

Higher education policy issues and trends

An update on higher education policy issues in 11 Western countries, 2003

CHEPS – Higher education monitor

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Trends en topics: een samenvatting

1.1 Trends en onderwerpen in beleid en structuur

In het kader van de CHEPS Higher Education Monitor wordt jaarlijks een inventarisatie gemaakt van de meest in het oog springende ontwikkelingen van het afgelopen jaar in de structuur en het beleid (ten aanzien) van het hoger onderwijs. Naast de negen West-Europese landen die in voorgaande edities werden besproken worden nu ook de ontwikkelingen in Portugal en Australië gepresenteerd. Bij die inventarisatie gebruiken we vier thema's als leidraad: de infrastructuur van het hoger onderwijs en onderzoek, bekostiging en financiën, bestuur en beheer, en kwaliteit.

Voor we de belangrijkste onderwerpen op een rij zetten, maken we enkele opmerkingen over het gebruik van de gepresenteerde informatie. De beschrijving in de onderstaande paragrafen geeft een overzicht van de belangrijkste onderwerpen in het publieke en politieke debat over hoger onderwijs. Het is van belang daarbij te onderstrepen dat het overzicht alleen de belangrijkste onderwerpen en de recente ontwikkelingen in die debatten weergeeft. Verder kan het zijn dat onderwerpen die gedurende een langere periode als belangrijk worden gezien niet in het overzicht worden meegenomen, omdat we ons bij het samenstellen vooral hebben gericht op datgene wat recent op de agenda's is verschenen.

De informatie kan op twee manieren worden gebruikt. Bij het eerste type gebruik zal de lezer zich vanuit een nationaal perspectief vragen stellen als 'Staan voor ons belangrijke onderwerpen ook in andere landen op de agenda?' en 'Zijn onderwerpen die in andere landen van belang blijken ook voor ons land wellicht relevant?'. Het tweede type gebruik gaat uit van een bredere interesse in hoger onderwijs (beleid): 'Wat zijn de belangrijke onderwerpen en trends in het Europese hoger onderwijs?'. In het overzicht (tabel 1) zijn de onderwerpen weergegeven die in tenminste drie landen als belangrijk zijn te kenschetsen. Voor deze onderwerpen zullen we ook een nadere toelichting geven. Bij het gebruik van de tabel en de toelichtingen moet de lezer behoedzaam te werk gaan. Het is van belang in te zien dat zowel de toonzetting waarin de debatten in de verschillende landen worden gevoerd alsmede de beleidscontext aanzienlijk kunnen verschillen. De beschrijvingen in onderstaande paragrafen kunnen van dienst zijn waar het gaat om het begrijpen van de onderwerpen in de beleidscontext.

Voor we ingaan op de issues in de vier aandachtsgebieden staan we stil bij een opmerkelijke constatering. In zes landen zijn de discussies en beleid ten aanzien van hoger onderwijsbeleid vervat in een omvattende context. Dit zien we in discussies over beleidsnota's (Australië en het VK) en over discussies over nieuwe hoger onderwijs wetgeving (Oostenrijk, Denemarken, Finland en Vlaanderen). In deze beleidsnota's en wetgeving wordt een breed scala aan onderwerpen (onderwijs, onderzoek, bestuur en beheer, en kwaliteitszorg) behandeld.

1.1.1 Onderwijs infrastructuur

Het Bologna proces heeft in de meeste landen grote invloed op de hoger onderwijs infrastructuur. Met uitzondering van Australië, het VK en Portugal is de invoering en implementatie van een bachelor-master structuur een dominant thema in de hoger onderwijs(beleids)ontwikkeling. Aangezien het echter een open proces is, zien we dat er duidelijk verschillen zijn in de wijze waarop en het tempo waarin invulling aan Bologna wordt gegeven.

Een belangrijk onderscheidend kenmerk is de status van de nieuwe programma's. Er zijn landen waar de bachelor-master structuur als een aanvulling op de bestaande structuur wordt ingevoerd en landen waar de nieuwe structuur de bestaande structuur vervangt. In Duitsland zal de bestaande structuur nog een tijdlang bestaan en ook in Oostenrijk zal de nieuwe structuur de bestaande structuur geleidelijk vervangen (in Oostenrijk mogen nieuwe programma's alleen nog maar in een bachelor-master structuur worden aangeboden). In het Franse hoger onderwijs zijn enkele bestaande diploma's voorzien van een 'bachelor-compatibele' naam, maar met de recente regelgeving wordt de inrichting van volwaardige bachelor en master programma's mogelijk gemaakt en gestimuleerd. De nieuwe regering heeft daarbij voor ogen dat de nieuwe programma's de oude programma's uit het systeem drukken of absorberen. In Nederland vervangt de bachelor-master structuur de oude structuur volledig: instroom in de oude structuur is niet meer mogelijk. In de tijd loopt Nederland iets voor op Vlaanderen aangezien men in Nederland de implementatiefase al volgt. In het Deense hoger onderwijssysteem bestaan bachelor en master diploma's al langer, maar de bachelor programma's waren tot voor kort niet erg populair. Om de aantrekkelijkheid van de bachelor programma's te verhogen worden maatregelen overwogen.

Een tweede kenmerk van de ontwikkelingen in de gradenstructuur is de oriëntatie van de master programma's. In een aantal landen worden twee typen master programma's ontwikkeld: beroepsgerichte masters en academische of onderzoekmasters. Verder is er in enkele landen een discussie op gang gekomen over de vraag waar welke masters mogen worden aangeboden. In Finland, Vlaanderen en Nederland zijn masterprogramma's ontwikkeld in de hogescholen-sector. Daarbij moeten Vlaamse hogescholen echter samenwerken met universiteiten.

Tabel 1: Belangrijkste onderwerpen in het hoger onderwijs(beleid)

Gemeenschappelijke onderwerpen	Oos	Aus	Dk	Fi	Vla	Fr	Du	NI	P	Zw	VK	Totaal
Onderwijs infrastructuur												
Bachelor/master	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		8
Internationalisering	X	X	X	X			X	X		X		7
Deelnamebeleid	X		X		X	X	X				X	6
Personeel beleid	X		X	X		X	X	X			X	7
Onderzoek infrastructuur												
Maatschappelijke relevantie (priorities)		X	X			X		X			X	5
Extra investering in onderzoek			X			X				X	X	4
Financiën												
(gedifferentieerde) Collegegelden	X	X					X	X	X		X	6
Bekostigingssystematiek	X		X	X				X	X			5
Studiefinanciering				X	X	X		X			X	5
Eigendomsrecht van gebouwen			X			X	X					3
Governance												
Prestatie contracten / accountability	X		X	X			X		X			5
Autonomie van HO instellingen	X		X	X		X			X			4
Kwaliteit												
Kwaliteitszorgsystemen			X						X	X		3
Accreditatie	X							X		X		3
Institutional audits		X									X	2

Oos: Oostenrijk; **Aus:** Australië; **Dk:** Denemarken; **Fi:** Finland; **Vla:** Vlaanderen; **Fr,** Frankrijk; **Du:** Duitsland; **NI:** Nederland; **P:** Portugal; **Zw:** Zweden; **VK:** Verenigd Koninkrijk

De veranderingen in de structuur van de hoger onderwijsprogramma's zijn niet het enige resultaat van het Bologna proces. De rationale voor dat proces was om de internationalisering te vergroten. Het is daarom niet verwonderlijk dat in veel landen ook op andere manieren internationalisering hoog op de agenda staat. In Oostenrijk, Denemarken, Finland, Duitsland en Zweden wordt in algemene zin gesproken over het stimuleren en faciliteren van internationale mobiliteit. In Nederland, Finland en Zweden wordt internationalisering ook in de context van internationale concurrentie besproken: de discussies spitsen zich daarbij toe op de mogelijkheden om studenten aan te trekken die (hoge) collegegelden kunnen betalen (dus van buiten de EU). In het VK en Australië is deze benadering al ingeburgerd. Daarbij is het opmerkelijk dat Australische instellingen nu ook filialen in het buitenland inrichten (off-shore provision).

De uitbreiding van de deelname aan en de verbreding van de toegang tot het hoger onderwijs is een onderwerp dat vooral zichtbaar is in Oostenrijk, Denemarken, Vlaanderen, Frankrijk, Duitsland en het VK. De drijvende kracht achter deze discussies is enerzijds de behoefte om de kennismaatschappij te versterken door het aandeel van hoger opgeleiden in de samenleving te vergroten. Anderzijds leeft het besef dat de opkomst en groei van de kennissamenleving de kansongelijkheid kan vergroten, met name voor sociaal-economische achterstandsgroepen. In Oostenrijk en Duitsland is de deelname aan hoger onderwijs relatief laag, hetgeen mogelijk verklaart waarom in deze landen de nadruk van het beleid ligt op het vergroten van de deelname. In het Britse beleid ligt de nadruk sterk op het vergroten van de toegang voor sociaal-economische

achterstandsgroepen. In Frankrijk is er tevens aandacht voor het toegankelijk maken van het hoger onderwijs voor mensen zonder formele toegangskwalificaties maar met elders verworven competenties en ervaringen. In Denemarken en Vlaanderen richt het deelnamebeleid zich vooral op het faciliteren van de studiekeuze van aankomende studenten door de transparantie van het programma-aanbod te vergroten en de informatieverstrekking aan scholieren te verbeteren.

Personeel (wetenschappelijk en onderwijzend) staat in zes landen op de agenda. Wetenschappelijk personeel is de belangrijkste input voor kwalitatief onderwijs en onderzoek. Daarom is een mogelijk gebrek aan continuïteit in de personele bezetting een grote bedreiging voor het hoger onderwijs. Er is een aantal ontwikkelingen die die continuïteit bedreigen. De massificatie, in combinatie met tekorten op de arbeidsmarkt is één van die ontwikkelingen, de aanstaande uittocht van wetenschappelijk personeel door pensionering is een andere bedreigende ontwikkeling. De eerste ontwikkeling is niet in alle landen relevant, de tweede echter wel. Hoe aan gekwalificeerd personeel te geraken is een probleem in alle landen. In Denemarken, Frankrijk en het VK gaan de discussies vooral over het verbeteren van de aantrekkelijkheid van het beroep en de carrière perspectieven van (jonge) onderzoekers. De Duitse discussies gaan over de carrière perspectieven van (jonge) professoren. In Oostenrijk maakt men zich vooral druk over de vraag wie verantwoordelijk is voor personeelsbeleid. In Finland gaat het over de toegankelijkheid van academische carrières voor polytechnic-afgestudeerden.

1.1.2 Onderzoek infrastructuur

In een aantal landen wordt er veel gesproken over de maatschappelijke relevantie van onderzoek en hoe die te vergroten. In Australië en het VK vindt dat zijn neerslag in de formulering van nationale onderzoeksprioriteiten. In Denemarken en Nederland is de strategie gericht op het dynamiseren van het onderzoek in de hoger onderwijsinstellingen en het meer aan te laten sluiten op de maatschappelijke behoeften en ontwikkelingen. Dit sluit aan bij het beleid in Frankrijk en het VK waar het beleid sterk gericht is op het versterken van de relaties tussen hoger onderwijs en bedrijfsleven.

Daarnaast blijkt een duidelijke prioritering voor onderzoek uit de uitbreiding van de publieke budgetten voor onderzoek zoals dat in Denemarken, Frankrijk, Zweden en het VK gebeurt.

1.1.3 Financiën

Het is klaarblijkelijk onmogelijk om over hoger onderwijsbeleid te spreken zonder daarbij de financiën te betrekken. In verscheidene landen komen financiële onderwerpen naar voren. In Oostenrijk gaat de discussie over de effecten van de recent ingevoerde collegegelden. In Portugal wordt de verhoging van collegegelden gezien als een manier om de financiële problemen waarin het hoger onderwijs zich bevindt te verzachten. Soortgelijke overwegingen spelen ook een rol in de Australische en Britse voorstellen om instellingen de mogelijkheid te geven zelf de hoogte van het collegegeld

vast te stellen. Differentiatie van collegegelden is ook in Nederland een onderwerp van gesprek maar de discussies zijn nog in een relatief pril stadium. Het Duitse collegegelden debat duurt al enkele jaren maar het blijft levendig: in enkele *Länder* zijn collegegelden geïntroduceerd voor studenten die te lang over hun studie doen. In de Scandinavische landen blijven collegegelden onbespreekbaar.

In enkele landen staat het bekostigingsstelsel voor universiteiten ter discussie. In Oostenrijk wordt langzamerhand een lump-sum bekostiging ingevoerd, in combinatie met prestatiegebonden overeenkomsten. In Denemarken en Finland bestaan eveneens plannen om meer prestatiegebonden elementen in de universitaire bekostiging op te nemen. In Denemarken betreft het een zogenaamde bachelor-bonus die aan de huidige bekostigingsformule wordt toegevoegd en in Finland wordt ernaar gestreefd om arbeidsmarkt gerelateerde gegevens in de bekostigingstarieven te integreren. Ten aanzien van de Finse polytechnics zijn voorstellen om de bekostiging dynamischer te maken en de middelen voor kapitaaluitgaven in de bekostiging te integreren recentelijk verworpen. De Nederlandse discussies gaan voornamelijk over de wijze waarop het bekostigingsmechanisme het best op de bachelor-master structuur kan aansluiten.

Studiefinanciering staat in vijf landen op de agenda. In Vlaanderen en Frankrijk worden extra beurzen beschikbaar besteld voor speciale groepen studenten. In het VK zal een nationaal beurzenstelsel worden heringevoerd en zullen instellingen verantwoordelijk worden voor het opzetten van beleid gericht op het aantrekken van meer studenten uit sociaal economische achterstandsgroepen. Instellingen kunnen zo hun eigen collegegeld en beurzenpakket samenstellen. In Nederland worden inkomensafhankelijke leningen en academicibelasting op hun merites onderzocht. De Finse overheid is van plan de studiefinanciering te verbeteren voor studenten in lange programma's en voor studenten die in de eindfase van hun studie zijn.

In de meeste landen waar het hoger onderwijs traditioneel een voornamelijk publieke sector was/is waren de gebouwen eigendom van de overheid. In Nederland is het eigendomsrecht van gebouwen een aantal jaren geleden aan de instellingen overgedragen. Vergelijkbare plannen zijn ook in Denemarken, Frankrijk en Duitsland ontwikkeld. In Denemarken zijn die plannen echter uitgesteld tot duidelijk is welke invloed de nieuwe wetgeving op de hoger onderwijs sector heeft. Ook de Franse experimenten zijn uitgesteld. In Duitsland zijn de eigendomsrechten op experimentele basis voor zes universiteiten overgedragen.

1.1.4 Bestuur en beheer

Bestuur en beheer blijken geen groot onderwerp van discussie te zijn. De belangrijkste discussies betreffen de invoering en verdere ontwikkeling van prestatie gebonden overeenkomsten. In Denemarken krijgen de contracten een breder karakter door het opnemen van meer onderwerpen als onderwijs en onderzoek doelstellingen, externe betrekkingen, ICT, management, beheer en arbeidsvoorwaarden.

Een ander thema betreft de autonomie van hoger onderwijsinstellingen. De Deense voorstellen gaan daarbij relatief ver (de universiteiten zullen veel meer autonomie krijgen). In Denemarken, Oostenrijk en Portugal zijn er ook discussies over het hervormen van de interne bestuursstructuren binnen de universiteiten. Deense en (wellicht) Portugese universiteiten zullen een directieraad (trustees) instellen en de gekozen rector (en decanen) vervangen door benoemde personen. Ook in Finland zullen de instellingen meer autonomie krijgen. De polytechnics zullen meer vrijheid krijgen bij het beslissen over zowel hun strategie als operationele onderwerpen, terwijl de universiteiten meer mogelijkheden krijgen om externe middelen te verwerven. De Portugese overheid probeert de autonomie van zowel de publieke als private hoger onderwijsinstellingen te beperken door de verantwoordingsplicht van instellingen te verzwaren

1.1.5 Kwaliteit

De kwaliteit van het hoger onderwijs en onderzoek is in de meeste landen een onderwerp van aanhoudende zorg. Kwaliteit gerelateerde discussies en beleid kennen daarbij drie verschijningsvormen. De eerste vorm zijn de discussies over de 'traditionele' kwaliteitszorgsystemen. In Denemarken wil de overheid het kwaliteitszorgsysteem versterken door kwaliteitscontrole een continue taak van de instellingen te maken en door externe evaluaties ook toegankelijk te maken voor internationale kwaliteitszorg organisaties. In Portugal, waar de overheid niet tevreden is met de effectiviteit van het vigerend systeem, zoekt men naar manieren om het systeem te verbeteren.

De tweede vorm van 'kwaliteits'-discussies gaan over accreditatie. In het Nederlandse hoger onderwijs en in de Oostenrijkse *Fachhochschulen* is een accreditatiesysteem ingevoerd. In Zweden wordt de invoering van accreditatie overwogen als een middel om het kwaliteitszorgsysteem beter af te stemmen op de toenemende internationalisering van het onderwijs.

De discussies over instellingsaudits zijn de derde vorm van kwaliteitsdiscussies. In het VK zijn instellingsaudits recentelijk toegevoegd aan de bestaande kwaliteitszorgprogramma's. De audits moeten een evaluatie van de instellingen als een geheel geven. Soortgelijke audits hebben in Australië de traditionele *discipline reviews* vervangen.

1.2 Discussie

Hoger onderwijs systemen zijn complexe, open systemen. Ze zijn open, niet alleen voor invloeden op het nationaal niveau maar ook voor invloeden die door de ontwikkelingen in andere nationale (hoger onderwijs) systemen . Het vergelijken van de belangrijkste onderwerpen in elf hoger onderwijssystemen moet daarom wel leiden tot een

caleidoscopisch beeld. De lijst van nationale onderwerpen geeft een rijk en dynamisch beeld. Door een momentopname te presenteren, zoals we hebben gedaan, bestaat in die context het gevaar dat het beeld licht vertekend is. We moeten vaststellen dat de voorliggende lijst van gemeenschappelijke onderwerpen min of meer consistent is met de lijsten die we in de vorige jaren hebben gepresenteerd.

2 Introduction

Higher education systems have become open to influences from outside the system. Describing higher education systems in a highly dynamic context therefore requires a regular updating of the information presented. The annual CHEPS Higher Education Monitor¹ update report provides insights into the latest developments in the higher education infrastructure, higher education finance, governance and quality assurance. In the first, and main part of the report the issues most present in public debates and policies are identified and discussed. Information is collected from written and electronic materials as well as consultation of national experts. The first part is concluded with a comparative analysis. In this part, the issues are identified that are common in a number of national systems or even in most systems. No additional information is presented in this section, but the cross-national presentation of issues in some cases casts a different light on the national issues.

The second part provides an overview of statistical trends. The choice of the indicators was mainly driven by the choice of indicators in the EU Detailed work programme on the concrete objectives of education and training systems.

¹ The 'CHEPS higher education monitor' is an ongoing research project aimed at the monitoring of higher education systems and higher education policies in ten (Western) European countries and Australia. A major part of the project is commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The 'CHEPS higher education monitor' consists of in-depth country reports, (describing national systems and policies), thematic reports (providing in-depth comparative analyses of major issues in higher education research), trendreports (identifying changes in quantitative aspects) and a database with quantitative and qualitative information on the higher education systems.

