. Many respondents also mentioned the lack of flexibility of educational offers with regard to time, place, and content as important factors.<sup>197</sup> The results of the HEAD study confirm the findings of the *Adult Education Survey*. Lack of time is identified as a major factor keeping adult learners from enrolling in higher education programmes; the time famine is closely related to external commitments, such as family or work duties. Furthermore, the results show that receiving support from peers and family members is crucial for the successful participation of adult learners in higher education. Likewise, it is essential that learning facilities are located nearby; even with the range of ICT

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<sup>196</sup> Smidt, H. & Sursock, A. (2011). *Engaging in Lifelong Learning: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies*. Brussels.

<sup>197</sup> Research voor Beleid (2010). *Impact of Ongoing Reforms in Education and Training on the Adult Learning Sector*. Zoetermeer.

possibilities available today, physical proximity of the higher education provider is still an important factor. A lack of suitable programmes in the proximity is reported as a cause for not enrolling in higher education. One of the most important constraining factors mentioned in the country reports and case studies is the lack of financial means to cover the direct and indirect costs of education.

### ***Personal/dispositional factors***

In addition to situational factors, personal/dispositional factors are an important aspect. The non-participants questioned in the *Adult Education Survey* reported a lack of self-confidence about going back to school, a lack of right prerequisites, a lack of employer support, and a lack of facilities in their surroundings to be major barriers to participation in education. In the cross-country analysis of 32 European countries, the *Research voor Beleid* report furthermore identified bad experiences with previous education, a lack of confidence in one's own capabilities, feelings of being too old to learn, a sense that learning is good but not for 'our kind of people', and insufficient awareness of the positive returns to learning as crucial factors affecting participation in adult education.<sup>198</sup> Our analyses showed similar results. In the Hungarian report, for example, career benefits gained from previous or current participation in higher education and the positive experiences of others are mentioned as positive factors. On the other hand, other people's bad learning experiences might also influence an individual's decision. The perception of personal affinity to the world of higher education plays an important role. The atmosphere at a traditional university, for instance, might be foreign and unfamiliar, and a lack of cultural capital or wrongly connoted social capital might make it difficult for non-traditional students to fit in.

### ***Motivational factors***

The country reports and case studies mention various motivational factors. There is a variety of reasons why adult learners enrol in higher education programmes. The motivation is often directly linked to students' working life. The decision to participate in higher education might, for example, be based on the desire to reflect on and explain workplace activities with the help of theory and research. Close ties between work and study content have been identified as a success factor in several case studies (e.g. in the Finnish case study). Furthermore, many individuals decide to pursue a tertiary degree because it will allow them to earn a higher income or to reach a higher position in their career field. Another frequently mentioned factor is personal development. For some students, going to university is something they always wanted 'to do one day', because they felt they 'could do more'. Some adult learners enrol in higher education programmes because it was a lifelong dream that hasn't been completed. Others experienced a life trauma, such as divorce, and hence a desire to change their life. In the French country report, the idea of earning a university degree to enhance one's social and cultural status is mentioned as an additional motivational factor.

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<sup>198</sup> Research voor Beleid (2010). *Impact of Ongoing Reforms in Education and Training on the Adult Learning Sector*. Zoetermeer.

## 5.4 Conclusions

As our multi-dimensional analysis of contextual, institutional, and individual factors has shown, opening higher education to adults and widening adult participation in higher education encompass various levels and forms of activities. Furthermore, the analysis shows that the conditions for adult learners in higher education, and for institutions to foster the opening of higher education to adults, vary from country to country. The findings from this study confirm the results from previous research. There is no single solution to address under-participation in learning; rather, a fuller consideration of the determinants of participation and non-participation in education is required to understand the impact of barriers and the consequences of removing them.<sup>199</sup>

Therefore, besides identifying and working to remove the main barriers to adult participation, it might also be helpful to identify strategies at national/regional and institutional levels that are conducive to widening adult participation in higher education. According to the findings of this study, such monitoring could refer to strategies designed to improve contextual, institutional, and individual determinants of opening access and widening participation, thereby ensuring compliance with equity issues. The following table shows a draft configuration of how strategies conducive to widening participation could be monitored.

Table 5: Draft monitoring strategies conducive to widening adult participation in higher education

| Strategies aiming at ...  | Sample indicators e.g.  |
|---|---|
| greater coherence of lifelong learning policies                                     | cross-sectoral and inter-institutional dialogue within education systems and within the higher education sector   |
| strengthening learning cultures at the national, regional, and institutional levels | programmes and campaigns which help raise awareness of the returns to lifelong learning for all   |
| the common use of ICT in education and learning                                     | technological infrastructures and availability of ICT; dialogue between ICT providers, higher education institutions, and teaching staff, enhancement of adults' digital skills   |
| higher education provision matching labour market and employers' needs              | exchange between higher education institutions, labour market experts, and regional employers   |
| improving support structures for adult learners in higher education                 | accessible information systems targeting to adult participation in higher education, HR in higher education institutions - including counselling and guidance, mentoring/tutoring systems   |
| the organisational embedding of higher education programmes for adults              | specified units and management of lifelong learning activities within higher education institutions, visibility and 'labelling' of higher education programmes for adult learners   |
| implementing lifelong learning as guiding principle                                 | lifelong learning included in mission statements, current discourse and exchange on lifelong learning within higher education institutions, visibility of services such as child care, facilities and services for people with disabilities |

<sup>199</sup> Gorard, S., Smith, E., May, H., Thomas, L., Adnett, N. & Slack, K. (2006): Review of Widening Participation Research: Addressing the Barriers to Participation in Higher Education. Higher Education Funding for England, <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/star/resources/gorardbarriers.pdf>

financial support for adult learners in higher education

bursaries, grants and loans for adult students at place, transparency of criteria of eligibility, easy application

## **6 Research on Flexible Learning Provisions and Flexible Delivery of Higher Education Programmes for Adult Learners**

This chapter provides information on current trends in adult education research on the topic of opening higher education to adults through flexible delivery of higher education programmes and flexible learning provisions within the countries the HEAD study covers. Adult education research projects found in appendix J present the major trends with regard to opening higher education to adults and making study programmes and learning provisions more flexible. The first impression when reviewing the research on adult learners, and more specifically the flexible delivery of higher education programmes, flexible learning provisions, and facilitating or inhibiting factors, is one of vast differences across countries in terms of range and depth. Whereas some countries have engaged in detailed research on various topics, others are still catching up. Research conducted in collaborative projects with partners from different European countries has proven to be a useful instrument. and integrating ‘trailblazers’, that is, countries with a longstanding commitment and research tradition regarding a specific topic, proves to be a useful way of generating insights to guide research in other countries.

When looking at the way adult education research, and more specifically, research on opening higher education to adults, is organised and funded, it is easy to see that short-term, project-based research on special issues, funded by European, national, and regional institutions, is the prevailing model.

With regard to the main topics of research, generally, we see a trend towards more sophisticated research on lifelong learning, the recognition of prior learning, the use of information and communication technologies, and the issue of equity with regard to participation in higher education. Research on inhibiting and facilitating factors is still underdeveloped in many countries, whereas in others, insights from that kind of research are already used to monitor the participation of various groups. The following overview will focus on these major trends, presented as a result of cross-country analysis. Each section features a general introduction, followed by specific research projects from some of the participating countries. Short profiles of these research projects, including bibliographical references and further information, can be found in appendix J.

### **6.1 Lifelong learning**

At a very general level, the implementation of lifelong learning at universities (ULLL) has become the focus of attention of a number of European projects and other national projects. Due to the wide range of issues associated with a broad interpretation of lifelong learning as a systemic concept, there is an equally wide range of research projects examining the issue from various perspectives.

### ***Focus on policies and strategies***

At the level of policies and systematic strategies, the project COMPASS-LLL (Collaboration on Modern[izing] Policies and Systematic Strategies on Lifelong Learning)<sup>200</sup> has tried to engage two aspects of the paradigm shift towards a European Lifelong Learning Area: (1) the gap between lifelong learning policy making at the European level and national, regional, and local policies, and (2) the phenomenon that even though many universities are involved in lifelong learning activities, only a few have incorporated that perspective into their mission. Projects like ALLUME (A Lifelong Learning Perspective University Model for Europe)<sup>201</sup> or SIRUS (Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies)<sup>202</sup> sought to increase the participation of universities in lifelong learning, whereas other projects like BeFlex<sup>203</sup> and IMPLEMENT (Implementing University Lifelong Learning through Training Development)<sup>204</sup> aimed at monitoring the progress of reforms designed to increase flexibility and lifelong learning in institutions of higher education, such as the Bologna process. Other projects like THEMP (Tertiary Higher Education for People in Mid-Life)<sup>205</sup> have specifically targeted the need for upgrading the skills of people in mid-life. Apart from these EU-funded projects, other projects were supported by national institutions, such as the German project STU+BE<sup>206</sup>, funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. STU+BE addressed the situation of tertiary study and career, exploring processes of change regarding the function of higher education institutions. Following a more narrow understanding of lifelong learning, a number of cross-country comparative studies and studies looking at single countries such as Austria<sup>207</sup> France<sup>208</sup> have examined programmes labelled as continuing education and the issue of quality management in continuing education.

### ***Focus on recognition of prior learning (RPL)***

RPL is a second major focus of adult education research. The recognition of prior formal, informal, and non-formal learning provides a conceptual bridge between different forms and spheres of adult learning, thereby facilitating personal change and biographical flexibility. With the transformation of the relation between systems of education and work, the transfer of learning outcomes between these systems and institutions has become a focus of European and national research and implementation programmes alike. At the European level, projects like EQF-Pro (Articulation Between Vocational and Academic Learning in

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<sup>200</sup> <http://compass.eucen.eu>

<sup>201</sup> <http://allume.eucen.eu>

<sup>202</sup> <http://www.sirus-project.eu/>

<sup>203</sup> <http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlex/index.html>

<sup>204</sup> <http://implement.eucen.eu/>

<sup>205</sup> <http://www.themp.eu>

<sup>206</sup> Kerres, M., Hanft, A., Wilkesmann & U. Wolff-Bendik (eds.) (2012): Studium 2020. Positionen und Perspektiven zum lebenslangen Lernen an Hochschulen. Münster et al.; <http://mediendidaktik.uni-due.de/stube>

<sup>207</sup> Pellert, A., & Cendon, E. (2007): Internationale Vergleichsstudie zur Struktur und Organisation der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen. Länderstudie Österreich. In: Hanft, A., & Knust, M. (eds.): Weiterbildung und lebenslanges Lernen in Hochschulen. Eine internationale Vergleichsstudie zu Strukturen, Organisation und Angebotsformen. Münster et al., pp. 273-312; AQA-Österreichische Qualitätssicherungsagentur (ed.) (2012): Qualitätsentwicklung der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen. Wien

<sup>208</sup>

[https://www.igf.minefi.gouv.fr/sections/les\\_rapports\\_par\\_typ/les\\_audits\\_de\\_modern/education\\_recherche/la\\_formation\\_continu/downloadFile/attachedFile/Rapport\\_total.pdf?nocache=1187257122.89](https://www.igf.minefi.gouv.fr/sections/les_rapports_par_typ/les_audits_de_modern/education_recherche/la_formation_continu/downloadFile/attachedFile/Rapport_total.pdf?nocache=1187257122.89)

University Education)<sup>209</sup>, OBSERVAL (European Observatory of Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning), and its follow-up project, OBERSERVAL-Net<sup>210</sup>, TRANSFINE (Transfer<sup>211</sup> in order to develop and implement mechanisms for recognising and validating Between Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education)<sup>212</sup>, REFINE (Recognising Formal, Informal and Non-formal division between the vocational training and higher education (university) sectors, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has funded the ANKOM-programme vocational competencies for the purpose of gaining access university-based Education)<sup>213</sup>, and WINKIT (Women's Tool Kit for the Identification of Informal Learning Outcomes)<sup>214</sup> have all addressed the issue of recognising and validating learning outcomes.

Research on this topic has a long tradition in some European countries such as the United Kingdom, or France, where it has seen continuous attention. In Germany, with its deeply entrenched division between the vocational training and higher education (university) sectors, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has funded the ANKOM-programme in order to develop and implement mechanisms for recognising and validating vocational competencies with regard to the purpose of gaining access university-based degree programmes. More than most other research topics the issue of recognition of prior learning shows the vast differences in research and implementation between the countries participating in this study. As a consequence, projects involving partners from several Member States seem to be a particularly promising way of sharing the experience and knowledge that 'trailblazing' countries like France, or the United Kingdom, and Ireland have accumulated in the past.

## 6.2 Use of ICT – eLearning and blended learning

One of the most prominent research subjects across all countries has been the change in higher education due to the development of ICT and its application in higher education institutions. The opportunities and challenges of this new and evolving technology are at the centre of attention, and will remain so for some time to come. Offering a degree of flexibility in terms of time and space that goes far beyond the flexibility of its predecessor, 'distance learning', the development of online- and blended-learning formats is heralded as a way to open (higher) education and to make higher education accessible anytime and anywhere. Although the use of ICT promises major gains in flexibility and is therefore promoted to be of utmost importance with regard to widening access to higher education, the research conducted on different target groups of universities still needs to be integrated into the design of study programmes and support structures. Not all potential students can be considered 'digital natives' or familiar with communicating and learning in virtual environments. Although research on the use of ICT is available from almost all countries (e.g. Cyprus, Finland, Germany<sup>215</sup>, Italy, Latvia<sup>216</sup>, Spain<sup>217</sup>, and others), the experiences with its implementation

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<sup>209</sup> <http://www.eucen.eu/EQFpro/index.html>

<sup>210</sup> <http://www.observal.org/>

<sup>211</sup> Anrechnung beruflicher Kompetenzen auf Hochschulstudiengänge (ANKOM):

<http://ankom.his.de/archiv>

<sup>212</sup> <http://www.univ-lille1.fr/transfine/>; <http://www.eucen.eu/Transfine>

<sup>213</sup> <http://www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html>

<sup>214</sup> <http://www.winkit.eu/winkitproject.php>

<sup>215</sup> <http://www.foerderinfo.bund.de/de/366.php>

<sup>216</sup> Birzina, R., Fernate, A., Luka, I., Maslo, I. & Surikova, S. (2012): ELearning as a Challenge for Widening of Opportunities for Improvement of Students' Generic Competences. In: ELearning and Digital Media, Vol. 9(2), pp. 130-142.; <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2012.9.2.130>



and the extent of provision vary widely. In the Nordic countries, where distance education has a long tradition, the research is characterised by a highly differentiated approach to various aspects of pedagogical issues in general, teaching and guidance in particular, as well as a profound assessment of the different types of (adult) learners.<sup>218</sup>

### 6.3 Equity of participation

With regard to opening higher education, the issue of equitable access and participation has seen attention in various countries. Though issues of equitable access to higher education have a long history, this topic has seen increased attention due to the rising interest in opening higher education institutions to new and more diverse target groups that did not receive as much attention previously, when the need for upskilling the workforce did not seem to be that eminent. Whereas some countries have already adopted differentiated monitoring systems (e.g. the UK and Ireland<sup>219</sup>), others still refer to studies and surveys to assess the extent of the problem and suitable measures to address it. Equity of access and participation of special groups most commonly refers to the participation of persons from lower socio-economic backgrounds, women, and migrants.

### 6.4 Conclusions

The analysis of the adult education research reported from the participating countries has highlighted commonalities, differences, and trends in research conducted across Europe. The major topics in research are lifelong learning at universities, the recognition of prior learning, the use of ICT in higher education, and equitable access and participation. With regard to the future challenges of research on adult education, the following aspects have become apparent during the analysis of the research conducted within the framework of the HEAD study:

- The dominance of project-based research –financed by public institutions at the regional, national, or European level – is reflected in the lack of systematic and sustainable research, and the focus on special issues (RPL, ICT).
- Research approaches to adult learners in higher education have yet to reflect the changes in the relation between vocational and general higher education – the blurring of institutional boundaries and the conceptual integration of learning outcomes in various forms, as indicated by an increase in research on RPL and the analysis of the case studies conducted within the HEAD project. To date, we see only little cooperation between researchers exploring continuing education and higher education even though there is a pressing need to integrate concepts, methodology, and research.

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<sup>217</sup> Encarnación Mellado Durán, María del Carmen Talavera Serrano, Fátima Romera Hiniesta, María Teresa García Gutiérrez (2011). Las tic como herramienta fundamental de la formación permanente en la Universidad de Sevilla. [ICT as a fundamental tool for the lifelong learning at the University of Seville], Revista de Medios y Educación, No 39 Julio 2011. pp. 155-166

<sup>218</sup> For example: [http://www.helsinki.fi/valtiotieteellinen/julkaisut/blended\\_learning\\_Finland.pdf](http://www.helsinki.fi/valtiotieteellinen/julkaisut/blended_learning_Finland.pdf); Torrão, S. & Tiirmaa-Oras, S. (2007). Blended Learning: Research Reports & Examples of Best Practices. Coordinated by University of Tartu, Estonia. Retirado em 5 de Outubro de 2010 de <http://www.ut.ee/blearn/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=386871/blearn+multilingual+compendium.pdf>

<sup>219</sup> <http://www.heai.ie/files/files/file/Access/NationalPlanofEquityAccess2008-2013.pdf> ; <http://www.iaa.ie/students-graduates/widening-participation/>



- Research should shed more light on the situation of higher education institutions in the continuing education market. The changing contextual conditions and the new makeup of the higher education sector – and its institutions – need further assessment. Public universities in particular are still challenged to find their profile and path in a changing environment, and they are confronted with competition from (private) organisations used to providing education with a focus on labour market benefits.
- As mentioned in the previous chapters, the specific requirements of adult learners and adult education need further clarification with regard to study formats, support structures, and the organisation of study programmes, all of which have to address the needs of a heterogeneous student body.
- The impact of the financial crisis starts to become apparent in various European countries, warranting research on its effects on the participation of adult learners.
- The short-, medium-, and long-term effects of adult participation in college and university organisation, structure, and provision should be monitored.
- The issue of equitable access to higher education – e.g. regarding gender, class, ethnicity, and other aspects such as access to education in rural environments – is an enduring topic that needs continuing attention amid the prominent labour market-oriented rationales in higher education policy. Though improvements have been made in recent years, equal access policies and systematic monitoring are not yet the norm in all countries.

## **7 Challenges for the Future**

According to the conclusions from chapters 4, 5 and 6, the main challenges for future action to be taken become clear. Referring to the scheme presented in the introduction to chapter 4 these challenges can be associated with favourable levels of policy action.

| <b>Challenges for future action to be taken at ...</b> | <b>national level</b>   | <b>regional level</b>   | <b>institutional level</b>  |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>and with regard to ...</b>                          |   |   |   |
| policy and legislation                                 | developing coherent lifelong learning policies/ strategies which embrace all educational levels   |   | aligning the work and strategies of higher education institutions and national higher education policy and legislation to enhance higher education for adults;<br><br>making benefits which higher education institutions can gain from opening up to adults more transparent |
| flexible access arrangements                           | encouraging higher education institutions to <b>work on standard procedures for RPL and validation practices</b> (in line with the objectives of the 2012 Council Recommendations)  |   | enhancing the development of bridging and preparatory courses/programmes to <b>reinforce transitions from VET to higher education</b> , including clarification of entitlements and validation of prior learning and work experience  |
| flexible programme provision                           |   |   | enhancing the development of mainstream university programmes providing different study options (e.g. duration, timing, sequencing of modules, study language) in order to meet the different needs of adult learners in terms of flexibility                                 |
| student services and support                           |   |   | <b>disseminating 'good practice'</b> in student counselling and support services that enable adult learners to progress through higher education successfully   |
| teaching methods and teacher training                  |   |   | <b>disseminating 'good' practice</b> in teaching methods and self-assessment tools conducive to good performance of adult learners in higher education  |
| financial provision                                    | adapting funding schemes to the needs of adult learners; introducing financial conditions and mechanisms that facilitate implementation of flexible learning provisions and adult uptake, including a more equity-oriented fixing of tuition fees, introduction of grants (especially for adult learners with a low income) and co-financing of programmes by external stakeholders |   |   |
| cooperation with external stakeholders                 |   | clarifying the impact of different types of cooperation between higher education institutions and external stakeholders on outreach and wider availability of higher education provisions to adults |   |
| response to labour market needs                        | fostering the development of programmes with a focus on labour market needs in order to better <b>serve</b> local, regional, national and/or transnational labour markets   |   |   |

## 8 Recommendations

The HEAD study has provided a review of the main factors facilitating and inhibiting adult participation – this with a focus on flexible access and flexible programme provision. However, it is equally clear that higher education institutions are already providing a good deal of flexible access arrangements and flexible learning provision. It is equally clear from the study that more could be done to enhance and to improve flexible access and flexible learning provision, thus widening adult participation in higher education. The challenges which require future action at national, regional, and institutional levels have been presented in the previous chapter. Distilling the major requirements for the continuous process of opening higher education to adults from the information that was presented in the above, we propose that future European cooperation activities be planned around the following recommendations:

### ***Encourage governments to improve the coherence of national lifelong learning policies/strategies***

We have seen that the development of national lifelong learning policies and/or strategies is on-going, yet with differences in terms of coherence. As a consequence, the role and integration of higher education as part of the lifelong learning continuum is not always as clear as it should be. National governments should therefore be encouraged to develop lifelong learning policies and strategies addressing all policy areas relevant to making lifelong learning a reality, including higher education. Legal instruments can drive national lifelong learning policies towards the implementation of aligned strategies for the different education sectors from early childhood education to the education of adults could be strengthened. Furthermore the improvement of the coherence of national lifelong learning strategies strengthen the links between VET, adult education, and higher education by promoting alternative qualification pathways from VET to obtaining an academic degree, in particular by exploiting the implementation of EQF/NQF to enable smooth progression to and through higher education.

### ***Encourage national (or federal) higher education policies to remove regulative barriers to increasing adult participation in higher education***

Despite the overall progress in national higher education policies towards opening higher education to adults there are still obstacles to overcome. This applies especially to regulations on maximum age at the time of enrolment which limit the participation of adults and regulations concerning the share of adult students entering higher education via an alternative route. In countries where such regulations exist, adult students' participation is either restricted to participation in university continuing education provision separated from the mainstream programmes. This may lead to frustrations preventing adults from further attempts to take part in higher education. In such cases, national higher education policies should be encouraged to remove such restrictive regulations in order to strengthen the motivational of the adult population to participate in higher education as well as of higher education institutions to engage in adult education.

***Increase the amount of information on the returns higher education institutions can gain from the adult learners***

The HEAD study shows that some higher education institutions do a great deal to attract adult students. Equally the study reveals that lifelong learning is far from being a commonly recognised mission of higher education institutions, even if the respective national policy and legislation is in place. Particularly the development of mainstream higher education programmes for adults needs further promotion. This in turn shows that more information on the returns higher education institutions can gain from adult learners is needed. A better understanding of the benefits of adult participation in mainstream higher education programmes, including the benefits for innovations in teaching and teaching research, should help to motivate higher education institutions to implement lifelong learning policies and strategies and to work on the defragmentation of higher education learning provision for adults, while ensuring that practices keep up with existing favourable regulatory conditions.

***Promote the development of standard procedures for RPL and validation practices***

The development of regulations on flexible access to higher education has progressed during the last decade, though experiences with RPL and validation of previous non-formal learning as well as the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) are still limited in a number of European countries and decisions are often taken at the level of academic departments or of their admissions officers. It is clear that there is a need to promote the development of standard procedures for RPL and validation practices in line with the objectives to be achieved by 2018, as formulated in the 2012 Council Recommendations. National governments and higher education institutions should be encouraged to extend the knowledge on how manageable procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, in line with EQF and national qualifications frameworks, can be produced, made available to individuals, and used by higher education institutions themselves. These processes should be supported by appropriate guidance and counselling. Working on standard procedures for RPL and validation would also have a positive effect on making the links between VET, adult education and higher education provision and participation more transparent, which in turn is an important requirement for higher education institutions, if they are to engage in widening participation to adults.

***Develop and disseminate 'good practice' in the areas of flexible programme provision, student services and support, teaching methods and teacher training and enhance the professional discourse thereon***

Flexible programme provision, student services and support, teaching methods and teaching competencies which meet the needs of adult learners are most important conditions conducive to good learner performance and adult higher education attainment. The HEAD study has shown a range of exemplary initiatives and evidence of 'good practice' in these respects. However, it seems that most initiatives do not systematically build on existing information and knowledge, but are developed on the basis of the personal experience and expertise of the respective initiators and developers. So the HEAD study does not only reveal

the need to disseminate widely the current state of knowledge, but also the emerging need to foster the recognition of and professional discourse on 'good practice'. Wider dissemination and recognition of the existing knowledge by the higher education professional community could contribute to facilitating progress and further development in these areas. Besides, publication of research results online as well as in journals and books and through presentations at seminars and at national and international conferences would also give more possibilities for knowledge-based exchange and professional discourse. Measures in this regard should target peer learning activities, e.g. through the involvement of existing networks and organisations at the European level which are concerned with lifelong learning and higher education, or through the establishment of personalised online networks dedicated to sharing publications on relevant R&D results, asking questions, finding innovative solutions on problems, and accelerating knowledge-based progress.

***Encourage governments, higher education institutions and stakeholders to create and to improve funding models and financial support for higher education for adults***

It is clear from the HEAD study that higher education programmes designed for adult learners most often come with tuition fees. It is also clear that higher education institutions have to charge a minimum fee in order to manage costs of development and implementation of higher education programmes for adults. However, even a minimum charge may prevent potential students from lower income groups (e.g. single parents, people with a migrant background) and those who try to overcome unemployment (by upskilling and professional development) from enrolling in higher education. National governments should therefore be encouraged to take their responsibility by developing targeted funding models, such as student loans and grants as well as incentive taxation models for employees and for employers funding the participation of their employees in degree programmes. Higher education institutions should be encouraged in seeking support from external stakeholders (e.g. companies, foundations, NGOs) in order to improve co-financing of higher education programmes for adults and to create, for example, grants and awards to ease the financial burden for adult learners.