3 Austria

3.1 Educational infrastructure

3.1.1 University reform

Until 1993, Austrian universities had more or less the same structure as they had over the last 200 years, based on the von Humboldt model. In that model, the main decisions were centrally made by the Ministry of Higher Education in Vienna, whilst academic decisions were taken at the universities. In the past decades, Austrian universities have experienced a range of organisational reforms, following the expansion of the universities in the 1960's. The University Organisation Act of 1993 was gradually implemented in the mid 1990's and was in full operation in all universities as from the year 2000. Parallel changes have been the introduction of the *Fachhochschulen* and the establishment of private universities in the 1990's. At the turn of the century the modernisation of the university sector entered its second stage. As part of this process, a new law for university employees was adopted in 2001 and in the same year student fees were introduced (see Kaiser *et al.*, 2002).

The further development of the university sector is formulated in the new Universities Act or *Universitätsgesetz 2002* (UG2002; BMBWK 2002a) which was enacted on July 11 2002. The Act came into force on October 1 2002 and takes full effect on October 1 2003 (except for a part on 'Study Law', which comes into force on January 1 2004). It can be seen as a final episode in the transformation of the state controlled universities into independent institutions; a transformation that aimed at improving the academic performance and the economic efficiency of universities.

3.1.2 The Fachhochschulen-sector

Since its establishment in 1994, the *Fachhochschule* sector has shown a substantial increase in students up to 14.338 students in 2001-2002. Women are underrepresented in the *Fachhochschule* sector both in terms of enrolment and of teaching staff. This is mainly due to the technical orientation of study programs. However, the proportion of female students has already grown from approximately 25% in 1994-1995 to 33% in 2001-2002 (Fachhochschulrat, 2001). It is planned to expand the range of subjects by adding programs in the fields of social work, health care and nursing. The structure of such programs would be suitable for the *Fachhochschule* sector and such programs are also located at this level abroad.

3.1.3 The private sector

As from 2000, foreign universities as well as private Austrian institutions are entitled by law to act as universities and to offer study programs in Austria. The University Accreditation Act of 1999 regulated the criteria for educational institutions and the procedure to get accreditation as a private university. Accreditation by the Austrian Accreditation Council is one of the prerequisites to be allowed to award degrees to graduates of these programs. Initially, the private institutions were mainly engaged in the field of business and engineering. In 2002 however, private medical universities and a music university have joined the Austrian higher education system. These private universities cannot receive public funding from the central government, but they can receive additional funding from the provinces (Länder).

3.2 Bologna process²

3.2.1 The university sector

Following one of the objectives of the Bologna Declaration, the Diploma Supplement³ is included in the UG2002. As of October 2003, the diploma supplement will be issued to all graduates upon his/her request. In relation to two-cycle structure of higher education programs – as foreseen in the Bologna Declaration – the aim is to offer at least 50% of all fields of study as bachelor and master programs by 2006. Newly established programs must run the bachelor/master structure and for these it is not possible to run a program in both the old (Diploma) and the new (Ba/Ma) structure.

In order to promote international mobility, the implementation of the ECTS system has been compulsory for bachelor/master studies since 1999 and is compulsory for programs in the old diploma-structure as of October 2002 (since the UG2002).

3.2.2 Fachhochschulen

With the amendment to the Fachhochschule Study Act (FHSStG), which came in effect on May 1, 2002, the legal basis for introducing bachelor and master study programs has been established in the *Fachhochschule* sector. The first bachelor and master programs at *Fachhochschulen* will start in the academic year of 2003/2004. The amendment also provides for the introduction of the ECTS system, but the majority of the Austrian *Fachhochschulen* have already introduced the ECTS system in order to facilitate student and teacher exchange under the framework of the Socrates program.

² This part is primarily based on BMBWK (2002b)

³ The diploma supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma by national institutions. The supplement is based on a template from a Joint European Commission/Council of Europe/UNESCO working party, which aims to improve the international 'transparency' and recognition of qualifications. It provides a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the study program concerned.

To stimulate the internationalisation process within the Austrian *Fachhochschule* sector, a special ‘Committee for International Affairs’ was recently set up by the ‘Austrian Fachhochschulen Conference’. This committee ensures an optimal information flow and a coherent implementation of international programs within the whole sector.

3.3 Finance

3.3.1 The university sector

In the financial domain, universities received real one line budgets. Under the new UG2002, the universities will still be mainly funded by the Federal Government. Each university will receive a global budget, established in advance for a three-year period. This will consist of a basic budget and formula-based budget. The basic budget will remain subject to negotiations between the university and the Ministry of Science, according to the existing model. The formula-based component will amount to 20% of the global budget. The formula-based amounts apportioned to individual universities will be calculated in accordance with qualitative and quantitative indicators relating to teaching, research, the advancement and appreciation of the arts, and social goals. The Minister will, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, and after consultation of the universities, establish the performance indicators and the method of calculation of the formula-based budgets by 31 December 2005. Furthermore, the universities will report their income from third-party funds and investment income. These shall remain at the disposal of the universities and shall not reduce state allocations.

The universities will be free, within the limits of their duties and the performance agreements, to dispose of their global budgets. The Rectorates are expected to conduct the financial affairs of their universities according to principles of efficiency, feasibility, and transparency. The Federal Government will not be liable for the universities’ debts and the universities’ financial management shall be examined by the Federal Audit Office. Therefore, every university has to install an accounting system, including income and expenditure accounting, and a reporting system under the responsibility of the Rectorate. The Rectorate has to annually submit a performance report, the annual financial statements and an auditor’s report, to the university council by 30 April. The university council will appoint a registered auditor and in some cases also a chartered accountant which is independent of the university. These have to audit the financial statements not later than six months before the end of the current financial year. The university council needs to approve the performance report and financial statements submitted by the Rectorate within four weeks and forward them to the Minister.

The UG2002 also provides funding for the transition period. Starting on January 1 2004, the Federal Government will allocate to the universities an annual global amount of €1.660 million for the period from 2004–2006 to cover the expenses arising

from the fulfilment of their duties under the new Act. University budgets for succeeding years shall be based on the respective performance agreements. In addition to the federal allocations under subsections 1–2, the universities shall receive a one-time payment of €11 million for 2004, and thereafter annual amounts of €4 million to finance the expenses incurred as a result of implementation of the new Act.

3.3.2 Fachhochschulen

The funding mechanism for the *Fachhochschulen* has not changed. The federal government grants a subsidy per study place per academic year, which is based on 90% of the calculated costs per study place. This corresponds to €6.903 in the technical subjects, €5.813 in the business fields and €6.104 in interdisciplinary study programs per study place and academic year (BMBWK, 2002c). The amount per study place did not change in 2002. However, total public expenditure on *Fachhochschulen* increased due to the further expansion of the sector.

3.3.3 Tuition fees

Tuition fees were for the first time introduced in the academic year 2001/2002. The fee of €363,36 per semester had a profound effect on the total number of students enrolled in universities. The total number of students declined with 21.3% compared to the year before. The number of new entrants declined with 14.5% in the winter semester of 2001/2002 compared to the same semester the year before (BMBWK 2002d). These declines are partly due to the fact that people often enrolled as students to be eligible for social benefits related to the status of students, but never actively studied.

According to the new UG2002, students who have been admitted to more than one degree program, at one or more universities, have to pay the university fees only once. University fees paid by students attending a degree program jointly offered by more than one university, or admitted to more than one degree program at different universities are divided among the universities concerned.

3.3.4 Scholarships for international mobility

In order to promote international mobility an extensive range of scholarship programs is available for students and graduates alike, in addition to the range of means-tested financial aid measures. For their study periods spent abroad in the EU-, government- or university-mobility programs, outgoing students do not pay tuition fees at Austrian universities. The same is true for students coming to Austria in the framework of such programs.

3.4 Governance

The internal organization of the universities will change considerably. The universities themselves can decide on how to subdivide their organisation into faculties, departments, institutes etc. However, the central organs and decision-making authorities are prescribed by law including the University Council, the Rectorate and the Senate as the major bodies of governance. Under the legislation of 1993, universities are governed by the Senate, the Rector and the Vice-rectors. This situation remains until December 31 2003. The University Council is the central strategic organ with far-reaching decision-making authority (e.g., election of the Rector on the basis of a tripartite list of the Senate and the Vice-Rectors) and approval reservations (e.g., on the development plan, the financial statements, the organisation plan, and the performance agreements with the state). It consists of 5, 7 or 9 members external to the university, of which 2, 3 or 4 are nominated by the federal government and the other 2, 3 or 4 by the university. These agree on the 5th, 7th or 9th member. The Rectorate consists of the Rector and up to four Vice-Rectors, who essentially prepare the proposals on the decisions for the University Council. Finally, the Senate can make statements on the individual proposals of the Rectorate, makes its own decisions concerning mainly study matters, and can set up Appointment Committees and *Habilitation* Committees. In the Senate the professors hold the majority.

Under part I of the UG (the part on organizational law), universities become legal public entities. As legal entities they will obtain autonomy on personnel, budget and legal matters (Zechlin, 2002: 4). In terms of personnel, universities become the employers of their employees and will conclude their own collective/tariff agreements. This will lead to the development of a new law for university employees, which will replace the old law for university employees that took effect in 2001.

3.5 Quality assurance

The *Fachhochschulrat* (Fachhochschule Council) is the authority responsible for the accreditation of *Fachhochschule* degree programs, the evaluation of *Fachhochschulen* and *Fachhochschule* degree programs. While the initial accreditation only refers to the *Fachhochschule* degree programs, two types of evaluation procedures will be carried out from 2003 onwards: an institutional evaluation and a degree program-related evaluation. In 2002, the *Fachhochschulrat* adopted the guidelines for the evaluation of the *Fachhochschule*-sector, and established the fields that will be evaluated on an institutional level and the ones evaluated on the program level. The main issues to be evaluated at the institutional level are organisational structures and procedures, human resource development, overall teaching policies, admission procedures, quality management, internationalisation and physical infrastructure and resources. On the program level issues like the curriculum, theses, self-assessment reports and staff are included in the fields that will be evaluated. Special attention now is given to the

international comparability and recognition of bachelor and master programs as well as the awarded degrees.

4 Australia

The higher education system awaits the Nelson report (new minister) expected in May 2003. It is expected that it will more or less continue where the West-report (1997/8) left off. In terms of what already has been leaked, the report will be much in line with the UK White Paper (see paragraph on the United Kingdom).

4.1 Educational infrastructure

The expansion of the system in terms of student numbers continues, although the massive growth of the early 1990s (10% annual growth) has melted away (annual growth by the end of the 1990s is around 2%).

A distinct characteristic of Australian higher education is the size of the overseas student business. The growth in this business continues but there is a major change. Where in the past the students came to Australia for education, now the Australian institutions go overseas (Off-shore provision).

Table 2: Percentage of over-seas students in total enrolment by level of course

	post graduate	undergraduate	total
1990	8%	5%	5%
1991	7%	5%	6%
1992	8%	6%	6%
1993	8%	6%	6%
1994	9%	6%	7%
1995	10%	7%	8%
1996	11%	8%	8%
1997	12%	9%	10%
1998	14%	10%	11%
1999	17%	11%	12%
2000	20%	12%	14%

4.2 Research infrastructure

4.2.1 Setting national priorities

The Prime Minister announced Australia's first set of national research priorities in late 2002. The setting of national research priorities for Commonwealth funded research is intended to help integrate Australia's research effort more closely with the community's economic, social and environmental aspirations.

In developing these priorities for 2002, greater prominence was given to science and technology than the social sciences and humanities. The Government therefore started working in 2003 with the social science and humanities research communities through their learned academies to ensure full engagement with the national research priorities.

4.2.2 Performance based research training scheme

In 2002 a performance based research training scheme was introduced. In this scheme three performance criteria have been defined:

- Number of grants attracted (40%)
- Number of refereed publications (10%)
- Graduate output (50%)

A national pool of higher education research places has been created (some 25,000) which will be distributed over institutions on the basis of these performance criteria. In the scheme, a transitory period has been defined (a level playing field) to allow institutions to prepare for this new approach. After that, resources/ places will be redistributed based on one criterion: graduation on time. If this criterion is not met (no graduation or over time), an institution will lose this place. The place goes back in the pool and is redistributed. The system operates for all research degrees (masters and PhD).

4.3 Finance

In 2001 there was a review of science, which led government to inject 1.3 billion Au\$ over the next 10 years. Rationale for this increase has been the necessity to invest in the knowledge society. However, the majority of those funds will be released at the end of that period (passing the buck to the next government(s)).

The Nelson report will have a strong focus on financial aspects. However, it is still unclear what the heading of the new policy will be. Speculations circulate regarding individual tuition fees (per institution/program), and the introduction of a student loan scheme. It is expected that the government will aim to make the system more competitive and increase student choice. What it all means for HECS etc. is unclear. No significant increases in money for higher education is foreseen.

4.4 Governance

No major changes have taken place regarding governance issues. There have been some initiatives at the State level to change the legislation so that State governments are not liable for the effects of institutional entrepreneurial activities.

4.5 Quality assurance

Australia has fully adopted the audit approach. The traditional disciplinary reviews have been abolished. Institutional audits are organised by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). The AUQA is an independent, not-for-profit national agency that will promote, audit, and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education. AUQA

was formally established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in March 2000. It operates independently of governments and the higher education sector under the direction of a Board of Directors. AUQA is owned by the Commonwealth, which takes care of its operational funding. The first round of audits has started in 2002. A system of trained auditors, both national and international has been put in place. Most emphasis is on teaching and learning. For details on the AUQA and its operations see their website (AUQA, 2003).

5 Denmark

The change from a social-democratic government to a liberal government in November 2001 has had quite some impact on the higher education policy setting in Denmark. The new government organised countrywide debates about the future direction of the education sector as a whole. This resulted in a draft University Act that is supposed to become definite policy in the course of 2003. The new University Act will have a substantially impact on the relationships within higher education. In addition to the new University Act, main recent policy issues concentrate on the research infrastructure and on information technology infrastructure.

5.1 Educational infrastructure

5.1.1 General education policies

The Danish government wants to stimulate growth and dynamics in society and therefore it argues that the education system must deliver top quality. This is seen as the only key to coping with international competition as a result of globalisation. There is a need for innovation to sustain high professional standards, quality, relevance and flexibility in the whole education sector. To that end, the government presented a nation wide action plan for *Better Education* in September 2002 (Ministry of Education, 2002a). This plan proposes to launch a number of reforms, particularly concerning general upper secondary education, including the Gymnasium, and the HF (higher preparatory examination), and the university sector. In the vocational sector, the commercial and technical programs are said to require innovation. Other major issues concern the strengthening of natural sciences and internationalisation throughout the whole education system. Finally, further education is envisaged to be extended with new vocationally-oriented adult education programs.

To support the developments in the higher education system it is envisaged to elaborate on the recently started integration of information technology (IT) in education (as mentioned in the 2001-2002 CHEPS Higher Education Monitor update). A setback in the IT ambitions was the 2002 abolishment of the Denmark's Virtual University (DVUNI) which was established in 2000. This co-ordinating body offering further training and undergraduate and post-graduate courses via flexible net-based distance learning for Danish higher education institutions was not deemed a necessity.

In May 2002, the Danish parliament passed legislation on transparency and openness in education (Ministry of Education 2002b). This legislation must lead to better/ comparable information on education and institutions for students and their parents. This will enhance opportunities to make well-informed choices. In addition, it provides institutions with systematic information, enabling to compare themselves with others and to learn from good practice. As a prerequisite, institutions must put detailed

information on an internet site, amongst other things including their pedagogical principles, organisation, grade averages, and evaluation reports.

5.1.2 A new University Act: Education related issues

The draft for a new University Act is the outcome of a process that started in 2000 with the Research Commission that reported in 2001 (The Danish Folketing, 2003). The new government that was installed in November 2001 organised country wide political discussions on a reform of Danish universities. These discussions were a major input for the draft University Act which was proposed to the parliament at January 15 2003. It is envisaged to implement the new act in the second half of 2003. The main education-related topics are the following (Ministry of STI, 2003a):

- reducing dropout in university programs.
- guarantee a high level of flexibility and mobility between Danish universities and to/from foreign universities.
- introduce a co-ordinated intra-university enrolment scheme (InterUniversitaer Koordineret Tilmelding, IU- KOT) to ensure bachelors a genuine choice of admission to master programs.
- to change to the 3+2 bachelor master structure where the educational structure has not already been altered.
- introduce a modular structure for all bachelor and master programs.
- intensify the individual student counselling service, for example through expanding the use of the electronic self-service systems.

5.2 Research infrastructure

The proposals of the Danish Research Commission for an overall strategy for Danish research can be seen as the main current directive in the research arena. This strategy entails the following interconnected principles (Ministry of STI, 2001; The Danish Research Commission, 2001):

- The ability of research institutions to take up new challenges must be strengthened within a framework of freedom and responsibility.
- Research must be renewed through a targeted effort, increased recruitment and a more attractive labour market for researchers.
- The quality control of research must be improved, cooperation among research institutions be developed and all research institutions must contribute actively to research-based education.
- The structure of the research advisory system must be simplified and the system of funding made more transparent.
- This strengthened research effort presupposes increased investment.

As a follow-up on these ideas, the draft University Act wants to ensure that universities stimulate the growth of knowledge, welfare and development throughout society. As such, it is regarded essential that universities attend to basic research. Universities should therefore be committed to uphold the freedom of research, through individual researchers choosing their own research methods, procedures and topics within the strategic frameworks laid out in the University Performance Contracts (Ministry of STI, 2003b). In these contracts the individual universities come to an agreement with the Ministry of STI about their strategic goals and their expected results.

5.3 Finance

An expert group that assessed the working of the Danish taximeter system for allocating public funds for teaching to higher education institutions concluded in 2001 that the system worked fine (The Danish Rector's Conference, 2001). In 2004 a so-called *bachelor bonus* will be introduced in the funding mechanism. Under the renewed model, the taximeter will also include a tariff for each bachelor degree universities conferred.⁴ It is envisaged to use two tariffs. The tariff for scientific, technical and medical programs will be about twice as high as the tariff for social science, humanities and art programs. Rewarding the higher education institutions for the number of degrees conferred is an instrument to reduce the student drop-out from higher education. Under the new conditions, institutions will have a greater interest in a successful completion of students.

5.4 Governance

5.4.1 System level

At the system level, the draft University Act envisages to make universities more autonomous, which is reflected in the idea of self-governing institutions. For this, the Danish Technical University (DTU) serves as an example. A self-governing status implies that universities will become special administrative entities pertaining to public law with a much higher degree of independence governed by less clearly defined principles. As a result, universities will gain freedom to generate additional resources and to decide how to spend their resources. Increased autonomy will not yet cover the issue of ownership over university buildings. The debate on the ownership of university buildings will be postponed to a later point in time.

⁴ Information based on correspondence with Mr. M. Moos, Fuldmægtig, Universitetsøkonomisk kontor.

5.4.2 Institutional level

The governance structures in Danish higher education did not change much in the past years, but this is going to change because the management structure of universities is a major issue in the draft for the new University Act (Ministry of STI, 2003b). It is proposed to strengthen the university management structure. The major instrument is the introduction of Boards of Directors with a majority of external members, but also including students, academic and support staff. Instead of being elected as in the current situation, the Rector will be appointed by the Board of Directors. The Rector also has to report directly to the Board of Directors. The Rector on his turn will appoint Deans (per faculty) who are responsible for daily management of the faculties, including the faculty's research, study programs, teaching, budget, staff and strategies. The Deans appoint Heads of Department, who are responsible for activities within the units where research and study normally take place (departments). The Head of Department may appoint Junior Heads of Department and Heads of Research.

To maintain the democratic principles within universities, the draft act further states that internally composed Academic Councils should be established. The members will be academic staff and students, chaired by the Rector or the Dean at faculty level. The Academic Council gives its opinion on all important academic matters, including the internal allocation of basic funds, and recommends new strategically research and teaching initiatives. Finally, the Dean should appoint one or more Curriculum Boards and Directors of Study which keep a close eye on the study programs.

5.4.3 University Performance Contracts

A final governance issue relates to the role of the University Performance Contracts that were introduced in 1999/2000. These contracts embody a comprehensive dialogue between the individual universities and internal and external stakeholders. It includes issues like research planning, teaching targets, external relations, working conditions, the use of ICT, management, the maintenance of libraries, museums and buildings in general. In the first round of contracts, the goals and instruments were formulated in a rather loose way. But within the framework of the new University Act the contracts are meant to be more explicit on what society demands from universities. This situation is foreseen to start in 2003.

5.5 Quality assurance

The draft University Act also makes internal quality assurance and quality development an important issue. It says that a system will be developed in which a continuous and systematic evaluation of research and teaching takes place (Ministry of STI, 2003b). High quality education should improve the ability of Danish universities to compete internationally. To this end, quality assurance will become the responsibility of the universities and will be part of the University Performance Contract between the

Ministry of STI and each institution. As such, the evaluation reports and follow-up plans will serve as inputs for the University Performance Contracts.

In addition to the internal quality development process, an independent external organisation has to conduct external quality evaluations using internationally recognised principles, methods and procedures. It will be up to the universities to choose the organisation to conduct the evaluation. Next to the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA), this could also include foreign organisations. The involvement of students in the quality development and follow-up on evaluations will be a requirement as well. In addition, the university management is responsible for conducting and following up on the assessments and the quality development initiatives. In particular, the heads of faculty will get a major role in that. The universities will also be obliged to set up a nation wide corps of external examiners. EVA will keep its responsibility to take the initiative for evaluating the university sector as well as all other education sectors.

Though accreditation has become an important issue to accommodate a further internationalisation of Danish higher education, the exact elaboration of these ideas has been postponed until after the adoption of the new University Act (Ministry of STI, 2003a).

6 Finland

6.1 Educational infrastructure

6.1.1 Post-graduate programs in polytechnics

In February 2002, 20 polytechnics were given experimental permission to award post-graduate degrees. The period of experiment commenced on 1 August 2002 and will end on 31 July 2005. The postgraduate degree is piloted with the aim of collecting data and experience of its structure, labour market needs, education-industry relations, and the status of the degree in the overall higher education system. The degree programs leading to a higher degree comprise 40 credits in disciplines in which the first degree is 160 credits and 60 credits when the first degree is 140 credits. The postgraduate degree is aimed at people with a degree from a polytechnic, or some other applicable degree, and who have accumulated at least three years' work experience since graduation. The polytechnic postgraduate degree has been designed to respond to the needs of the labour market and the studies are suitable for mature students. Between 2002 and 2005 there are a total of 300 mature student places reserved for this experiment.

In February 2003, the Ministry of Education granted four new polytechnics the right to participate in the experiment. Following this decision, a total of 24 polytechnics offer postgraduate polytechnics degrees in the experiment.

The polytechnic post-graduate exam is a higher education degree, but it's formal name and status has not yet been formally defined. The main issue is whether or not it will be named 'master'.

6.1.2 Special MA programs increase the flexibility of university studies

An evaluation group assigned by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council has studied the master's programs offered by Finnish universities. In February 2002 the group proposed that the master's programs should be connected to the universities' overall strategy and their supply should be more dictated by demand. It recommends that master's programs are designed as permanent programs with clear, long-term objectives. The acute or more temporary needs should be responded to by further education. The working group also recommended that universities support and encourage the implementation of a two-step degree system. This comprises the bachelor's degree (120 credits) and the master's program (further 60 credits). Implementing this model would require, for example, a complete review of the contents and distribution of credits within bachelor's and master's degrees. The scope of the doctorate would be 140-160 credits. In the academic year 2000-2001, 19 universities in

Finland provided master's programs. The total number of programs was 167. Some 1,600 students have graduated from the master's programs.

6.1.3 Admission

The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council proposed in December 2002 that the position of new upper-secondary school-leavers in student selection in tertiary education be improved through a quota. In fields where quotas are not applicable, first-time applicants could be awarded extra points. The Council also suggests that student selection should emphasize the matriculation exam so that in future, an increasing number of students could be selected on account of school certificates rather than entrance exams. However, the matriculation exam should be reformed so as to better serve the purposes of student selection. The panel expressed its criticism of university entrance exams, which in some universities and schools seem to have become an end in themselves. According to the evaluation panel, the entrance exam should remain an alternative only when it is crucial to be able to discern between students of a similar level and measure their motivation.

6.1.4 Internationalisation

In its policy paper on education and research (Ministry of Education, 2000), the ministry of education stressed the necessity of internationalisation. The proportion of students who have taken a course abroad should be 30% by 2010.

6.1.5 Open University

An evaluation group appointed by the Higher Education Evaluation Council to examine Open University studies suggested that the threshold between the Open University and the actual degree programs in Universities be lowered. The evaluation group recommended that Open University students be granted the right to proceed to a full degree once they have passed a certain number of credits. The required number of credits should be notified unambiguously and the requirements should not be changed every year. In the current situation, the requirements for entering degree programs vary from one discipline to the next. To guarantee equality, the government should allocate adequate funding to Open Universities so that the term fees could remain at a reasonable level. All groups, men in particular, should be encouraged to take up Open University studies and more attention should also be paid to the study opportunities of the unemployed and other marginalised groups. The current costs of Open University studies are considered quite high.

6.1.6 Staff at polytechnics

The polytechnics have two categories of teachers: principal lecturers, for whom the requirement is a postgraduate university (licentiate or doctorate) degree, and lecturers, who must have a Master's degree. Both categories of teachers must have a minimum of three years of work experience. In practice this implies that until now the graduates from the polytechnics cannot be appointed at a polytechnic in an academic staff position. This controversial situation is the consequence of the rigid Finnish regulations with respect to the conditions for appointment in a public sector organization.

6.2 Research infrastructure

6.2.1 Graduate school positions for over a thousand students in 2003-2006

The Ministry of Education has decided to fill 1,010 graduate school positions for 2003-2006, and proposes a €36.5 million allocation in the 2003 budget to cover the salaries of 1,426 graduate school students and 23 research coordinators. Most graduate schools function as part of a joint project of several universities and research institutes. All universities are involved in graduate school networks. Graduate schools are temporary programs, in which students participate on a full-time basis and the doctorate can be completed in four years.

6.2.2 R&D in Polytechnics

R&D work of the polytechnics is undergoing a strong development phase. In 2000, the R&D expenses of the polytechnics were more than €31,5 million (Statistics Finland). The percentage of outside funding was 73%. This high percentage is a consequence of the strong regional orientation of the R&D activities of Polytechnics.

6.3 Finance

6.3.1 New funding arrangements for polytechnics

The Committee on Polytechnic Funding has completed its work and it published a report in February 2002. The Committee recommends that the separate support system for capital investments should be replaced by a funding model where the capital finance is a part of the core funding. The Committee also recommends that the core funding should be determined on the basis of the number of students, degrees completed and R&D work. The fourth element of the core funding would be lump sum equal in size for all the polytechnics. According to the Committee the revise of the funding system would reflect better the functions of the polytechnics and it would include more

incentive elements. This model was, however, rejected and core funding is still based on the number of students and cost factor.

6.3.2 Revision of university funding mechanism

The university funding mechanism is under revision as well. In 2002, a commission started an analysis of the university funding mechanism. The main focus was on increasing and improving the performance based character of the mechanism. In March 2003, the commission had not reported yet.

Early 2002, the Ministry of Education was surveying the opportunities to increase the calculated unit price in fields that are anticipated to experience a labour shortage. These include, for example, machinery and metal technology and forestry. According to the Minister, performance-based funding must take into account how well students will be employed. "Employment is the most important criterion for performance-based funding".

6.3.3 Student support

A Ministry taskforce is planning a long-term development program for the student aid system. The group aims at speeding up study times and introducing regular revisions of the amount of student aid, starting in 2005. The group proposed that in 2003 and 2004, the length of period that a Master's student in, for example, technology, as well as other upper university degrees, is eligible for student aid be extended. It is also recommended that the aid received by students, who make rapid progress, be increased for one term, and the student loan terms be made more flexible to ease financially the final stage of studies. The income limits applied to student aid should be adjusted and the maximum rent covered by the housing subsidy be raised. In the second phase of the program, in autumn 2005, both the grants and the surety bond for student loans would be raised to correspond to the rise in costs since 1995.

6.3.4 Reassessment of the rents paid by universities

The university funding system does not include capital investment provisions. All the universities have rented premises. Universities get resources for the rent costs in their core funding.

Although the appropriation for operating expenses of universities has substantially increased, a *rapporteur's* report (commissioned by the Ministry) indicated that universities have failed to redefine the share of costs accordingly. The *rapporteur* urged universities to take the facility costs into account more rigorously in activities that are financed from non-budget funds. Rents must be included, for example, in the price of commissioned research. Moreover, the use of facilities could be more efficient.

The system of capital finance of polytechnics does not differ from the system of upper secondary schools. They get funds for capital investments directly from government.

6.3.5 The basic funding for universities will increase in 2003

The performance negotiations between universities and the Ministry of Education were held in April 2002. The quantitative and qualitative goals of universities have been set for a three-year period, 2001-2003. The appropriation for operating costs will increase in 2003 by a minimum of €30 million, in addition to cost increases owing to pay rises. Compared with the previous year, the basic financing will increase in all universities. The strategic priorities of universities in 2003 include the development of basic education and teaching, strengthening of regional impact, internationalisation, and the development of education related to the national health program. In connection with the performance negotiations, the supervision and administration of external funding was also discussed. The universities need to develop cost-effectiveness calculations and monitoring of working hours.

6.3.6 Performance based appropriations in polytechnics

The Ministry of Education uses the proposals for units of quality as one criterion in the distribution of performance-based appropriation. A unit proposed as a unit of quality must show evidence of high-standard pedagogy, of innovative approach and that the core competencies provided by the education and training are firmly linked with the knowledge base of vocational competence, as well as working life. Moreover, steering process supporting the development of core competencies must be systematic and promote the vocational growth of students. The operations of the unit must be excellent or good on average in all of the evaluated fields. In 2002, four units received the unit of quality status (the Degree Program in Design of Häme Polytechnic; the Learning Centre Optiimi of the Faculty of Social and Health Care of Lahti Polytechnic; Councelling process for professional and personal growth in degree program of social services of Pohjois-Savo Polytechnic, and the Degree Program in International Business and Marketing Logistics of Satakunta Polytechnic).

6.4 Governance

6.4.1 Change in legislation on polytechnics

The Polytechnics Act is to include clearer regulations on the polytechnics' position within the higher education system and their tasks. The polytechnics' operations include teaching, research and development, and regional functions. The applied research and development carried out by the polytechnics serves both the polytechnic studies and the

efforts to improve them, while promoting the regional and local business and professional life and the development of its region. The polytechnics will receive the right to decide their internal affairs. The organs operating the polytechnics will decide upon the central operational and economic issues as well as the strategies. The internal administration of a polytechnic will be governed by its Board and president or rector. The Acts are planned to enter into force on 1 August 2003.

The Act aims to strengthen the development in which polytechnics and universities, which both have their own profiles, can complement each other in forming the higher education system. According to the proposal by the working group, teaching in polytechnics should be primarily based on the requirements imposed by the labour market and its development. Besides teaching, polytechnics should provide research and development which would serve teaching, working life, and regional development. Polytechnics should co-operate with business and industry, and other higher education and educational institutions. It is proposed that the degree completed at polytechnics be a Bachelor of Arts (Polytechnic).

6.4.2 Improved steering system for universities

A Ministry of Education committee proposed legislative reforms, among others, for strengthening the strategic steering and the autonomy of the universities. The universities should get a better chance to carry out their societal service task, which ought to be taken into account in their funding. As a new task, the legislation ought to include interaction with society in general and promoting the impact of research data. The degree regulations should be streamlined and, when possible, incorporated. It should be made possible to transfer income derived from utilising innovations, as well as other funding from donations etc., into separate funds, which could be used flexibly to further the university's operations. The target agreements are to include quantitative goals for degrees. In all fields, teacher training should be separated from the other goals set for academic degrees. The committee proposed that the operational expenditures in the agreement period 2004-2006 continue to consist of the basic funding proper, funding of national tasks, national programs, as well as project and result-based funding.

7 Flanders

7.1 Educational infrastructure

In Flanders, much attention in higher education was given to the developments concerning a new law on higher education (*structuurdecreet hoger onderwijs*). This has been prepared in order to implement the Bachelor-Master-system in Flemish higher education. This law also covers the implementation of an accreditation system. Interesting to note is that the new "*structuurdecreet*" does not mention the organisation of teacher-training nor the organisation of student representation in higher education. Another interesting project started by the Minister of Education is the SOHO-project that is aimed at optimising the transition from secondary education to higher education.

7.1.1 Bachelor-Master

The Flemish Minister of Education, Vanderpoorten, started a process to reform the Flemish higher education system according to the guidelines resulting from the Bologna declaration. The Flemish Parliament has not yet given the final approval on the reform, but the Minister has reached an agreement on a new law with most political parties (representing two-thirds of parliament).

“One of the first objectives in this transformation process is to stimulate co-operation between institutions of higher education. Therefore universities and *Hogescholen* have drawn up agreements in order to create ‘Associations’, linking the *Hogescholen* to universities” (Ministry of the Flemish Community, VLHORA, & VLIR, 2002). It is expected that as of the academic year 2004-2005 the universities and the *Hogescholen* will award the new degrees.

To obtain a Bachelor degree, one has to complete at least three years of study, or 180 ECTS-credits. There are two different types of Bachelor degrees, Profession-oriented and Academic Bachelor degrees. The Profession-oriented degrees are more practice-oriented and will include periods of work placement. These will be awarded by the *Hogescholen* only. Universities as well as *Hogescholen* can award the Academic degrees. However, the latter ones can only award these degrees in the framework of an association. The Academic Bachelor is preparatory for a Master-program.

Master degrees will cover at least one year of study (60 ECTS-credits). Education and research are integrated in these studies and a Master’s thesis is part of the program. “Master programs are organised at universities and at *Hogescholen* in the framework of an association. Subsequent Master programs are organised at universities, at *Hogescholen* in the framework of an association and at postgraduate training institutions” (Ministry of the Flemish Community *et al.*, 2002).

Part of the agreement that the Minister reached with the parties, is the strengthening of higher education in West-Flanders. The offer of bachelor and master

programs is being expanded; new programs are set up in higher education institutions in this area (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2003a). On the other hand some of the current programs will be terminated.

Similar developments as in higher education also apply to upper secondary vocational education as a result of the Declaration of Copenhagen.

7.1.2 SOHO-project

A pilot-project of the SOHO-project (optimising the transition from secondary to higher education) has recently been approved by the Flemish government (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2003b). The SOHO-project is started to limit the number of 'failures' in higher education. The project hopes to do so by providing better information to new entrants. The main objectives of the project are to improve the competencies of students in making schooling choices in secondary education and to optimise the choice guidance by the schools (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2003b).

7.2 Research infrastructure

Through several initiatives, the Flemish government tries to stimulate scientific research. The main initiatives are support for participation in the Sixth Framework Program and the upgrading of the electronic network for research in Flanders.

7.2.1 Sixth Framework Program

The Flemish government has approved an ambitious action-plan which should stimulate the participation of Flemish universities, research institutes and companies in the Sixth framework program of the European Union (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002d). The underlying goal of the action-plan is to provide a strong position for Flanders in the future European research area. The government feels participation in the Framework is important for both the financial returns, as well as the strategic interest in Flemish researchers being actively involved in European projects. Earlier Framework Programs have shown that these projects often develop new technologies which are of economic importance (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002c). Examples of measures in the action-plan are providing advise and guidance for individual participants, including the help in finding partners and granting financial support, stimulation of Flemish research networks, mobility of researchers and infrastructure and the appointment of a Flemish Commissioner for the Sixth Framework Program, who will strengthen the networks between the researchers in Flanders and the European Commission (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002d). In addition, a Flemish information point for the European Framework Programs is set up (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002c).

7.2.2 Upgrading electronic network

The Flemish government has decided to invest €2,5 million in the further upgrading of the electronic network-infrastructure for research in Flanders (BELNET) (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002a). The main part of this subsidy will go to the *hogescholen*. Almost all of them are already part of the network, but they still have some catching up to do and they need to join the level of the universities in using the network. The *hogescholen* can use about 45% of the money for the infrastructure of their own institute; the other 55% must be spent in co-operation with other institutes. The object of this is to reach a surplus value for all students, researchers and teaching staff involved in the co-operation (Ministry of the Flemish Community, 2002a).

7.3 Finance

In September 2002 the *Task Force Studietoelagen* (student support) presented its report to the Minister (Task Force Studietoelagen, 2002). Goal was to present a draft of the new decree to the parliament in April 2003, in order to implement the new decree together with the '*structuurdecreet*' (see above).

The task force opts for a selective system of student support. Student support should continue to be an "in cash" contribution and access to and size of the contribution are determined by income. The underlying idea of the support system is to provide vulnerable social groups with possibilities to participate in education and to maximise their chances for development. Complementary to the student support system, should be the social services provided by the higher education institutes.

The task force further states that the support should guarantee that a student has the possibility to obtain a diploma of secondary schooling, as well as a first Bachelor- and Master degree. The student support should be able to be taken along if a student wishes to do courses abroad or study at a foreign institute, within the European Higher education area. Student support can also be taken along out the European higher education area, if the program is not provided within this area.

7.4 Quality

With the implementation of bachelor and master programs in Flemish higher education, accreditation will also be introduced. "Accreditation is the formal recognition of a program based on a decision of an independent organisation, which verifies whether this program meets the pre-determined minimal quality requirements" (Ministry of the Flemish Community *et al.*, 2002). Flanders will be working together with the Netherlands on accreditation. In the Netherlands the accreditation council (NAO) already started its work. Flanders will be in close touch with this Dutch council through a special representative, until the new law will be implemented, including the implementation of accreditation.

8 France

8.1 Introduction

In 2002, a new government was installed. The conservative Luc Ferry replaced the former social democrat Jack Lang as Minister of Education. This had some consequences regarding the issues that were on the political agenda, as well as for the style of the ministry. In the presentation of its views and proposals, the ministry now uses appeals on the responsibilities of the higher education institutions much more than the former minister did. The general tone is more of proposing than of imposing.

The new minister presented his view on higher education in October 2002. He listed seven 'new perspectives' for higher education: a successful entrance into higher education, the position of French higher education in Europe and the world, new perspectives for university research, student involvement in the functioning of higher education institutions, involvement of staff, enhancement of autonomy of universities and strengthening the regional ties, and the evaluation of the quality of programs (Ferry, 2002).

8.2 Educational infrastructure

8.2.1 Successful entry into higher education

The minister distinguished four issues regarding the topic of entry into higher education. The first one is the transition between secondary education and higher education. The first cycle programs at universities (DEUG) are seen as the weakest link in higher education. The success rate is relatively low, especially among secondary degree holders (*bacheliers*) from the technological and vocational stream. Only 38% of them succeed. In addition, half of those *bacheliers* did not choose to go to the DEUG, but were refused by the selective short cycle technological programs (STS and IUT). Therefore the minister called on the STS to give some priority to *bacheliers* from the technological stream.

The second issue in this respect was the place of IUT. More than 50% of the IUT degree holders continue their education. This intermediate character of IUT should be recognised. The IUT- and STS-degrees are seen as appropriate preparations for a *licence professionnelle*. The minister encourages universities and *Lycées* to develop *licences professionnelles* in close co-operation.