***Encourage higher education institutions to engage in partnerships and networks dedicated to building 'learning regions'***

The HEAD study shows the importance of collaboration between higher education institutions and with outside bodies in terms of reducing risks of phasing out programmes, allocating financial resources, better responding to the needs of regional, national and transnational labour markets and so on. So far this type of collaboration has been either driven by motives of sustaining higher education programmes for adults faced with irregular demand and financial shortage or – as demonstrated e.g. by the case studies from South Africa and New Zealand – by motives of responding to region specific problems of social coherence and public health through appropriate higher education learning provision for adults. However, if higher education institutions and their partners want to contribute more concretely to promoting lifelong learning as a principal requirement within the evolution of knowledge-based societies, they should not lose sight of the overall objective which should be to offer adults a choice of higher education programmes for personal or professional

purposes at any stage of their lives. Therefore higher education institutions should be encouraged to engage in partnerships and networks dedicated to fostering lifelong learning at local and regional levels. Consequently national governments and actors from the field of regional development should support this engagement by promoting such partnerships and networking between all relevant actors as part of the activities of 'learning regions'.

***Make progression in opening higher education to adults in the European countries more visible and accountable***

The HEAD study provides evidence that the processes of opening higher education to adults in the European countries is on-going, though with different accentuations and pace. On the one hand this can be explained by the pluralism of education systems and forms of educational governance throughout the European countries. On the other hand it should be acknowledged that progress in opening up higher education to adults should not be narrowly determined but depends also on the willingness and motivation of the relevant actors from governments and institutions to initiate and to foster change. Making differences as well as progress within the European Union more visible and accountable could be an incentive for national governments and higher education institutions to foster and to improve their efforts towards opening higher education to adults. Benchmarking and, in particular, monitoring performance and progress are effective tools to enhance the motivation and the commitment of the relevant actors in European countries to fostering the opening of higher education to adults. Improving the monitoring of progression in opening higher education in order to enhance comparison at institutional and national level could be helpful to better align the pace of national and institutional developments.

Adult learners, higher education institutions and Europe as a whole will benefit from the actions and activities recommended.

## **9 Annex**

The annex of this report contains the following appendices:

Appendix A: Overview methodological approach

Appendix B: Team structure

Appendix C: Glossary

Appendix D: Indicators of best practice

Appendix E: Research manuals

Appendix F: Country reports

Appendix G: Case studies

Appendix H: Inventory of flexible types of learning

Appendix I: Tuition fees – case studies

Appendix J: Research projects and bibliography

Appendix K: Workshop programme and list of participants

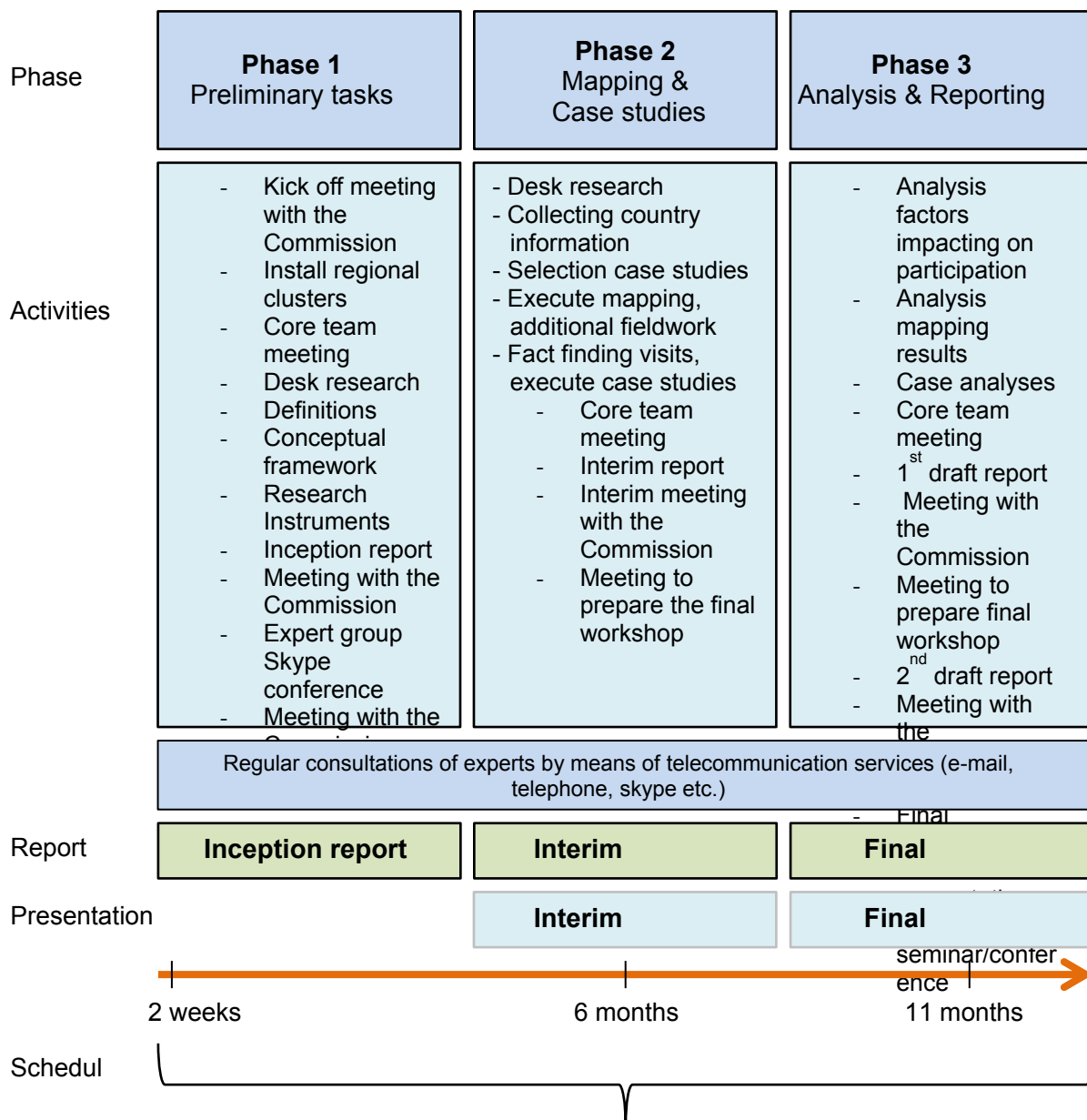
# Appendix A: Overview Methodological Approach



EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG Education and Culture  
Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT3:

## OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)

Contract EAC 2012-0074





## Appendix B: Team Structure

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN

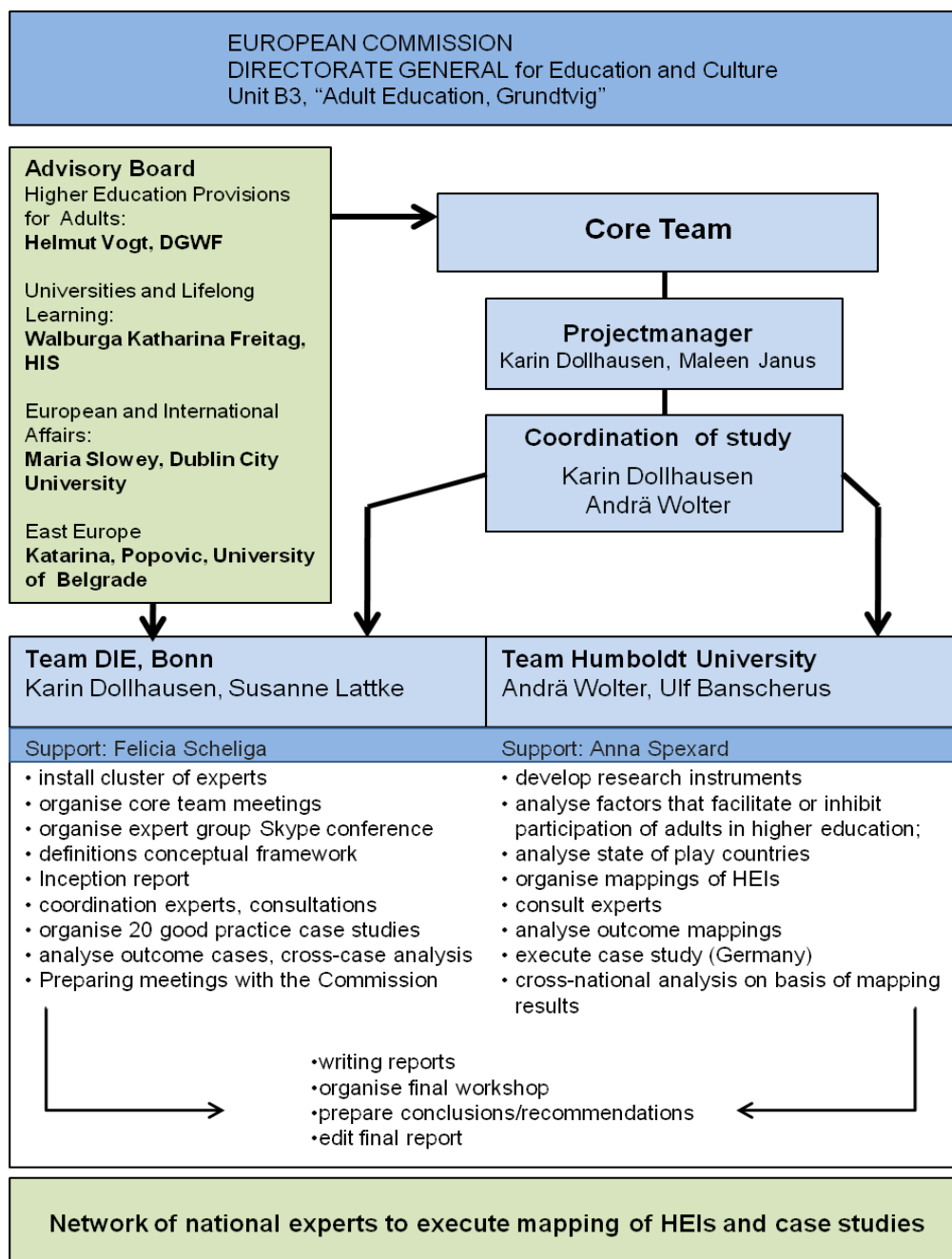


Deutsches Institut für  
Erwachsenenbildung  
Leibniz-Zentrum für  
Lebenslanges Lernen

German Institute for  
Adult Education  
Leibniz Centre for  
Lifelong Learning

### EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG Education and Culture Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT3: OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)

**Contract EAC 2012-0074**



## Appendix C: Glossary

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG Education and Culture

### 1 **Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT 3: Opening Higher Education to Adults**

**(HEAD)**

**Contract EAC 2012-0074**

#### **DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTIONS**

The project team identified several conceptions and key terms which have to be defined in order to establish a common basis for the analyses conducted over the course of the project.

### 2 **Adult education research related to flexible education for adults undertaken in higher education institutions**

A variety of research projects related to innovative flexible provision of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions are carried out at HEIs. The results gained through these projects are an extremely valuable source of information on possible ways and effective solutions for opening HE to adults. Therefore, information on flexible delivery of programmes and flexible learning provisions are collected through the mapping of adult education research undertaken at HEIs and the subsequent analyses of results. During the research process it has to be considered that the transition between adult and higher education research is very smooth. The project team acknowledges that relevant research on flexible HE provision for adults might also be conducted in pilot projects which do not reflect common practice. Yet and regarding the different status of the subjects of research the analysis of adult education research undertaken at HEIs provides an efficient way of collection relevant information on the issue of flexible education for adults.

### 3 **Adult learners in higher education institutions**

The term “adult learner” is widely used in research and politics. There is however no common definition who an adult learner in higher education is and who is not. The OECD states in its publication “Beyond Rhetoric: Adult Learning Policies and Practices”<sup>1</sup> that there is no consensus or single definition for adult learners. The definition of adult learners vary “in terms of coverage, settings and age according to the country and, sometimes, to the regional authority or the type of programme” (p. 23). The UNESCO also assumes that the definition of adults differ between countries, in the glossary of the ISCED classification it is referred to adults as “persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong”<sup>2</sup>. Kasworm<sup>3</sup> comes to a similar conclusion: “International adult higher education is characterized by a variety of contextual terms and definitions.” (p. 412).

In the European Adult Learning Glossary<sup>4</sup>, an adult learner is defined as “Any person aged 16 or over participating in adult learning”. Adult learning is described as “The entire range of formal, non-formal and informal learning activities which are undertaken by adults after a

<sup>1</sup> OECD (2003) *Beyond Rhetoric: Adult Learning Policies and Practices*. Paris: OECD.

<sup>2</sup> Unesco (2006) *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*

<sup>3</sup> Kasworm, C.E. (1993) *Adult higher education from an international perspective*. Higher Education, 25: 411-423.

<sup>4</sup> NRDC (2010) *Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector. European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2*. (Call Number: EAC 11/2008).

break since leaving initial education and training, and which results in the acquisition of new knowledge and skills” and explicitly includes higher education: “This includes university-level or higher education undertaken after a break (other than for deferred entry) since leaving initial education and training”. Obviously, these definitions are too broad for the purpose of this project as it does not comprise all adult learners but focuses on adult learners in higher education.

The OECD report on “Adults in Higher Education”<sup>5</sup> identified four different categories for adults in ten different countries examined within the framework of the study:

- students who enter/re-enter HE after a major break in their formal involvement in learning,
- student above a certain age (e.g. 25 years),
- students entering HE on the basis of mature life experience (gained through work, family and/or community involvement),
- and students re-entering HE after having completed a degree at an earlier stage.

In the “Pre-study on the role of higher education institutions as providers of continuous professional learning and adult education” of the Directorate General for Education and Culture<sup>6</sup> all people aged 30 years or older enrolled in HE are regarded as adult learners. But even if the only the category of age is used to define adult learners, country variations occur: “With regards to higher education (HE), the UK and Ireland have a nationally recognised age for mature students at undergraduate level – 21 years and over and 23 years and over respectively. In Belgium and Spain, it is generally accepted that 25 is the boundary age separating adults from younger students. In Sweden, the term ‘adult student’ is less familiar because many people often choose to participate in HE in their mid twenties. Similarly, in Germany, the length of degree courses means that many undergraduates are older than in other countries”<sup>7</sup>.

These research findings underline the variety of definitions which exist on the issue of adult learners in HE.

Within the framework of this study, it is assumed that adult learners in higher education cannot be treated as a homogenous group as there are different criteria to define adults in HE within and across countries. To assure the comparability of results of the research carried out during the project, however, an underlying understanding of what is meant by the term “adults in higher education” is necessary. Within the framework of the HEAD-project, the research will concentrate on adults in the sense of non-traditional students. In order to capture the different notions, the national experts are asked to provide the concepts of adults in higher education which are most important in the respective country. As a starting point and orientation, possible criteria to define adults in higher education are presented to the experts. The following criteria and types of non-traditional students have been identified during an extensive literature research and originate from publications by e.g. Schuetze and Slowey<sup>8</sup>, Kasworm<sup>9</sup> and Teichler and Wolter<sup>10</sup>. They represent the current state of play and combine different approaches and concepts to define adult learners in HE.

<sup>5</sup> OECD (1987). *Adults in Higher Education*. Paris: OECD.

<sup>6</sup> DG for Education and Culture (2011) *Pre-study on the role of higher education institutions as providers of continuous professional learning and adult education*.

<sup>7</sup> Powell, R., Smith, R. & Reakes, A. (2003) *Defining Common Issues Across Europe for Adult Education*. NFER.

<sup>8</sup> Schuetze, H.G. and Slowey, M. (eds.) (2000) *Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. International Perspectives on Change*, London: Routledge.

| - Approach to define adults in HE | - Central issue  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| - Age                             | - non-traditional students are defined in the line with a specific age, mostly older than 25 at the time of the  |
| - Participation                   | - non-traditional students derive from groups which are underrepresented in their participation in higher education, e.g. students with a working-class background, with a disability, or from migrant or indigenous families                              |
| - Life-course                     | - participants who enter higher education after a winding biographical path after a first school career, e.g. a career of periods of work experience, vocational training, and continuing education, often paired with a family biography                  |
| - Access and admission            | - alternative entrance and admission procedures for non-traditional students, e.g. via recognition of prior learning and/or work experience and the permeability between vocational and continuing education on the one and higher education on other hand |
| - Modes of studying               | - typical patterns and intensity of studying of non-traditional students, e.g. part time distance, extra occupational, in the evening hours or weekend etc.  |
| - Type of programme               | - participation in HE combined with a continuing professional development orientation, often initiated in partnership with employers, e.g. masters programs, non-credit courses, and often on a full cost basis  |
| - Organisation of provision       | - participation in HE in specialist institutions, such as Open Universities, or units within public HE institutions, i.e. Universities of the third age  |

Additionally, a typology of lifelong learners in higher education is suggested by Slowey and Schuetze<sup>11</sup>:

| - Type of       | - Characteristics  |
|-----------------|--|
| - Second chance | - learners without formal entry qualifications who enter higher education via special entrance examination or                              |
| - Equity groups | - learners from socio-economic or other groups which are underrepresented in higher education  |
| - Deferrers     | - learners with credentials who defer entry into HE, decision to participate in HE is made after a phase of employment or other activities |
| - Recurrent     | - learners who return to HE for a further, usually higher degree   |

<sup>9</sup> Kasworm, C.E. (1993) *Adult higher education from an international perspective*, Higher Education, 25: 411-423.

<sup>10</sup> Teichler, U. & Wolter, A. (2004) *Zugangsweg und Studienangebote für nicht-traditionelle Studierende*, Die Hochschule, 13: 64-80

<sup>11</sup> Slowey, M. & Schuetze, H. G. (eds.) (forthcoming): *Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners*.

|   |                        |  |
|---|------------------------|--|
| - | learners               |  |
| - | Returners              | - learners who drop-in to higher education, having 'dropped- out' or deferred HE studies at an earlier stage                     |
| - | Refreshers             | - participation in continuing HE programs with or without traditional educational qualifications to refresh knowledge and skills |
| - | Learners in later life | - learners at the third age who enrol in mainly non-credit HE programs for personal development purposes                         |

In our study the national experts are invited to comment on the presented approaches and outline the concepts and definitions of adult learners in HE which prevail in their country. The discussions of criteria and typologies are used by the core team to develop a terminology and/or classification model for adult learners in higher education suitable for the range of the entire study.

#### 4 Factors facilitating or inhibiting adult participation in higher education

The extent of participation and retention of adults in HE study programmes depends on a variety of inhibiting and facilitating factors. It is very important to identify the prevailing factors impacting on adult participation because they form the basis for the development of actions aiming at opening HE to adults.

In the relevant literature on the issue, different barriers to participation are identified, e.g. personal barriers (e.g. particular attitudes, perceptions or expectations that affect a person's ability to participate), situational barriers (e.g. lack of time, distance from educational provision, lack of appropriate facilities or financial constraints), institutional barriers (organisational models of HE)<sup>12</sup> or informational barriers<sup>13</sup> (e.g. lack of information on adult learning opportunities in HE). Motivational factors (e.g. achieve more personal satisfaction, increase general knowledge, acquire specific qualifications and competencies to do a job better or to foster a professional career, obtain a qualification to sustain employability etc.) play also an important role. Broek and Hake<sup>14</sup> also refer to situational and institutional barriers and add "dispositional barriers" which "include bad experiences with previous education; lack of confidence in individual capabilities; the feeling that one is too old to learn; a sense that learning is good but not for 'our kind of people'; lack of awareness of positive returns to learning etc." (p. 4). These dispositional barriers partly overlap with the personal barriers identified in other publications. Pont<sup>15</sup> mentions several similar factors which might inhibit the participation of adults: "lack of information, lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of incentives, lack of access or lack of funding" (p. 35).

Other research projects in the area of adult education identified two main groups of factors: factors which impede a person's readiness to engage in learning (cultural, social and

<sup>12</sup> Cross, K. P. (1981) *Adults as Learners: Increasing Participation and Facilitating Learning*. San Francisco: Joey-Bass.

<sup>13</sup> McGivney, V. (1991) *Access to Education for Non-Participant Adults*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education

<sup>14</sup> Broek, S. & Hake, B. J. (2012) *Increasing participation of adults in higher education: factors for successful policies*. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 1-21.

<sup>15</sup> Pont, B. (2004) *Improving Access to and Participation in Adult Learning in OECD countries*. *European Journal of Education*, 39 (1): 31-45.

psychological barriers) and factors which inhibit his or her ability to participate (practical and structural barriers)<sup>16</sup>.

## 5 Flexibility

Flexibility is one of the key concepts of the present study. The flexibility of HE programmes and learning provisions is an important factor impacting participation of adult learners in HE. According to a definition in the European Adult Learning Glossary<sup>17</sup>, 'flexible learning' is defined as "Education and training that responds to learners' needs and preferences. Flexible learning offers learners choices about how, where and when they learn [...]" (p. 24). European and international research on the issue show that different types of flexibility can be identified, e.g. flexibility of governance and control structures, flexibility in the development of practice- and occupational-related HE programmes, flexible (open) access and entry routes, flexibility in terms of space and time, financial flexibility and flexible lifelong learning processes<sup>18</sup>.

More in particular we distinguish the following two concepts:

The flexibility of the delivery of a HE programme can refer to different dimensions but it is mainly defined by structural indicators, e.g. the organisation of the programme. A flexible HE programme for example allows students to study part-time or it offers the possibility of credit accumulation. Flexible learning provision on the other hand describe didactical dimensions; examples for flexible learning provisions are E-Learning or blended learning.

## 6 Higher education and higher education institutions

In the framework of this study, higher education is defined with regard to the International Standard Classification of Education by the UNESCO. In the ISCED 1997 framework, tertiary education covers three levels: 5A, 5B and 6. When classifying degrees, it is also important to take into account that the UNESCO emphasises that the position of a degree in the national qualification structure for tertiary education within an individual country plays an important role<sup>19</sup>. The ISCED level 5A refers to educational programmes which are "tertiary programmes that are largely theoretically based and are intended to provide sufficient qualifications for gaining entry into advanced research programmes and profession with high skills requirements"<sup>20</sup> (p.35) and have at least a duration of three fulltime equivalent years. Programmes at ISCED level 5B "are typically shorter than those in 5A and focus on occupationally specific skills geared for entry into the labour market, although some theoretical foundations may be covered in the respective programme"<sup>21</sup> (p. 35). Within the ISCED system, "adult education programmes equivalent in content with some ISCED 5 programmes could be included at this level"<sup>22</sup> (p. 38).

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<sup>16</sup> ALPINE project, [http://www.qub.ac.uk/alpine/ALPINE/MAIN\\_PAGE.htm](http://www.qub.ac.uk/alpine/ALPINE/MAIN_PAGE.htm)

<sup>17</sup> NRDC (2010) *Study on European Terminology in Adult Learning for a common language and common understanding and monitoring of the sector. European Adult Learning Glossary, Level 2.* (Call Number: EAC 11/2008).

<sup>18</sup> Schuetze, H.G. & Slowey, M. (2000) Traditions and New Directions in Higher Education – A Comparative Perspective on Non-Traditional Students and Lifelong Learners. In: Schuetze H.G. and Slowey, M. (eds.) *Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. International Perspectives on Change.* London: Routledge: 3-24

<sup>19</sup> Unesco (2006) *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*

<sup>20</sup> Unesco (2006) *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*

<sup>21</sup> Unesco (2006) *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*

<sup>22</sup> Unesco (2006) *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*

ISCED level 6 is “reserved for tertiary programmes which lead to the award of an advanced research qualification. The programmes are therefore devoted to advanced study and original research and are not based on course-work only”<sup>23</sup> (p.39).

The present study aims at including a variety of different types of HEIs (e.g. classical and specialised institutions). In general, higher education institutions are regarded as institutions which have the right to issue degrees at ISCED level 5A or higher. In terms of educational provision, the present study will concentrate on programmes at ISCED level 5A, 5B and 6.

## **7 Increase of participation of adults in higher education**

When referring to the “increase of participation of adults in HE” we imply the widening of access for new groups of adult learners as well as the increase of participation rates of adult learner groups already participating in HE.

## **8 Opening higher education**

Opening higher education is identified as one major objective by the Council. In the renewed European agenda on adult learning, the Council “encourage[s] higher education institutions to embrace less traditional groups of learners, such as adult learners, as a means of displaying social responsibility and greater openness towards the community at large, as well as responding to demographic challenges and to the demands of an ageing society”<sup>24</sup>.

Opening higher education to those adult groups which have not been previously engaged in HE is seen as crucial; especially regarding the increasing share of highly-qualified jobs in Europe with the parallel decreasing of jobs requiring low qualifications. Consequently, in the framework of this study, “Opening higher education” is primarily understood as widening the participation of adults in HE, i.e. opening higher education for new target groups. However, the participation and retention of adult groups already engaged in HE is very important as well.

In the documents related to the Bologna process, four main measures aiming at the opening of HE for lifelong learning can be identified:

- facilitating the access of “non-traditional” students to HE,
- delivery of flexible education,
- the validation of competencies acquired outside the HE sector, and
- the creation of supporting frameworks<sup>25</sup>.

The focus of this study lies on the description and analyses of flexible education, i.e. the flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions.