The third issue is the place of the preparatory classes for the *Grandes Écoles* (CPGE) in the higher education system. In the 1990s, the CPGE became heavily debated: the elitist, selective and specialised nature of the programs caused many to question the future role of CPGE. The Minister wants to give CPGE a firm place. A

debate on that has to start, in which he wants to focus on the restructuring of the programs, on the cooperation between CPGE and universities, the geographical spread, and on the social equity among the CPGE entrants.

The final issue is the attention paid to liberal education. Students in the DEUG should get more education in general academic values. Ferry calls on the higher education institutions for ideas to bring this about.

8.2.2 Teacher education (IUFM)

The teacher training institutions (IUFMs) are in a critical situation. They have lost their professional character and teachers are no longer sufficiently prepared for the challenges the schools and pupils pose. The crisis in the teacher training institutes is, according to some commentators, a consequence of the fact that the IUFMs were placed in the realm of the universities when they were established in 1989 (Petrynka, 2003).

During the Lang administration, a reform of the IUFM was initiated. After the change of government, the reform was altered. Teacher education is seen by the ministry as a clear state responsibility. Therefore, the IUFMs will not be granted stronger autonomy, as other higher education institutions will be. The education inspections were asked to report on the position of the IUFM and to advise on the IUFM programs. Based on that report (due February 2003) the policy regarding IUFM will be restated.

8.2.3 Degree structure

In spring 2002 a new legal framework comprising a new degree structure was adopted. It allows the higher education institutions to organise their programs in a more flexible, modular way, which enables them to respond better to the needs of their clientele. The content of the programs is no more nationally defined. However, external evaluations regarding the coherence and quality of the programs are still required. The universities do not have to organise their programs in this new way (yet).

The minister has strong ideas on how the degree structure has to look like, but in October 2002, he did not yet want to impose his ideas on the higher education institutions. In his view, the three levels of degrees would be the licence, the master and the *doctorat* (in accordance with the Bologna declaration). The *licence* should become a coherent, general university program. In the (already existing) *licences professionnelles*, the relation between higher education institutions and the professions should be maintained. The new master should be guaranteed by the state and open to be offered by universities as well as by *grandes écoles*. Both research and professional masters should be developed. Eventually, the master should replace the existing similar level degree programs. As for the doctorate level, the *écoles doctorales* should get a more general character. Again, these are the ideas of the Minister, prior to an extensive consultation with the higher education field (Ferry, 2002).

Early 2002 the law on social modernisation was adopted, which gives higher education institutions the opportunity to recognise competencies and experiences that were acquired outside higher education (*Validation des acquis de l'expérience*). This is seen as a new era of continuing education in higher education. It opens the opportunity for ten thousands of people to get a higher education degree, (partly) based of their experiences, both personal and in working life. It also may help people to change career. After a year of experience with the new law, many cultural and financial barriers still need to be removed. Teachers need to adapt to a new audience. The introduction of the VAE is a slow evolution, both in terms of the providers and in terms of the demand. Only few universities have adopted a clear strategy yet and the number of students using the new opportunities is still marginal (Bontems, 2003).

8.3 Research infrastructure

With the new government, the old 10-year plan on HRM in higher education proposed by the former minister Schwartzberg was abolished. The main goal of the new minister for research and new technologies (Claudie Haigneré) is to increase R&D spending from 2.4% of its GDP to 3% by 2010 (Haigneré, 2002). The minister has outlined five priorities to prepare for the future:

- To attract more young people to research by providing them more attractive perspectives. Instruments to be used are: an increase of the level of research scholarships (by 5.5%), the creation of 400 post-doctoral places (based 12 to 18 months contracts), an increase in support staff to free time for researchers, and the specific stimulation of priority research areas.
- To develop a strong and open public research. For that, the resources for university research will be increased, post-doctoral places will be created, and contributions to international research organisations will be increased.
- To investigate the synergies between public and private research in order to uphold innovative power.
- To support the major industrial and space research programs
- To embed science in the heart of society

Due to the economic situation, the public budget for R&D, especially for CNRS, was reduced by 2.1% in 2003 compared to 2002 (Ministère de la Jeunesse, 2003).

8.3.1 Staff

In 2001, a one per cent increase in staff, both academic and support was planned. However, this increase could not be realised. Instead of increasing, the number of publicly funded staff decreased by 2.2% (Sénat). The higher education sector has a problem in finding qualified staff to fill the vacancies and new posts. The improvements

of the working conditions (especially salary) and the increased flexibility for institutions are apparently not enough to attract the people needed.

8.4 Finance

For the first time since five years the 2003 budget for higher education has decreased in real terms by 0.4% compared to the 2002 budget. This decrease is mainly due to the decrease in investments and the drop in enrolment in the late 1990s.

In 2001, an experiment regarding the transfer of the buildings from the state to the universities was announced, and in the 2002 budget funds were earmarked to facilitate such an experiment. However, the experiment lacked a proper legal basis. The experiment therefore was postponed (Sénat, 2002).

8.4.1 Student support/scholarships

In 2002, scholarships based on social criteria became available to students enrolled in the DESS programs (specialised professional third cycle programs). For 2003, the plans are to expand this type of scholarships to students enrolled in DEA programs (pre-doctorate programs). In addition, the number of mobility grants is increased by 25%.

8.5 Governance

8.5.1 The debate on decentralisation

In his views on higher education of October 2002, the minister indicated that he wanted to increase the autonomy of the higher education institutions. Although autonomy was strengthened the last two decades, there is a general understanding that institutional autonomy should be further strengthened. This need is based on the challenges and new missions of professional and continuing education, the recognition of other competencies (*validation des acquis de l'expérience*) and increasing internationalisation.

The strengthening of institutional autonomy should, in the view of the minister, be coupled with a strengthening of the competencies of the regions. Their role in the development of higher education is part of the debates that started by the end of 2002. The major concerns heard refer to the fear for large disparities in the educational offerings, the danger of slipping pedagogy and clientelism, and a possible lack of professional administrators at the regional level (Séry, 2002)

In February 2003, it was not clear what the impact of the law, permitting a new stage of decentralisation (after the 1992 law) would be. The Minister of Education stressed that no rights would change, but the regions clearly expect to get more authority regarding professional education (Barroux, 2003).

8.5.2 SAIC

In April 2002, a bill was published allowing higher education institutions to create a *service d'activités industrielles et commerciales* (SAIC). A SAIC is a liaison office that functions as an intermediate between the higher education institutions and their environment. It is an organisation that facilitates and professionalizes the commercial and industrial use of the research and educational activities of the higher education institutions. The creation of a SAIC requires the consent of the members of the higher education institutions (i.e. their representing bodies). Several issues are yet to be resolved, like how to deal with co-operations across institutions? In 2002, experiments with SAICs started at 8 universities. Whether the SAICs will be a success is to be seen because they have a formally organised structure whereas the existing co-operating arrangements often are flexible (CPU, 2002).

9 Germany

9.1 Introduction

The year 2002 seems relatively quiet compared to the previous year(s). The partial explanation is that a number of weighty policy reforms (Bafög, *Dienstrechtsreform*) have been settled in 2001 through the finalisation of changes of federal laws, and the subsequent implementation of these laws at the *Land* level (including some constitutional court cases of *Länder* against the state regulations). Another part of the explanation is formed by the national elections in 2002: shortly before elections, there is barely room for new – let alone controversial – policies. After the elections, the ‘new’ coalition has set out its general ideas on higher education. Important elements are the aim to have 40% of secondary school-leavers enter higher education (that was about 31% in 2002; CHEM, 2003) and to make the performances of the higher education institutions (including the private higher education institutions) transparent and comparable (e.g. by ranking). The proposal regarding ranking is, however, a bit odd, for different German organisations already carry out ranking exercises. In the area of quality assurance there have not been any new developments.

9.2 Educational infrastructure

9.2.1 Bachelor Master

Many institutions have developed new programs in the Bachelor-Master structure, most of them in engineering, followed by the humanities and social sciences. They are rarely taught in English though. In 2000-2001, less than 2% of the students were enrolled in the new programs. At present there are more than 1500 Bachelor and Master programs in Germany (see e.g. Klemperer *et al.*, 2002). Whereas legislative matters have been dealt with in previous years, the year 2002 is marked by implementation issues. Some master graduates of *Fachhochschulen* are confronted with difficulties regarding the recognition of their degrees to enter certain positions in the public sector that were previously reserved for university graduates at the Master level. It seems that FH-Masters are judged to be of lower quality than university masters (Krüger, 2002). A similar problem occurs when students move from one type of higher education institution to another. There are also signs that German business and industry is unfamiliar with the new program structure. Regarding the accreditation of study programs, a positive development has been the decrease of the fees to be paid in the case a university is willing to combine the accreditation of different programs.

9.2.2 Private higher education

Not so much in sheer quantitative developments, but more so in an ideological sense, the issue of private higher education is on the agenda. In the 1990s, particularly specialised colleges for business studies and ‘outsourced’ segments of public institutions emerged (e.g. *InnoCap Wagniskapitalgesellschaft*, University Göttingen). All higher education institutions, however, must apply for approval from the respective *Land* in which they are located. There are at the moment no approved foreign-owned private universities, although efforts are being made to establish a university in co-operation with a private US university (Teichler, 2003). But there are a number of non-approved foreign institutions. A particular issue is the debate on public support for private institutions. The International University Bremen, for instance, received a government subsidy of €118 million, whereas at the same time the university charges €15.000 tuition fee. Some other *Länder* (e.g. Baden-Württemberg) have accepted regulations implying waiving public support for private institutions.

9.2.3 Staff

In 2001, The *Bundeskabinett* has approved the draft changes in the regulations (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*, HRG and *Professorenbesoldungsreformgesetz*) to allow for more flexibility in the career development of professors and their salaries, including performance-related payments. The change of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* also introduced a new status of professorship, the junior professor. These laws were highly controversial, as reflected in the fact that they did not pass the *Bundesrat* as foreseen the end of November 2001. The *Professorenbesoldungsgesetz* first entered a phase of renegotiation (*Vermittlungsausschuss*) before the president finally signed the act in February 2002. The *Länder* have to implement the *Professorenbesoldungsreformgesetz* before the end of 2004. Lower Saxony was the first *Land* to do so in autumn 2002. As the *Länder* have significant room for shaping implementation through *Länder* level laws, the debate about implementation is still vivid.

The change of the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* also limits the qualification phase for young researchers and forbids temporary employment for researchers after this qualification phase. This is even more controversial. Some *Länder* do not accept the abolition of the *habilitation* and have made a case at the constitutional court that the federal level has interfered with their competencies. Universities and young researchers argue that abolishing temporary contracts for researchers after the qualification phase will force researchers into unemployment as there are not sufficient alternatives.

9.3 Finance and governance

In some *Länder* governments have agreed upon covenants with the higher education institutions (e.g. Hessen). The covenants (*Hochschulpakt*) imply an agreement on targets and financial means to reach those targets for the middle-range future. However,

the covenants are not guaranteed: the Parliament is allowed to step back from it. On top of these more abstract arrangements some *Länder* started with special instruments of contract management (*Zielvereinbarungen*). For example in Nordrhein-Westfalen all universities and *Fachhochschulen* defined projects to build up their profiles and fixed them in 3-year-contracts with the ministry. In Niedersachsen, a progressive higher education law was passed that gave significant leeway to institutions regarding their internal governance and organisation structure. Steering will be largely through agreements on targets (*Zielvereinbarungen*). A group of six universities has been granted the status of *Stiftungsuniversität* which means that they have become owners of their own buildings and land and have a high degree of financial and personnel autonomy.

9.3.1 Tuition fees

In the new *Hochschulrahmengesetz*, it is explicitly forbidden to set tuition fees for study programs in public higher education institutions with the exception of students who take a long time to graduate (*Langzeitstudierenden*) and further education, including further education Master programs. More and more *Länder* decide to introduce tuition fees for long term students as a kind of “punishment” and incentive to lower the actual duration of study (e.g. in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen). There are, however, calls from many in and around higher education to introduce tuition fees for regular students. At the *Land* level there are complaints that the national government is – by not accepting tuition fees – interfering in the competencies of the *Land*. Several *Länder* have made a case at the constitutional court regarding this issue. Apart from the competency problem, many point at the impossibility to stick to free education in the context of international competition. The Rectors’ Conference published a paper which proposed to design tuition fee systems on the institutional level. Based on this proposal the TU München started a pilot project in order to develop and discuss a workable system (which have no chance for realisation as long as the legal regulations do not change).

10 The Netherlands

10.1 Educational infrastructure

10.1.1 Bachelor-Master

In the wake of the Bologna-agreement, the Dutch government formulated the plan to reform the degree structure. Early 2002, the Dutch parliament approved the change in the Law on Higher Education and Research (WHW), making it legally possible for Dutch higher education institutions to grant Bachelor and Master degrees as of the 2002/2003 academic year. Interestingly, most universities and some universities of professional education (HBO) already made the decision to implement the new system before the change in the WHW was approved by parliament. Contrary to for example the German and French situation, in the Netherlands the Bachelor Master system (BaMa) is going to fully replace the current higher education system. Both the universities and the universities of professional education (*hogescholen*) will now be able to start Bachelor and Master programs (Lub, *et al.*, 2002).

The main motive to implement the BaMa system is that it is regarded to be an essential condition for a modern and internationally oriented higher education. The BaMa system is intended to make the Dutch higher education system more flexible and open which is required to anticipate new societal developments like internationalisation, globalisation and the use of ICT. The system should be flexible enough to meet the needs of different groups of students in terms of age and modes of attendance. The system should be open to allow Dutch students to study abroad and to enable foreign students to enter the Dutch higher education system (Lub, *et al.*, 2002).

In the BaMa system, students at *hogescholen* will be awarded a Bachelor degree after four years of (nominal) study after which they may enter a Master program. As stated in the Bologna declaration, the European Bachelor-Master system is based on the undergraduate-graduate structure. This means that the traditional university programs are divided into two cycles. University students will first take a Bachelor program with a nominal duration of three years. After that they may enter a Master program. One of the main discussions in Dutch higher education is related to the duration of the university Master programs. Contrary to most of the other European countries, the official duration of the university studies in the Netherlands is four years (exceptions are science and engineering programs with a duration of five years and the medical studies which have a duration of six years). In the BaMa system this would mean that, following on a university Bachelor program of three years, most Master programs would be one-year programs. However, many stakeholders argue that Master programs should have a duration of last two years. To stimulate a clear debate the Minister of Education, Science and Culture installed the committee "Topmasters" that also

investigated the possibility to introduce top Master programs. This committee reported their advice “*Over de top. Duidelijkheid door differentiatie*” in October 2002. The most important advice of the committee is to differentiate between three types of Master programs: a short (60 ECTS) program aimed at specific domains (the so-called “domain” Master); a professional Master (60-180 ECTS) for the professionally oriented university programs; and a Research Master (120 ECTS), which is seen as a preparation for a PhD study.

10.2 Research infrastructure

The research infrastructure has not much changed. The most important development relates to the current debate on the funding of research at universities. Until now, research funding is primarily based on historical distributions. Within a broader debate on the attractiveness of the research sector in the Netherlands, it is argued that the relatively static funding model could be made more dynamic. This could help to overcome funding problems related to changes in the relative size of institutions (which is solved at an ad hoc basis so far). But more importantly, a new way of funding could improve the attractiveness of the academic profession for young (potential) researchers, stimulate the social relevance and quality of research, and to strengthen the relationships between universities and business (knowledge transfer). Potential ways to reach these aims could be to strengthen the role of the Research Council (NWO), of the Research Schools, of the research evaluations or to stimulate university-industry relationships (Jongbloed, 2002).

10.3 Finance

The transition towards the BaMA system has implications for the funding of Dutch universities. In the old model, universities conferred master-level undergraduate degrees. These were the basis for the allocation of half of the public funds available for teaching at universities. Under the BaMa system, two types of undergraduate degrees are conferred: the Bachelor and the Master degree. Though the principles of the model do not change (including the total budget available), the rewards per degree conferred will change. The difference in tariff between Bachelor and Master degrees will be 2 : 1, implying that universities will receive twice as much for a bachelor degree as for a master degree. The tariffs further differ between humanities/social studies versus science/engineering versus medically oriented sciences in the relationship 1 : 1,5 : 3.

The transition towards the BaMa system led to extensive debates on the principles of the funding methods for higher education. With relation to Master programs, questions concern issues like whether a demand driven funding model should be implemented, whether Masters that differ in duration will also receive different levels of public subsidy, and whether Master programs from *hogescholen* and private higher education institutions can also be eligible for public funding. A second

discussion relates to the question whether Bachelor programs of universities and of *hogescholen* should be equally treated according to one single funding model.

Tuition fees continue to be an issue. The call for differential tuition fees becomes louder, particularly for university masters. Those in favour argue that high quality programs (top masters) will require higher tuition fees, which can be justified from the perspective of higher expected future returns to education. Opponents argue that this will lead to access problems creating a small elitist top-layer in the higher education system.

Another issue, closely related to the tuition debate, is the system of student support. In December 2002, the Committee Vermeend has been installed to investigate the opportunities of a graduate tax system or income contingent loans in the Netherlands. The committee has to report on 1 July 2003.

The debates are still vivid and are likely to continue in 2003. The focus of the discussions is distracted by the fall of a recently installed government, new government formations and economic decline triggering budget cuts, also in the education sector.

10.4 Quality

As was stated in the previous update report (Kaiser *et al.*, 2002), the former Minister of Education, Science and Culture, Hermans, installed a ‘trailblazers’ committee which presented its report “Activate, Achieve and Advance” (*Prikkelen Presteren Profileren*) in September 2001 (Commissie Accreditatie Hoger Onderwijs, 2001). The most important recommendations of the report were:

- The establishment of a frame of reference concerning accreditation of all Bachelors and Masters programs in public and private higher education institutions
- The foundation of a National Accreditation Organ
- Accreditation of new programs

On basis of the findings of this report, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture submitted a bill on accreditation to parliament, together with the change in the Higher Education Act (WHW) to enable higher education institutions to grant Bachelor and Master degrees. The new bill was discussed and approved in June 2002. One of the main achievements has been the foundation of the Netherlands Accreditation Organization (NAO), which started its work 1 January 2003. This Dutch accreditation council is organised along the bachelor–master model, and the reform plans include that accreditation will be mandatory for programs:

- to award recognised bachelor and master degrees
- to make their students eligible for study grants and loans;
- to get state funding (for public higher education institutions only).

Implicit in the above is that private higher education institutions will be included in the accreditation procedures on an equal footing with public ones, apart from the issue of

public funding. This will open up the Dutch higher education system for globalisation forces. A potential problem relates to the issue that the Dutch accreditation system should be open for all (international) visiting and evaluating institutions. However, the practical criteria used for accreditation have a very specific Dutch character. As a result it can be questioned to what extent the system is really open for foreign or international evaluation institutions (Westerheijden, 2002).

11 Portugal

In order to stress the main issues that are making the agenda of Portuguese higher education, one must start by emphasising the general context of financial stringency and a political climate that combines elements of economic recession with discourses on ‘urgent reforms’ in the public sector. The main issues discussed in the political arena are presented in the following sections.

11.1 Educational infrastructure

In the aftermath of March 2001 election, the supervision over higher education was transferred from the Ministry of Education to a new Ministry - the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Combining the reform discourse with the urgent need to deal with the decrease in the budget allocated to research and higher education, the new Minister initiated a process of public discussion which apparently embraces almost every sector of the higher education system.

The Portuguese system is a fairly diversified system, with universities and polytechnics, and public and private institutions on both sub-sectors. The university network was very small (4) until the turn to the seventies, when the process of expansion was launched, reaching the current number of 13 public universities in the eighties. The polytechnic sector was developed in the 1980s, and has a large geographical coverage. The private sector mushroomed from the 1980s onwards in the large urban areas and heavily demanded and low-cost programs, reaching at its peak, in the mid-1990s, 1/3 of the enrolments.