## **9 Regulatory frameworks and financial provisions**

The regulatory frameworks and financial provisions at national level are further important factors influencing the opening of HE to adults and adult participation in HE. Regulatory frameworks for example comprise relevant regulatory issues e.g. the autonomy of HEIs as well as access and admission to HE. Financial provisions refer to e.g. public and private funding of HEIs as well as student funding for adult learners. Further and more general information concerning funding and financing of HE for adults should be delivered by the ‘sister study’ carried out within lot 2.

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<sup>23</sup> Unesco (2006) *International Standard Classification of Education-ISCED 1997*

<sup>24</sup> *Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (2011/C 372/01)*.

<sup>25</sup> Banscherus, Ulf (2010) *Lebenslanges Lernen im Bologna- Prozess*. In Wolter, Andrä , Wiesner, Gisela , Koepernik, Claudia (Eds.): *Der lernende Mensch in der Wissensgesellschaft. Perspektiven lebenslangen Lernens*, Weinheim: Juventa, 221-23

OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)  
**INDICATORS OF BEST PRACTICE**

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The following indicators of best practice should help you to screen the adult education research undertaken in HEIs with regard to descriptions and analyses of good or best practice. The indicators should help in particular to identify examples of flexible HE programmes and learning provisions which can be considered as particularly remarkable in terms of openness, impacting good learner performance, innovativeness, transferability and sustainability and which in your view could be suitable candidates for the case study envisaged.

## 9.1 Potential for opening HE to adults

The best practice example (BPE) shows more than one of the following characteristics:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| policy / aim                                 | The BPE explicitly seeks to attract non-traditional (adult) students   |
| curriculum / contents                        | The curriculum is particularly attractive to adults (e.g. adult access courses, courses on work-related subjects, courses linking theory and practice, courses including competence training). |
| didactical principles                        | The particular needs of adult learners are taken into account. Principles such as learner autonomy and self-responsibility are respected and supported.  |
| organisation                                 | The BPE offers flexible learning provisions, i.e. self-organized learning, open learning, distance learning, part time studies etc.  |
| access / recognition of prior learning (RPL) | Prior learning and work experience of adults are recognized  |
| support                                      | Special support services to adult learners such as child care, complementary training, study and career advisory etc., are offered.  |
| relevance to the labour market               | The needs of employees and employers are taken into account.   |

## 9.2 Impact

The BPE can be positively assessed with regard to the following indicators:

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| learning performance | The BPE has a positive impact on learning performance of adults and/or on the participation of adults in HE. |
| documentation        | There exists a systematic documentation of this impact (e.g. evaluation studies, participation statistics).  |

## 9.3 Innovativeness

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| attention to LLL | The BPE integrates concepts of LLL especially in terms of regarding the learner's biographical status and experience.                  |
| vanguard         | The BPE has introduced a new flexible type of study programme or learning provisions with respect to the national or regional context. |
| outreach         | The BPE has acted as a model for other institutions/programmes.  |

## 9.4 Transferability

|  |  |
|--|--|
| application                            | The rationales of the concept, development and implementation of the BPE also apply for other institutions within and outside the country.     |
| regulation                             | The regulatory frameworks and financial provisions influencing the delivery of flexible HE programmes and learning provisions are practicable. |
| transparency of implementation process | There is a systematic documentation of the development and implementation process of the BPE.  |

## 9.5 Sustainability

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| funding conditions    | There exists a viable and transparent system for the funding of programmes for adult learners.                                   |
| quality assurance     | There are systematic procedures in place in order to monitor, evaluate and improve learning provisions, processes and results.   |
| professional teaching | There are systematic procedures in place in order to monitor, evaluate and improve the skills of adult education teaching staff. |

## Appendix E: Research Manuals



Deutsches Institut für  
Erwachsenenbildung  
Leibniz-Zentrum für  
Lebenslanges Lernen

*German Institute for  
Adult Education  
Leibniz Centre for  
Lifelong Learning*

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG Education and Culture  
Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT3:

# OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD) Contract EAC 2012-0074

## MANUAL 9.6 Country Report

Prepared by

Karin Dollhausen / Susanne Lattke / Felicia Scheliga

Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen  
German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning

Andrä Wolter / Ulf Banscherus / Anna Spexard

Humboldt Universität Berlin, Philosophische Fakultät IV, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften,  
Abteilung Hochschulforschung

Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Faculty of Arts and Humanities IV, Department for Education Studies, Section for Higher Education Research

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## **I Objectives and Contents of the Country Report**

The project “Opening Higher Education to Adults - HEAD” aims at a comprehensive study on factors impacting on the participation of adults in higher education (HE) and on the flexible delivery of HE programmes and learning provisions for adult learners within higher education institutions (HEIs). The overall objective of this project is to derive conclusions and recommendations for action to be taken at European, national and regional level to open higher education to adults.

The country reports which are authorised by a cluster of national experts from different European countries are one important information and evidence base for the analyses in the framework of the study.

The main objective of the country report is to create an overview on adult education research conducted at HEIs which is related to flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions for adult learners. The analysis of existing adult education research primarily aims at identifying flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions which are conducive to good adult learner performance and to increase the participation of adults in HE.

The country report shall contain information and evidence on

- background research at national level with regard to
  - definitions of ‘adults’ in HE and specifications of the target group of adult learners in HE,
  - statistical data sources concerning the participation and situation of adults in HE,
  - regulatory and financial issues
- adult education research undertaken in HEIs related to the flexible delivery of HE programs and flexible learning provisions for adult learners with regard to
  - factors that facilitate or inhibit adult participation in HE,
  - the importance of flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions at HEIs to attract adult learners,
- examples of good practice in the area of flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions for adult learners.

Each country report will be supplemented by a case study providing an in-depth analysis of one good practice example of flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions within HEIs. For this case study a separate manual will be made available.

## II General Notes

This manual provides research tasks and orientation concerning the research methodology. For a better understanding, central questions are provided for each research task.

We are aware of the distinctness of countries and the national systems of adult education and higher education. We therefore rely on your expertise and skill to convey an impression of the situation in your country.

The project team produced a glossary (**HEAD\_Glossary**) containing conceptions and key terms which have to be defined in order to establish a common basis for the analyses conducted over the course of the project. The glossary provides a set of relevant criteria and types of adult participation in HE. You may consult the glossary provided by the project team for definitions of key terms.

Our focal interest are flexible study programmes and learning provisions offered by HEIs which can be ascribed to ISCED level 5A, 5B and 6. Access to HE and validation of prior learning and work experiences should not be in the focus of the analyses because these issues are sufficiently covered by existing studies.

From the good practice examples presented under point 9 of this manual, one example of an exceptionally good programme or institution will be selected by the project team for a more in-depth analysis in the form of a case study. For this purpose, please identify at least 3 good practice examples which you consider as particularly remarkable in terms of openness, impacting good learner performance, innovativeness, transferability and sustainability and which in your view could be suitable candidates for the case study envisaged. Please, explain why these examples are particularly good-practice and refer to the indicators of good practice (**HEAD\_Indicators\_Best\_Practice**) provided by the project team.

Under point 10, we would like you to give a brief résumé of the situation of adult learners in HE in your country.

## III Methodology

The main objective of the country report consists in collecting, screening and analysing adult education research undertaken in HEIs related to the flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions within HEIs. The result should be a bibliography with résumés of the subjects and main research findings of the relevant research projects. From these mapping results, conclusions on flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions, which are conducive to good adult learner performance and to increase the participation of adults in HE will be derived.

The mapping of adult education research at HEIs should be executed mainly as desk research. The study should mainly build on available documents and sources, e.g. pertinent studies, publications, data bases and networks which exist at the international, national or regional level. In addition, relevant documents produced by the EU institutions should be taken into account. Further information should be gathered by telephone interviews with researchers in the respective countries and with responsible actors within HEIs.

## IV Research Tasks

The following topics should be covered in your research and we assume that you as expert will best know which attention and elaborateness you should give to each topic according to the specific situation in your country.

We recommend using the following structure for your reporting and ask you to select information to fit into a paper of approximately 20 to 30 pages.

### Key concept

#### 1. Definition of the term “adults” in higher education

- Which criteria (e.g. age, life course) are used to define “adults” in HE in your country? Which groups of learners are most important? (Please refer to the glossary.)
- How do the prevailing concepts of adults in HE in your country differ from the concepts suggested in the glossary?
- Are there further criteria and groups of learners to be taken into account in your country?

### Background information

#### 2. Information on important regulatory issues and policies

- Which are the most relevant regulatory issues at national, regional and/or institutional level to stimulate the participation of adults in HE in your country (e.g. access and admission to HE, funding of HEIs, student grants/ loans)? Is participation in HE regulated by law?
- Are there national policies and trends in HE as well as in adult education, vocational education and training to overcome barriers between the sectors (e.g. cooperation between HE and adult education sector and NGOs, strategies for RPL)?
- Are there specific conditions/events/policy decisions shaping policy in the field of opening HE to adults (e.g. national policies which specifically mention the openness of HE to adults)?
- Are there disadvantaged and underrepresented groups of adult learners in HE? In how far are these groups regarded in HE policy programs?
- What are successful policies in regard to opening higher education to adults?
- Please name important measures that have been initiated to increase openness of HE.

#### 3. Information about statistical data sources on adults in higher education

- What are the most relevant statistical sources to collect information on the participation and situation of adult learners in HE in your country?
- Which key data to summarize the situation of adults in higher education are available (e.g. quantitative analyses on participation rates; socio-demographic features of participants; study motives/ objectives; modes of study; completion/ drop-out)? Please refer to the time period 2006-2012 when providing concrete figures.
- Are there significant lacks of data sources concerning the situation of adults in HE? Which data are difficult to obtain or not available at all?



#### **4. Information on developments and implementation regarding opening HE to adults at different levels**

- Are there particular historical conditions and developments (e.g. political, economic, societal, cultural, educational) in your country which are of importance to the opening of HE to adults? What is the most important historical background with regard to opening HE to adults?
- Which actors and stakeholders have been involved at national level to support the opening of HE to adults?
- Are there certain programmes at regional level to attract adult learners in HE? Which is their added value?
- Are there certain monitoring mechanisms at national, regional and/or institutional level regarding the development of participation of adults in HE?

### **Mapping of adult education research at HEIs on flexible delivery of higher education programmes and flexible learning provisions**

#### **5. Commented list of research projects**

- Please, describe the research projects at HEIs in your country which focus on flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions (e.g. subject and type of research; theoretical basis; methodology; main findings; publications). Please refer to projects which have started or have been completed since 2000.

#### **6. Higher education institutions offering flexible delivery of higher education programmes**

- Which HEI providing programmes for adult learners can be identified within the framework of the mapping of adult education research? Please, refer only to programmes which are conducive to good adult learner performance and increase participation of adults in HE. Please, name the HEIs and the corresponding programmes.
- Which are the characteristics of these HE programmes (e.g. type of provision; target group; study format; content; recognition of prior learning; organisational embedding in HEIs; information before and during studies; guidance before and during studies)?
- How do these HEIs and programmes fit into the system of adult and continuing education institutions and programmes in your country?

#### **7. Types of learning provisions**

- Which types of flexible learning provisions by HEIs for adult learners are regarded and described in the adult education research projects? Please, describe them with regard to e.g. target group, field of study, content, type of degree.
- Why are the flexible learning provisions described in the adult education research conducive to good adult learner performance. Which flexible learning provisions help to increase the participation of adults in HE effectively?

#### **8. Information on factors that facilitate or inhibit the participation of adults in HE**

- Which factors can be identified within the framework of the mapping of adult education research that facilitate, constrain or prohibit the participation of adults in HE (e.g. personal, situational, institutional or informational factors)?
- What are the barriers for opening HE to adults? (e.g. historical, contextual)
- What is the impact of contextual elements on the participation of adults and openness of HEIs (e.g. socio-economic context, globalisation, demographic change)?

- Which are drivers for the enhancement of adult learners in HE (e.g. labour market policy, education policy, demographic change)?

## **Conclusion**

### **9. List of examples of good practice in the area of flexible delivery of higher education programmes and learning provisions for adults available within HEIs (basis for the selection of one case study for each participating country)**

- Which good practice examples exist in your country with regard to a) flexible delivery of higher education programmes and b) learning provisions for adults within HEIs? Please, identify at least 3 concrete examples which you consider particularly good practice and provide a short description of each example.
- For identifying the good practice, please take into consideration the questions listed above under points 1-8.
- In order to motivate your choice, please refer in your short description to the five “Indicators of good practice” (Potential for opening HE to adults, Impact; Innovativeness; Transferability and Sustainability), which are provided by the core team in a separate document.

### **10. Résumé and outlook**

- In how far do existing evaluations focus on measures to increase openness and participation of adults in HE and structural changes initiated by these measures (e.g. monitoring mechanism for participation of adults in HE)?
- Which influence do the Bologna process, Lisbon strategy, Copenhagen process etc. have on the enhancement of adult learners in HE in your country?
- What is your general assessment of the situation of adult learners in HE in your country (e.g. development of the discussion over the last years, perspectives)?
- What do you think are the main particularities of your country in comparison with other countries (e.g. special characteristics of modes of study; exceptional features of adult HE)?
- Which open research questions became apparent for you during the analyses?

## 9.7 V Deadlines for Reporting

| Reporting area   | Deadline for intermediary results | Deadline for final results |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Specification of „adult learners in higher education” and background information | 30/06/2012                        | 30/09/2012                 |
| Mapping of adult education research  | 30/06/2012                        | 30/09/2012                 |
| Resumé and outlook of research mapping   |                                   | 30/09/2012                 |
| Proposals of three potential examples of good practice                           |                                   | 30/06/2012                 |
| Case study for example of good practice  |                                   | 30/09/2012                 |

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Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT3:

**OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)**  
**Contract EAC 2012-0074**

**MANUAL**  
**9.8 Case Studies**

(European Countries)

Prepared by

Karin Dollhausen / Susanne Lattke / Felicia Scheliga

Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen  
German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning

Andrä Wolter / Ulf Banscheraus / Anna Spexard

Humboldt Universität Berlin, Philosophische Fakultät IV, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften,  
Abteilung Hochschulforschung  
Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Faculty of Arts and Humanities IV, Department for Education  
Studies, Section for Higher Education Research

## **I Objectives and Contents of the Case Study**

The project “Opening Higher Education to Adults - HEAD” aims at a comprehensive study on factors impacting on the participation of adults in higher education (HE) and on the flexible delivery of HE programmes and learning provisions for adult learners within higher education institutions (HEIs). The overall objective of this project is to derive conclusions and recommendations for action to be taken at European, national and regional level to open higher education to adults.

The case studies which are authorised by a cluster of national experts from different European and Non-European countries are one important information and evidence base for the analyses in the framework of the study.

Each case study comprises an analysis of a best practice example in the area of flexible delivery of higher education (HE) programmes and learning provisions for adults available within higher education institutions (HEIs). Each case study contains also a detailed description of regulatory frameworks and financial provisions at national level which contribute to creating and sustaining conditions for flexible delivery of higher education programmes. The description of the best practice example should encompass the whole life cycle of the program/provision, beginning with the rationales for the development via implementation through to evaluation.

The main characteristics of the best practice example are its potential for opening HE to adults as well as a noticeable impact on the participation and learning performance of adult students in HE. In total, 20 case studies will be collected. They will provide the basis for a cross-case analysis. The results will allow recommendations for action to be taken at European, national and regional level to enhance participation of adults in higher education.

## **II Selection of the good practice example for the case study**

Until 8 July 2012 you are asked as national expert to identify possible examples which you consider particularly remarkable in terms of openness of HE and which in your view could be suitable candidates for the case study envisaged. Please send these examples (from the country/countries you cover) with a short description to Felicia Scheliga ([scheliga@die-bonn.de](mailto:scheliga@die-bonn.de)) who will collect all proposals. Until mid-July 2012, one example of an exceptionally good programme or provision will be selected by the project team for a more in-depth analysis.

**9.9 Please, provide us with a list of at least 3 examples of best practice for your country with regard to**

**9.10 a) flexible delivery of higher education programs and**

**9.11 b) flexible learning provisions for adults within HEIs.**

**9.12 You are requested to give a short description (300 to 500 words) of each example and to explain why you consider these examples particularly good-practice.**

For identifying best practice, please take into consideration the questions listed below. In order to motivate your choice, please refer in your short description also to the five “Indicators of good practice” which are sent to you as separate document (**HEAD\_Indicators\_Best\_Practice**). The project team produced also a glossary (**HEAD\_Glossary**) containing conceptions and key terms which help to establish a common basis for the analyses conducted over the course of the project. You may consult the glossary for definitions of key terms.

### • III Research Tasks – General Notes

The case study should be carried out mainly as desk research including a field visit to gather more case-related information. For a better guidance and understanding central questions are provided for each research task, listed below. Furthermore the questions should help you to prepare a structured case study for a further cross-case analysis which will be carried out by the project team.

The questions provide the general framework to conduct the case studies. It is important to note that each of the topics and questions may not be equally relevant to each country. The distinctness of countries and cases requires the experts to assign the appropriate attention to each topic according to the specific characteristics of the good practice example and its relevant context. For each single case study, it will therefore be up to the respective expert to decide which of the topics need to be given particular attention. The case study should encompass approximately 10 pages.

When we refer to the “increase of participation of adults in HE” we mean as well the widening of access for new groups of adult learners as the increase of participation rates of adult learner groups already participating in HE.

### • IV Methodology

In order to collect relevant information, the analysis of case-related documents, e.g. brochures, announcements, case-related research etc. is recommended. Furthermore we recommend a fact-finding visit which comprises an expert interview with the responsible representative of the academic staff.

The national experts have been selected due to their experience in the field of adult learners in higher education in their country. However, in order to assure the validity of the case study the report on the HEI is to be provided to the representatives of this HEI. A concurrence of the assessment of the institution should be accomplished.

### V Deadlines for reporting

| Reporting area  | Deadline for results |
|---|----------------------|
| Proposal of three potential examples of good practice | 08/07/2012 (updated) |
| Case study / description of best practice example     | 30/09/2012           |

## • VI Research Tasks

The following topics and questions should be covered in your research. We assume that you as experts will best know how much attention and elaborateness must be paid on each topic according to the specific situation in your country and at the HEI. Please refer in your analysis also to the “Indicators of good practice” (HEAD\_Indicators\_Best\_Practice).

### Characteristics of the programme

#### **1. Detailed description of the characteristics of the best practice example with a focus on flexibility**

- Please, provide information on the following issues
  - Target groups and participants (e.g. differentiated by age, gender, ethnic, socio-economic, biographical background)
  - Motives of target group members and participants to enrol in HE programmes
  - Tuition fees and funding possibilities
  - Ways of access to the programme
  - Mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning and work experience
  - Information, guidance and counselling services before, during and after studies
  - Accumulation of studies, e.g. through credit point system
  - Cooperation in HE programmes with partners from other systems, such as labour and employment, NGOs, social partners and providers of non-formal adult learning
  - Training of teaching staff in adult education
  - Content (specialised or general knowledge, science related or related to practice)
  - Study format (full-time, part-time)
  - Learning provisions (e.g. distance learning, blended learning).
- Is there a system of quality assurance, including teaching qualifications of professionals, in place?
- Is there evidence regarding the contribution of the best practice example to good, i.e. successful learning performance?

### Institutional Context

#### **2. Description of the HEI**

- Please provide relevant facts on the HEI in which the best practice example has been developed and implemented.
- Do adult learners in HE play a role in the strategic aims and mission of the HEI?

#### **3. Institutional conditions which contribute to the creation and sustainable development of the best practice**

- Please describe how the best practice example is organised within the HEI (e.g. integrated/separated programme, project etc.).
- Which particular institutional conditions have contributed to the creation and implementation of the best practice example?

- Had there been particular institutional barriers to overcome before implementing the best practice example?

#### **4. Regulatory frameworks at national level relevant to the development and implementation of the best practice example**

- Are there regulatory frameworks at national level which contribute
  - to the creation and sustainable development of the best practice example and
  - to increase adult participation at the described HEI?
- Are there regulatory frameworks at national level which enhance or inhibit the flexible delivery of the described HE programme or flexible learning provision within the described HE programme?

#### **5. Financial provisions at national level relevant to the development and implementation of the best practice example**

- Are there financial provisions at national level which are conducive
  - to the creation and sustainable development of the good practice example and
  - to increase adult participation at the described HEI?
- Are there financial provisions at national level which enhance or inhibit the flexible delivery of the described HE programme or flexible learning provision within the described HE programme?

**If you have answered the questions above exhaustively, please proceed to the section “Assessment”.**

### **Assessment**

#### **6. Factors inhibiting or facilitating the participation of adults**

- Are there factors inhibiting or facilitating the participation of adults which became apparent in the study of the best practice?
- Does the best practice example imply hints at specific barriers for opening HE to adults (e.g. historical, contextual)?
- Does the best practice example imply information on the impact of further contextual elements on the participation of adults and openness of HEIs (e.g. socio-economic context, globalisation, demographic change)?

#### **7. Impact of the best practice example on institutional context**

- Is there information in how the best practice example impacts the institutional context (e.g. mission statement of HEI, organisational structure, other learning provisions, student population etc.). Which benefits can be identified?

**Please provide a summarizing evaluative comment on the best practice example, thereby regarding the following questions.**

#### **8. Comment on the best practice example**

- In what way are the learning environments and learning approaches appropriate to non-traditional students and other relevant target groups?
- Which are strengths and weaknesses of the best practice referring to the indicators of best practice?



## **Documentation**

- Please prepare a list of documentations (brochures, reports, publications etc.) and other sources related to the best practice example.
- Please provide contact details referring to the best practice example.



EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG Education and Culture  
Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT3:

## OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)

**Contract EAC 2012-0074**

### **MANUAL**

### **9.13 Case Studies**

(Non-European Countries)

Prepared by

Karin Dollhausen / Susanne Lattke / Felicia Scheliga

Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung – Leibniz Zentrum für Lebenslanges Lernen  
German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning

Andrä Wolter / Ulf Banscherus / Anna Spexard

Humboldt Universität Berlin, Philosophische Fakultät IV, Institut für Erziehungswissenschaften,  
Abteilung Hochschulforschung

Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Faculty of Arts and Humanities IV, Department for Education  
Studies, Section for Higher Education Research

## **I Objectives and Contents of the Case Study**

The project “Opening Higher Education to Adults - HEAD” aims at a comprehensive study on factors impacting on the participation of adults in higher education (HE) and on the flexible delivery of HE programmes and learning provisions for adult learners within higher education institutions (HEIs). The overall objective of this project is to derive conclusions and recommendations for action to be taken at European, national and regional level to open higher education to adults.

The case studies which are authorised by a cluster of national experts from different European and Non-European countries are one important information and evidence base for the analyses in the framework of the study.

Each case study comprises an analysis of a best practice example in the area of flexible delivery of higher education (HE) programmes and learning provisions for adults available within higher education institutions (HEIs). Each case study contains also a detailed description of regulatory frameworks and financial provisions at national level which contribute to creating and sustaining conditions for flexible delivery of higher education programmes. The description of the best practice example should encompass the whole life cycle of the program/provision, beginning with the rationales for the development via implementation through to evaluation.

The main characteristics of the best practice example are its potential for opening HE to adults as well as a noticeable impact on the participation and learning performance of adult students in HE. In total, 20 case studies will be collected. They will provide the basis for a cross-case analysis. The results will allow recommendations for action to be taken at European, national and regional level to enhance participation of adults in higher education.

## **II Selection of the good practice example for the case study**

Until 8 July 2012 you are asked as national expert to identify possible examples which you consider particularly remarkable in terms of openness of HE and which in your view could be suitable candidates for the case study envisaged. Please send these examples (from the country/countries you cover) with a short description to Felicia Scheliga ([scheliga@die-bonn.de](mailto:scheliga@die-bonn.de)) who will collect all proposals. Until mid-July 2012, one example of an exceptionally good programme or provision will be selected by the project team for a more in-depth analysis.

**9.14 Please, provide us with a list of at least 3 examples of best practice for your country with regard to**

**9.15 a) flexible delivery of higher education programs and**

**9.16 b) flexible learning provisions for adults within HEIs.**

**9.17 You are requested to give a short description (300 to 500 words) of each example and to explain why you consider these examples particularly good-practice.**

For identifying best practice, please take into consideration the questions listed below. In order to motivate your choice, please refer in your short description also to the five “Indicators of good practice” which are sent to you as separate document (**HEAD\_Indicators\_Best\_Practice**). The project team produced also a glossary (**HEAD\_Glossary**) containing conceptions and key terms which help to establish a common basis for the analyses conducted over the course of the project. You may consult the glossary for definitions of key terms.

- **III Research Tasks – General Notes**

The case study should be carried out mainly as desk research including a field visit to gather more case-related information. For a better guidance and understanding central questions are provided for each research task, listed below. Furthermore the questions should help you to prepare a structured case study for a further cross-case analysis which will be carried out by the project team.

The questions provide the general framework to conduct the case studies. It is important to note that each of the topics and questions may not be equally relevant to each country. The distinctness of countries and cases requires the experts to assign the appropriate attention to each topic according to the specific characteristics of the good practice example and its relevant context. For each single case study, it will therefore be up to the respective expert to decide which of the topics need to be given particular attention. The case study should encompass approximately 10 pages.

When we refer to the “increase of participation of adults in HE” we mean as well the widening of access for new groups of adult learners as the increase of participation rates of adult learner groups already participating in HE.

- **IV Methodology**

In order to collect relevant information, the analysis of case-related documents, e.g. brochures, announcements, case-related research etc. is recommended. Furthermore we recommend a fact-finding visit which comprises an expert interview with the responsible representative of the academic staff.

The national experts have been selected due to their experience in the field of adult learners in higher education in their country. However, in order to assure the validity of the case study the report on the HEI is to be provided to the representatives of this HEI. A concurrence of the assessment of the institution should be accomplished.