This process of expansion was fuelled by the fact that a large proportion of students could not get a place in the system, at that time largely dominated by public universities. However, in the late nineties the declining demographic trends and the too rapid expansion of the system, especially of the private, created a new context, dominated by competition for students. Hence, at the moment the major issues in this respect can be considered to be:

- The situation of the private institutions. Faced with a serious decline of demand, some are considering merger operations, other risk closing, and most are adjusting their capacity.
- The relationship between polytechnics and universities. The polytechnics have been allowed recently to award university type degrees, and have been asking for the possibility of awarding masters and PhD degrees. The universities, especially those more peripheral and most affected for the decline in demand, have tried to move in terms of more specialised/vocational degrees, becoming close to the polytechnics.

11.2 Finance

The level of funding has been regulated since the late eighties by a formula, which has promoted the expansion. However, both the high level of participation (over 40% of the age cohort) and the current budgetary difficulties in terms public funding point out potential changes. After a period of persistent growth in funding, higher education institutions are adjusting to a period of cuts on government expenditure, which will have a significant impact on many institutions.

The students pay a small tuition fee (ca. €300 per year). This is one of the potential areas for reform. But the issue is a controversial one, and the recent past suggests that the government will face a hard task in this respect. In the near future the main issues will be:

- reformulating the funding formula; end of incremental funding of public higher education institutions
- possibility of competitive funding in terms of public sources
- re-opening the debate on tuition fees and students' financial participation
- fund-raising activities by public institutions

11.3 Governance

11.3.1 Institutional governing structures

Higher education political agendas are increasingly loaded with governance issues. Based on claims of efficiency, relevance and accountability, politicians and, paradoxically, academics are engaging on discussing academic power and collegial decision-making processes. Should a rector be elected or appointed? Should a Board of Trustees be included as a governing body or even substitute the traditional governing bodies? These questions are assuming increasing visibility in the political debate which is being induced by the Ministry itself.

11.3.2 Autonomy and accountability

Higher education institutions have enjoyed significant autonomy, especially public institutions, and even more universities. This period, initiated in the late 1980s, seems to be changing to a context where the government is more willing to interfere and change some of the current rules of the game. There are ongoing discussions on the topic, and one gets the impression that the new framework will increase the accountability of higher education institutions. At the same time there is a trend to make the level of autonomy more homogeneous between sub-sectors, meaning less autonomy for public ones and more to private ones.

11.4 Quality assurance

11.4.1 Criticism on existing procedure for public institutions

Public universities have been co-ordinating a process of evaluation, accepted by the government, for around 10 years. The process emphasises the self-assessment and does not have strong implications, notably in terms of funding. However, the government seems to show some impatience with the process and to consider more demanding processes of assessment. This also responds to a view among certain public opinion quarters that the process is too soft and without serious consequences for the institutions. Hence, one would not be surprised if changes in this matter also happened. However, the fact that the current system is up and running (on its second cycle of evaluation), and the predictable resistance of universities to that, will make any change a hard process.

11.4.2 Private institutions

The private higher education institutions have been resisting for many years to an external assessment. Although the decline of the private sector has reduced the visibility of this matter, it seems probable that any changes in the evaluation system would try to include both public and private institutions within the same framework. Private institutions are expected to resist, since they consider the process to be biased against them and/or to fear the results of the evaluation process.

12 Sweden

12.1 Educational infrastructure

12.1.1 Further education

From 1996 to 2001 a pilot project on advanced vocational education (Kvalificerad Yrkesutbildning - AVE) was carried out. Categorized as “post secondary” education, the courses were organised through close co-operation with upper-secondary, higher education, adult education, and private companies. The purpose was to provide a vocational track where one-third of the time would be spent in the work place “in the advanced application of theoretical knowledge” (Kvalificerad Yrkesutbildning, 2002). The success of the pilot program pushed legislators to include AVE in the regular education system since 2002 and to regulate it through a newly developed Swedish Agency for Advanced Vocational Education.

12.1.2 Higher education / internationalisation

January 2002 saw the introduction of a new master’s degree structure designed to give universities and university colleges greater flexibility to provide continuation courses. The new master’s courses are open to people having degrees comprising at least 120 credits (three years). In a move designed to foster greater international mobility, the Swedish Institute has been directed to establish a consultative body that will co-ordinate information and market Sweden to other countries as a destination for higher education study.⁵ A program will be established targeting developing countries and a Diploma Supplement will be introduced in 2003. The hallmark of the program is that students from outside the EU will not be charged tuition fees.

12.1.3 Teacher education

A teacher education reform bill was also enacted in 2001 that consolidates the existing eight teaching degrees into only one. As a result, all students pursue a common program for the first 1.5 years while overall time to completion will vary depending on which specialisation and qualification levels are pursued. A significant portion of the training is set to take place in municipality-operated public schools. Since the beginning of 2002, the government also allocates funding for the development and implementation of particular courses in teaching methods.

⁵ The Swedish Institute is a public agency tasked with disseminating knowledge about the country to external (i.e. international) constituents.

12.2 Research infrastructure

In 2001 the Swedish Research Council (*Vetenskapsrådet*) was established which consolidated the activities of several other councils.

12.3 Finance

The higher education budget (for teaching and research) was increased by 5% in current prices (2% in real terms). This expresses the government's wish to make extra investments in the higher education sector.

12.4 Governance

Finally there is the Agency for Sweden's Internet University (SIU). Only in operation since March of 2002, SIU is a gateway co-ordinating the registered distance education courses and programs provided by various universities and university colleges. The Agency's responsibility is to promote the development of distance education courses through the Internet and provide information about its offerings.

12.5 Quality

Quality is a big issue in Sweden. There were many institutional audits and quality assessments in 2002. In addition, a debate has been started on the quality evaluation system in view of the increasing internationalisation. The question is whether the system has to be altered, e.g. through introducing accreditation.

13 The United Kingdom

The single most important development in the UK from January 2002 till now is the release of the government's white paper: "the future of higher education" (DES, 2003). In this strategic paper the government sets out a list of problems that higher education is facing:

- Higher education must expand to meet rising skill needs.
- The social class gap among those entering university remains too wide.
- Many of our economic competitors invest more in higher education.
- Universities are struggling to employ the best academics.
- Funding per student fell 36 per cent between 1989 and 1997.
- The investment backlog in teaching and research facilities is estimated at £8 billion.
- Universities need stronger links with business and economy.

In the white paper, the government claims that it will reverse years of under-investment with an increase in funding for higher education averaging more than 6 per cent – over and above inflation – for the next three years (2004-2006). Funding for student support will rise sharply – including new grants for students from lower income families – and the science settlement is the most generous for a decade. The government claims that this extra investment will improve access and enable universities to tackle many of their immediate problems. It also states that this alone will not enable universities to boost opportunity and excellence as much as is needed. Additional resources will be needed if higher education is to meet the long-term challenge to maintain and improve high standards, expand and widen access, strengthen links with business, and compete globally. The white paper touches upon all the topics this update will deal with: educational and research infrastructure, quality and finance.

In addition there are two other important developments. First, the partnership for progress program which seeks to improve the relations between higher education, further education, schools, training providers and work. The second major development is a new system of quality assessment replacing the old system of subject reviews: the institutional audit.

13.1 Educational infrastructure

13.1.1 Expanding higher education

In the 2002 white paper the government states that it wants to expand higher education, but at the same time does not want to compromise on quality. It wants the bulk of the expansion to come through new types of qualification, better tailored to the needs of students and the economy. Government pledges that it will:

- continue to increase participation towards 50 per cent of those aged 18–30, mainly through two-year work-focused foundation degrees;
- work with employers to develop more foundation degrees, providing financial incentives for students, strengthening links between further and higher education and creating better pathways for progression;
- encourage more flexibility in courses, to meet the needs of a more diverse student body and improve support for those doing part-time degrees.

Access

Expansion in itself is not the only issue. The government finds that the social class gap among the participants in higher education remains unacceptably wide (DES, 2003). While many more people from all backgrounds benefit from higher education, the proportion coming from lower-income families has not substantially increased. This means a waste of potential for individuals and for the country as a whole. Raising participation and standards in our reforms of secondary and further education will be the most important step in improving access. Improvements in student finance will also remove barriers. But universities and colleges must do more if they are to play their full part in promoting opportunity. The government's package includes:

- Restoring grants for students from lower income families and abolishing up-front fees for all (up to £1000 on top of the current loans system);
- Requiring universities to draw up an Access Agreement to improve access for disadvantaged students before they are able to increase the level of fee they ask students to pay (up to £3000 on top of the regular countrywide tuition fee);
- Appointing an independent Access Regulator to oversee these agreements, to promote wider access and to ensure that admissions procedures are fair, professional and transparent;
- Expanding our national "Aim Higher" program to build better links between schools, colleges and universities and raise young people's aspirations;
- Reforming funding so that universities and colleges will be properly reimbursed for extra costs in attracting and retaining students from non-traditional backgrounds;
- Doubling the amount of extra money to help vulnerable students and introducing a new package of grant support for part-time students.

The creation of an independent access regulator is one of the more controversial proposals in the White Paper on Higher Education. The idea is that each institution will be required to implement a plan of action in order to meet access targets, which ensure more students from non-traditional backgrounds to enter university. The access regulator will have the power to inspect the progress of these strategies, and also to withdraw a university's right to charge differential tuition fees if they are found to be missing targets.

Criticism from the higher education sector has focused on the added bureaucracy and pressure that these new targets could entail. However, some experts in the field of widening participation are greeting the idea with enthusiasm. The devil, they point out, is almost certainly in the detail, and there is little detail to go on in the white paper. The access regulator is likely to be a government body with responsibility for ensuring institutions are widening access. But as with any form of external accountability system, the criteria against which institutions are to be measured need to be explicit. Currently there is no indication about this (HERO, 2003).

Partnership for progress program

Alongside measures to increase access proposed in the governmental whitepaper, the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Learning and Skills Council have jointly launched a new scheme called *Partnerships for Progression* (HEFCE, 2002). “Partnerships for Progression” seeks to strengthen relationships between higher education, further education, schools, training providers and work. Of particular concern is how to raise both the aspirations and attainments of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who are currently under-represented in higher education.

The HEFCE and the LSC will jointly provide a minimum of £60 million to the partnerships strand between April 2003 and March 2006. Each Council will contribute £10 million per year. It is aimed to allow the maximum opportunity for partnerships to use funds flexibly and collaboratively, consistent with proper and secure accountability for funds. Partnerships should therefore treat the fund as a single source, with a single monitoring and accounting process, which will be routed through the HEFCE.

The Partnership for Progression leads in each region had to submit strategic plans to release funds before 31 January 2003. Institutions and organisations which felt that they could contribute to the initiative had to contact the Partnership for Progression business planning leads.

13.2 Research infrastructure

In the 2002 white paper the government points out that it wants to concentrate the best research in larger units. The government claims that this will create better infrastructure, better collaboration within and between disciplines, easier development of research-only posts and better pay for excellent researchers. The Government will:

- Increase spending on research in 2005–06 by £1.25 billion compared to 2002–03 – around 30 per cent in real terms;
- Encourage and reward research in larger units, including through collaboration;
- Invest more in the leading research departments and universities, enabling them to compete with the world’s best;
- Develop new incentives to support emerging and improving research;
- Develop and reward talented researchers, with rigorous new standards for government-funded postgraduate research places;

- Create a new Arts and Humanities Research Council.

13.2.1 Higher education and Business

The government in its white paper states that less than one in five businesses taps into universities' skills and knowledge. According to government, universities and colleges can play a bigger role in creating jobs and prosperity in the UK. It will encourage this by:

- Strengthening the Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) – worth £90m a year in 2005–06 – to encourage especially the non research-intensive universities to work with employers locally, regionally and nationally;
- Funding through the HEIF a network of 20 *Knowledge Exchanges* to reward and support higher education institutions working with business. Knowledge Exchanges will be exemplars of good practice in interactions between less research-intensive institutions and business. Each Knowledge Exchange will receive up to £500,000 for each of five years.
- Building stronger partnerships between higher education institutions and regional development agencies (RDAs), with RDAs playing an increasing role allocating the HEIF;
- Helping *Sector Skills Councils* (SSCs) forge stronger alliances between business and relevant departments in universities and colleges. SSCs are independent, UK wide organisations developed by groups of influential employers in industry or business sectors of economic or strategic significance also involving trade unions, professional bodies and other stakeholders to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK (SSDA, 2003).

13.3 Finance

The prime finance issue concerns the ongoing debate on top up fees, which was prominent in 2002 and early 2003. Interestingly one of the major supporters of such fees, the Russell group of elite universities is now split on the topic. The Scottish universities in the group (Edinburgh and Glasgow) are opposed to any top up fees, Cambridge issued a statement that it considers introducing fees of around 3000 pounds while at the other end of the scale Imperial wants to charge students the full cost of their education 10500 and possible 15000 pounds (THES, 2002).

In the Future of Higher Education whitepaper, the government for the first time has taken a position on top up fees. But the white paper discusses the top up fees in a more general context of higher education finance and student support. The white paper states that the Government will continue to be the major funder of universities but that the institutions should also have greater freedom to access new funding streams on their own account. One way in which this could be realised is by providing incentives to

build up endowments. Another is allowing universities the right to secure from graduates larger contributions to the cost of their education, i.e. allowing for top up fees. Graduates on average earn much more than those without degrees and are far more likely to be in employment. But at the same time government states that it will not compromise on fair access and will take steps to ensure young people are not deterred by up-front fees. The government will:

- Re-introduce in 2004 a new grant of up to £1,000 a year for students from lower-income families, benefiting around a third of students;
- Introduce in 2006 a new Graduate Contribution Scheme. Universities will be allowed to seek a contribution of between £0 and £3,000 per year for each course;
- Continue to pay up to the first £1,100 of fees for lower income students families;
- Abolish up-front payment of tuition fees and allow every student to defer until after they have graduated their contribution to the cost of their course. Payments after graduation will be through the tax system, linked to ability to pay;
- Raise, from April 2005, the threshold at which graduates have to start repaying their fee contribution and maintenance loan from £10,000 to £15,000;
- Help universities build up endowment funds by promoting individual and corporate giving and creating a fund to give universities the incentive to raise their own endowment finance.

The details of the proposed arrangements will still have to be worked out.

13.4 Quality

A new quality assessment mechanism, i.e. the process of institutional audit, has been developed by the Quality Assessment Agency (QAA) in partnership with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and Universities UK (UUK), and has been endorsed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). For institutions in England, it replaces the previous processes of continuation audit, undertaken by the QAA at the request of UUK and SCOP, and universal subject review, undertaken by the QAA on behalf of HEFCE, as part of the latter's statutory responsibility for assessing the quality of education that it funds (QAA, 2002).

Institutional audit is a new process that pays due attention to the quality of programs and the standards of awards at the point of delivery, as well as to institutions' ultimate responsibility for what is done in their names and through the exercise of their formal powers. It is an evidence-based process carried out through peer review, and balances the need for publicly credible, independent and rigorous scrutiny of institutions with the recognition that the institutions themselves are best placed to provide stakeholders with valid, reliable and up-to-date information about the quality of their programs and the standards of their awards. At the centre of the process is an emphasis on students - in terms of the quality of the information they receive about their programs

of study, the ways in which their learning is facilitated and supported, and the academic standards they are expected to achieve, and do achieve in practice (QAA, 2002).

The institutional audit process is intended to combine scrutiny of internal quality assurance systems at an institutional level with investigations of how those systems operate at the level of the discipline and to assure the quality of the program (the full diet of modules, options, and other structured learning opportunities, individual research study, and associated learner support, which together comprise a pathway that leads to an award).

Institutional audits will be introduced progressively from 2002-03. All higher education institutions will have participated in an audit by the end of 2005. Thereafter, audits will take place on a six-year cycle.

Quality of teaching in the whitepaper

Next to this new quality assessment system, in the governmental whitepaper the government makes several proposals to improve the quality of teaching:

- Additional funding not just for excellence in research but also in teaching with new money for pay modernisation, rewarding good teaching and providing more fellowships for the best researchers;
- Better information for students including a new annual student survey and publication of summaries of external examiners' reports to help student choice drive up quality;
- New national professional standards for teaching and a new national body to develop and promote good teaching – the Teaching Quality Academy.

14 Issues across the countries

The country descriptions presented above provide a rich overview of the major issues in public and political debates regarding higher education. The information can be used in two ways. First, a reader can take a particular national perspective and look whether the national higher education issues in his/her country occur in other countries as well. According to this perspective, the reader may also be attended to issues that pop up in other countries and that might become relevant for the reader's country as well. The second use is for the reader who has a broad interest in higher education (policy) and who wants to identify the main trends and issues in European higher education. Table 1 serves both types of readers.

It is important to mention that the overview is based on the *major* issues and *recent* developments. Because of this, there may be other issues that are important in the various countries that are not listed here as being the most important. In addition, this overview covers only developments in the last few years. There may therefore be issues that continue to be of significance in the countries (but which have been important over a longer period of time) which have been left out here.

In the following sections the major overarching issues are discussed. Clearly the 'tone' of the debates, the participating actors, and in the policy contexts will differ between countries. For an in-depth understanding of a country-specific issue we refer to the specific country descriptions.

In addition to the issues in the four main areas listed below, an interesting observation can be made. In six countries the debates and policies on higher education are put in a more comprehensive context by the presentation of and debates on a white paper (Australia and the UK) or by the debates on a new higher education act (Austria, Denmark, Finland, and Flanders). These white papers and acts address many issues relevant for higher, including teaching, research, governance, quality and finance issues.

14.1.1 Educational infrastructure

The Bologna process has a major impact on the higher education infrastructure in most countries. Except for Australia, the UK and Portugal, the introduction or development of the bachelor-master degree structure is an overarching theme in the national higher education policy developments. However, the process is a relatively open one, leaving much latitude to the participating countries. Therefore, the direction and pace of the reforms and debates differ among the countries.

A major 'divide' is the status of the new programmes. There are countries in which the bachelor-master structure is introduced as an addition to the existing degree structure and there are countries in which the new structure replaces the old one. In Germany the traditional degree structure will remain for some period and in Austria the

The structural reforms are not the only outcome of the Bologna process. The rationale for that process was to enhance the internationalisation of higher education. It is therefore not surprising to see that in many countries (other) internationalisation issues are also high on the agenda. Some countries, like Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden, want to stimulate and facilitate international mobility. In the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden international mobility is put in the perspective of international competitiveness: the debates on internationalisation focus also on the opportunities to attract fee-paying students from countries outside the EU. This perspective is standing practice in the UK and Australia. The latter is now establishing overseas campuses (off-shore provision).

Expanding higher education or widening access is another major issue that is particularly visible in Austria, Denmark, Flanders, France, Germany and the UK. The driving forces behind these debates and policies are on the one hand the perceived need to strengthen the knowledge based society by increasing the proportion of higher educated people in the population. On the other hand, governments feel that the rise of the knowledge based society may increase the inequality of chances for socio-economic disadvantaged groups. In Austria and Germany participation rates in higher education are relatively low which may explain why in these countries the emphasis is on increasing the level of enrolment in general. In the UK policies are mainly directed at widening access for socio-economic disadvantaged groups of students. France particularly increases the opportunities for people without official entrance qualifications but who have considerable working (and life) experience. In Denmark and Flanders the focus is on facilitating a well-informed choice for a higher education study by improving transparency, openness and information provision for secondary school leavers and on the transition between the bachelor and master stage.