## **V Deadlines for reporting**

| Reporting area  | Deadline for results |
|---|----------------------|
| Proposal of three potential examples of good practice | 08/07/2012           |
| Case study / description of best practice example     | 30/09/2012           |

## • VI Research Tasks

The following topics and questions should be covered in your research. We assume that you as experts will best know how much attention and elaborateness must be paid on each topic according to the specific situation in your country and at the HEI. Please refer in your analysis also to the “Indicators of good practice” (HEAD\_Indicators\_Best\_Practice).

### Characteristics of the programme

#### **9. Detailed description of the characteristics of the best practice example with a focus on flexibility**

- Please, provide information on the following issues
  - Target groups and participants (e.g. differentiated by age, gender, ethnic, socio-economic, biographical background)
  - Motives of target group members and participants to enrol in HE programmes
  - Tuition fees and funding possibilities
  - Ways of access to the programme
  - Mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning and work experience
  - Information, guidance and counselling services before, during and after studies
  - Accumulation of studies, e.g. through credit point system
  - Cooperation in HE programmes with partners from other systems, such as labour and employment, NGOs, social partners and providers of non-formal adult learning
  - Training of teaching staff in adult education
  - Content (specialised or general knowledge, science related or related to practice)
  - Study format (full-time, part-time)
  - Learning provisions (e.g. distance learning, blended learning).
- Is there a system of quality assurance, including teaching qualifications of professionals, in place?
- Is there evidence regarding the contribution of the best practice example to good, i.e. successful learning performance?

### Institutional Context

#### **10. Description of the HEI**

- Please provide relevant facts on the HEI in which the best practice example has been developed and implemented.
- Do adult learners in HE play a role in the strategic aims and mission of the HEI?

#### **11. Institutional conditions which contribute to the creation and sustainable development of the best practice**

- Please describe how the best practice example is organised within the HEI (e.g. integrated/separated programme, project etc.).
- Which particular institutional conditions have contributed to the creation and implementation of the best practice example?

- Had there been particular institutional barriers to overcome before implementing the best practice example?

## **12. Regulatory frameworks at national level relevant to the development and implementation of the best practice example**

- Are there regulatory frameworks at national level which contribute
  - to the creation and sustainable development of the best practice example and
  - to increase adult participation at the described HEI?
- Are there regulatory frameworks at national level which enhance or inhibit the flexible delivery of the described HE programme or flexible learning provision within the described HE programme?

## **13. Financial provisions at national level relevant to the development and implementation of the best practice example**

- Are there financial provisions at national level which are conducive
  - to the creation and sustainable development of the good practice example and
  - to increase adult participation at the described HEI?
- Are there financial provisions at national level which enhance or inhibit the flexible delivery of the described HE programme or flexible learning provision within the described HE programme?

**If you have answered the questions above exhaustively, please proceed to the section “Assessment”.**

## **Assessment**

### **14. Factors inhibiting or facilitating the participation of adults**

- Are there factors inhibiting or facilitating the participation of adults which became apparent in the study of the best practice?
- Does the best practice example imply hints at specific barriers for opening HE to adults (e.g. historical, contextual)?
- Does the best practice example imply information on the impact of further contextual elements on the participation of adults and openness of HEIs (e.g. socio-economic context, globalisation, demographic change)?

### **15. Impact of the best practice example on institutional context**

- Is there information in how the best practice example impacts the institutional context (e.g. mission statement of HEI, organisational structure, other learning provisions, student population etc.). Which benefits can be identified?

**Please provide a summarizing evaluative comment on the best practice example, thereby regarding the following questions.**

### **16. Comment on the best practice example**

- In what way are the learning environments and learning approaches appropriate to non-traditional students and other relevant target groups?
- Which are strengths and weaknesses of the best practice referring to the indicators of best practice?

## **Documentation**

- Please prepare a list of documentations (brochures, reports, publications etc.) and other sources related to the best practice example.
- Please provide contact details referring to the best practice example.

## **Supplement for experts from *non-European countries* only**

The project takes into account the distinctness of countries and the national systems of adult education and higher education. We therefore need some supplementing information to convey an impression of the situation in your country.

### **9.18 Information on Regulatory issues and policies**

- Are there specific conditions/events/policy decisions shaping policy in the field of opening HE to adults (e.g. national policies which specifically mention the openness of HE to adults)?
- Are there specific regulatory frameworks and financial provisions at national level contribute to creating and sustaining conditions for flexible delivery of HE programmes and flexible learning provisions within HEIs (e.g. policies to widen participation to adults in HE)?
- Are there disadvantaged and underrepresented groups of adult learners in HE? In how far are these groups regarded in adult education and/or HE policy programs?
- Please, name important measures that have been initiated to increase openness of HE.
- Is participation in HE regulated by law?

### **9.19 Information on Developments and implementation regarding opening HE to adults at different levels**

- Are there particular historical conditions and developments in your country which are of importance to opening HE to adults?
- Which actors and stakeholders are involved at national level to support the opening of HE to adults?
- Are there programmes at regional level to attract adult learners in HE?
- Are there certain monitoring mechanisms at national/regional and/or institutional level regarding the development of participation of adults in HE?

## 10 Appendix H: Inventory of Flexible Types of Learning

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Deutsches Institut für  
Erwachsenenbildung  
Leibniz-Zentrum für  
Lebenslanges Lernen

*German Institute for  
Adult Education  
Leibniz Centre for  
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### OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)

**Contract EAC 2012-0074**

This inventory presents selected types of flexible learning conducive to good adult learner performance and participation in higher education. The types result from the detailed analyses presented in the paragraphs above and refer to didactical and structural dimensions regarded as essential for a comprehensive model of flexible higher education provision. Based on these two dimensions, it is possible to outline different concepts and approaches that contribute to the flexibility of learning.

| Dimension  | Concepts and approaches   |
|------------|---|
| Didactical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- learner-centred approaches and provisions</li><li>- balance between academic and professional focus</li><li>- support for academic advancement</li></ul>              |
| Structural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- access, admission, and recognition of prior learning</li><li>- flexible programme delivery and organisation</li><li>- special support services for students</li></ul> |

#### 10.1 *Learner-centred approaches and provisions*

Fostering the diversity of student populations, including adult learners, means to recognise prior learning experiences and different needs and requirements for successful learning. Practitioners and professionals of intensive education for non-traditional students offer interesting and well-tested alternatives to traditional higher education.<sup>3</sup>



Accelerated learning: Accelerated learning approaches are based on a motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching that values diversity in regard to ethnic or social background, to different types of learners, and even to different intelligence profiles. They focus on social inclusion, the personal relevance of learning, the integration of learner's perspectives, and the creation of authentic and effective learning experiences. This evokes intrinsic motivation and strengthens retention.<sup>2</sup> Accelerated degree programmes are suitable

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<sup>1</sup> Wlodkowski, R.J., Ginsberg, M.B. (2010): Teaching Intensive and Accelerated Courses. Instruction that motivates Learning. San Francisco

<sup>2</sup> Wlodkowski, R.J., Ginsberg, M.B. (2009): Diversity & Motivation: Culturally Responsive Teaching. San Francisco; Wlodkowski, R.J., Kasworm, C.K. (eds.) (2003): Accelerated Learning for Adults: The

for students who want to take less in-class instruction, thus accelerating their time commitment to gain a degree. Comprehensive information, guidance, and counselling services before, during, and after studies are an essential quality feature of accelerated programmes.

Directed study and learning contracts: In directed learning, the learner works independently with a facilitator to achieve the learning outcomes of a selected course. Learning contracts have been widely used in adult education to foster self-direction, relevant learning, improvement of learning performance, and expectancy for success among adults. They can accommodate individual and cultural differences in regard to experience, perspective, and capabilities, shape the learning process, and provide maximum flexibility in regard to learning content, pace, process, and outcome. Learning contracts detail in writing what will be learned, how the learning will be accomplished, the period of time involved, and the evidence and criteria to be used in assessing the learning.<sup>3</sup>

Guided distance learning and self-assessment: Open and distance learning programmes offer many opportunities for flexible study arrangements as they are based on principles such as openness, social inclusion, and student-centred learning approaches. Nowadays, distance learning concepts are increasingly based on e-learning technologies. Well-balanced guidance and self-assessment are an integral part of distance study programmes.

Holistic learning and assessment: The case study from New Zealand responds in a particular way to the specific cultural background of students: The University of New Zealand provides its programmes in accordance with Māori principles and approaches, a philosophy that acknowledges the teacher and learner as equal contributors and beneficiaries in the learning processes. For instance, 'achieved' and 'yet to achieve' is used instead of 'pass' and 'fail' to assess student performance. Some learning is based on Māori places of belonging, such as a carved meeting house, a dining hall and cooking area, or the sacred space in front of the meeting house.

## **10.2 Balance between academic and professional focus:**

Balance between academic and professional focus: Some higher education programmes work with a didactic approach that relates theory to practice to create a balance between academic and professional focus in teaching and learning. Problems arising in the students' professional and employment contexts are analysed and solved as an integral part of the curriculum. This approach is highly suitable for attaining and developing self-efficacy for learning and supports adult learners to attribute their success to their capability, effort, and knowledge.

Interdisciplinary learning approach: In the case study from Ireland a thoroughly interdisciplinary approach for study programmes is reported. Overall, nine university departments are involved in the delivery of full-time and part-time degrees in Community

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Promise and Practice of Intensive Educational Formats. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 97. San Francisco; Wlodkowski, R.J., Mauldin, J.E., Gahn, S.W. (2001): *Learning in the Fast Lane: Adult Learner's Persistence and Success in Accelerated College Programs*.

Indianapolis

<sup>3</sup> Berger, N.O., Cafarella, R.S. and O'Donnell, J.M. (2004). In: Galbraith, M. W. (ed.): *Adult Learning Methods: A Guide for Effective Instruction*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Malabar, Florida

Studies and Local Studies. Students are encouraged to integrate learning across disciplines, to make interdisciplinary connections, and to utilise the information in new and exciting ways.

### **10.3 Support for academic advancement**

Support for the academic advancement of non-traditional learners includes a variety of measures.

Study skill modules: Study skill modules are aimed at equipping students with core skills required to be successful in higher education study, such as writing, academic literacy, critical reading, exam preparation, and time management. Students also have the opportunity to get acquainted with assessment formats such as critical analyses, essays, timed in-class assessments, or oral presentations.

Upgrading options: A few programmes for adult learners presented in this study offer flexible upgrading options for undergraduate or postgraduate study. For instance, one professional degree programme (Sweden) awards 120 credits and offers the possibility to get a bachelor's degree by studying for an additional 60 credits. Another programme (Cyprus) offers upgrading options for earning Master of Science and PhD degrees.

### **10.4 Access, admission, and recognition of prior learning**

Access courses: Some higher education institutions offer courses that enable adult learners without formal university entrance diplomas to obtain such a qualification.

Admission: There is wide-ranging flexibility in regard to admission dates. At the high end are programmes with individualised start dates (Sweden), programmes allowing for enrolment at any time with defined examination periods (Serbia), or programmes with multiple entry dates per year (USA).

Credit transfer: Many programmes for adult learners offer credit transfer for credited learning from other study programmes and universities. Among most of the institutions analysed for this study, transferable credit ranges from 20 ECTS (Austria) to 60 ECTS (Italy).

Recognition of previous work experience: Experiential learning from previous work experience or other contexts is recognised by only a few higher education programmes for adults, and mostly informally.

Degree completion programme: This is an option for adults with a minimum of work-related experiences and college credits, a clear sense of career goals, and strong academic ability. The US case study highlights the so-called EXCEL programme, offered at a private higher education institution. It employs assessment of experiential learning as a significant element in fulfilling program requirements. Several day-long seminars at the college are required of all participants. A Bachelor of Professional Studies is awarded in this programme, with majors that include business and public administration.

### ***10.5 Flexible programme delivery and organization***

Blended learning and e-learning: Nearly all adult learning programmes offered at higher education institutions today, including those presented as examples in this study, incorporate modern technology for distributing contents and for interacting or collaborating. Many programmes combine e-learning (interactive/ self-study) with face-to-face contact sessions, tutorials, or seminars. As the development effort for such programmes is quite high at the initial phase, some higher education institutions have joined forces for creating new and flexible online offers.

Choice between full-time and part-time option: Part-time formats are widely acknowledged as an effective tool for opening higher education to adult learners: the majority of programmes introduced as good practice examples in this study offer a choice between full-time and part-time study.

Delivery in multiple languages and locations: Language and cultural learning is a key area where improvements can be made in respect of widening participation and embracing the language and cultural needs of adult learners of a multilingual Europe and its neighbouring regions. Two programmes described in the Italian and Spanish case studies are offered in more than one language.

Flexible and need-based curriculum: Many higher education institutions described in the case studies seem have specific and well-established feedback mechanisms to ensure their programmes meet the needs of their students. In the US case study, curriculum review is part of the quality assurance procedures. Approximately every two to three years, a team of professors gets together to review the curriculum and learning modules in a specific discipline. The case study from South Africa highlights the relevance of sustained review by ongoing internal monitoring and evaluation processes at the faculty level.

## **10.6 Special support services for students**

It is widely recognized that student support and adult guidance is a key area for making learning more accessible to adults. Specific information, guidance, and counselling services for adult learners are intermediaries between learners' needs and the learning on offer.<sup>4</sup>

Academic support: Many programmes for adult learners offer academic advice as an integral part of their programmes. Academic advisors or tutors offer their support online or via phone or office appointments. They guide learners through the programme, helping them with selecting (or dropping) particular courses, preparing for assessments, or using effective strategies for learning and improving their academic performance. Sometimes, mentoring and writing consultation services are offered as well.

Career support: Most higher education institutions offer career support to students while they are enrolled. Career advice may be provided by a student's programme tutor or by separate career services connecting students and alumni with potential employers.

Childcare services: Childcare services are an important tool for opening higher education to adults with children and relieving them from their increased time burden. However, only few cases of the HEAD study mention childcare services as an integral part of their programme.

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<sup>4</sup> Mark, R., Pouget, M. & Thomas, E. (eds) (2004) Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe. Peter Lang, Bern

Disability support: Only a few higher education institutions seem to offer special services for disabled students. All programmes at the Open and Distance University of Mexico are accessible for people with mobility, visual, or auditory disabilities. In addition to a virtual campus platform, students can receive face-to-face counselling. Support devices available include screen readers, accessibility applicators, or Braille printers.

Financial advice: Only a few programmes described in the case studies provide adult learners with professional financial advice prior to enrolment or during their studies.

ICT support: At most higher education institutions offering blended learning or complete online programmes, ICT support is integrated into the programme and facilitated by programme tutors or administrative staff. In some cases, this comprises technical advice and didactic guidance on how to use technology appropriately for effective learning. Some higher education institutions have established additional support centres with an outreach function in different regions of the country or in several countries, especially higher education institutions that deliver their programmes entirely online (Italy and Mexico).

Social outreach: Only some higher education programmes for adult learners offer outreach programmes with delivery locations in disadvantaged areas. The UK case study reports that programmes address parents of young children in nurseries, and free childcare services are provided while caregivers are studying.

The online programme presented in the case study from Italy reaches out to learners in France, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco by running study and exam centres with IT pools throughout Italy and in universities/ vocational training centres of 11 countries in the Mediterranean.

Psychological counselling: Some higher education institutions offer psychological counselling as an extra service, whereas some have successfully integrated this service into their programme guidance. It is especially important to provide specific encouragement to adult learners, who often feel insecure, wondering whether they have the skills to complete a degree successfully, because they dropped out of higher education before.

All types of flexible learning presented in the inventory of flexible learning are primarily related to the individual and institutional learning environment of adult learners. It is obvious that education providers and professionals need to be able to create a flexible learning environment responsive to learners, relevant stakeholders in higher and adult education, and the labour market. Facilitating regulatory frameworks and sustainable financial provisions are essential success factors for higher education becoming more flexible. Only if flexible learning is not narrowed down to a set of new programme formats or technical innovations related to ICT will it have a long-term impact at the institutional level and the potential for shaping a new learning culture. What is definitely also needed to realize such a shift are coherent institutional strategies, regulative frameworks allowing



for or even encouraging flexibility, and supportive mid- and long-term financial provisions. An institutional shift from content-centred towards student-centred learning approaches implies long-term change for each higher education institution. Such change can only be completed if it involves some degree of ownership and is not entirely imposed from top down via national regulations. Change should rather be facilitated and developed collaboratively by integrating the commitment and feedback of learners, providers, policy makers, and governing bodies.

## Appendix I: Tuition Fees – Case Studies

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



Deutsches Institut für  
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### OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)

**Contract EAC 2012-0074**

| Institution   | Programme   | Fees   | Volume    |
|---|---|--|-----------|
| Alpen-Adria<br>Universität<br>Klagenfurt (Austria)                    | Adult Education/<br>Continuing Education<br>(Master of Advanced<br>Studies) | 5 400 €<br>+ cost of board and lodging<br>during attendance times<br>+ fee for the supplementary<br>module “Academic<br>Research and<br>Writing” (mandatory for<br>students without higher<br>education entrance<br>qualification) | 90 ECTS   |
| Open University of<br>Cyprus (Cyprus)                                 | Information and<br>Communication<br>Systems (MA)                            | 5 400 €  | 120 ECTS  |
| University of Eastern<br>Finland & University<br>of Tampere (Finland) | Qualification studies for<br>library personnel in<br>Eastern Finland        | 1 200 €  | 60 ECTS   |
| Departments of<br>continuing education<br>(France)                    | D.E.A.U. (Access<br>diploma for entering<br>higher education)               | 0 € – 3 080 €  | -         |
| University of Applied<br>Sciences Münster<br>(Germany)                | BASA online, Bachelor<br>in Social Studies                                  | 1 690 €<br>+ enrolment fees<br>+ accommodation and<br>travel cost during<br>attendance periods   | 180 ECTS  |
| Hellenic Open<br>University (Greece)                                  | Master in Education   | Costs for learning,<br>information and evaluation<br>material  | 120 ECTS  |
| University of Miskolc<br>(Hungary)                                    | Special course on<br>logistics management                                   | 1 250 €  | 300 hours |
| National University<br>of Ireland Maynooth<br>(Ireland)               | Part-time Bachelor<br>degree in Local Studies<br>and Community Studies      | yes  | 180 ECTS  |
| International<br>Telematic University<br>UNINETTUNO (Italy)           | Management<br>Engineering (BA)  | 2 000 € per academic year  | -         |
| University of Latvia  | Educational Treatment   | 1 209 €/year or 3 024 € for  | 120 ECTS  |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| (Latvia)  | of Diversity (MA)  | the programme for EU/EEA /Swiss citizens and EU long term residents  |   |
| Open and Distance University of Mexico (Mexico)     | Management of Small and Medium Businesses (TSU/BA)             | No fees  | -   |
| The University of New Zealand – Māori (New Zealand) | Diploma in Adult Education                                     | yes  | -   |
| Moscow State Technical University (Russia)          | Bachelor degree programmes                                     | -  | 4 years full-time                                 |
| Singidunum University (Serbia)                      | Distance Learning System                                       | 1 500 – 1 800 € per year   | -   |
| University of Maribor (Slovenia)                    | Distance learning programme Economic and technical logistics   | yes  | 180 ECTS  |
| University of Western Cape (South Africa)           | Master in Public Health  | 1 300 €<br>+ costs of courier delivery<br>+ travel and accommodation costs for attendance periods  |   |
| Open University of Catalunya (Spain)                | Degree in Business Administration and Management               | 19,60 €/credit<br>+Learning resources for degrees: 11,23 €/ credit + 4% VAT or for accredited qualifications: 9,20 €/ credit + 4% VAT<br>+Support services to teaching: 55,09 €<br>+Enrollment management and academic record 53,50 €/semester | 240 ECTS  |
| Dalarna University (Sweden)                         | Development of eServices programme                             | No fees  | 120 – 180 ECTS                                    |
| Birkbeck College, University of London (UK)         | Part-time Certificate in Higher Education Introductory Studies | 4 500 €  | 60 ECTS   |
| Elizabethtown College (USA)                         | Accelerated Degree Programmes                                  | 390 € /credit or 1 175 € /3-hour course (undergraduate)<br>455 € /credit or 1 370 € /3-hour course (graduate)  | 125 credit hours (BA)and 36-42 credit hours (MBA) |

## Appendix J, Final Report - Opening Higher Education to Adults (HEAD)

### 11 RESEARCH PROJECTS AND REPORTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG Education and Culture  
Developing the Adult Learning Sector, LOT3:

OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)  
**Contract EAC 2012-0074**

The following section provides profiles of research projects and other reports on research conducted at HEIs in the participating countries. For some countries, projects from European research programmes have been integrated into the anthology of the respective country, while in other cases, these projects have not been pointed out by the national experts. To give an overview of European research projects relevant to opening higher education to adults, an assortment of European (co-)funded projects has been included following the anthology of projects assorted by country and alphabetical order.

#### 11.1 Research projects by country

##### 11.1.1 Austria

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>International comparative Study on the Structure and Organisation of Continuing Education at Universities – Country Report Austria</b>  |
| Summary                        | The study aims at an assessment of the range of offers of continuing education at institution of higher education. The research three levels of analysis: the level of systems, the level of universities, and the level of programmes. The results for Austria demonstrated a growing interest in the opportunities provided by academic continuing education, though academic continuing education is still perceived as a separate track, and there is still need for a better integration of Austrian HEIs into the Bologna process. |
| Duration                       | 09.2005 – 08.2006  |
| Institution                    | Donau-Universität Krems / Universität Oldenburg  |
| Publications and other Sources | Pellert, A., & Cendon, E. (2007). Internationale Vergleichsstudie zur Struktur und Organisation der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen. Länderstudie Österreich. In: Hanft, A., & Knust, M. (Hg.): Weiterbildung und lebenslanges Lernen in Hochschulen. Eine internationale   |

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|--|---|
|  | <p>Vergleichsstudie zu Strukturen, Organisation und Angebotsformen. Münster u.a.: Waxmann: S. 273-312.</p> <p><i>International comparative study on the structure and organisation of continuing education at universities. Country report: Austria</i></p> |
|--|---|

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Quality development for continuing education at universities.</b><br><i>Qualitätsentwicklung der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen</i>   |
| Summary                        | The project „Qualitätsentwicklung der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen“ was carried out by the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA) with the aim to establish a commonly shared understanding of quality and give recommendations on the design and implementation of study programmes at HEIs in the area of continuing education. The analysis itself focused on three levels: cross-programme management functions, study programmes themselves, and the level of the modules constituting the programmes. Furthermore, inhibiting and supportive framework structures were considered in this analysis. |
| Duration                       | 2010 - 2011  |
| Institution                    | Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA)  |
| Publications and other Sources | AQA-Österreichische Qualitätssicherungsagentur (Hrsg.) (2012): Qualitätsentwicklung der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen. Wien (Facultas). (Quality development for continuing education at universities; translation by the author)   |

### 11.1.2 Cyprus

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Enhancing adult distance teaching and learning in higher education: the case of the Open University</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>The research project aims at shedding light on the internal dynamics of learners' and tutors' adult professional learning, its context and its occasions, in the course of on an undergraduate and postgraduate distance learning programme of studies run by the Open University of Cyprus (OUC) and the Hellenic Open University (HOU).</p> <p>The final purpose is to inform the organisation, design, implementation and further development of distance-learning courses in higher education, and contribute towards their future reorganisation.</p> |
| Duration                       | 01.2010 – 12.2012   |
| Institution                    | Open University of Cyprus   |
| Publications and other Sources | None provided   |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Open Discovery Space: A socially powered and multilingual open learning infrastructure to boost the adoption of e-learning</b> |
|----------------------|---|

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
|                                | <b>resources</b>  |
| Summary                        | The aim of the project is the creation of digital educational material and the promotion of the notion of distance learning and that of the better use of new technology. |
| Duration                       | 04.2012 – 03.2015   |
| Institution                    | Open University of Cyprus   |
| Publications and other Sources | None provided   |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Telepromitheus – Training platform for employees in the field of emergency health treatment for patients and their family</b>   |
| Summary                        | The aim of the project is the training of the employees and other people involved in critical circumstances. The emergency treatment units have specific demands, therefore the employees and the patients' family require special handling. |
| Duration                       | 07.2011 – 06.2013  |
| Institution                    | Open University of Cyprus  |
| Publications and other Sources | None provided  |

### 11.1.3 Finland

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Adult education in the web</b>  |
| Summary                        | Summarises some best practices on how web based learning is used in the field of university adult education, as well as the theoretical principles of web based learning environments. Focus on computer mediated communication (CMC) and its potential as a tool when flexible yet effective learning opportunities are created at university level.                                      |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Matikainen, J. & Manninen, J. (toim.) (2000). Aikuiskoulutus verkossa: Verkkopohjaisten oppimisympäristöjen teoriaa ja käytäntöä. Helsingin yliopisto, Lahden tutkimus- ja koulutuskeskus. [ <i>Adult education in the web. Theory and practice of web based learning environments</i> ].<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University pedagogy and use of technology</li> </ul> |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Blended Guidance at Open University</b>   |
| Summary              | The article introduces the concept and model of “Blended Guidance”, which basically mean integration of ICT and guidance services at Open University. Development of the model is based on development project |

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|--------------------------------|---|
|                                | Virtukampus ( <a href="http://virtukampus.fi/">http://virtukampus.fi/</a> ), where the aim was to develop and pilot new virtual practices for university context. Guidance model takes into account the special needs of Open University students, and offer tailor made, needs based guidance services.  |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | Pyrstöjärvi, T. & Saramäki, L. (2011). Sulautuva ohjaus opiskelijan tukena. Teoksessa: Myyry, L. & Joutsenvirta, T. 2011. Sulautuvaa opetusta verkkokeskustelusta ohjaukseen. Helsingin yliopisto, Valtiotieteellisen tiedekunnan pedagogiset kehittämisspalvelut.<br><br><a href="http://www.helsinki.fi/valtiotieteellinen/julkaisut/sulautuva2011.pdf">http://www.helsinki.fi/valtiotieteellinen/julkaisut/sulautuva2011.pdf</a> |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Blended Learning in Finnish universities</b>  |
| Summary                        | A good overview of Blended Learning initiatives in Finnish university education, Based on the presentations in national BL conference, it gives a good perspective on how technology is used in different fields of study. A general observation is that BL and use of technology in general is not treated and used as a means of flexibility, but as a pedagogical tool. BL is therefore more a didactical phenomena at the moment, enhancing quality of learning in university education, not as a distance education method enabling more flexible participation for adult learners. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Joutsenvirta, T., & Myyry, L. (2010). Blended Learning in Finland. Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Helsinki.<br><a href="http://www.helsinki.fi/valtiotieteellinen/julkaisut/blended_learning_Finland.pdf">http://www.helsinki.fi/valtiotieteellinen/julkaisut/blended_learning_Finland.pdf</a>  |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Blended Learning theory and practice in universities</b>  |
| Summary                        | Analysis of Blended Learning best practices in higher education, including Finland. Summarizes theoretical and conceptual background of blended learning, and gives examples on blended learning courses in several countries in Europe. One of the main observations was that blended learning courses in many cases include a strong pedagogical development aspect as well, and therefore BL initiatives in universities are not only technological development projects, but also pedagogical. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Torrao, S., & Tiirmaa-Oras, S. (2008). Blended Learning: Research reports & examples of best practices. B-Learn project. 225565-CP-1-2005-1-EE-MINERVA-M.<br><br><a href="http://www.ut.ee/blearn/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=386871/">http://www.ut.ee/blearn/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=386871/</a>   |

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|  | blearn+multilingual+compendium.pdf |
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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Pedagogical aspects of video lectures</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Summary                        | Preliminary results from a research project ( <a href="http://www.aducate.fi/movie">http://www.aducate.fi/movie</a> ) evaluating the use of video lectures in university context. Broadcasting of live or recorded lectures has become a common method to overcome the challenge of distance especially in universities with several campuses (like UEF). Use of Adobe Connect video conferencing is also common in Open University and as well as in faculties, when access to lectures at distance is needed. This project looks at the potential pedagogical advantages of this medium. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Kukkonen, I. (2012). Students' perceptions and perceived value of lecture capture in teacher education, 4.7.2012, "DIVERSE 2012" - conference, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven [PDF].<br><br><a href="http://www.aducate.fi/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=c5628aa8-9a42-4d52-97a1-296cdcb73a54&amp;groupId=143970&amp;p_l_id=1643924">http://www.aducate.fi/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=c5628aa8-9a42-4d52-97a1-296cdcb73a54&amp;groupId=143970&amp;p_l_id=1643924</a>  |

| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Profiles of Open University students and provision of web based courses</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Summary                        | Analysis on how ICT is used in Open Universities in Finland, how many and what kind of students participate annually on distance education courses, and what is the quality of learning on these courses. The results show, that during that time use of ICT was based mainly on information delivery and self study model, and there were only a few examples of technology and study methods enabling more collaborative and interactive learning. Adults at work and in blue or white collar jobs were more active participants at distance courses. Quality of learning was considered better on web based courses, negative aspects were lack of guidance and interaction. Both students and OU organizations felt that there is growing need for use of ICT in OU. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Mannisenmäki, E., & Manninen, J. (2004). <i>Avoimen yliopiston verkkopiskelijän muotokuva</i> . (The portrait of Open University Web-students). Helsinki: Palmenia-kustannus.  |

| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Web based learning provision and its quality at universities</b>   |
|----------------------|---|
| Summary              | The title of this study in English is "Quality Online – Dimensions of Virtual Learning in Higher Education", and it focuses mainly on the development work done at the university of Helsinki. The topics include |



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|--------------------------------|--|
|                                | definition and principles of web based learning and reflection on the quality issues, management and development. Articles stress the importance and need of flexible study opportunities as a starting point for development of web based learning provision. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Nevgi, A., Löfström, E. & Evälä, A. (Eds.) (2007). Laadukkaasti verkossa. Yliopistollisen verkko-opetuksen ulottuvuudet. Kasvatustieteen laitoksen julkaisuja. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.   |

#### 11.1.4 France

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>3T Portfolio</b>  |
| Summary                        | The aims of the project were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to transfer models of port-folio;</li> <li>• to develop the methodologies in RAC for specific publics.</li> </ul> |
| Duration                       | 10.2010 – 12.2012  |
| Institution                    | Itinéraire Formation (Pilot)<br>University of South Brittany (Partner)   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.itineraires.fr">www.itineraires.fr</a>   |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>ALLUME: A Lifelong Learning University Model for Europe</b>  |
| Summary                        | The main objective of the ALLUME project and of EUCEN was to explore ways to increase the participation of universities in lifelong learning and to produce “A Lifelong Learning University Model for Europe”. This model was supposed to assist universities by providing guidelines based on the European Universities’ Charter on Lifelong Learning published in 2008. However, during the project’s lifespan it became clear that the idea of a unique model or a one-size-fits-all approach was outdated and not adequate given the diversity of universities, environments and the heterogeneity of LLL strategies and processes. |
| Duration                       | 10.2009 – 11.2011   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1, University of Brest; and partners; EUCEN coordinator.  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://allume.eucen.eu">http://allume.eucen.eu</a>   |

|                      |                                    |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>AQOR</b>                        |
| Summary              | The aims of the AQOR project were: |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
|                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to ameliorate LLL and guidance in Europe with new tools and processes;</li> <li>• to transfer news practices in guidance.</li> </ul> |
| Duration                       | 10.2007 – 10.2009   |
| Institution                    | PRAO-Rhône-Alpes (Pilot)<br>University of South Brittany (Partner)  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.prao.org/">http://www.prao.org/</a>   |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>BeFlex: Benchmarking Flexibility in the Bologna Reforms</b>   |
| Summary                        | The project aims to monitor the development of university lifelong learning (ULLL) in the reformed structure of higher education qualifications. |
| Duration                       | 11.2005 – 05.2007  |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1 and EUCEN (coordinator)  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlex/index.html">http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlex/index.html</a>  |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>BeFlex+: Benchmarking Flexibility in the Bologna Reforms</b>   |
| Summary                        | This project aims to monitor the way in which the flexibility offered by the Bologna reforms and tools are being used to develop ULLL and map progress since the first BeFlex survey in 2006. It will also provide a new focus on the use of the Bologna tools in supporting and promoting regional learning partnerships, identifying different models of collaboration between Universities and other providers and stakeholders for promoting participation and progression into and through ULLL. |
| Duration                       | 2008 – 2009   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1 and EUCEN (coordinator)   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlexPlus/index.html">http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlexPlus/index.html</a>   |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>COMPASS-LLL: Collaboration On Modern(izing) Policies and Systematic Strategies on LLL</b>   |
| Summary              | In the paradigm shift towards a European Lifelong Learning Area, this project addresses two questions: (1) the widening gap between the policy making process of LLL at European level with statements from various and the situation of Universities in their respective contexts, and (2) the stunning diversity of LLL activities at HE level, while at the same time only a minority of universities have been fully engaged in the process of integrating LLL into their institutional missions and strategies. |
| Duration             | 2009 (one year)  |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Institution                    | French UCE Network, and University of Lille 1, EUCEN (coordinator) and 9 other partners. |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://compass.eucen.eu/">http://compass.eucen.eu/</a>                          |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Development of relations between employment and formation<br/>(Regional initiative)</b>   |
| Summary                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-Paire</li> <li>• In-Paire réseaux</li> <li>• In-Pactt</li> </ul> Three steps to develop LLL and individualization in |
| Duration                       | 2007 – 2008<br>2008 – 2009<br>2010 – 2011  |
| Institution                    | University of South Brittany (Pilot) + 3 Universities of Brittany  |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>DIALOGUE: Bridges between Research and Practice in ULLL</b>   |
| Summary                        | DIALOGUE aims at bridging the gap between academic research on University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) and the professional practice around adult teaching, learning and guidance within LLL provision. By strengthening these links, the project will support the collective production of knowledge and the interactive exchange of information, which reinforces the evolution of LLL and linked benefits for European society. |
| Duration                       | 2010 – 2013  |
| Institution                    | University of Versailles-Saint Quentin en Yvelines<br>EUCEN (coordinator) and partners   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://dialogue.eucen.eu/">http://dialogue.eucen.eu/</a>  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>EQF-Pro: Articulation between vocational and academic learning in University Education</b>  |
| Summary              | This project aims to test in a lifelong learning perspective the level 5 and level 6 of the European Qualification Framework on 25-30 professional diplomas provided by Higher education institutions (average of 2 to 3 per institution) to identify potential confusions in the classification of the qualifications at levels 5 and 6 of the EQF framework in different institutions or countries; Identify nature and source of the distortions in the classification in levels 5 and 6 (conflict with other frameworks: |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
|                                | National qualification framework, sectoral framework, local employment constraints...) and to propose guidelines to ensure a better presentation of the qualifications. |
| Duration                       | 01.2008 – 06.2009   |
| Institution                    | University of Versailles Saint Quentin<br>(Coordinator) and partners  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/EQFpro/index.html">http://www.eucen.eu/EQFpro/index.html</a>   |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>EQUIPE Plus: European Quality in Individualised Pathways in Education Plus</b>  |
| Summary                        | The main objectives of this project were: to inform and complement the work of Bologna process by focussing on quality in ULLL and promoting debate on the theme; to address the quality of universities involvement in Grundtvig, and assist in networking between Grundtvig projects and the theme of quality; to provide an overview of quality arrangements in ULLL in 25 countries, identifying the need for further development and making recommendations; to develop indicators of quality ULLL supported by case studies derived from best practice and taking account of definitions and practices in deferent countries; to promote the results of the first Equipe network and of other projects on quality in LLL; to promote training opportunities for staff in ULLL on the theme of quality. |
| Duration                       | 2005 – 2008  |
| Institution                    | University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris VI<br>University of Brest,<br>EUCEN (coordinator) + 32 partners  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.cfp.upv.es/webs/equipeplus/index/index.jsp">http://www.cfp.upv.es/webs/equipeplus/index/index.jsp</a>  |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>IDEAL: Identify, Evaluate and Validate. Transfer and adaptation of a system for the validation of formal and informal learning</b>  |
| Summary              | Can the RPL contribute to solve a human resources problem? The lack of teachers.<br><br>Context Mutations in Europe: education is in the heart of consideration but we observe a real decrease of interest for the teacher's career. The objective of the project is to study how to fight against teacher's career shortage observed in certain countries in Europe.<br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up of an efficient framework of APEL</li> <li>• Increasing LLL training of the teachers by Universities</li> </ul> |
| Duration             | 2010 – 2013  |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Institution                    | University of Brest (coordinator) and 5 other partners        |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://ideal.ulb.ac.be/">http://ideal.ulb.ac.be/</a> |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Investigation of the Court of Auditors on continuing Education in universities</b><br><i>Enquête de la Cour des comptes sur la formation continue dans les universités</i>   |
| Summary                        | The orientation Law of Higher Education of 26 January 1984 made of the university continuing education a mission of public service. The education code so provides, in Article L. 123-3, that "missions of higher education are: initial and continuing education, and the scientific and technological research and the development of its results, the dissemination of culture and scientific and technical cooperation ". Yet, while the changing world of work calls for the development of training throughout life, universities have so far invested little in training.<br><br>The report analyses 14 the activity of 14 universities in the field of continuing education and provides twelve recommendations for an overhaul of continuing education provided by universities. |
| Duration                       | 2005 – 2006   |
| Institution                    | French National Parliament (Budget commission)  |
| Publications and other Sources | None provided   |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>REFINE: REcognising Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education</b>  |
| Summary                        | The aims of Refine are: to test the tools for a European methodological framework for the recognition of non-formal and informal Learning and to foster trans-national and trans-sectoral collaboration; to build mutual trust in the practices and procedures. |
| Duration                       | 2004 – 2006   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1 (coordinator) and EUCEN, FRANCAS, AFPA org.   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html">http://www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html</a>   |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>SIRUS: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies</b>  |
| Summary              | The SIRUS project aimed to support Europe's universities in implementing the commitments made in the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning and thus assisting them in developing their specific role as lifelong learning institutions forming a central pillar of the Europe of Knowledge.<br><br>This project offered universities with different profiles and interests in |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
|                                | lifelong learning (LLL), and which were at different stages of LLL implementation, an opportunity to develop and enhance their strategic LLL approaches, in interactive discussion with colleagues from all over Europe. At the same time, it allowed them to contribute to the development of policy recommendations for the European Higher Education Area. |
| Duration                       | 03.2010 – 02.2011   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1, University of Versailles Saint Quentin and 27 other universities.  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.sirus-project.eu/">http://www.sirus-project.eu/</a>   |

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>State modernisation audit, report on UCE in Higher Education institutions.</b><br><i>Audit de modernisation sur la formation continue dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur</i>   |
| Summary                        | The objective of this project was to answer the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of higher education institutions in the market of continuing education, which presupposes identifying the relevant market;</li> <li>• The “performance of higher education institutions”, by defining criteria for assessing the performance and identifying potential “obstacles in the development effort of training”;</li> <li>• The census, in France and abroad, of “good practices that can be implemented and extended to the whole sphere of higher education”;</li> <li>• The monitoring of the activity of training for higher education institutions, their performance and their potential" and, more broadly, “instruments allowing the state to control the training policy in higher education, particularly in the context of the contractual relationship established with the HEI.</li> </ul> |
| Duration                       | 2006 – 2007   |
| Institution                    | IGF (Inspection Générale des Finances), French Ministry of finance<br>IGAENR (Inspection Générale de l'Administration de l'Education Nationale), French Ministry of Education   |
| Publications and other Sources | None provided   |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>The effects of RPL on the professional situation of applicants in west atlantic régions universities</b><br><i>Les effets de la Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience (VAE) sur les parcours professionnels à l'échelle du RUOA</i> |
| Summary              | The main objective of this study was to report on the impacts of VAE on the professional and personal lives of its beneficiaries across universities of the west atlantic regions. The study concludes that the                        |

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
|                                | VAE causes many effects corresponding to some expected by the legislature. Indeed, the ten universities in the West Atlantic meet, without any doubt, the goal of rehabilitation allowing half of the 13% of job seekers they have validated host to find work after their VAE. Moreover, beyond a professional development, a return to studies or an access to new responsibilities, the VAE plays a big role on the personal development and in particular that of the most vulnerable populations. |
| Duration                       | 2008 – 2009  |
| Institution                    | 10 universities (FR), coordinator RUOA association   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.ruoa.org">http://www.ruoa.org</a>  |

|                                |   |
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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>TRANSFINE. Transfer between Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education</b>  |
| Summary                        | The objective of the project was: to collect, analyse and build on work already carried out at national and EU level in the 3 programme areas and across formal, informal and non-formal education; to investigate the feasibility of an integrated set of procedures for a system of transfer and accumulation of qualifications; to create, develop and propose the principles, methods and tools for such a system; and to construct a specification for pilot projects to test the proposals. |
| Duration                       | 2002 – 2003   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1 (coordinator) and EUCEN   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.univ-lille1.fr/transfine/">http://www.univ-lille1.fr/transfine/</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>VaLEx: Valuing Learning from Experience</b>   |
| Summary                        | Social Inclusion through APEL: Valuing Learning from Experience (VaLEx)                      |
| Duration                       | 2003 – 2005  |
| Institution                    | Glasgow Caledonian University (Pilot)<br>University of South Brittany (Partner) + 6 partners |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.valex-apel.com">http://www.valex-apel.com</a>                            |

#### 11.1.5 Germany

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Academic continuing education in the new study system – Opportunities and requirements</b><br><i>Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung im neuen Studiensystem – Chancen und Anforderungen</i> |
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| Summary                        | The goal of the explorative study was to qualitatively review and evaluate the situation of continuing education at German universities. For this purpose, the supply structure and the organisation of selected universities were analysed. The results show that most programmes are offered as extra-occupational part-time studies and incorporate elements of eLearning. The majority is organised in a modular system. The main target group are HE graduates with professional experience. |
| Duration                       | 2006  |
| Institution                    | Institute for Research on Higher Education Halle-Wittenberg   |
| Publications and other Sources | Bloch, R. (2006). <i>Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung im neuen Studiensystem- Chancen und Anforderungen. Eine explorative Studie.</i> HoF- Arbeitsberichte. Halle.<br><a href="http://www.hof.uni-halle.de/dateien/ab_6_2006.pdf">http://www.hof.uni-halle.de/dateien/ab_6_2006.pdf</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Access of Non-traditional Adult Students to Higher Education (1998 – 2002)</b><br><b>Learning in Higher Education (2002 – 2004)</b><br><b>Promoting Reflective Independent Learning in Higher Education (2004 – 2006)</b>   |
| Summary                        | Prof. Alheit worked in different research projects in the field of non-traditional students in HE. The results of the different projects were published in a summarising article. The analyses show that the 'university' habitus is an important factor inhibiting the participation and retention of non-traditional students in HE.   |
| Duration                       | since 1998   |
| Institution                    | University of Göttingen  |
| Publications and other Sources | Alheit, Peter, K. Rheinländer und R. Watermann (2008): Zwischen Bildungsaufstieg und Karriere. Studienperspektiven „nicht-traditioneller Studierender“. In: Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft 11 (4): 577-606. <a href="http://www.springerlink.com/content/k6715949411075q2/">http://www.springerlink.com/content/k6715949411075q2/</a><br><a href="http://www.dsw.edu.pl/fileadmin/www-ranlhe/dissemination.html">http://www.dsw.edu.pl/fileadmin/www-ranlhe/dissemination.html</a> |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Accompanying research on the three-stage continuing education programme in engineering at the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences</b>   |
| Summary              | In 2009, the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences introduced a three-stage continuing education programme in engineering for students with and without a formal HE entrance qualification. The participants have the possibility to complete a vocational education at the first stage; the second and third stage consists of a bachelor and master degree in engineering. The accompanying research evaluated the benefits of this study programme. |



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| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | Anhalt University of Applied Sciences   |
| Publications and other Sources | Kaftan, H.-J., Kaftan, K. & Orzessek, D. (2010). Ingenieurwissenschaftliche Weiterbildung an der Hochschule Anhalt (FH) als dreistufiges Konzept. In U. Strate & P.-O. Kalis (eds.), <i>Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung: Zehn Jahre nach Bologna – alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen oder Paradigmenwechsel</i> (p. 108-113). Hamburg: DGWF. |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Advancement through Education: Open Higher Education</b><br><i>Aufstieg durch Bildung: Offene Hochschule</i>  |
| Summary                        | Since 2008, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research is funding various initiatives that improve the access of citizens to various forms of education. Part of that major initiative is the programme “Advancement through Education: Open Higher Education” (Aufstieg durch Bildung: offene Hochschulen) that is co-funded by the European Social Fund and the European Commission and seeks to support concepts of study programmes and learning provisions at HEIs that further the permeability between vocational and academic education, part-time programmes, and other forms of flexible learning provisions. The various learning provisions should take the specific needs of groups of people into account that can be considered “non-traditional” students: people with duties in the sphere of work and family, returners to HE, second chance learners, and jobless academics. Though the process of research and implementation has just been started, the projects have already submitted various concepts that aim at improving the flexibility and access to HEIs by either devising new programmes or learning provision, adjusting existing programmes to better serve the needs of adult learners, and to implement procedures to recognise / validate prior learning. |
| Duration                       | 2011 – 2015  |
| Institution                    | University of Oldenburg, Berlin University for Professional Studies, and Humboldt-University of Berlin   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.offene-hochschulen.de">http://www.offene-hochschulen.de</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>BA-Flex</b>  |
| Summary              | The journal article describes a concept of a flexible learning provision that is offered as an online-based programme of continuing education at the University of Applied Sciences Münster. The concept aims at improving the permeability between vocational and academic education as well as the flexibility of a bachelor programme in social sciences. It is suggested that a more flexible organisation of learning provision is improving the entrance to an online-based bachelor programme. |

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| Duration                       | since 2010   |
| Institution                    | University of Applied Sciences Münster   |
| Publications and other Sources | Lenkenhoff, M. (2011). Das Projekt BA-Flex: Eine Idee zur Flexibilisierung der Durchlässigkeit des Bachelor-Studiums Soziale Arbeit an der Fachhochschule Münster. In: <i>Hochschule &amp; Weiterbildung</i> . 1/2011. p. 44-49. |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>BASA-online: an extra-occupational, online-based bachelor programme in social studies</b><br><br><i>BASA-online: ein berufsbegleitender, online-basierter Studiengang in der Sozialen Arbeit</i>   |
| Summary                        | From 2001 to 2005, the development of an extra-occupational, online-based bachelor programme in social studies has been funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the federal states of Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate. In various publications, diverse aspects of the conceptualisation and implementation of the programme are documented and discussed. The reports focus two aspects of the programme: First, the competency based approach and the modularization of study programme. Secondly, the online-teaching is discussed with regard to challenges for the teaching staff and the adequacy of online-learning for the respective target group. The results of the analyses show that most, but not all of the participants of the programme can benefit from this type of learning provision. Furthermore, various advices on the use of online-teaching are offered. |
| Duration                       | 2001 – 2005   |
| Institution                    | Consortium of HEIs  |
| Publications and other Sources | Karstädt, R., 2010, Wissenschaftliche Qualifizierung für Berufstätige in der Sozialen Arbeit - der grundständige Fernstudiengang basa-online. In Strate, U. & Kalis, P.-O. (Hrsg.): <i>Wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung: Zehn Jahre nach Bologna - alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen oder Paradigmenwechsel</i> (S. 178-183). Hamburg: DGWF.  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>“Blended Learning” at the Macro Level –<br/>The Experience of the Bavarian Virtual University</b>   |
| Summary              | The Bavarian Virtual University (BVU, Virtuelle Hochschule Bayern) is an institute set up in 2000 by the nine universities and the 17 universities of applied sciences of the Free State of Bavaria. The BVU provides online-courses with an equivalent of two to six credit points (by ECTS) which the member universities can integrate into their courses of study. The BVU helps its member universities to enlarge and enrich their programmes, and it helps the students to organize their studies in a more flexible way. The BVU aims at the provision of blended learning at the macro level of the course of study and not at the micro-level of the single course, facilitating the import and export of online-courses |

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|                                | between all member universities, and develop and offer courses tailored to the needs and the actual demand of the member universities. The use of macro-level blended learning increases the flexibility of study programmes, reduces the danger of social isolation and thereby facilitates the participation and retention of adult learners in HE.   |
| Duration                       | 2010  |
| Institution                    | Bavarian Virtual University   |
| Publications and other Sources | Rühl, P. (2010). "Blended Learning" at the Macro Level – The Experience of the Bavarian Virtual University. In D. Krzysztof, J. <u>Madey</u> & <u>L. Rudak</u> (Eds.), EUNIS 2010 - <i>University Information Systems. Selected Problems</i> .<br><br><a href="http://www.vhb.org/fileadmin/download/EUNIS_2010_BVU.pdf">http://www.vhb.org/fileadmin/download/EUNIS_2010_BVU.pdf</a><br><br><a href="http://www.vhb.org">www.vhb.org</a> |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Framework programme "New Media in Education"</b><br><i>Rahmenprogramm "Neue Medien in der Bildung"</i>  |
| Summary                        | In 2000, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research launched the framework programme "New Media in Education". The programme aims at the permanent and broad integration of new media as means of communication, working, and learning in education as well as the improvement of educational offers through media support. In the context of the programme projects are funded which develop innovative, online-based multimedia learning and teaching software. Since 2004, the programme is restricted to the area of vocational education but before projects at HEIs were supported as well. One example is the Vawi project in which a virtual postgraduate study programme in the subject area information systems was developed. The study programme aims at graduates from universities and universities of applied sciences who want to return to HE after a period of employment ("returners"). |
| Duration                       | 2000 – 2013  |
| Institution                    | Federal Ministry of Education and Research   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.foerderinfo.bund.de/de/366.php">http://www.foerderinfo.bund.de/de/366.php</a><br><a href="http://www.bildungsserver.de/innovationsportal/blk_set.html?Id=581">http://www.bildungsserver.de/innovationsportal/blk_set.html?Id=581</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>HE without a formal HE entrance qualification – Monitoring of developments at national, federal and institutional level</b><br><i>Studieren ohne Abitur – Monitoring der Entwicklungen in Bund, Ländern und Hochschulen</i>  |
| Summary              | In the framework of the project, the situation of learners without a formal HE entrance qualification is monitored on the basis of administrative data, regulatory frameworks and institutional conditions. Furthermore, the public debate on this issue as well as policy trends are analysed. |