Staffing issues are on the agenda in six countries. Academic staff is the main input for high quality teaching and research. That is why a potential break in the continuity of adequate staffing is a major threat to higher education. There are a number of potential threats to adequate staffing. The massification, combined with shortages on the labour market is one threat, the imminent exodus of staff retiring is a second one. The first threat is not relevant for all countries, but the second one is. How to attract staff is then an overarching theme. In Denmark, France and the UK the debate is particularly on how to improve the attractiveness of the profession and career of researchers. The German debate focuses on the career development of professors. Austrian policies are more directed towards making higher education institutions responsible for their staffing policies. In Finland the staffing issue concentrates on who are qualified to lecture at the polytechnics.

14.1.2 Research infrastructure

In a number of countries, it is deemed important to strengthen the societal relevance of research. In Australia and the UK this is done by setting national research priorities. In Denmark and the Netherlands the strategy is to make higher education research more dynamic and receptive to societal needs and developments. In France and the UK this aim is (also) expressed by the explicit policies to strengthen the university-industry relationships.

Strengthening the research infrastructure has been marked as a priority through expanding the public budget for research in Denmark, France, Sweden and the UK.

14.1.3 Finance

It seems impossible to debate higher education policy without referring to money. In all countries some financial issues come to the fore. Tuition fees are a hot issue in several countries. However, discussions differ across countries. In Austria the debate is on the effects of the recently introduced tuition fees. In Portugal, raising fees is regarded as a potential way to overcome the financial problems in the higher education system. Such motives play also a role in the Australian and UK proposals to allow institutions to charge their own fees. Differentiating fees is an issue in the Netherlands as well, but it still seems to be in a premature stage. In Germany the tuition debate is going on for quite some time and remains to be vivid; a number of *Länder* introduced tuition fees for students who exceed the nominal duration of study. In the Scandinavian countries tuition fees remain more or less a taboo.

In a number of countries, the regular funding mechanism for universities (and/or colleges) is under discussion. Austria is in the stage of changing to a block grant funding mechanism related to some performance agreements. In Denmark and Finland there are plans to include more performance related elements in the university funding mechanism. In Denmark a so-called *bachelor bonus* is envisaged to be added to the current funding formula, and in Finland data on employment needs are envisaged to be integrated in the funding tariffs. With regard to polytechnics, a Finnish proposal to make funding more dynamic and to include capital funds in the system has recently been rejected. Dutch debates focus on funding mechanisms that best fit the bachelor master structure.

Student support is considered an issue in five countries. In Flanders and France extra scholarships will be available for targeted groups of students. In the UK a national grants system will be reintroduced and institutions will become responsible to set up (support) policies to attract more students from economically disadvantaged background. As such, institutions can develop their own tuition and support packages in the face of individual access targets. The Netherlands is exploring the potentials of income contingent loans or a graduate tax. In Finland the government aims to improve student support for students in long-term studies and students in the final stage of their program.

In most countries with a traditionally dominant public higher education sector, the premises were owned by the state (or other public bodies). In the Netherlands, ownership of the premises was transferred to the institutions a number of years ago. Similar plans are postponed in Denmark until the effects of the new university act will become clear. In France an experiment in this direction is also postponed. In Germany, the transfer of ownership was implemented on an experimental base for six universities.

14.1.4 Governance

Governance related issues did not stand out as much as financial issues in the policy debates. The introduction and further establishment of performance contracts was the most prominent issue in this realm. This primarily relates to funding in Austria, Finland and in some German *Länder*. In Denmark performance contracts have a wider governance perspective, covering a wide range of issues like research and teaching targets, external relations, ICT, management, maintenance and working conditions.

Another theme concerns the autonomy of higher education institutions. Danish proposals are far-reaching in the sense that universities will gain a high level of autonomy. In Austria, Denmark and Portugal there are also debates on a revision of internal governance structures within universities. Danish and (maybe) Portuguese universities will establish of a board of directors (trustees) and replace the elected rector (and deans) with appointed ones. In Portugal the government aims to limit the autonomy of public and private higher education institutions by increasing the accountability obligations of the institutions. In Finland, polytechnics will gain autonomy in deciding on their strategy and operational issues. Finnish universities will get more freedom to generate external income.

14.1.5 Quality

The concern for the quality of higher education is an ongoing issue in many countries. Within the eleven countries reviewed, quality related policies and debates come in three forms. The first one is the debate on the 'traditional' quality assurance systems. In Denmark, the government intends to strengthen the system by making quality control an ongoing institutional task and through opening the external evaluations to international quality assurance agencies. In Portugal, the government is not satisfied with the effectiveness of the current quality assurance system and is looking for improvements.

The second form the quality debates take is the debates on accreditation. In Dutch higher education and in the Austrian *Fachhochschule* sector an accreditation system is implemented. In Sweden accreditation is now being discussed as a way to modernise the quality assurance system in order to accommodate the further internationalisation of higher education.

A third form of quality debates focuses on institutional audits. In the UK institutional audits have recently been added to the existing quality assurance programs.

The audits aim to give an evaluation of the higher education institutions as a whole. Similar audits replaced the traditional disciplinary reviews in Australia.

14.2 Discussion

Higher education systems are clearly complex open systems. There are open to the national influences as well as for the influences that are created by developments in other national (higher education) systems. Comparing the lists of hot issues in eleven higher education systems is therefore bound to produce a kaleidoscopic picture. The list of national issues is rich and volatile. Presenting a snap-shot comparison, as we did, has in this context a risk of being distorted. Using a different perspective or a different timeframe may change the national lists of issues. However, we found a list of common national issues that is more or less consistent with the list of last year and the year before.

Part II Statistical trends

15 The Lisbon process

At the European Council meeting in Lisbon (2000), it was declared that the European Union should, by 2010, become the *'..most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'*.

This ambitious goal is to be achieved by a new method of European cooperation, called the open method of co-ordination. Cornerstones of this method are the definition and monitoring of common outcomes or objectives and the identification of best practice policies used in the European member states. The use of indicators and benchmarks is crucial to the success of the OCM.

In the policy area of education and training, three strategic objectives were conceived:

1. Improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the EU;
2. facilitating the access of all to education and training systems;
3. opening up education and training systems to the wider world

Based on these three strategic goals, the European Commission proposed 13 objectives, for which 29 indicators were laid out (see Appendix).

Objectives from the Detailed workprogramme

-
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1.1 | Improving education and training for teachers and trainers |
| 1.2 | Developing skills for the knowledge society |
| 1.3 | Ensuring access to ICT for everyone |
| 1.4 | Increasing recruitment to scientific and technical studies |
| 1.5 | Making the best use of resources |
-
- | | |
|-----|--|
| 2.1 | Open learning environment |
| 2.2 | Making learning more attractive |
| 2.3 | Supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion |
-
- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3.1 | Strengthening the links with working life and research and society at large |
| 3.2 | Developing the spirit of enterprise |
| 3.3 | Improving foreign language learning |
| 3.4 | Increasing mobility and exchange |
| 3.5 | Strengthening the European co-operation |
-

These objectives refer to education and training in general. Only part of the objectives and the underlying indicators have a direct link with higher education. For those indicators and objectives, we shall present statistical information available in the CHEPS International Higher Education Monitor. The focus is on the position of the Dutch higher education system in the European context.

15.1 Improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the EU

For the first strategic goal only two objectives have a clear link to higher education:

- A. Increasing recruitment to scientific and technical studies and
- B. Making the best use of resources

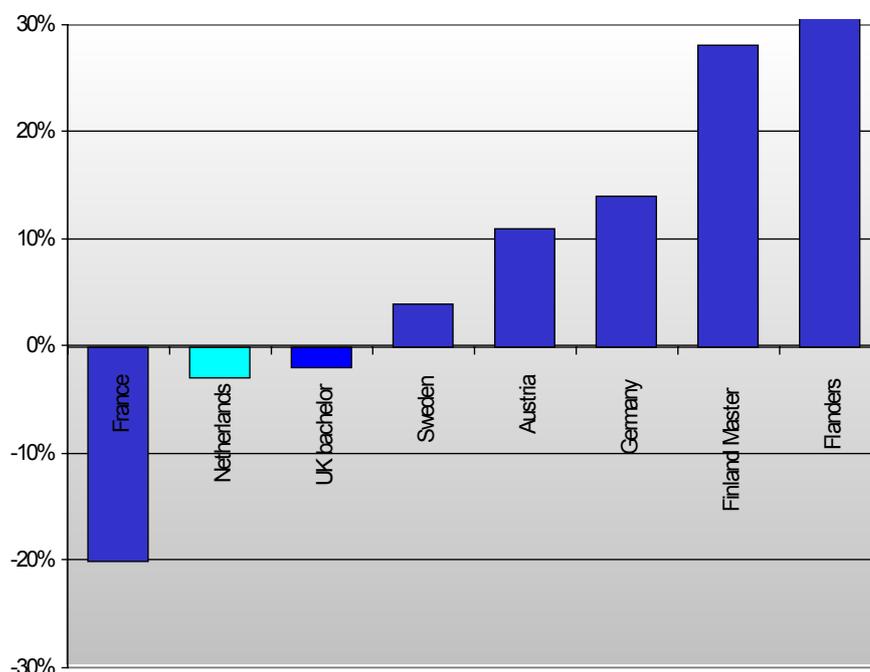
For the first objective two indicators were proposed for which the CHEPS IHEM contains trend data:

- A.1 The number of entries into mathematics, science and technology courses (upper secondary advanced levels and tertiary levels, by gender)
- A.2 The number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology, by gender

The data presented do not refer to mathematics, science and technology as in EU-indicators but are broken down into two categories: science and engineering. From preliminary data-analyses we learned that there are substantial differences in the indicator scores for those two categories. For similar reasons, the data are also broken down by type of institution.

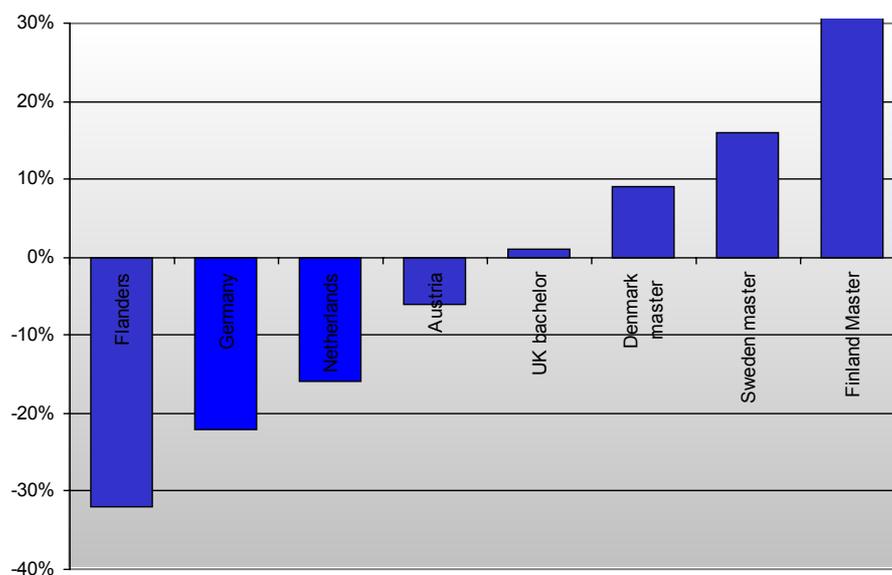
As far as the changes in the entries into science programmes at universities are concerned, there has been a substantial decrease in France, a minor decrease in the Netherlands and the UK (bachelor level). In Finland (master level) and Flanders, the increase has been substantial.

Figure 1: Change in number of new entrants in science, universities, 1990-2000



In engineering, the trends are more problematic. Flanders, Germany, and the Netherlands show a substantial decrease, whereas a substantial increase could be found only in Finland (master-level).

Figure 2: Change in number of new entrants in engineering, universities, 1990-2000



In the non-university sector the developments in two systems have been extreme, due to the introduction of *Fachhochschulen* and AMK in Austria and Finland; new sectors that are geared towards professional education. Only in Denmark and Germany, the number of new entrants in engineering in the non-university sector has gone down.

Figure 3: Change in number of new entrants in engineering, non-universities, 1990-2000

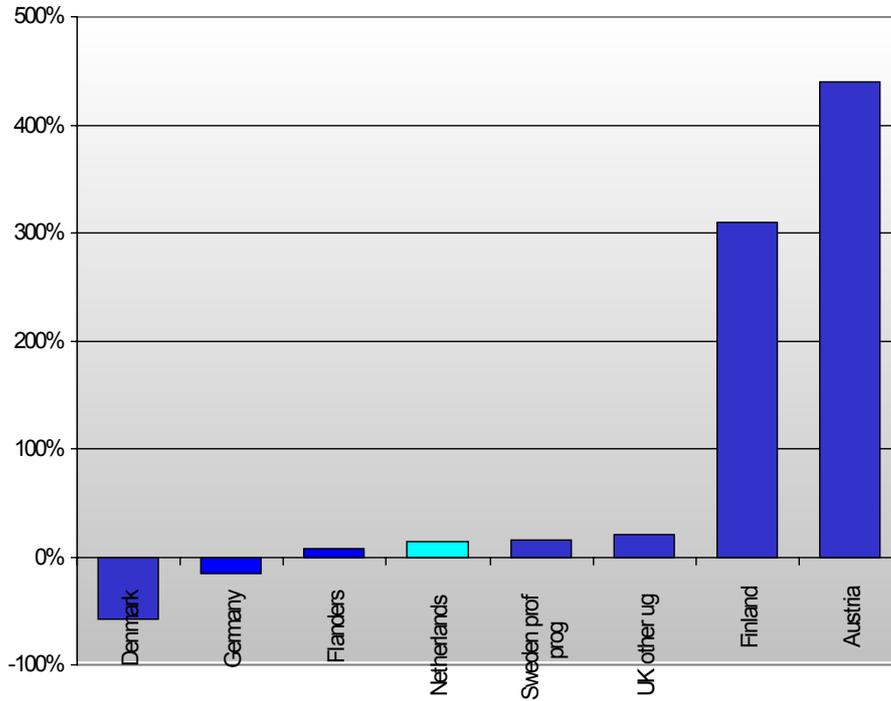


Figure 4: Graduates in natural science as a % of total number of graduates, universities

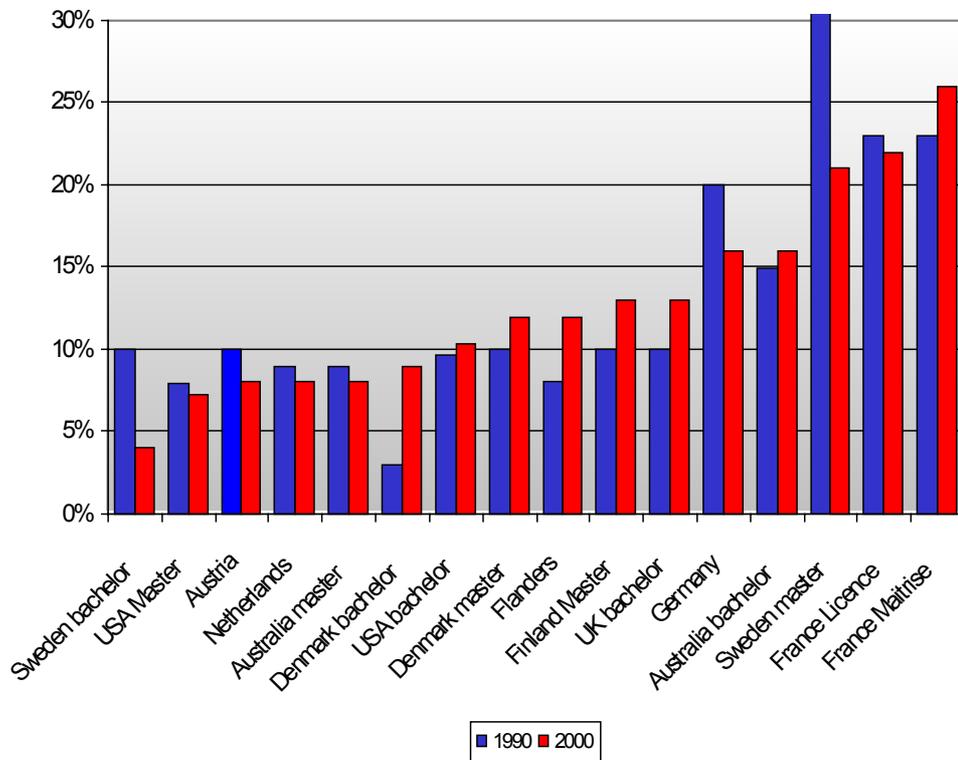


Figure 5: Graduates in technical sciences as a % of total number of graduates, universities

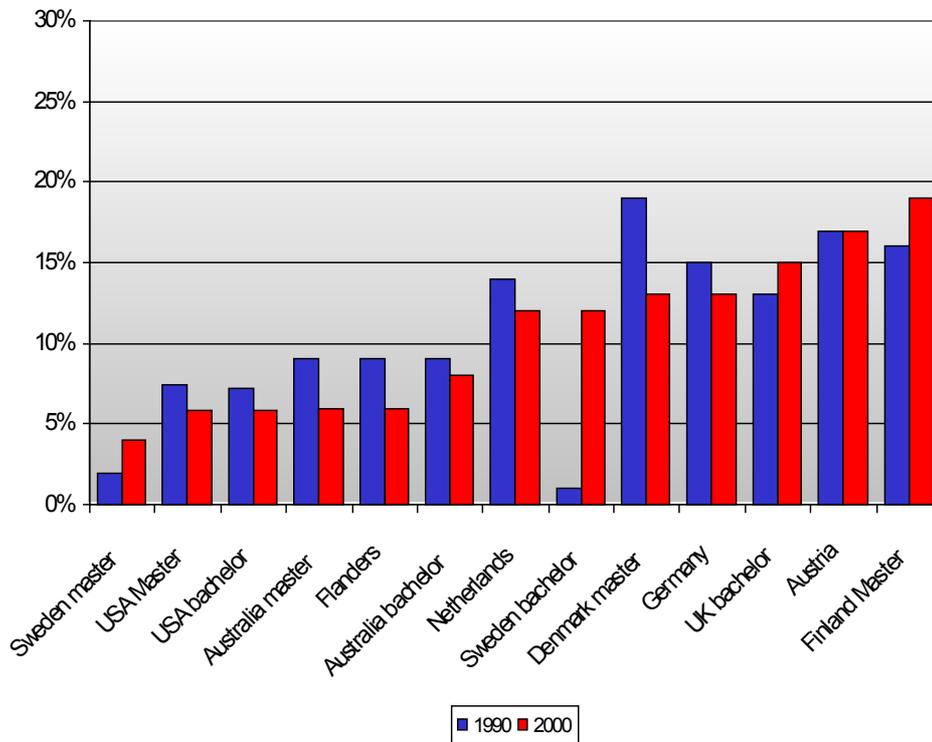
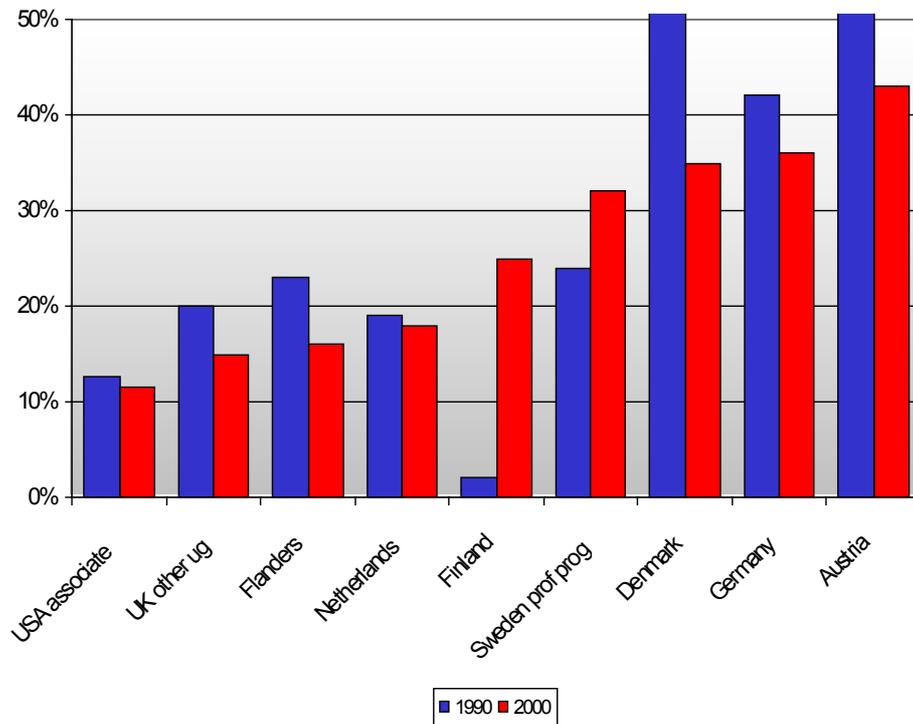


Figure 6: Graduates in technical sciences as a % of total number of graduates, non-universities



In 2002, the European Commission proposed five European benchmarks. These benchmarks are not concrete targets for individual countries: they are defined as reference levels of European average performance. Of these five benchmarks only one refers to higher education. The initial wording by the European Commission was: *'By 2010, all Member states will have at least halved the level of gender imbalance among graduates in the above mentioned fields (number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology) whilst securing an overall significant increase of the total number of graduates, compared to the year 2000'*⁶. In the conclusions of the European Council the benchmark was rephrased as: *'the total number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology in the European Union should increase by at least 15% by 2010 while at the same time the level of gender imbalance should decrease'*.⁷ The later version marks a switch in priority (downplaying the gender imbalance), a more precise target and the substitution of the group of reference (from the individual member states to the European average).