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|                                | The study provides detailed information for each German federal state. The access modes and the recognition of prior learning are very important dimensions of flexible HE programmes. The results of the study show that more and more person without a formal HE entrance qualification want to enter into HE in Germany but the number of first-year students is still very low. Furthermore, important factors facilitating the participation of learners without a formal HE entrance qualification have been identified; e.g. flexible organisation of study programmes, extra-occupational and professionally oriented programmes and recognition of prior learning. |
| Duration                       | since 2008  |
| Institution                    | Center for Higher Education   |
| Publications and other Sources | Nickel, S. & Leusing, B. (2009). <i>Studieren ohne Abitur – Entwicklungspotenziale in Bund und Ländern. Eine empirische Analyse</i> . Gütersloh.<br><a href="http://www.che-consult.de/downloads/CHE_AP123_Studieren_ohne_Abitur.pdf">http://www.che-consult.de/downloads/CHE_AP123_Studieren_ohne_Abitur.pdf</a><br><br>Nickel, S. & Duong, S. (2012). <i>Studieren ohne Abitur: Monitoring der Entwicklung in Bund, Länder und Hochschule</i> . Arbeitspapier Nr. 157<br><a href="http://www.che.de/downloads/CHE_AP157_Studieren_ohne_Abitur_2012.pdf">http://www.che.de/downloads/CHE_AP157_Studieren_ohne_Abitur_2012.pdf</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>International comparative study on structures and organisation of continuing education at universities</b><br><br><i>Internationale Vergleichsstudie zur Struktur und Organisation der Weiterbildung an Hochschulen</i>  |
| Summary                        | The study examines and compares the structure and organisation of continuing HE in six countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, UK and USA). The focal interest lies in the educational provisions, the HEI as well as the surrounding milieu. The results show that in most countries the boundaries between basic undergraduate study and continuing education are disappearing. Especially in Finland and the USA, innovative learning methods are employed, e-learning has been adopted in all countries but to a different degree. The study also reveals that part-time bachelor degrees are not very common in Germany. |
| Duration                       | 09.2005 – 10.2006   |
| Institution                    | University of Oldenburg   |
| Publications and other Sources | Knust, M. & Hanft, A. (2009) (eds.). <i>Continuing Higher Education and Lifelong Learning</i> . Dordrecht: Springer.<br><br><a href="http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/internat_vergleichsstudie_struktur_und_organisation_hochschulweiterbildung.pdf">http://www.bmbf.de/pubRD/internat_vergleichsstudie_struktur_und_organisation_hochschulweiterbildung.pdf</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>International comparative study on the participation in university</b> |
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|                                | <b>continuing education</b><br><i>International vergleichende Studie zur Teilnahme an Hochschulweiterbildung</i>   |
| Summary                        | The international comparative study aims at providing empirical evidence in the field of university continuing education. Secondary data from Germany, Finland, France, GB, Canada, Austria and the USA is analysed and compared. In the main focus are issues related to the demand for continuing education, the characteristics of participants, motives of participation, conditions of participation, the role of HEIs in the continuing education market, as well as barriers and incentives for offering continuing education programmes. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | Higher Education Information System (Hochschul-Informations-System, HIS), German Institute for Adult Education (Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung, DIE)  |
| Publications and other Sources | Schaeper, H.; Schramm, M.; Weiland, M.; Kraft, S. & Wolter, A. (2006). <i>International vergleichende Studie zur Teilnahme an Hochschulweiterbildung</i> . HIS Projektbericht.<br><a href="http://www.his.de/pdf/22/hochschulweiterbildung.pdf">http://www.his.de/pdf/22/hochschulweiterbildung.pdf</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Learning processes and learning effects in university teaching</b><br><i>Lernprozesse und Lernwirkungen in der universitären Lehre</i>  |
| Summary                        | The project focuses on the monitoring of learning processes in on-site and distance learning provisions. It aims at identifying factors that influence the success of such learning processes.   |
| Duration                       | 06.2005 – 12.2010  |
| Institution                    | Technical University of Kaiserslautern, Cooperation with University of Bremen  |
| Publications and other Sources | Pätzold, H. (2007), Lernforschung bei Fernstudien. Ein empirischer Einblick in die Praxis des Fernstudiums. In : DIE (Hrsg.). <i>Zeitschrift für Weiterbildungsforschung</i> Report 29.Jahrgang 2006 Heft 4/2006.<br><a href="http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/report06_04.pdf#page=1">http://www.die-bonn.de/doks/report06_04.pdf#page=1</a> |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Master Online</b>  |
| Summary              | The funding programme aims at supporting university continuing education at HEIs in Baden-Württemberg and enhances the usage of new media. Within the context of the programme, conceptualisation, development, implementation and conduct of new, multimedia supported continuing education programmes in subject areas with a high demand are funded. |
| Duration             | since 2008  |

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| Institution                    | Ministry for Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/studium/wissenschaftliche-weiterbildung/master-online/">http://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/studium/wissenschaftliche-weiterbildung/master-online/</a> |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>MaweSt – Development of models for the design, implementation, management and evaluation of continuing education courses in networked structures</b><br><br><i>MaweSt – Entwicklung von Modellen für die Planung, Implementierung, Management und Evaluation von weiterbildenden Studiengängen in vernetzten Strukturen</i>  |
| Summary                        | The objective of the MaweSt project was the collective and coordinated development of recommendations for the development, implementation, management and evaluation of continuing education programmes certified with an academic degree. One major topic was the organisation of extra-occupational continuing education study programmes with regard to e.g. learning provisions, information behaviour and compatibility of work and study. |
| Duration                       | 10.2003 – 09.2006   |
| Institution                    | University of Oldenburg   |
| Publications and other Sources | Abschlussbericht Modellversuch wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung – Entwicklung von Modellen für die Planung, Implementierung, Management und Evaluation von weiterbildenden Studiengängen in vernetzten Strukturen (MaweSt) (2008)<br><br><a href="http://www.web.uni-oldenburg.de/download/Abschlussbericht_final_Mawest.pdf">http://www.web.uni-oldenburg.de/download/Abschlussbericht_final_Mawest.pdf</a>                                     |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Online perspectives for the continuing education programme “Management for executives”</b><br><br><i>Online-Perspektiven für das weiterbildende Studium “Management für Führungskräfte”</i>  |
| Summary                        | The project aimed at the development and testing of online modules for the continuing education programme “Management for executives”. Furthermore, framework conditions for a sustainable continuing education offer as well as concepts for the qualification of teaching staff were developed. The study programme targets HE education graduates with professional experiences. |
| Duration                       | 04.2002 – 09.2004   |
| Institution                    | University of Hamburg   |
| Publications and other Sources | Universität Hamburg – Arbeitsstelle für wissenschaftliche Weiterbildung (2005). Projekt OLIM – <i>Online-Perspektiven für das weiterbildende Studium Management für Führungskräfte</i> . Hamburg.   |

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|  | <a href="http://www.aww.uni-hamburg.de/projekt_olim_abschluss.pdf">http://www.aww.uni-hamburg.de/projekt_olim_abschluss.pdf</a> |
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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Open Higher Education Lower-Saxony (<i>Offene Hochschule Niedersachsen</i>)</b>   |
| Summary                        | The research and development project pursues several objectives: the implementation of specially designed study programmes for professionals and non-traditional target groups; facilitation of the transition between vocational and academic education through recognition of competencies acquired outside the HE system; and integration of adult education offers into HE through cooperation between the different institutions. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | University of Oldenburg  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.oh.uni-oldenburg.de/index.html">http://www.oh.uni-oldenburg.de/index.html</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>PAELL: Pedagogical employment in the system of lifelong learning</b><br><i>PAELL: Pädagogische Erwerbstätigkeit im System des lebenslangen Lernens</i>   |
| Summary                        | The project focussed on the issue of lifelong learning for persons working in continuing and higher education. It examined which cooperation regarding lifelong learning between the sectors exists and which factors inhibit such cooperation.                             |
| Duration                       | 04.2009 – 03.2011   |
| Institution                    | University of Frankfurt, LMU Munich   |
| Publications and other Sources | Nittel, D./Schütz, J./Fuchs, S./Tippelt, R. (2011): Die Orientierungskraft des Lebenslangen Lernens bei Weiterbildnern und Grundschullehrern. Erste Befunde aus dem Forschungsprojekt PAELL. In: <i>Zeitschrift für Pädagogik. Beiheft 57</i> - Oktober 2011, p. 167 - 183. |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Recognition of vocational competences in higher education programmes (Phase 1)</b><br><i>Anrechnung beruflicher Kompetenzen auf Hochschulstudiengänge (ANKOM)</i><br><br><b>ANKOM – Transitions from vocational to higher education (Phase 2)</b><br><i>ANKOM – Übergänge von der beruflichen in die hochschulische Bildung</i> |
| Summary              | The ANKOM projects focus on the group of adult learners who are professionally qualified and want to enter into HE. In the first phase, eleven pilot projects were funded which developed and tested procedures for the recognition of professional competencies.  |

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|                                | <p>Furthermore, the quality assurance of recognition procedures was in the focus and quality criteria were developed. In the second phase, 19 HEIs and one provider of vocational education were supported in the development and testing of transitional measures at HEIs.</p> <p>The developed procedures and models contribute to the permeability of vocational and higher education and increase the flexibility of HE study programmes.</p> |
| Duration                       | <p>Phase 1: 2005 – 2011</p> <p>Phase 2: since 2012</p>  |
| Institution                    | Federal Ministry of Education and Research  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://ankom.his.de/publikationen">http://ankom.his.de/publikationen</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <p><b>Stu+Be: Higher Education for employed persons – Success factors of lifelong learning at universities</b></p> <p><i>Stu+Be: Studium für Berufstätige – Erfolgsfaktoren für Lifelong Learning an Hochschulen</i></p>  |
| Summary                        | <p>In the framework of the project, the three participating universities examined the compatibility of studies and employment with regard to the concept of lifelong learning at undergraduate level and developed innovative projects in the area. Corresponding to this central question, the projects focussed on HEIs as providers of learning for adults. Within the course of the project, the participating universities were examined as case studies; the students' everyday realities as well as their requirements on studies were surveyed with a questionnaire. Students enrolled in undergraduate on-site programmes as well as student studying on line continuing education programmes were included in the survey. Additionally, handbooks of study modules were analysed with regard to feasibility of the courses. The organisation of continuing education at the HEIs was analysed and flexible learning provisions and flexible HE programmes at the participating HEIs were presented.</p> |
| Duration                       | 02.2009 – 01.2012   |
| Institution                    | Technical University of Dortmund, University of Oldenburg, University of Duisburg-Essen   |
| Publications and other Sources | <p>Kerres, M., Hanft, A., Wilkesmann &amp; U. Wolff-Bendik (Eds.). (2012). <i>Studium 2020. Positionen und Perspektiven zum lebenslangen Lernen an Hochschulen</i>. Münster: Waxmann.</p> <p><a href="http://mediendidaktik.uni-duisburg-essen.de/stube">http://mediendidaktik.uni-duisburg-essen.de/stube</a></p>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <p><b>Study programmes of individual pace. Academic success – through individual design and support.</b></p> <p><i>Studienmodelle individueller Geschwindigkeiten. Erfolgreiches Studium</i></p> |
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|                                | – <i>durch individuelle Gestaltung und Förderung.</i>   |
| Summary                        | Within the framework of this funding programme, the ministry supports eleven HEIs at the development of models of study programmes which allow the students to study at their individual pace. The aim of the model study programmes is to improve the study success of a heterogeneous student population. The developed measures and offers comprise e.g. bridging courses, part-time studies, and orientation semesters. |
| Duration                       | 01.2010 – 12.2013   |
| Institution                    | Ministry for Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/studium-und-lehre/studienmodelle-individueller-geschwindigkeit/">http://mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/studium-und-lehre/studienmodelle-individueller-geschwindigkeit/</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Survey and typification of extra occupational and dual study programmes</b><br><i>Erhebung und Typisierung berufsbegleitender und dualer Studienangebote</i>   |
| Summary                        | The project's objective was to provide an overview on existing extra-occupational and dual study programmes at German HEIs. The results comprise information on access conditions, subject areas, organizational structure of the programme, learning and teaching provisions, types of degrees, duration and connectivity. |
| Duration                       | until 2011  |
| Institution                    | Higher Education Information System (HIS)   |
| Publications and other Sources | Minks, K.H., Völk, D. & Netz, N. (2011). <i>Berufsbegleitende und duale Studienangebote in Deutschland: Status quo und Perspektiven</i> . HIS: Forum Hochschule 2/2011.<br><br><a href="http://www.his.de/pdf/pub_fh/fh-201111.pdf">http://www.his.de/pdf/pub_fh/fh-201111.pdf</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Tertiary Higher Education for People in Mid-life / THE-MP</b>   |
| Summary              | The project aims to study the tertiary lifelong learning of HEIs in several countries with respect to inclusion of mid-life learners. At the core stands a comparative study with concrete examples analyzing statistically available data, making series of interviews with decision makers, stakeholders, lecturers and mid-life learners. The study will analyze the efficiency of TLL programs to achieve the inclusion of mid-life learners. The project will analyze the regulation of the TLL system, not only with respect to labor markets and society, but also its internal regulation in terms of access, learning pathways, certifications, recognition of prior learning and funding. Another area of analysis will be the analysis of didactical innovation in the TLL programs to assure the retention of non-traditional students in the TLL-system. The project's target groups are those in mid-life (over 40 years old). |

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| Duration                       | 01.2011 – 12.2013   |
| Institution                    | Institute for Work and Technology at the Westfälische Hochschule Gelsenkirchen Bocholt Recklinghausen University of Applied Sciences, the Ruhr-University Bochum  |
| Publications and other Sources | Hamburg, I., & Öz, F. (2011). Tertiary lifelong learning for people in mid-life and social inclusion. In: <i>Lifelong learning for competitiveness, employability and social inclusion: international conference</i> , 11 - 13 November 2011, Craiova, Romania. Craiova: Editura Universitaria.<br><br><a href="http://www.postgraduatecenter.at/fileadmin/user_upload/ref_weiter/uniMind/Craiova_Conference_Compendum_20111212.pdf">http://www.postgraduatecenter.at/fileadmin/user_upload/ref_weiter/uniMind/Craiova_Conference_Compendum_20111212.pdf</a><br><br><a href="http://www.iatge.de/index.php?article_id=1024&amp;clang=0">http://www.iatge.de/index.php?article_id=1024&amp;clang=0</a> |

### 11.1.6 Greece

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Contextual and Motivational factors associated with learning outcomes in distance learning adult education: Testing a model of Self-Determination Theory in Hellenic Open University</b>  |
| Summary                        | Using self-determination theory (SDT) as a framework this study explores how drop out intention can be explained in motivational terms in adult distance education. The study was conducted among first year students of Hellenic Open University in order to examine the relations between several personal factors (e.g. motivation to enroll in a course) and contextual factors (e.g. learning climate) as well as demographic data of adult learners with several learning outcomes, such as engagement, course satisfaction and drop out intention. The research hypothesis tested is that autonomous motivational beliefs of attending a course in Hellenic Open University as well as Autonomy Supportive Learning Climate can positively predict course satisfaction and negatively predict drop out intention. |
| Duration                       | 2012   |
| Institution                    | Hellenic Open University   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Factors that affect participation of adult students in the learning process. Investigation of postgraduate students' views at the Hellenic Open University</b>  |
| Summary              | The study (master's thesis) investigates factors that influence adult participation in the learning process. Participation seems to be affected by several factors, intrinsic and extrinsic. Adult students believe that participation is affected more by intrinsic motivation than by extrinsic. |
| Duration             | 2007 – 2008  |
| Institution          | Hellenic Open University   |

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| Publications and other Sources |  |
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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Factors that inhibit the application of the principles of Adult Education in Distance Education. The case of students of the postgraduate programme "Masters in Education"</b>  |
| Summary                        | The study (master's thesis) monitors, presents and analyses what obstructs the application of the principles of Adult Education in Distance Education according to students' views of the postgraduate study programme "Masters in Education". The obstacles seem to be mainly related to the learning procedures, to the educational programme as well as to psychological factors. |
| Duration                       | 2007 – 2008  |
| Institution                    | Hellenic Open University   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>ProInterNet (PIN)</b>   |
| Summary                        | The PIN project aims at creating a network of key players in the area of e-Jobs and Internet-related jobs converging around a web 2.0 platform: the e-Jobs Observatory.<br><br>It hopes to contribute towards improving the employability of job seekers, reducing the e-skills shortages on the EU labour market, improving the quality of Vocational Education & Training (VET) in the field of e-Jobs and making VET more transparent and comparable at European level. |
| Duration                       | 01.2010 – 12.2012  |
| Institution                    | Euproma GmbH & Co KG (Germany), (participation of Hellenic Open University as partner)   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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|----------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>The university as provider of continuing education</b>  |
| Summary              | The study (PhD thesis) examines the role of Universities as lifelong learning providers according to the views of teaching staff. It comes to the conclusion that teaching staff acknowledge the role of Universities as lifelong learning providers but they consider it as less important than their original functions, namely teaching and research. This debate is ideologically controversial among teaching staff (instrumentalisation of education to the market's needs). |
| Duration             | completed 2012   |

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Institution                    | Aristotle University of Thessaloniki |
| Publications and other Sources |                                      |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>T-learning to Improve Professional Skills for intercultural dialogue (TIPS)</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>The project designs and delivers a training course for cultural mediators based on T-learning methodology especially for social workers or professionals interested in cultural mediation who are in need of up-to-date, on-the-job training in view of enhancing their everyday activities at the workplace.</p> <p>The TIPS T-learning methodology integrates three different tools: the personal computer (E-learning), mobile phone (M-learning) and television (TV-learning).</p> |
| Duration                       | 11.2007 – 10.2009   |
| Institution                    | FOR.COM – Formazione per la comunicazione (Italy), (participation of Hellenic Open University as partner)   |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Training of cultural mediators utilising new Social Networking Software (SONETOR)</b>   |
| Summary                        | The project aims at developing a training platform that will integrate existing social networking applications with modern adult education methodologies and specially produced content and services, in order to assist Cultural Mediators in developing formal and non-formal skills and competences and in applying them during their work with immigrants. |
| Duration                       | 02.2012 – 01.2014  |
| Institution                    | Hellenic Open University   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>VALuing experience Beyond the University (VAB)</b>   |
| Summary              | <p>The project is suggesting a tool and a method to improve the global evaluation of their students in taking into account the experience they have acquired beyond University with the view of enhancing their chances for professional insertion.</p> <p>It allows to identify value or even validate knowledge, skills and competences developed/gained through an informal or non-formal learning by students outside the Universities.</p> <p>The VAB project should thus improve the transition between the</p> |

|                                |   |
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|                                | University and the labour market.   |
| Duration                       | 10.2009 – 09.2011   |
| Institution                    | University of Evry Val d'Essonne (France)<br>(participation of Hellenic Open University as project partner) |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

### 11.1.7 Hungary

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>ADD-LIFE project</b> (Grundtvig)   |
| Summary                        | <p>The ADD-LIFE project has the following aims and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to explore different models of inter-generational learning;</li> <li>• to develop learning opportunities that will promote participation in civil society as promoters for European themes and facilitators/mentors with others to promote active European citizenship.</li> <li>• to design 12 modules of learning using these different models and flexible approaches, and pilot 6 of these.</li> <li>• to evaluate the pilots systematically and report on the lessons learned from inter-generational teaching and learning;</li> <li>• to evaluate systematically and report on the lessons learned about universities' potential role in training promoters for different fields of voluntary and paid work, identifying the need for further development, including concrete recommendations.</li> <li>• to disseminate and valorise the outputs and products of the project among the professional communities in European universities and beyond.</li> </ul> <p>The dissemination activities provided case studies and evaluative reports that enabled other universities to valorise the results.</p> |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | University of Pécs  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://add-life.uni-graz.at/cms/?q=about/aims">http://add-life.uni-graz.at/cms/?q=about/aims</a>   |

|                      |   |
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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Equipe+ project: European Quality in Individualised Pathways in Education Plus.</b>  |
| Summary              | <p>The main objectives of this project were: to inform and complement the work of Bologna process by focussing on quality in ULLL and promoting debate on the theme; to address the quality of universities involvement in Grundtvig and assist in networking between Grundtvig projects and the theme of quality; to provide an overview of quality arrangements in ULLL in 25 countries, identifying the need for further development and making recommendations; to develop indicators of quality ULLL supported by case studies derived from best practice and taking</p> |

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|                                | account of definitions and practices in different countries; to promote the results of the first Equipe network and of other projects on quality in LLL; to promote training opportunities for staff in ULLL on the theme of quality. |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | University of Pécs  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.cfp.upv.es/webs/equipeplus/index/aims.jsp?local=net">http://www.cfp.upv.es/webs/equipeplus/index/aims.jsp?local=net</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>OBSERVAL: European Observatory of validation of non-formal and informal learning</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>Aims of the project: to develop a strong network for the transfer and development of innovation, and integrated European solutions for the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning; to contribute to increasing participation in lifelong learning; to reinforce cooperation between actors and sectors;</p> <p>Objectives of the project: to create a permanent European Observatory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Observatory is based on a European network of national experts (including actors from learning and training providers in all sectors and NGOs), who have a leading role in their countries and a global vision of existing practices; to collect and analyse existing data and present them in a common format that allows both comparison and articulation of practices developed in different contexts or sectors, and their evaluation using criteria defined on the basis of the "common principles"; to identify regulations, organisation, pilot projects and experiments, standards and reference frameworks, tools and methods, purposes and approaches in the workplace, results registered (access, credits, exemptions, award of qualifications etc.) and statistics available for the development of practice.</p> <p>The University of Pécs in Hungary collected some distinguished RPL practices in the context of VET and uploaded them to the OBSERVAL database collecting country-specific examples.</p> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | University of Pécs   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.observal.org/">http://www.observal.org/</a>  |

#### 11.1.8 Ireland

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Bridges to Learning Connections</b>                           |
| Summary              | A partnership project, which focuses on schools, community-based |

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|                                | <p>groups, and voluntary/statutory agencies, and is designed to raise educational aspirations. It seeks to increase the number of disadvantaged, mature students and students with disabilities accessing third level programmes.</p> <p>This project aims to provide a model for regional partnerships to deliver on the national access agenda. The project will also help to inform national access and widening participation policy by reviewing and evaluating data from collaborating institutions</p> |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | University College Cork   |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

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|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) – Widening Participation</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>Two Strands of work relevant to adult learners:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhancement of Learning: included curriculum reform with a dimension of increasing flexibility. Also, a survey of academic staff across the 8 institutions, conducted by the Higher Education research Centre of Dublin City University, which, inter alia, explored their views on the changing nature of the student population, including more mature students.</li> <li>2. Widening Participation: proposed the establishment of a Higher Learning Network (HLN) DRHEA institutions with other providers across the greater Dublin region. Initial efforts were to focus on the needs of adult learners within the workforce or wider community who wish to enter or progress further in higher education.</li> </ol> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | 4 Universities and 4 Institutes of Technology in the Dublin area   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Eastern Regional Alliance (ERA) access project: Consolidating Services for increased capacity</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>Support for activities which promote balanced regional, economic, and social development. It aims to increase the number of flexible programmes offered to meet the needs of lifelong learners and to aid in overall learner retention.</p> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | Institute of Technology Carlow   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Equity of Access</b>  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Summary                        | This project aims to build on the IUA-SIF 1 Access Project. It will implement nationally-agreed indicators of educational disadvantage and utilise these to accurately direct pre-entry, admission and post-entry activities at those students. The new structured approach involves a radical overhaul of the existing access system. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | Irish Universities Association   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Outreach / access initiatives in rural areas</b>   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Summary                        | The objective of this project is to widen access and participation and promote lifelong learning across the Border Midland and Western Region and Co. Clare. This region has dispersed population, living mainly in small towns and rural areas. The region's infrastructure is 'comparatively poor'; it has 'a relatively small share of the national third-level infrastructure'. |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | National University of Ireland Galway   |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Shannon Consortium: Strand 1: Shannon Regional Learning Gateway (SRLG)</b>   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Summary                        | The SRLG will build on each institution's community-based initiatives to create regional pathways and to raise educational aspirations. It will target marginalised communities, mature students, socioeconomically disadvantaged and students with disability, and will seek to optimise opportunities, resources and services for these students. |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | University of Limerick  |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Widening Participation</b>   |
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| Summary              | This project has been established to set new goals for the access and widening participation interventionist models at UCD – by increasing participation by part-time learners in arts, science and engineering |



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|                                | programmes.               |
| Duration                       |                           |
| Institution                    | University College Dublin |
| Publications and other Sources |                           |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Widening the base for high-quality student recruitment</b>  |
| Summary                        | The project objective is to reform and mainstream existing supplementary admissions routes for under-represented groups of students. The two routes in question are the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and the Supplementary Admissions Route for Applicants with a Disability |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | Irish Universities Association   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Work-based learning programmes</b>  |
| Summary                        | Work-based learning initiatives will be developed in partnership with employers, in selected pilot courses where there is a recognised need to up-skill the workforce. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | Limerick Institute of Technology   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

### 11.1.9 Italy

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Accoglienza, primo orientamento e tipologie dell'offerta didattica per gli studenti adulti iscritti ai Corsi di Laurea di nuovo ordinamento</b>   |
| Summary              | <p>The research project is part of the studies on "adult learners". The research include a comparative analysis with particular reference to France, Germany, Spain and England. The project want to rethink the provision of training and especially rebuild an updated picture of the application, taking into account the emerging challenge to open HE to new adults.</p> <p>The research aims to investigate the target models, methods and tools for the induction and orientation of student-workers and, more generally, adult students (over 24 years).</p> |
| Duration             |  |