In the following section we shall present information regarding this benchmark for the Dutch higher education system. The focus of the analyses is on the question whether it is plausible to assume that the benchmark will be met.

If we look at the trend in the part of higher education graduates that graduated in science or engineering, we can see a downward trend in both types of institutions (see Figure 7). In absolute numbers, the trend looks less dramatic, especially for the HBO-sector but the upward slope of the lines has disappeared by the end of the 1990s.

⁶ European Commission (2002) European benchmarks in education and training: follow-up to the Lisbon European Council, (Com (2002)629)

⁷ European Council (2003), Council conclusions of 5 May 2003 on Reference levels of European average performance in education and training (Benchmarks) (OJ C 134)

Figure 7: Change in the number of science and engineering graduates as a percentage of total number of graduates in the Netherlands, by type of institution, 1990-2000

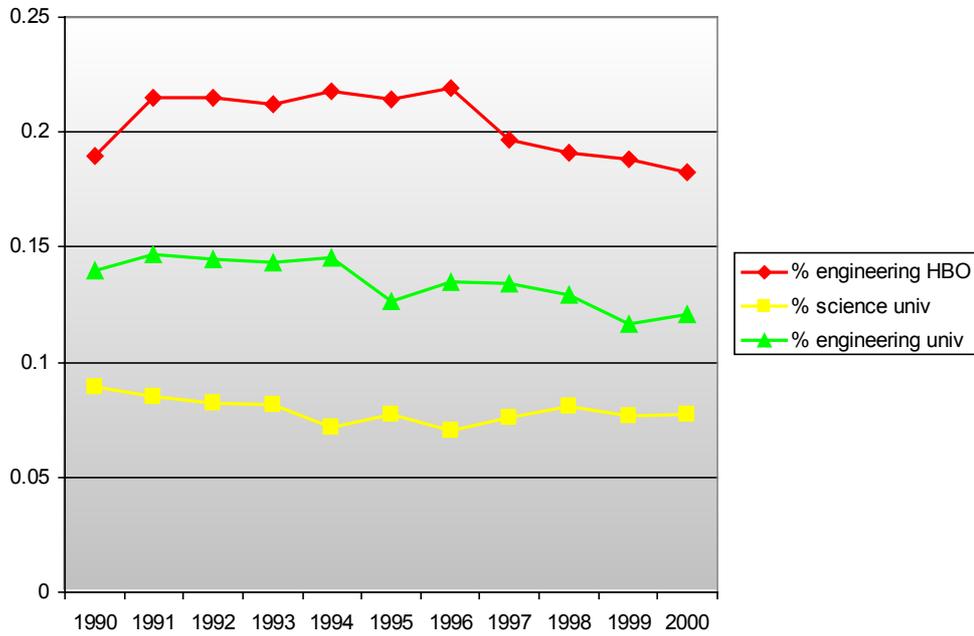
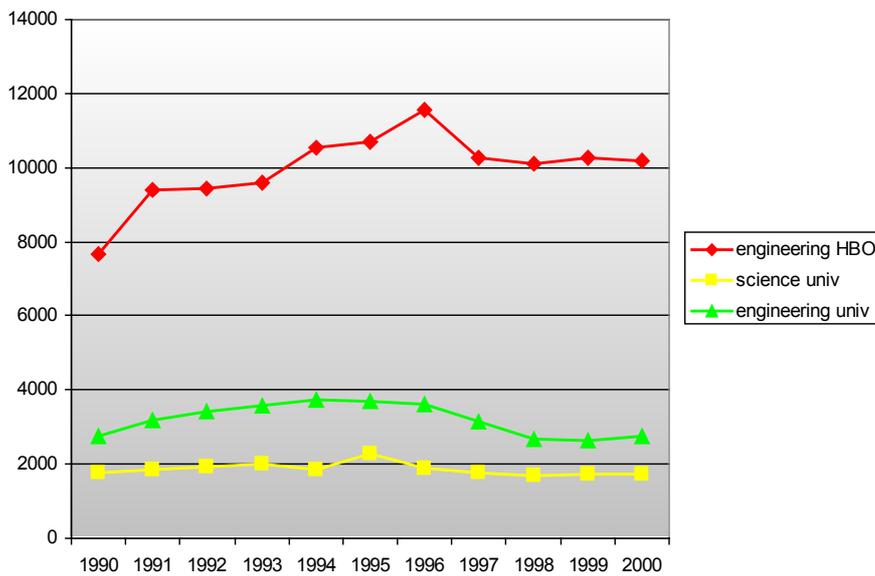
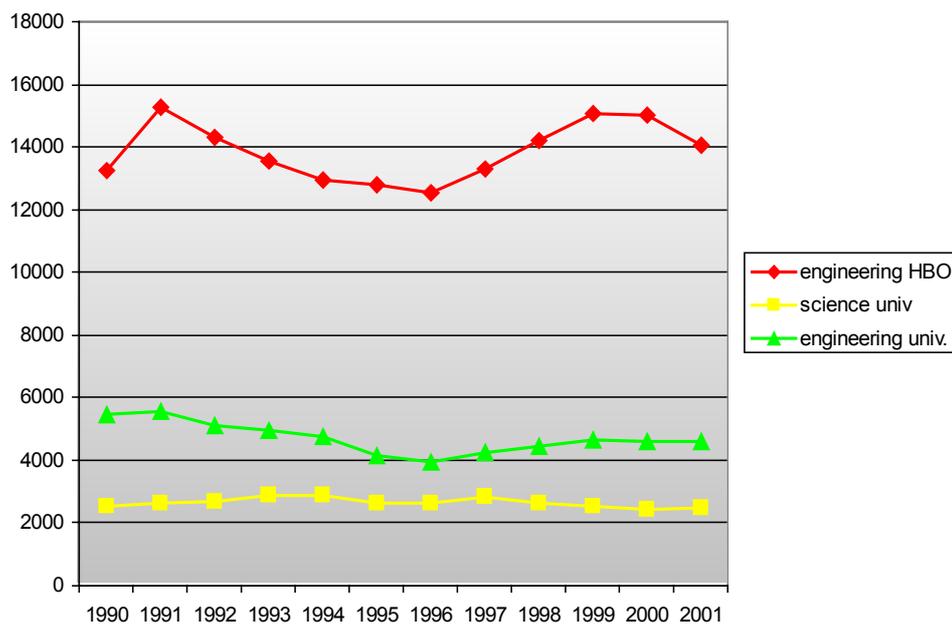


Figure 8: Number of graduates in science and engineering in the Netherlands by type of institution, 1990-2000



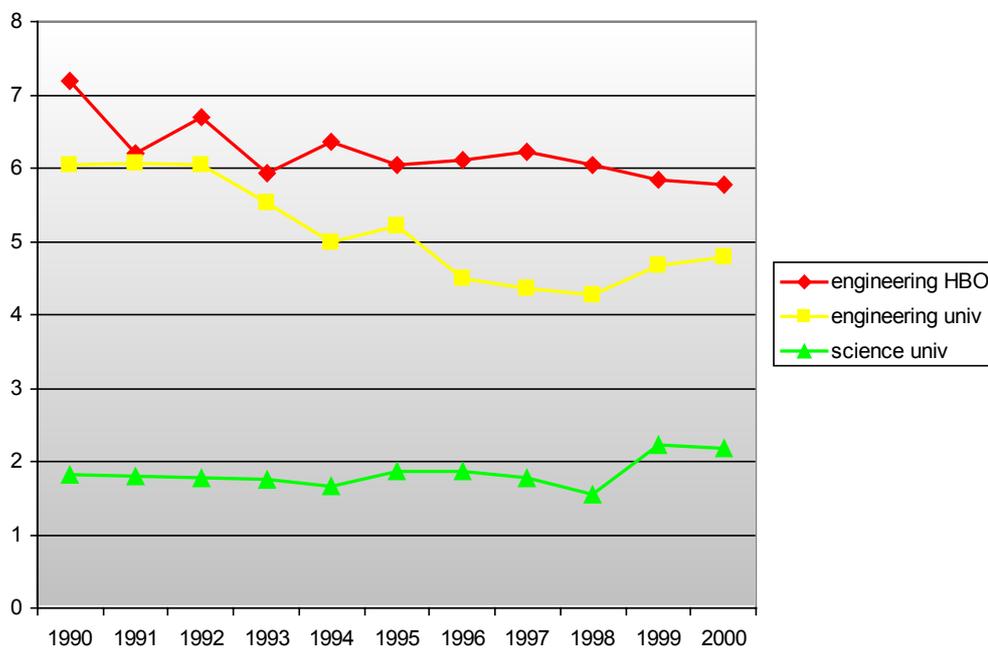
These trends refer to the past, but what can they tell us about the future? It is impossible to know the future, but if we analyse the trends in entrance into science and engineering programmes, we may take a peak into the future. The new entrants of 2001 will be the likely graduates in 2005 or 2006. The HBO-data (see Figure 9) suggest that the outflow of engineering HBO-graduates will rise in the early years of 2000, but in the second half of that decennium, that rise will hold. The university data suggest that the number of graduates will not grow during the first half of this decennium.

Figure 9: New entrants in science and engineering programmes in the Netherlands by type of institution, 1990-2001



The European benchmark does not only refer to the number of graduates but also to the gender imbalance regarding graduates in science and engineering. Since the European Commission did not provide an indicator for this, we calculated our own indicator. The indicator is the ratio of the number of male graduates in engineering and science as a percentage of the total number of male graduates and the number of female graduates in engineering and science as a percentage of the total number of female graduates. A score of 1 indicates there is no gender imbalance, is the score 4, than men are four times more likely to graduate in science and engineering than women. The gender imbalance has decreased since the early 1990s for engineering, but it has grown for science graduates (see Figure 10). Moreover, at the universities, the gender imbalance has grown the last few years of the 1990s.

Figure 10: Change in gender imbalance among graduates in science and engineering in the Netherlands by type of institution, 1990-2000



The situation regarding the gender imbalance is not very likely to improve. If we look at the new entrants in science and engineering, the gender imbalance is going up (see Figure 11). Assuming that the completion rate for women is not substantially higher than for men, this leads us to the conclusion that the gender imbalance target will probably not be met.

Figure 11: Changes in gender imbalance among new entrants in science and engineering in the Netherlands by type of institution, 1990-2000

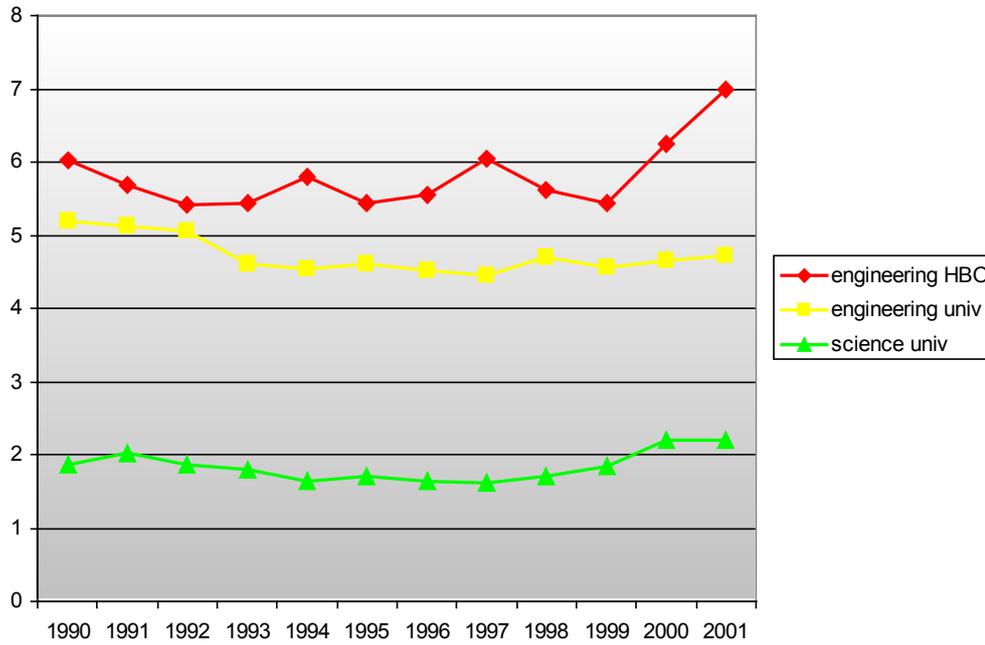


Figure 12: Graduates in natural science as a % of total number of graduates, by gender, 2000, universities

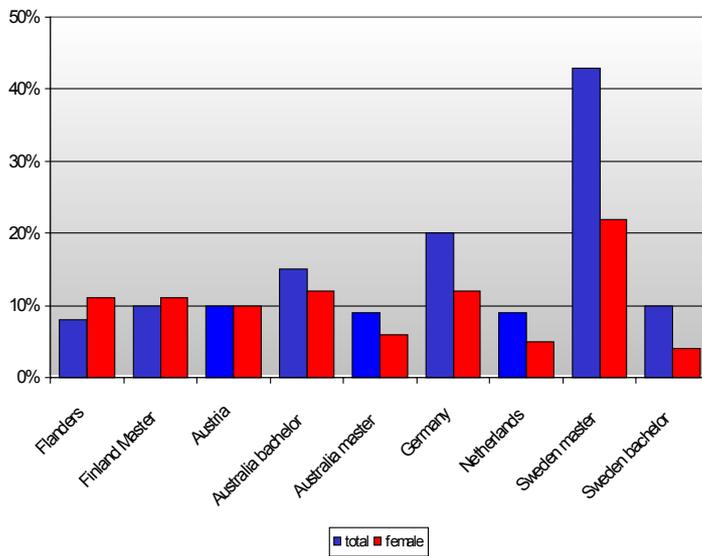


Figure 13: Graduates in technical sciences as a % of total number of graduates, by gender, 2000, universities

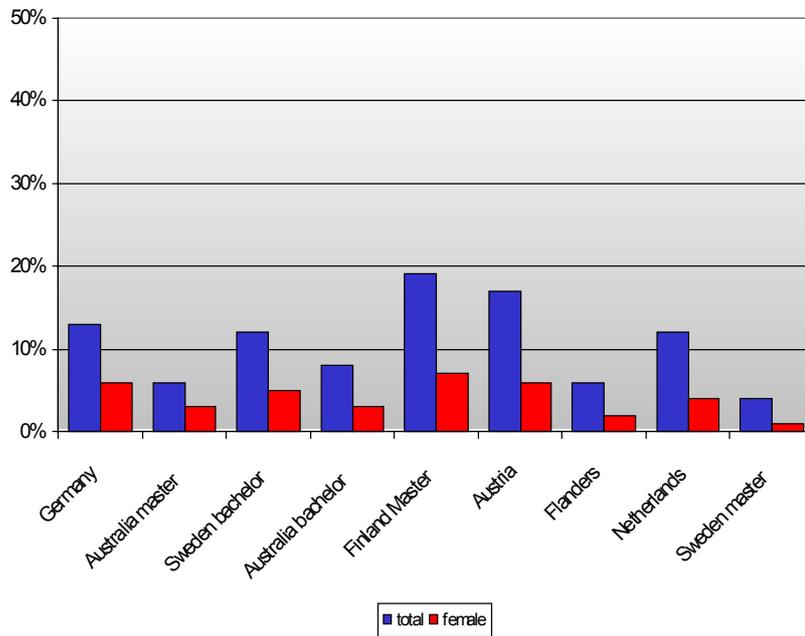
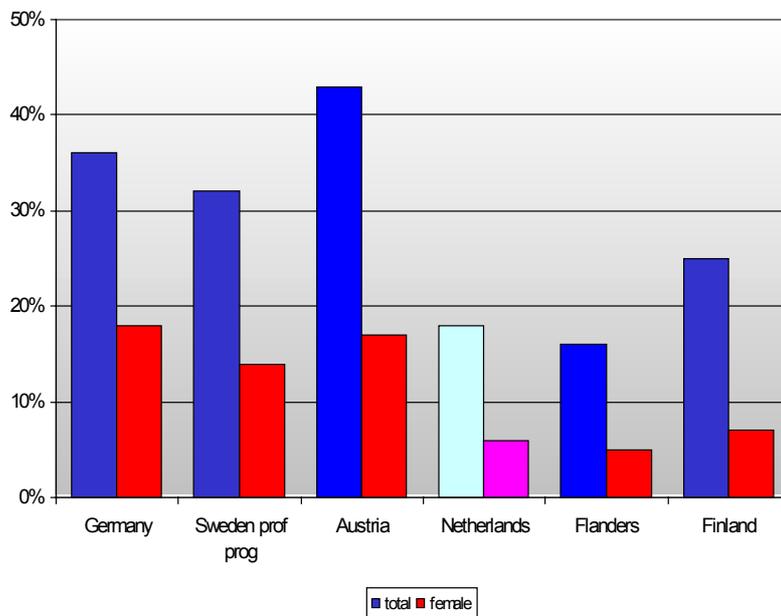


Figure 14: Graduates in technical sciences as a % of total number of graduates, by gender, 2000, non-universities



Regarding the indicators on ‘making the best use of resources’ the CHEPS IHEM contains trenddata on the indicator ‘*public expenditure on higher education as a percentage of GDP*’.

The trend in public expenditure (in constant prices) (see Figure 15) show upward trends for most countries, except Germany and Australia. If we look at the public expenditure as a percentage of GDP (an indication of the priority given to higher education), the trends are less favourable. In most countries, public expenditure have fallen or are stable. Only in two countries, public expenditure on higher education has gone up (as a percentage of GDP): Austria and the USA (see Figure 16). This downward or stabilizing trend can also be found in public expenditure in student support (grants) (see Figure 17).

Figure 15: Direct public expenditure on higher education institutions, 1993=100, prices 1995

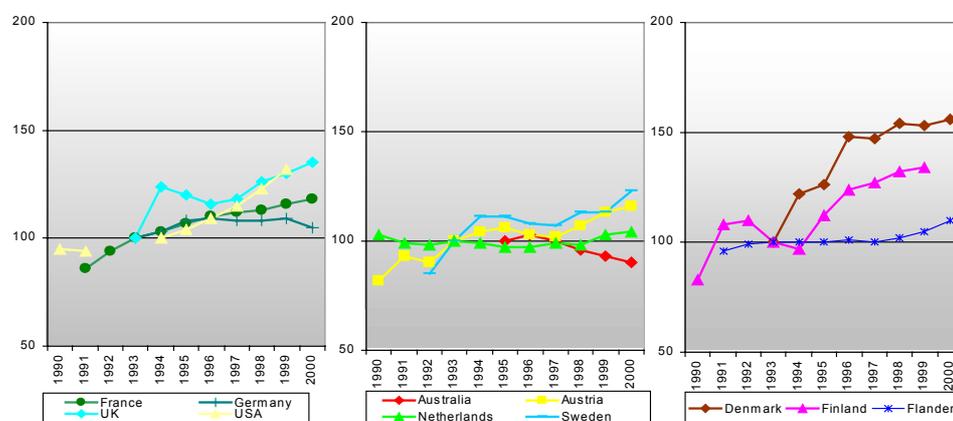


Figure 16: Direct public expenditure on higher education institutions, as a percentage of GDP, 1993=100

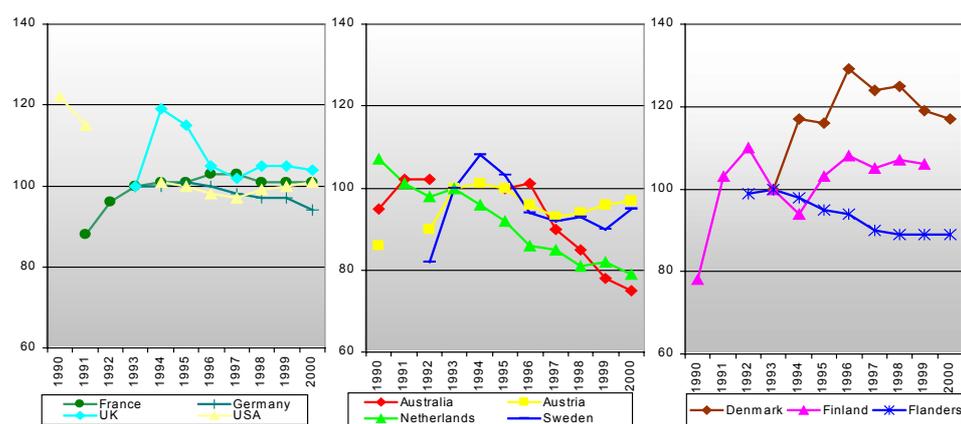
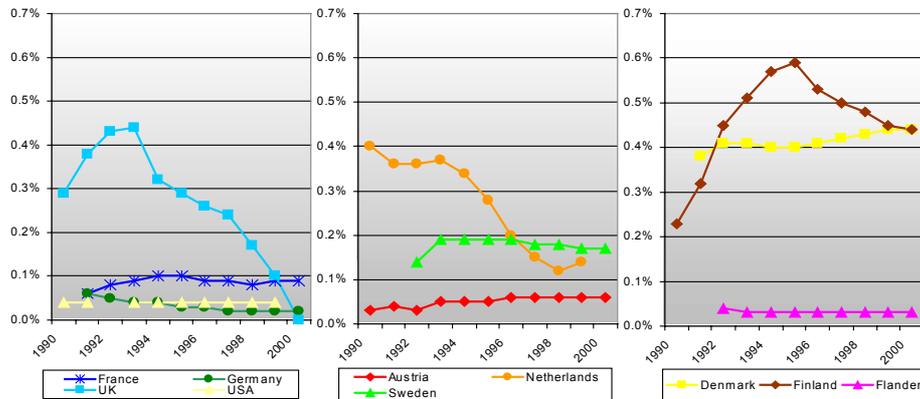


Figure 17: Public expenditure on student support, grants, as a percentage of GDP



15.2 Facilitating the access of all to education and training systems

In the realm of the second strategic goal, there is only one indicator, listed under the objective of ‘Making learning more attractive’, that has a direct link to higher education data in the CHEPS IHEM: Participation in tertiary education.

To identify trends in participation we shall look at trends in new entrants, enrolments, and graduates. In addition, a rate of participation will be presented.

Figure 18: Changes in the number of new entrants, 1990=100

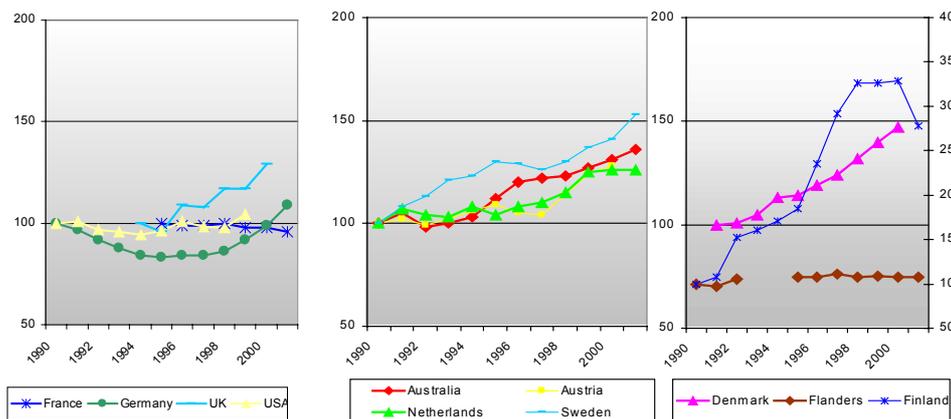


Figure 19: Changes in the number of students enrolled (undergraduate programmes), 1990=100

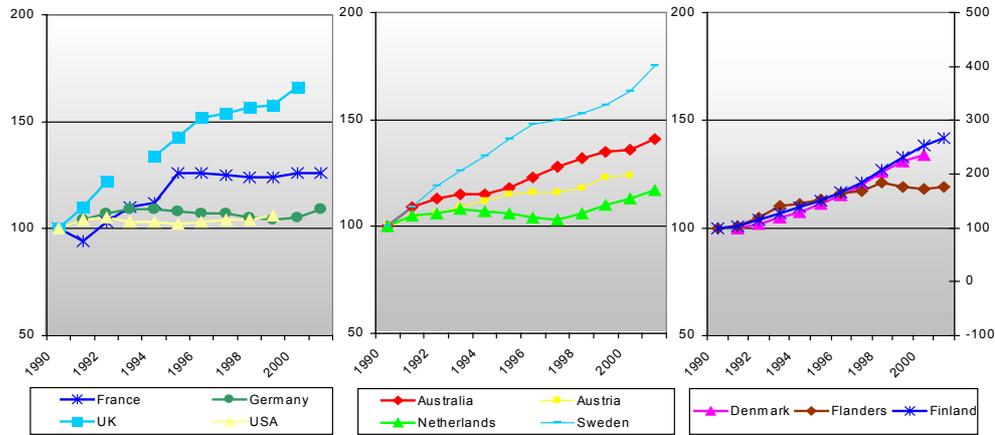


Figure 20: Changes in the number of graduates (undergraduate programmes), 1990=100

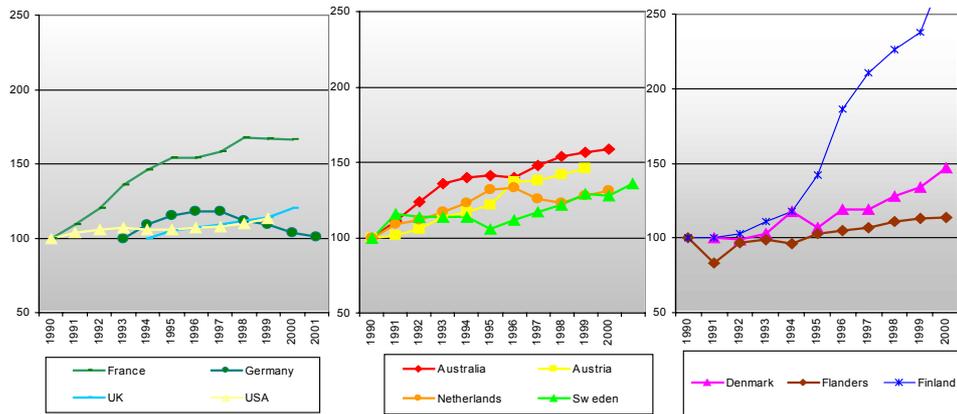
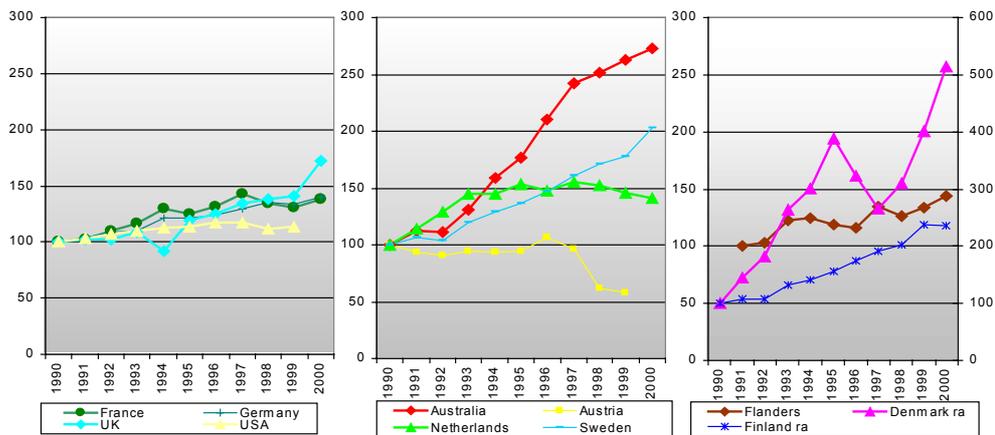
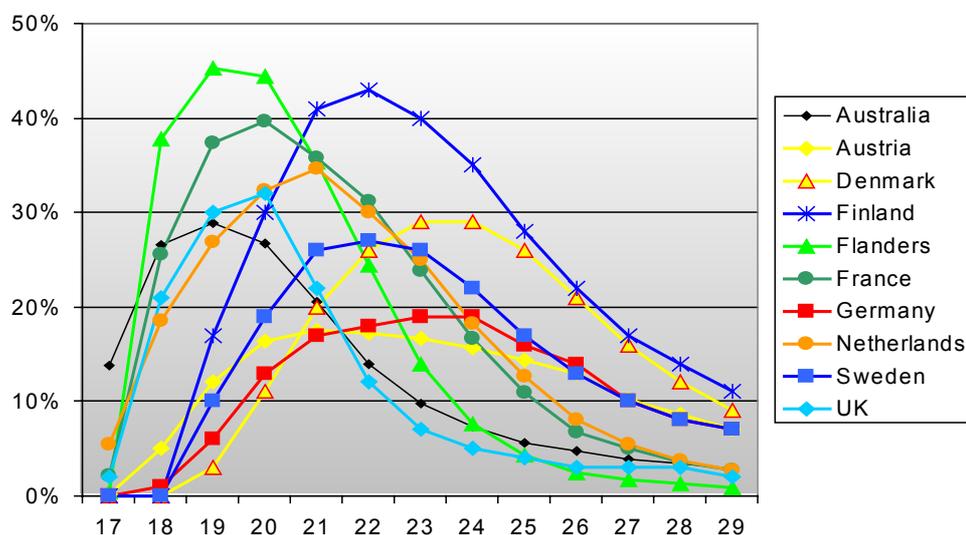


Figure 21: Changes in the number of graduates from PhD-programmes, 1990=100

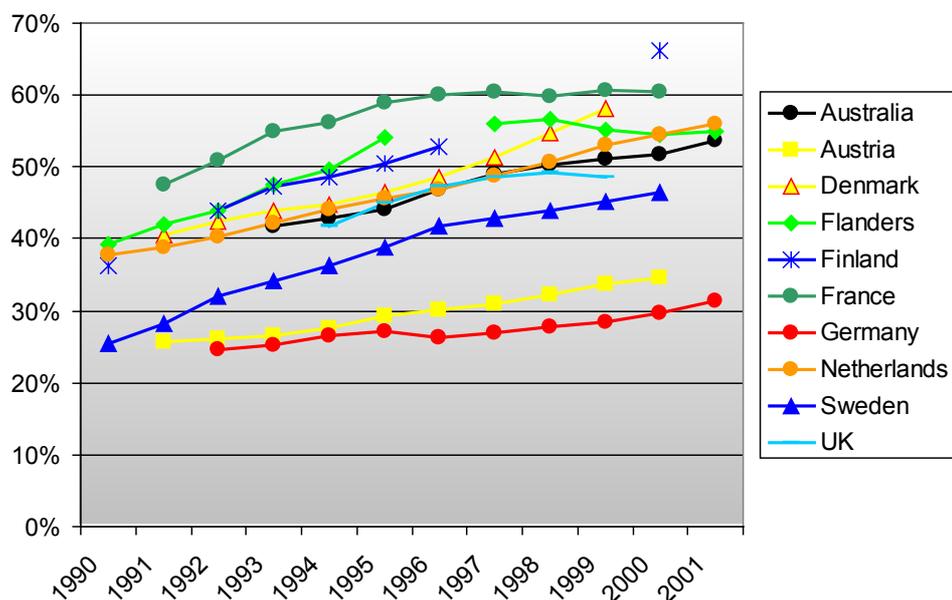


The net rate of participation is calculated as the number of students enrolled of age X as a percentage of the population of age X . The calculation results in a graph (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: Net rate of participation by ge-group, 2000



Although the net rate of participation graphs are informative regarding the distribution of relative enrolment by age, they lack the clarity of one numerical score. To derive such a score, we use a two-step procedure. First we calculate the surface of the area of the graph by adding the scores per age-group. Given the interpretation of the indicator it does not matter how long a student is enrolled. The result of this first step however is very much influenced by the duration of stay: the longer a student is enrolled, the higher the score will be. Therefore a second step is needed. In this second step we divide the result by the average duration of stay in higher education. The results of this two step procedure are presented in the next graph (see Figure 23).

Figure 23: Rate of participation (net corrected by duration of stay)

The rate of participation has grown in all countries, although in Flanders and the UK, growth has halted in the late 1990s. It is furthermore remarkable to see that the scores of Germany and Austria on this indicator are low.

15.3 Opening up education and training systems to the wider world

The indicators proposed for this third strategic goal are relatively weak. In the realm of higher education there is only type of data that may be used as an (imperfect) indicator for the objective *'increasing mobility and exchange'*: the nationality of students enrolled. There are marked differences between countries regarding the percentage of students with a foreign nationality: Austria scores relatively high, whereas Flanders, Finland and the Netherlands score low (see Figure 24).

Figure 24: Percentage students with a foreign nationality as a percentage of total enrolment, 2000

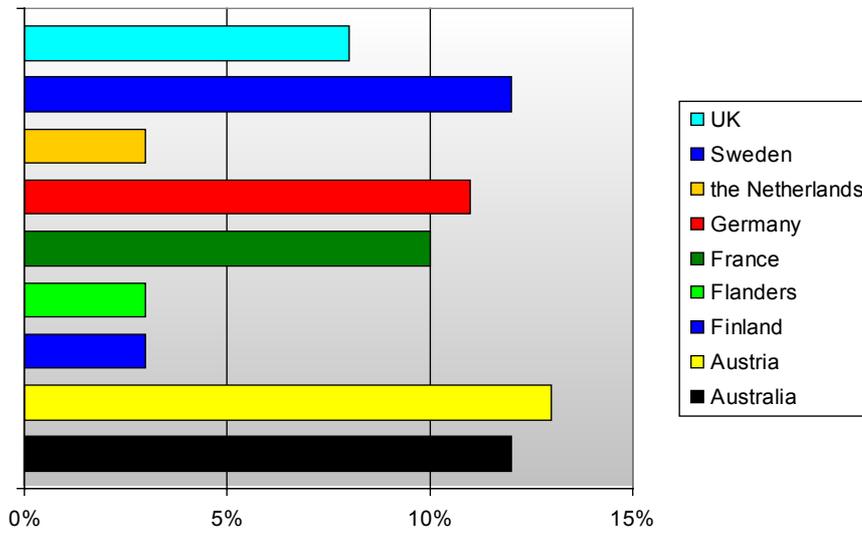
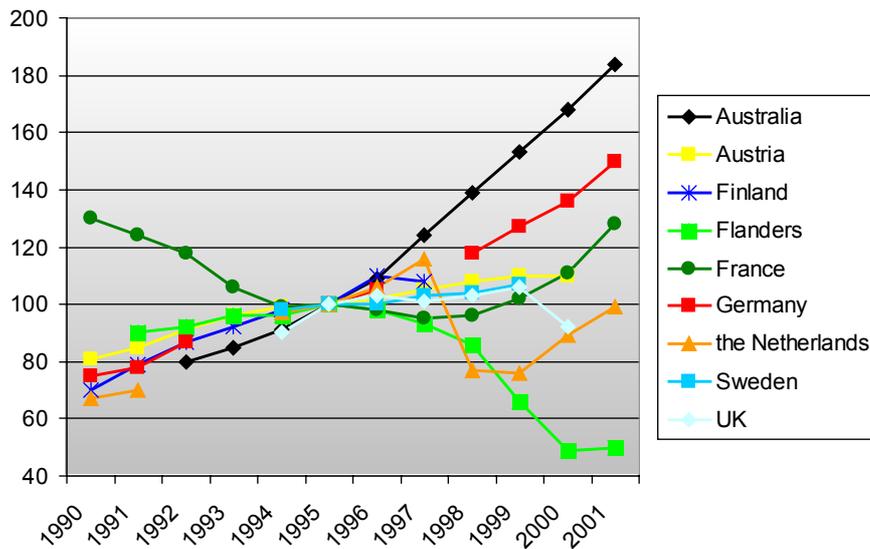


Figure 25: Change in the percentage students with a foreign nationality as a percentage of total enrolment, 1995=100



In four countries, the proportion of foreign students has grown in the late 1990s (Australia, Germany, France and the Netherlands). In Flanders, the proportion of foreign students has dropped since the mid 1990s.

15.4 Discussion

In the EU Detailed work plan, the information demand is not limited to statistical indicators. A crucial part of the Detailed work programme and the underlying open method of coordination is the qualitative description of, what the EU calls, best practices. Although the CHEPS IHEM is not set up to cover all issues mentioned in the Detailed work plan, the first part of this report contains some very relevant information on some of the qualitative issues regarding higher education mentioned in the Detailed work plan.

Regarding the objective 'Making best use of resources' there is a clear call for identifying the most efficient systems of funding (higher) education activities. In Austria, Denmark and Finland, there are discussions on performance based or related funding mechanisms as a way to enhance efficiency (see section 14.1.3).

The policies regarding access and equality in Austria, Germany and the UK (see section 14.1.1) can be used as a qualitative input in the discussions on objective 2.3.

The issue of mobility and internationalization can be found in most countries. The policies regarding Bologna, and other internationalization policies are clear examples that internationalization is becoming a leading theme in higher education policy.

The quantitative analyses made by the European Commission so far have been based on data available in international databases. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the kind presented in this report (based on national databases and expert opinions) may serve as a valuable additional source of information for assessing the performance and progress of European higher education systems.

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