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| Institution                    | Coordinatore Scientifico del Programma di Ricerca<br>Aureliana Alberici Università degli Studi ROMA TRE (published in 2007) |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Adulti all'università. Bilancio, portfolio e certificazione delle competenze</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>The project "MOIRC" was given out to analyse some Italian and European best practices in order to design and test devices and means of identification, recognition and certification of skills acquired in non formal and informal, and to outline some guidelines for the establishment of a Centre for Lifelong Learning devoted to procedures for validation of experiential knowledge and skills assessment.</p> <p>The achievement of such purposes occurred, on the one hand, through the experimentation of a methodology for recognition and certification of experiential learning for working students enrolled in degree programs at Padova University, characterized by the preparation of a portfolio of learning outcomes by candidates, supported by an accompanying process methodology conducted by specially trained operators. On the other hand, a path of financial expertise has been tested for graduates of Padova University, characterized by the preparation of a portfolio of skills on the part of beneficiaries of guidance, which was conducted through individual interviews and group meetings conducted by consultants.</p> <p>Finally, the project involved the administration to a group of employees of an online skills assessment tool in a scenario that simulates the work environment specific to a given professional profile, providing a range of stimuli to which the participant must face, and then assess actual behaviours and skills in action.</p> |
| Duration                       | 2011  |
| Institution                    | <i>(Luciano Galliani, Cristina Zaggia, Anna Serbati (a cura di))</i>  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.pensamultimedia.it/pensa/index2.php?page=shop.product_details&amp;flypage=flypage_pensa.tpl&amp;product_id=943&amp;category_id=81&amp;option=com_virtuemart&amp;Itemid=170&amp;lang=en&amp;pop=1&amp;tmpl=component">http://www.pensamultimedia.it/pensa/index2.php?page=shop.product_details&amp;flypage=flypage_pensa.tpl&amp;product_id=943&amp;category_id=81&amp;option=com_virtuemart&amp;Itemid=170&amp;lang=en&amp;pop=1&amp;tmpl=component</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Il riconoscimento e la validazione delle competenze professionali ed esperienziali degli adulti che (ri)entrano all'Università, nella prospettiva dell'apprendimento permanente.</b> |
| Summary              | The results are focused on the development of greater attention to issues of recognition and validation of the experience and skills of adults within the university.                   |

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|                                | <p>Specifically, the results of the first phase include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acquisition of in-depth cognitive elements of Italian and international literature on the topics: adult, college, experience, learn / learning to learn, then the definition of the conceptual framework that informs the trial;</li> <li>• Preparation of a glossary of basic vocabulary related to the conceptual framework of the research;</li> </ul> <p>The results of the second phase include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definition, development and practical implementation of all the methods and tools of the path of recognition and validation of professional skills and experiential adult members of the university;</li> </ul> <p>The results of the third phase include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of tools, criteria, and methods for the recognition and validation of the experience and skills of adults who wish to (re) enter the university, the university system.</li> </ul> |
| Duration                       | started in 2007   |
| Institution                    | Coordinatore Scientifico del Programma di Ricerca Aureliana Alberici<br>Università degli Studi Roma Tre   |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>La riorganizzazione dei sistemi universitari e di alta formazione nelle "economie della conoscenza" europee</b>   |
| Summary              | <p>The research program is studying the reorganization of European higher education systems in the context of the "knowledge economy". This context subjecting institutions of higher education to economic pressures, social and political. What results have these pressures? In particular, research will focus on three aspects of this transformation: the decision-making mechanisms that translate the pressure structural reorganization processes, the change in governance structures at national level and each university, the transformation of elite institutions of higher education.</p> <p>The countries studied are the largest European Union: Germany, France, United Kingdom and Italy, which, to some extent, adding Spain and Holland. Each country will be studied both in itself and in comparison with others. The first year of research will be devoted to fieldwork, surveying techniques that use both quantitative and qualitative. After a conference between them, the second year will be devoted to the analysis of the countries studied and their comparison in terms of the three problems at the centre of research. A second conference will present the results of this work, complete the comparison between countries and identify possible directions for public policy, both national and European.</p> |
| Duration             |  |
| Institution          | Coordinatore Scientifico del Programma di Ricerca Marino Regini  |

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|                                | Università degli Studi di Milano |
| Publications and other Sources |                                  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>L'esperienza universitaria: giovani e adulti a confronto, di Davide Cristofori – Consorzio Interuniversitario ALMALAUREA</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>AlmaLaurea conducted a study that compares the characteristics of graduates who enrolled in adult life with those of graduates enrolled in a "canonical" age. An important comparison is possible thanks to the thoroughness of the documentation of the Consortium, which manages to focus on the differences between two populations that live together at the University.</p> <p>The study, published in 2007 and yearly updated, is based on information gathered in the profile of the graduates from 2005.</p> |
| Duration                       | 2005 – 2011   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources |   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Linee guida. Università digitale 2011</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>The Guidelines have been produced by the universities participating in the project "Digital University" provided by eGov Plan 2012 of the Minister for Public Administration and Innovation. The Department for Technological Innovation of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Education, University and Research have developed and adopted specific guidelines for the digitization of the main processes and services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Guidelines for the implementation of the process of verbalization electronic de-exams;</li> <li>2. Guidelines for the dossier of the student</li> <li>3. Guidelines for the implementation of application cooperation;</li> <li>4. Guidelines for the adoption of VoIP systems;</li> <li>5. Guidelines for federated authentication for Internet access and network resources.</li> </ol> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | Dipartimento per la digitalizzazione della pubblica amministrazione e l'innovazione tecnologica (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri) e dal Ministero dell'istruzione, dell'università e della ricerca   |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Report on distance learning in Telematic Universities in Italy</b> |
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| Summary                        | <p>The overall data of a survey published by the European Consortium for integrated training, Omnicom, show a good approval rating received by the Telematic University, which, however, after about five years after approval of Decree Moratti-Stanca, are still an important change in the landscape of our higher education system. The data confirm that distance learning is increasingly popular and the market value of this sector of higher education grows with constant speed. Moreover, in four years the number of traditional universities that have adopted e-learning has almost doubled from 24 to 45, with an education of no less than 222 degrees.</p> <p>The University telematics have almost doubled its turnover in a year, gaining fourth of the total market. An encouraging result and in many ways unexpected, due also to the average cost of enrolment, 27% higher than that of traditional universities that offer online courses.</p> <p>In that context plays a leading role the University Marconi, who won the 81, 4% of the total market. The University of Rome has had a remarkable growth, equal to 340%. At Tel.Ma, ranking second in this special list, has a market share does not exceed 5%. Among the traditional universities, those grouped in the Neptune Consortium covering 71.9% of the market. These figures, taken together, document the rapid growth of telecommunication universities, although in absolute terms the gap remains large compared to the traditional universities: members are online for 2.7% of the total of one million seven hundred thousand university about attending our universities</p> |
| Duration                       | 2007   |
| Institution                    | Omnicom  |
| Publications and other Sources |  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>XII Rapporto sulla Formazione Continua. Annualità 2010-2011</b>   |
| Summary              | <p>The report studies the attitude towards training, both by businesses and workers. The results show that the behavior of firms are in general a culture that tends to underestimate the central importance of updating and learning initiatives. This varies depending on the territorial and sectorial policies, especially related to industrial clusters. There are cases that express a level of supply and demand for training strictly comparable to the more advanced North and Central Europe. The analysis of 'trend over the years, both as regards participation in the formation of the adult population and businesses, reveal short-and medium-term recovery that can be considered more competitive than the reality.</p> |
| Duration             |  |
| Institution          | Ministero del lavoro e delle politiche sociali   |
| Publications and     |  |

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### 11.1.10 Latvia

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b><u>E-learning as a Challenge for Widening of Opportunities for Improvement of Students' Generic Competences</u></b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>Which challenges for widening of opportunities were secured in e-learning in order to promote students' generic competences as a learning outcome?</p> <p>Providing new opportunities in e-learning by constructing various unknown situations and a wider spectrum of approaches offers the opportunity to educate those students who have always been uncomfortable with traditional learning. Thus, the virtual environment of communication becomes an effective educational treatment of students' learning diversity and contributes to the promotion of students' generic competences using e-learning opportunities.</p> |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | <p><u>Birzina, R., Fernate, A., Luka, I., Maslo, I. &amp; Surikova, S. (2012). E-learning as a Challenge for Widening of Opportunities for Improvement of Students' Generic Competences. <i>E-Learning and Digital Media, Volume 9</i> (2), 130-142. 2042-7530.</u></p> <p>Source: <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2012.9.2.130">http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/elea.2012.9.2.130</a></p>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Research-Based Academic Studies: Promotion of the Quality of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education?</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>The study addresses the effectiveness of opportunities of mastering the students' research process which furthers the quality of learning outcomes and reveal the ways how research-based academic studies are provided in higher education.</p> <p>Among other findings, it is suggested that (1) research-based academic studies allow students developing research-related capabilities by promoting critical scientific thinking, solution of problems and use other analytic strategies and technical tools; enables students to place learning within a meaningful context; (2) the development of students' scientific thinking as the quality of students learning outcomes is facilitated by using various new learning opportunities: sources of information, new technologies, and several languages to reach an important subjective goal.</p> |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | <p><u>Fernate, Andra; Surikova, Svetlana; Kalnina, Daiga; Sanchez Romero, Cristina (2009). <i>Research-Based Academic Studies: Promotion of the</i></u></p>   |

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|  | <p><u><i>Quality of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education? Paper for the European Conference on Educational Research 2009 "Theory and Evidence in European Educational Research"</i></u>, University of Vienna.</p> <p><a href="http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/187885.pdf">http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/187885.pdf</a>.</p> <p><a href="http://www.pzi.lu.lv/index.php?id=pzipublikacijas_inc#2010.%20gada%20publik%C4%81ciju%20izlase">http://www.pzi.lu.lv/index.php?id=pzipublikacijas_inc#2010.%20gada%20publik%C4%81ciju%20izlase</a></p> |
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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b><i>The Bologna Process – Towards the European Higher Education Area</i></b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>Effects or impacts of the Bologna Process (strategic goals), as well as looking at the implementation process (operational goals) at the level of the Bologna Process as a whole.</p> <p>Main findings related <u>to research mapping tasks</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flexibility in the admission process allows meeting the educational needs of minority language groups;</li> <li>2. Flexible access and curriculum;</li> <li>3. Flexible learning opportunities will be designed to meet adult needs and reduce dropout rates for life-long learning increase.</li> </ol>   |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | <p>The Bologna Process Independent Assessment: The first decade of working on the European Higher Education Area.</p> <p>Volume 1: Detailed assessment report</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_1_detailed_rept.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_1_detailed_rept.pdf</a></p> <p>Volume 2: Case Studies and appendices</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education//doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_2_cases_appendices.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education//doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_2_cases_appendices.pdf</a></p> <p>Eurodice report "Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: The Impact of the Bologna Process"</p> <p><a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf</a></p> |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Workplace Learning in Asia and Europe</b>   |
| Summary              | The project contributes to knowledge of what people understand to be voluntary and compulsory with respect to workplace learning, what companies and organisations offer in terms of formal and non-formal work-related learning, which of these are voluntary and which |

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|                                | <p>compulsory, and how objective opportunities and subjective perceptions influence employees' motivation to learn at work and their satisfaction with the learning they have undertaken.</p> <p>The study recommends to foster the development of workplaces as transformative learning spaces – based on working with a personally significant content, personal motivation and responsibility, reflecting about one's own learning process, using one's own experiences. Experiencing positive emotions and having the opportunity to work with others is a key issue in the development of personal well-being and economic stability in Latvian society.</p> |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | <p>Workplace Learning in Asia and Europe: Latvian National Survey. <a href="http://www.dpu.dk/asem/researchnetworks/workplacelearning">http://www.dpu.dk/asem/researchnetworks/workplacelearning</a></p> <p>Lynne Chisholm, Katharina Lunardon, Annette Ostendorf, Pier Paolo Pasqualoni (Eds.) (2012). Decoding the meanings of learning at work in Asia and Europe. Innsbruck University Press. <a href="http://www.dpu.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/ASEM/publications/decoding_meanings_web.pdf">http://www.dpu.dk/fileadmin/www.dpu.dk/ASEM/publications/decoding_meanings_web.pdf</a></p>   |

#### 11.1.11 Spain

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Análisis documental sobre el estudiante adulto en la Educación Superior: un perfil emergente de alumnado</b>  |
| Summary                        | The study conducts a documentary analysis. From this basis it appears that the adult is a new student profile increasingly abundant in university education and is a social commitment, on the part of the institutions, enhanced support for the integration of the adult student in college. The study defines the possible adaptation policies by university institutions, to this learner profile. The analysis is based on the specific characteristics of the new learner in relation to the traditional student |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | <p>Begoña Learreta, Ana Cruz, Águeda Benito (2012). Análisis documental sobre el estudiante adulto en la Educación Superior: un perfil emergente de alumnado, Revista Iberoamericana de Educación / Revista Ibero-americana de Educação, n. 58/3 – 15/03/12</p> <p><a href="http://www.rieoei.org/deloslectores/4678Learreta.pdf">http://www.rieoei.org/deloslectores/4678Learreta.pdf</a></p>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Estudiantes adultos matriculados en la universidad española</b>   |
| Summary              | The article carries out a detailed analysis of the trend of enrollment in Spanish universities. The analysis focuses on the participation of adults and its tendency to progressive growth. The study is quantitative in |



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|                                | nature and examines the characteristics of the profile of the adult student.   |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Ana Cruz, Begoña Learreta, Paloma Huertas, Blanca Rodriguez y Montse Ruiz (UEM). Estudiantes adultos matriculados en la universidad española |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>ICT as a fundamental tool for the life long learning at the University of Seville</b><br><i>Las tic como herramienta fundamental de la formación permanente en la Universidad de Sevilla</i>  |
| Summary                        | This work displays the crucial role of ICT in developing continuing education programmes. The Life Long Learning is contextualized throughout the European Higher Education Area, showing the strategy of the University of Seville to implement programs of continuing education to respond to the real demands for training of the society.<br><br>The article describes the experience of the E-Learning education Office in the Life Long Learning Centre for the design and development of on-line programs, using the e-Learning platform Blackboard Learning System. The results of the evaluation performed by the students of the courses developed in this modality during the academic year 2008-09 are analysed. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Encarnación Mellado Durán, María del Carmen Talavera Serrano, Fátima Romera Hiniesta, María Teresa García Gutiérrez (2011). Las tic como herramienta fundamental de la formación permanente en la Universidad de Sevilla. [Ict as a fundamental tool for the life long learning at the University of Seville], Revista de Medios y Educación, No 39 Julio 2011 - pp. 155 – 166.  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>La dimensión social de la educación superior: universidades socialmente responsables</b>  |
| Summary              | This article presents the social component of the universities. It is therefore to study the social responsibility of the university, stressing the importance that it has in the context of higher education. The research discussed in the context of social responsibility, the relationship between universities and their environment and the impacts that universities generated carrying out its activities. Furthermore are studied the areas and dimensions of performance, social responsibility in college, considered by these institutions. In short, this is further study of socially responsible universities. |

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| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | Ignacio Aldeanueva Fernández, Carlos Ángel Benavides Velasco (2012). La dimensión social de la educación superior: universidades socialmente responsables, Boletín Económico de Ice, 3024, Marzo de 2012. |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>La formación permanente y las universidades españolas</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>The publication represents the result of the official Commission created by the Minister of Education to create a new legal and organisational frame for HE for adults in Spain. From a research point of view it is a relevant effort to elaborate quantitative and qualitative information in view of a concrete and immediate decision making process.</p> <p>The document is centred especially on universities activities included within the category “títulos propios” aiming at introducing new regulation of the field in view of a stronger value of the related certifications.</p> <p>Globally, the paper discusses as general objectives to clarify the map of the current and standardize terminology and analyse the coexistence of formal offer and “títulos propios” (especially in the case of master degrees). As more specific objectives can be consider setting up criteria and procedures for the inscription in the Register of Universities, Schools and Degrees (RUCT) “títulos propios” of Graduate, and recognition and credit transfer between similar “oferta propia” and between “oferta propia” and official supply (bidirectional).</p> |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    | Comisión de Formación Continua  |
| Publications and other Sources | Comisión de Formación Continua (2010). La formación permanente y las universidades españolas.   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Universidad y educación de personas adultas</b>   |
| Summary              | <p>This review tries to open a debate and make some reflections about the sociological changes of the students at our universities. In fact, if we analyze some of the students’ sociological variables, like age, employment, their commitment to family responsibilities and time dedicated for study and revision, we will therefore be able to explain the high number of part time students at our universities. This situation is forcing a rethink about the university’s social function, with all that this implies with regards to educational offers, organisation, teaching, assessment and the learning process in general.</p> <p>At the same time, this means a new concept in education, which is centered nowadays in a life long learning process. A new culture, to add more about education, which connects us with a double reality: theoretical and practical; on one hand, the new values of European</p> |

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|                                | Higher Education and on the other hand, with the knowledge developed for a long time in adult education.            |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | Oscar Medina Fernández (2008). Universidad y educación de personas adultas, www.usal.es/efora, Vol. 2, Octubre 2008 |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>Universidad, universitarios y productividad en España</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>This report proposes twelve measures, which could improve the quality and quantity of results in universities at lower costs. The study on universities and productivity in Spain is financed by the BBVA Foundation and realised by the Valencian Institute for Economic Investigation present the results of the study in Spain</p> <p>The problems with productivity and international competitiveness seen in Spain's universities, (like its economy) raise doubts about the functioning and efficiency of these institutions, as well as their social and economic contribution. Universities have grown more in terms of resources than results and although university studies undoubtedly offer individual and social benefits, the profitability of investment in human capital is limited by the significant inefficiency of universities and the characteristics of the productive fabric, which employs graduates.</p> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Universidad, universitarios y productividad en España, Valencia, 2012  |

#### 11.1.12 Sweden

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| <b>Project Title</b>           |  |
| Summary                        | Analysis about Net University initiative from student perspective. Documentation about advantages of distance education and about reasons for dropout at web based courses at university.  |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | <p>Almqvist, L. &amp; Westerberg, P. (2005). Studenters upplevelser av distansutbildning inom Nätuniversitetet – en fördjupad studie med fokusgrupper på Internet. Umeå Centre for Evaluation Research.</p> <p>Mårald, G. &amp; Westerberg, P. (2006a). Nätuniversitetets studentnytta – slutrapport I från en 3-årig utvärdering, Umeå Centre for Evaluation Research, Evaluation Reports No 18.</p> <p>Mårald, G. &amp; Westerberg, P. (2006b). Nätuniversitetets studentnytta – slutrapport II från en 3-årig utvärdering, Umeå Centre for Evaluation</p> |

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|  | <p>Research, Evaluation Reports No 18.</p> <p>Westerberg, P. &amp; Mårald, G. (2006). Avbrott på nätutbildningar – en studie av när och varför studenter hoppar av alternativt fullföljer IT-stödda distanskurser, Umeå Centre for Evaluation Research, Arbetsrapport.</p> |
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| <b>Project Title</b>                  |   |
| <b>Summary</b>                        | Analysis of learner identities and study opportunities of non-traditional students in Swedish universities. Results show that widened access to universities does not guarantee equal academic education and for example for students with immigrant or working class background.   |
| <b>Duration</b>                       |   |
| <b>Institution</b>                    |   |
| <b>Publications and other Sources</b> | <p>Bron, A., &amp; Agelii, K. (2000). Non-traditional Students in Sweden: From Recurrent Education to Lifelong Learning, pp. 83-100. In: Higher Education and Lifelong Learners. International Perspectives on Change. Hans Schuetze and Maria Slowey (eds.) London: Routledge/Falmer.</p> <p>Bron, A., &amp; Lönnheden, C. (2004). Higher education for non-traditional students in Sweden – a matter of inclusion. Journal of Adult and Continuing Education 7/2004.</p> <p>Thunborg, C. &amp; Bron, A. (2011). Widening Access is not enough: Higher education and lifelong learning in Sweden In: Higher Education and Lifelong Learning in a Changed World Order by Hans Schuetze and Maria Slowey (eds.) London: Routledge.</p> |

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| <b>Project Title</b>                  |   |
| <b>Summary</b>                        | A detailed evaluation of distance learning at Karstads University, based on large scale student survey. Include follow-up data from previous years, as well as comparative data from campus students. Reveals for example that distance students have better learning outcomes than campus students. They report more often better critical and analytical thinking skills, cooperation skills, work related competences, better writing and speaking skills. |
| <b>Duration</b>                       |   |
| <b>Institution</b>                    |   |
| <b>Publications and other Sources</b> | <p>Haglund, L., &amp; Johansson L. (2012). Studenter om studier på distans: Resultat från studentenkäter vid Karlstads universitet 2011. Karlstad University Studies 2012:26.</p> <p><a href="http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-13370">http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:kau:diva-13370</a></p>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> |  |
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| Summary                        | Complete analysis about distance education provision in Swedish universities. Based on student registry statistics and survey data, gives a comprehensive picture about distance learning opportunities and formats. |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | Högskoleverket (2011). Kartläggning av distansverksamheten vid universitet och högskolor. Rapport 2011:2 R   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           |   |
| Summary                        | Benchmarking of eLearning activities at Lund University. Lund has been an active developer of distance education and use of ICT since 1990's, and offer therefore a good benchmark for Swedish universities in general. Based on several eQuality models and results from three EU-projects, the report summarizes the principles that should be taken into account in a comprehensive distance education (eLearning) system. |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | Ossiannilsson, E. & Landgren, L. (2010). Benchmarking av eLärande vid Lunds universitet – erfarenheter och kritiska koncept för kvalitetsarbete, Lunds universitet.   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           |   |
| Summary                        | Analysis on why university teachers use videochat-technology and how fast this innovation spreads in the university. Main motive for using this technology was that it enables simultaneous teaching of face-to-face students and distance students.  |
| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | Svensson, J. (2012). Spridning av innovation i högre utbildning: En studie av spridningen av Videochat vid Högskolan Dalarna. Dalarna University, School of Technology and Business Studies, Business Administration and Management.<br><br><a href="http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:du-10571">http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:du-10571</a> |

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| <b>Project Title</b> |  |
| Summary              | Analysis and description about Swedish university system as a lifelong learning opportunity. Relatively high dropout rates are treated as an example of “drop in – drop out” system, which actually facilitates lifelong learning opportunities. |

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| Duration                       |   |
| Institution                    |   |
| Publications and other Sources | Thunborg, C. & Bron, A. (2012). Higher education and lifelong learning in Sweden. In: Global perspectives on higher education and lifelong learners by Maria Slowey and Hans Schuetze (eds.) London: Routledge. |

## 11.2 European Projects

The profiles of projects funded by institutions of the European union and having partners from various member states presented hereafter have been chosen on the basis of two criteria: they have either been mentioned in reports in one or more of the participating countries, or they have a profile fitting the purpose of opening higher education to adults. The summaries are based on the self-descriptions of the projects or the summaries provided by the national experts.

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>ADD-LIFE project (Grundtvig)</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>The ADD-LIFE project has the following aims and objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to explore different models of inter-generational learning;</li> <li>• to develop learning opportunities that will promote participation in civil society as promoters for European themes and facilitators/mentors with others to promote active European citizenship.</li> <li>• to design 12 modules of learning using these different models and flexible approaches, and pilot 6 of these.</li> <li>• to evaluate the pilots systematically and report on the lessons learned from inter-generational teaching and learning;</li> <li>• to evaluate systematically and report on the lessons learned about universities' potential role in training promoters for different fields of voluntary and paid work, identifying the need for further development, including concrete recommendations.</li> <li>• to disseminate and valorise the outputs and products of the project among the professional communities in European universities and beyond.</li> </ul> <p>The dissemination activities provided case studies and evaluative reports that enabled other universities to valorise the results.</p> |
| Duration                       | 10.2006 – 09.2008   |
| Institution                    | University of Graz (Austria, Coordinator), University of Pécs (Hungary), Brno University of Technology (Czech Republic), Goldsmith University London (UK), Summer University of Jyväskylä (Finland), University of A Coruna (Spain), EUCEN  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://add-life.uni-graz.at/cms/?q=about/aims">http://add-life.uni-graz.at/cms/?q=about/aims</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>ALLUME: A Lifelong Learning University Model for Europe</b> |
| Summary              | The main objective of the ALLUME project and of EUCEN was to   |

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|                                | explore ways to increase the participation of universities in lifelong learning and to produce “A Lifelong Learning University Model for Europe”. This model was supposed to assist universities by providing guidelines based on the European Universities’ Charter on Lifelong Learning published in 2008. However, during the project’s lifespan it became clear that the idea of a unique model or a one-size-fits-all approach was outdated and not adequate given the diversity of universities, environments and the heterogeneity of LLL strategies and processes. |
| Duration                       | 10.2009 – 11.2011  |
| Institution                    | EUCEN, Universite of Lille 1 (France), University of Gent, Catholic University of Louvain (Belgium), University of Tartu (Estonia), University of Bretagne Occidentale, Brest (France), University of Malta (Malta), Inholland University (Nederland), University of Turku (Finland), Goldsmiths University of London (UK), University of Aveiro (Portugal)  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://allume.eucen.eu">http://allume.eucen.eu</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>Alpine: Adults Learning and Participating in Education – A Higher Education Project (Grundtvig Project)</b>  |
| Summary              | <p>The Grundtvig action attaches a great deal of importance to lifelong learning and seeks to improve the quality, to introduce the European dimension to adult education in the broadest sense, and to help make lifelong learning opportunities more widely available to Europe’s citizens.</p> <p>The operational aims of the action may be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the development of concrete products and valid results which may be of use in other countries</li> <li>• Promoting European co-operation between bodies providing adult education</li> <li>• Contributing to improving the quality of teacher training relating to persons involved in the teaching of adults</li> <li>• Furthering the debate on lifelong learning and contributing to the dissemination of good practice.</li> </ul> <p>The Grundtvig action is divided into four sub-actions: European co-operation projects; Learning partnerships; Individual training grants for adult education staff; and Grundtvig Networks.</p> <p>The ALPINE project is located within the first of these sub-actions. These co-operative projects have the following specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote European cooperation in the field of adult education, both formal and non- formal</li> <li>• To improve the training of persons involved in the teaching of adults</li> <li>• To pool knowledge and experience in order to achieve concrete and innovative outcomes</li> </ul> |

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|                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To pilot experiences and produce teaching products of high quality.</li> </ul>  |
| Duration                       | 2001 – 2004  |
| Institution                    | Queen’s University Belfast (UK, Coordinator), University Continuing Education Network in Finland (Finland, Evaluator), Abo Akademi University (Finland, Evaluator), University of Turku (Finland, Evaluator) and 20 Partner Universities from 20 countries |
| Publications and other Sources | Robin Mark / Mireille Pouget / Edward Thomas (eds.) (2004). <i>Adults in Higher Education. Learning from Experience in the New Europe</i> Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien.  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>BeFlex- Benchmarking Flexibility in the Bologna Reforms</b>   |
| Summary                        | The project aims to monitor the development of university lifelong learning (ULLL) in the reformed structure of higher education qualifications  |
| Duration                       | 11.2005 – 5.2007   |
| Institution                    | EUCEN (coordinator), Katholic University Leuven (Belgium), University of Oldenburg (Germany), University of Lille 1(France), University of Limerick (Ireland), University of Aveiro (Portugal), University of Helsinki (Finland), Lunds Universitet (Sweden) |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlex/index.html">http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlex/index.html</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>BeFlex+: Benchmarking Flexibility in the Bologna Reforms</b>   |
| Summary                        | This project aims to monitor the way in which the flexibility offered by the Bologna reforms and tools are being used to develop ULLL and map progress since the first BeFlex survey in 2006. It will also provide a new focus on the use of the Bologna tools in supporting and promoting regional learning partnerships, identifying different models of collaboration between Universities and other providers and stakeholders for promoting participation and progression into and through ULLL. |
| Duration                       | 2008 – 2009   |
| Institution                    | EUCEN (coordinator), University of Joensuu (Finland, Evaluator), Katholic University Leuven (Belgium), University of Oldenburg (Germany), Universidad de Deusto (Spain), Université des Sciece et Technologies de Lille 1 (France), Kauno Technologijos Universitetas (Lithuania), University of Aveiro (Portugal), University of Helsinki (Finland), Lunds Universitet (Sweden), London Metropolitan University (UK)   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlexPlus/index.html">http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlexPlus/index.html</a>   |



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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>COMPASS-LLL: Collaboration On Modern(izing) Policies and Systematic Strategies on LLL</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>In the paradigm shift towards a European Lifelong Learning Area, this project addresses two questions:</p> <p>the widening gap between the policy making process of LLL at European level with statements from various and the situation of Universities in their respective contexts.</p> <p>The stunning diversity of LLL activities at HE level, while at the same time only a minority of universities have been fully engaged in the process of integrating LLL into their institutional missions and strategies</p> |
| Duration                       | 2009 (One year)  |
| Institution                    | EUCEN, University of Lille 1 (France), Rovira I Virigili Foundation (Spain), University of Hildesheim (Germany), University of Porto (Portugal), University of Leicester (UK), University of eastern Finland (Finland), University of Graz (Austria), University of Primorska (Slovenia), CDSFCU, DGWF (Germany), University of Geneva (CH, associate partner), Catholic University Leuven (Belgium, external evaluator)   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://compass.eucen.eu/">http://compass.eucen.eu/</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>DIALOGUE: Bridges between Research and Practice in ULLL</b>  |
| Summary                        | DIALOGUE aims at bridging the gap between academic research on University Lifelong Learning (ULLL) and the professional practice around adult teaching, learning and guidance within LLL provision. By strengthening these links, the project will support the collective production of knowledge and the interactive exchange of information, which reinforces the evolution of LLL and linked benefits for European society.  |
| Duration                       | 2010 – 2013   |
| Institution                    | EUCEN (Coordinator), University of Strathclyde, Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium), University of Porto (Portugal), University of Potsdam (Germany), University of Eastern Finland (Finland), Middle East Technical University (Turkey), University of Primorska Faculty of Management Koper (Slovenia), University of Zilina (Slovakia), Lucian Blaga University from Sibiu (Romania), University of Graz (Austria), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece), National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Ireland), University of Granada (Spain), Universtié de Versailles Saint-Quentin en Yvelines (France), University of Bielefeld- Faculty of Educational Science (Germany) |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://dialogue.eucen.eu/">http://dialogue.eucen.eu/</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>EQF-Pro: Articulation between vocational and academic learning in University Education</b>  |
| Summary                        | This project aims to test in a lifelong learning perspective the level 5 and level 6 of the European Qualification Framework on 25-30 professional diplomas provided by Higher education institutions (average of 2 to 3 per institution) to identify potential confusions in the classification of the qualifications at levels 5 and 6 of the EQF framework in different institutions or countries; Identify nature and source of the distortions in the classification in levels 5 and 6 (conflict with other frameworks: National qualification framework, sectoral framework, local employment constraints...) and to propose guidelines to ensure a better presentation of the qualifications. |
| Duration                       | 01.2008 – 06.2009  |
| Institution                    | EUCEN (Coordinator), University of Oldenburg (Germany), University of Porto (Portugal), University of Primorska (Slovenia), University of Liege (Belgium), University of Versailles-Saint Quentin en Yvelines (France), Zachodniopomorska Szkoła Biznesu (Poland), Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad (Romania), Klaipėda University (Lithuania), University of Bradford (UK), Chelyabinsk State University (Russia)  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/EQFpro/index.html">http://www.eucen.eu/EQFpro/index.html</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>EQUIPE Plus: European Quality in Individualised Pathways in Education Plus</b>   |
| Summary                        | The main objectives of this project were: to inform and complement the work of Bologna process by focussing on quality in ULLL and promoting debate on the theme; to address the quality of universities involvement in Grundtvig and assist in networking between Grundtvig projects and the theme of quality; to provide an overview of quality arrangements in ULLL in 25 countries, identifying the need for further development and making recommendations; to develop indicators of quality ULLL supported by case studies derived from best practice and taking account of definitions and practices in deferent countries; to promote the results of the first Equipe network and of other projects on quality in LLL; to promote training opportunities for staff in ULLL on the theme of quality. |
| Duration                       | 2005 – 2008   |
| Institution                    | EUCEN, University of Turku (Finland), Technical University of Valencia (Spain), University of Bergen (Norway), University of Porto (Portugal), University of Limerick (Ireland), University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris VI (France), University of Brest (France)  |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.cfp.upv.es/webs/equipeplus/index/index.jsp">http://www.cfp.upv.es/webs/equipeplus/index/index.jsp</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>IDEAL: Identify, Evaluate and Validate. Transfer and adaptation of a system for the validation of formal and informal learning</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>Can the RPL contribute to solve a human resources problem? The lack of teachers.</p> <p>Context Mutations in Europe: education is in the heart of consideration but we observe a real decrease of interest for the teacher's career. The objective of the project is to study how to fight against teacher's career shortage observed in certain countries in Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Setting up of an efficient framework of APEL</li> <li>• Increasing LLL training of the teachers by Universities</li> </ul> |
| Duration                       | 2010 – 2013  |
| Institution                    | University of Brest (coordinator) and 5 other partners   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://ideal.ulb.ac.be/">http://ideal.ulb.ac.be/</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>IMPLEMENT: Implementing ULLL through training and development</b>  |
| Summary              | <p>From "rhetoric to practice" to "make LLL a reality". This aim remains a key priority on the European Policy agenda while offering crucial challenges in professional practice for all educational institutions and stakeholders. But how can universities do justice to their responsibility and live up to their role as "important social actors contributing to the better integration of adult learners, in particular through the recognition of informal and non-formal learning? How could universities be supported "to invest in services for learners" and to "better use their partnerships and effectively communicate the results of their cooperative activities?" How can they become truly LLL universities?</p> <p>The results of the BeFlex Plus project make clear recommendations in response to these questions and the excellent training materials also offer a valuable learning resource for university staff and linked target groups to reflect their insitutional situation, to develop action plans, and to IMPLEMENT changes.</p> <p>Thus the aim of the IMPLEMENT project is to support institutions to become real LLL-Universities. The objectives are to further disseminate and actively exploit the highly praised results of the BeFlex Plus project and particulary the idea that the potential for transfer and implementation is at its peak when key partners are supported to act as multipliers and to adapt and work with the materials according to their own needs and the specifics of their home university and national context.</p> <p>Value will be added to the existing training materials by adapting them to national needs, using them in real training at institutional, national and transnational events, and by developing and delivering an online version to provide a sustainable and dynamic solution for the longer</p> |

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|                                | term, exploitation of the learning resources and best practice examples.  |
| Duration                       | 2010 – 2012   |
| Institution                    | EUCEN (Belgium, Coordinator), Bibby Rumbelow Ltb (UK), University of Graz (Austria), Blaise Pascal University (France), Johannes-Gutenberg University Mainz (Germany), National Knowledge Centre for Validation of Prior Learning (Denmark), University College London (UK), TecMinho, University of Minho (Portugal), University of Genoa (Italy), University of Malta (Malta) |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://implement.eucen.eu">http://implement.eucen.eu</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>OBSERVAL: European Observatory of validation of non-formal and informal learning.</b>  |
| Summary                        | <p>Aims of the project: to develop a strong network for the transfer and development of innovation, and integrated European solutions for the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning; to contribute to increasing participation in lifelong learning; to reinforce cooperation between actors and sectors;</p> <p>Objectives of the project: to create a permanent European Observatory on validation of non-formal and informal learning. The Observatory is based on a European network of national experts (including actors from learning and training providers in all sectors and NGOs), who have a leading role in their countries and a global vision of existing practices; to collect and analyse existing data and present them in a common format that allows both comparison and articulation of practices developed in different contexts or sectors, and their evaluation using criteria defined on the basis of the "common principles"; to identify regulations, organisation, pilot projects and experiments, standards and reference frameworks, tools and methods, purposes and approaches in the workplace, results registered (access, credits, exemptions, award of qualifications etc.) and statistics available for the development of practice.</p> |
| Duration                       | Finished in 2010  |
| Institution                    | total of 27 partners from various countries   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.observal.org/">http://www.observal.org/</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>OBSERVAL-Net. European Observatory of validation of non-formal and informal learning.</b>  |
| Summary              | OBSERVAL-NET is a 2-year project coordinated by EUCEN and funded under the KA1 activity of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme that intends to set up a stakeholder-centric network of organisations supporting the validation of non-formal and informal learning (VNIL) in Europe. The core of the network will lie in the |

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|                                | <p>formation of national working groups in the 8 participating countries. Each national working group will organise a series of national stakeholder forums, bringing together key stakeholders in VNIL and political decision-makers to coordinate policy implementation in the field. These national networks will be supplemented by a cross-national level of networking. It will be made up of three expert committees plus a policy group, which will examine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bottom up approach - the role of grassroots initiatives in supporting VNIL, and strategies towards their mainstreaming.</li> <li>• The VNIL profession - the competence profile required for VNIL advisors.</li> <li>• Work-based competence - success factors in the implementation of VNIL in employment settings</li> </ul> <p>Policy group. Representatives from 8 different European ministries comprise this group. These policymakers and some stakeholders representing other related VNIL initiatives are the peer-learning group for sharing strategies on VNIL at high level.</p> <p>Aims and Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create transversal networks capable of developing national and transnational evidence-based models of best practices in VNIL</li> <li>• Develop coherent, comprehensive and flexible models for VNIL practices and recommendations, drawn from a comparative analysis of examples of best practices across European countries</li> <li>• Mainstream these practices through strategic development and policy making at national-regional level</li> </ul> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    | <p>EUCEN (coordinator), University of Sciences and Technology Lille 1 (France), Centre Régional de Ressources Pédagogiques et de Développement de la Qualité de la Formation (France), Navreme Boheme (Czech Republic), CPZ International Center for Knowledge Promotion (Slovenia), 3s Research Laboratory (Austria), National Knowledge Center for Validation of Prior Learning (Denmark), Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Switzerland), InHolland University (Netherlands), Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Czech Republic), Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (Slovenia), Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (Austria), Central Denmark Region (Denmark), General Secretariat of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) (Switzerland), Regionaal Platform Arbeidsmarktbeleid Noord-Holland Noord (Netherlands), Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle (Luxemburg),</p>  |
| Publications and other Sources | <p><a href="http://www.observal-net.eu/homepage">http://www.observal-net.eu/homepage</a></p>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b> | <b>REFINE: Recognising Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education.</b> |
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| Summary                        | The aims of Refine are: to test the tools for a European methodological framework for the recognition of non-formal and informal Learning and to foster trans-national and trans-sectoral collaboration; to build mutual trust in the practices and procedures. |
| Duration                       | 2004 – 2006   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1 (coordinator) and EUCEN, FRANCAS, AFPA org.   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html">http://www.eucen.eu/REFINE/All.html</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>SIRUS: Shaping Inclusive and Responsive University Strategies</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>The SIRUS project aimed to support Europe's universities in implementing the commitments made in the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning and thus assisting them in developing their specific role as lifelong learning institutions forming a central pillar of the Europe of Knowledge.</p> <p>This project offered universities with different profiles and interests in lifelong learning (LLL), and which were at different stages of LLL implementation, an opportunity to develop and enhance their strategic LLL approaches, in interactive discussion with colleagues from all over Europe. At the same time, it allowed them to contribute to the development of policy recommendations for the European Higher Education Area.</p> |
| Duration                       | 03.2010 – 02-2011  |
| Institution                    | European University Association (EUA), University of Lille 1 (France),   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.sirus-project.eu/">http://www.sirus-project.eu/</a>  |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b><i>The Bologna Process – Towards the European Higher Education Area</i></b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>Effects or impacts of the Bologna Process (strategic goals), as well as looking at the implementation process (operational goals) at the level of the Bologna Process as a whole.</p> <p>Main findings related <u>to research mapping tasks</u>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Flexibility in the admission process allows meeting the educational needs of minority language groups;</li> <li>5. Flexible access and curriculum;</li> <li>6. Flexible learning opportunities will be designed to meet adult needs and reduce dropout rates for life-long learning increase.</li> </ol> |
| Duration                       |  |
| Institution                    |  |
| Publications and other Sources | The Bologna Process Independent Assessment: The first decade of working on the European Higher Education Area.   |

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|  | <p>Volume 1: Detailed assessment report</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_1_detailed_rept.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_1_detailed_rept.pdf</a></p> <p>Volume 2: Case Studies and appendices</p> <p>Source: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education//doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_2_cases_appendices.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education//doc/bologna_process/independent_assessment_2_cases_appendices.pdf</a></p> <p>Eurodice report “Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: The Impact of the Bologna Process“</p> <p><a href="http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf">http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/122EN.pdf</a></p> |
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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>TRANSFINE: “Transfer between Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education”</b>  |
| Summary                        | The objectives of the project were: to collect, analyse and build on work already carried out at national and EU level in the 3 programme areas and across formal, informal and non-formal education; to investigate the feasibility of an integrated set of procedures for a system of transfer and accumulation of qualifications; to create, develop and propose the principles, methods and tools for such a system; and to construct a specification for pilot projects to test the proposals. |
| Duration                       | 2002 – 2003   |
| Institution                    | University of Lille 1 (coordinator) and EUCEN   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.univ-lille1.fr/transfine/">http://www.univ-lille1.fr/transfine/</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>VaLEx: Valuing Learning from Experience</b>  |
| Summary                        | Social Inclusion through APEL: Valuing Learning from Experience (VaLEx)   |
| Duration                       | 2003 – 2005   |
| Institution                    | Glasgow Caledonian University (Pilot, Lead), University of South Brittany (France), University of Stirling, University of Warwick, Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland), University of Brussels (Belgium), University of Turku (Finland), University of Tartu (Estonia) |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.valex-apel.com">http://www.valex-apel.com</a>   |

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| <b>Project Title</b>           | <b>WINKIT – The women's tool kit for the identification and recognition of informal learning outcomes.</b>   |
| Summary                        | <p>The recognition of learning outcomes acquired informally where they are taken into consideration, are often not given equal status as outcomes from formal and non-formal contexts and are very often not recognised at all either socially or on an institutional level. This impedes the equality of opportunity for women, because they are the group who spend most time in informal learning environments without being aware of the potential these learning outcomes can represent given the right circumstances.</p> <p>The WINKIT project aims at providing innovative means to reduce inequalities in using outcomes of non-formal and informal learning by providing innovative tools to include the recognition and identification of women's informal learning outcomes. It places the emphasis on making the learning outcomes of women's informal learning visible and valuable to the women themselves, their social and family networks, and in such a way to open and facilitate pathways leading to more formal recognition (in employment, by accreditation ). The project will link these learning outcomes into the European Key Competences for lifelong learning, putting the emphasis on learning to learn because this will spill over into many of the 7 other defined key competences.</p> <p>Providing methods and tools to make these learning outcomes visible, valid and authentic will also enhance the value of these skills and competences acquired informally and should therefore make them more attractive for men too. WINKIT also aims at promoting a fairer sharing of these tasks, thus furthering the objectives of the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010.</p> |
| Duration                       | 12.2007 – 11.2009  |
| Institution                    | Collectif Régional pour L'Information et la Formation des Femmes (France, Coordinator), Kardis Kadrovski Inzeniring D.O.O. (Slovenia), Centrum För Flexibelt Lärande Soderhamns Kommun (Sweden), University of Flensburg (Germany)   |
| Publications and other Sources | <a href="http://www.winkit.eu/">http://www.winkit.eu/</a>  |



OPENING HIGHER EDUCATION TO ADULTS (HEAD)  
**WORKSHOP PROGRAMME**  
**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



Deutsches Institut für *German Institute for*  
Erwachsenenbildung *Adult Education*  
Leibniz-Zentrum für *Leibniz Centre for*  
Lebenslanges Lernen *Lifelong Learning*

## DG Education and Culture

### Developing the Adult Learning Sector, Contract EAC 2012-0074

#### Project Workshop: Opening Higher Education to Adults

30 November 2012

German Institute for Adult Education – Leibniz Centre for Lifelong Learning (DIE),  
Heinemannstrasse 12-14, 53175 Bonn, Germany

#### 29 November

18.00 Registration, Check In

19.00 Optional joint dinner

#### 30 November

9.00 – 9.30 **Welcome**

Prof Dieter Gnahs (DIE directorate)

Martina NI-Cheallaigh (DG EAC, Deputy Head of Unit B3 – Adult Education, Grundtvig)

Prof Karin Dollhausen, Prof Andrä Wolter (Project coordination)

9.30 – 11.00 **Presentation of the study**

Prof Karin Dollhausen: Background, purpose, and aims of the study

Prof Andrä Wolter/Prof Karin Dollhausen: Key findings of the study

- adult learners in higher education
- factors impacting on adult participation in higher education
- models of flexible delivery of higher education programmes and learning provisions
- institutional and policy implications

Prof Maria Slowey: Commentary to the key findings of the study

11.00 – 11.15 **Coffee Break**

11.15 – 11.30 **Introduction workshops**

Organisation, time schedule, and emphases of discussions

11.30 – 13.30 **Workshops**

Workshop A: Success factors for opening higher education and higher education institutions to adult learners

Presentation/moderation: Dr Walburga Freitag

Input/minutes: Anna Spexard

The workshop focuses the findings of the study concerning factors that facilitate or inhibit adult participation in higher education. A range of factors could be identified aligned with known findings from previous research. Yet the findings of the study open a new perspective, as the factors found can be ascribed to different levels of action – governmental, institutional, and individual. The workshop discussion aims at the validation of these findings. The participants are invited to share their experiences and considerations referring to the following questions:

- Which factors at which level of action are most important to forward the opening of higher education and higher education institutions to adult learners?
- What should be relevant actions to be taken at which level to support adult participation in higher education?

Workshop B: Transferability of good/best practice of flexible delivery of higher education programmes and learning provisions

Presentation/moderation: Dr Helmut Vogt

Input/minutes: Felicia Scheliga

The workshop focuses the findings from a compilation of 20 examples of higher education programmes, which were analysed by cooperating national experts from different European and non-European countries. The study shows that flexible delivery of higher education programmes requires as well didactical and organisational flexibility as supportive institutional structures and networks, financial sustainability and regulatory frameworks at national level, which forward the inclusion of so called non-traditional students in higher education. The participants are invited to discuss the following questions:

- How can the transferability of the good/best practice be estimated? Which features of the good/best practice suit/do not suit for transfer?
- What action should be taken at institutional, regional and national level to improve both the transferability and adaptation of good/best practice?

Workshop C: Policy implications for opening higher education and higher education institutions to adult learners, i.e. non-traditional adult learners

Presentation/moderation: Prof Katarina Popovic

Input/minutes: Susanne Lattke

The workshop concentrates on the policy implications for opening higher education and higher education institutions to adult learners. It focuses the findings of the study concerning the definitions of “adult learners” in higher education, the state of statistics and adult education research and higher education systems in the European countries the study covers. The study shows that there are significant needs for further development and research. The participants are invited to share their experiences and considerations referring to the following questions:

- Which actions should be taken at national and institutional level to reach “adults” as a special target group for higher education?
- Which actions should be taken at European and national level to improve statistical information of adults in the sense of non-traditional learners in higher education?
- Which possibilities for campaigning and forwarding networking of higher education institutions with relevant stakeholders/institutions should be envisaged with regard to forward the opening of higher education institutions to adult learners?

13.30 – 14.30 **Lunch**

14.30 – 16.30 **Workshops**

Continuation of workshop sessions after changing groups of participants

16.30 – 16.45 **Coffee Break**

16.45 – 18.00 **Plenum**

Presentation/moderation: Prof Andrä Wolter

- Presentation of central results of workshop sessions by presenters/moderators
- Feedback from participants
- Final conclusions – outlook on finalising the study by project coordinators
- Opening higher education to adults – outlook on proceedings of DG EAC

18.00 – 18.15 **Farewell**

Prof Karin Dollhausen

18.15 **End**

## HEAD project workshop on 30th November 2012 in Bonn

### Participants

| No | Name                   | Organisation                               | Position  | Country   |
|----|------------------------|--|---|-----------|
| 1  | Marta Abramowicz       | Foundation for a Change                    | President   | PL        |
| 2  | Simon Broek            | Panteia (Research voor Beleid)             | Expert on policy research at Research vor Beleid                            | NL        |
| 3  | Toril Eikaas Eide      | University of Bergen                       | Senior executive officer  | NO        |
| 4  | Prof Paolo Federighi   | Universita di Firenze                      | Professor   | IT        |
| 5  | Dr Jean-Marie Filloque | Université de Bretagne Occidentale (Brest) | Vice rector for Lifelong Learning affairs University of West Britany/Brest) | FR        |
| 6  | Johannes Geffers       | Humboldt University Berlin HU              | Research Assistant  | DE        |
| 7  | Amra Halilovic         | Högskolan Dalarna                          | Programme manager Development of eServices                                  | SE        |
| 8  | Svante Hultman         | ENCELL, Jönköping University               | Project manager   | SE        |
| 9  | Dr Susanne Huss        | Universität Klagenfurt                     | Head of department  | AT        |
| 10 | Dr Alexandra Ioannidou | Open University of Cyprus                  | expert HEAD   | GR/Cyprus |
| 11 | Carol Kasworm          | North Carolina State University            | expert HEAD   | USA       |
| 12 | Prof Dr Ilze Ivanova   | University of Latvia                       | Professor   | LV        |
| 13 | Prof Dr Jyri Manninen  | University of Eastern Finland (UEF)        | Professor/Head of Department  | FI        |
| 14 | Prof Dr Irina Maslo    | University of Latvia                       | Professor   | LV        |
| 15 | Dr Balázs Németh       | University of Pecs                         | Ass. Professor for LLL  | HU        |

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| 16 | Martina Ni Cheallaigh                      | EU Commission DG EAC<br>Unit B3   |  | IE       |
| 17 | Lucilia Maria Pessoa Tavares<br>dos Santos | University of Aveiro  | Ass. Professor   | PT       |
| 18 | Hanne Smidt                                | European University<br>Association (EUA)  | Senior Adviser   | DK/SE    |
| 19 | Keti Tsintsadze                            | Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi<br>State University   | Head of Centre   | Georgia  |
| 20 | Dr Andrea Waxenegger                       | EUCEN-European<br>University Continuing<br>Education Network &<br>University of Graz,<br>Center for Continuing<br>Education | President (Eucen)/Director<br>Center for Continuing<br>Education Univ. Graz) | BE/AT/ES |
| 21 | Huaixin Zhu                                | Zhejiang University   | Professor  | CN       |
| 22 | Tihomir Ziljak                             | Public Open University<br>Zagreb  | Professor  | HR       |

### Workshop participants from project team (DIE Bonn and HU Berlin)

| No | Name                       | Organisation                                       | Position                      | Country |
|----|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------|
| 23 | Ulf Banscheraus            |  | Research Assistant            | DE      |
| 24 | Prof. Dr. Karin Dollhausen | Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung e.V. DIE | Professor/ Head of department | DE      |
| 25 | Prof. Dr. Dieter Gnahs     | Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung e.V. DIE | Senior Researcher             | DE      |
| 26 | Susanne Lattke             | Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung e.V. DIE | Research Associate            | DE      |
| 27 | Felicia Scheliga           | Deutsches Institut für Erwachsenenbildung e.V. DIE | Research Associate            | DE      |
| 28 | Anna Spexard               | Humboldt University Berlin HU                      | Research Assistant            | DE      |

### Workshop participants from advisory board

| No. | Name                         | Organisation  | Position                               | Country |
|-----|------------------------------|---|--|---------|
| 29  | Dr Walburga Katarina Freitag | HIS Hochschul- Informations-System GmbH   | Head of department                     | DE      |
| 30  | Prof Katarina Popovic        | University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy, Department for Adult Education / Adult Education Society (AES)                           | Professor / President (AES)            | RS      |
| 31  | Prof Maria Slowey            | Dublin University, Higher Education Research Centre and Development   | Professor/ Director                    | IE      |
| 32  | Helmut Vogt                  | German Association for University Continuing and Distance Education (DGWF) / University of Hambug, Centre of continuing education (AWW) | Vice president (DGWF) / director (AWW) | DE      |

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