



The National Unions of Students in Europe

Students financing higher education?



ESIB compendium on tuition fees

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Introduction

ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe has existed since 1982 to promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level, and towards all relevant organisations and institutions.

Higher Education Institutions in Europe are at the time witnessing a cut in the funding from their national state which has traditionally been the main source of funding for European Universities. Therefore universities have started to look for other sources of funding. Among these sources is charging tuition fees to students (or increasing fees, where they already exist).

With the increase of private institutions and the number of students attending these institutions, also the idea of students as customers buying an educational service instead of using a public good as citizens push forward the question of tuition fees. The data in this compendium is based on surveys done by CoCo at the 7th European Student Convention in Dublin, on trainings we have done and on several other documents. Most of the documents exist also in electronically format, and you get them by sending an e-mail to: coco@esib.org. Comments to the content or additional info can be sent to the same address. Thanks to all the people who have been contributing to this small compendium.

ESIB's opinion on tuition fees:

ESIB states in the policy on commodification of education that;

"ESIB rejects the idea of education as a commodity and is therefore in opposition to the process of commodification of education. (...) ESIB is opposed to any tuition fees; no matter if they are raised in public, private or for-profit systems. Tuition fees are a tool of exclusion and hinder free access to Higher education throughout the world. ESIB further believes that Education is a basic human right and has to be accessible to as many people as possible.

The Students of Europe believe that the concept of the student as a consumer and education as a product fails to acknowledge the importance of education as a social tool and runs counter to the creation of a knowledge-based society, with democratic, tolerant and active citizens."

This compendium tries to explain some trends in the way tuition fees are charged, it also looks at the arguments used by students and officials in the tuition fee debate and it tries to give some recent examples of students fighting tuition fees in their country.

The first question we need to ask ourselves when dealing with tuition fees is of course; what is a tuition fee?

A tuition fee is an economic contribution to a higher education institution or a country's higher education sector the student has to pay, in order to register, attend or finish higher education.

In some countries the fee is not connected to the university itself, but students have to pay a fee where the money goes to other scholarships, student housing or other arrangements for student welfare. As long as these fees are paid to the higher education sector or higher education institution it is a tuition fee, but if the money paid by students goes to student organizations or other foundations is not to be seen as a tuition fee.

Tuition fees in numbers

Country	Institutions		Students	Fees/year Undergraduate	Fees/year Graduate
Austria	Public	Universities	188 000	€726	€726
		Polytechnics	40 000	None	?
	Private	Universities	1 200	No limit	?
		Polytechnics			
Belgium (Flemish)	Public/Private	Universities	60 000	€80-500	€80-500
		Polytechnics	105 000		
Belgium (French)	Public/Private	Universities		€150-2000	€750-2000
		Polytechnics		No limit	No limit
Bulgaria	Public	Universities		€90-800	€90-700
Croatia	Public	Universities		€550-1100	€550-1100
Czech republic	Public	Universities	240 865	None	None
		Polytechnics			
	Private	Universities	7 891	€1210-1340	€1210-1340
		Polytechnics			
Cyprus	Public	Universities		None	€3500
		Polytechnics			
Denmark	Public	Universities	110 000	None	None
		Polytechnics	103 000		
Estonia	Public	Universities	40 711	€500-2500	€500-2500
		Polytechnics	12 042		
	Private	Universities	6 409	€1640	€1640
		Polytechnics	6 479		
Finland	Public	Universities	164 000	None	None
		Polytechnics	126 000		
France	Public	Universities	1 533 128	€4-800	€4-800
		Polytechnics	450 593	€400-500	€400-500
	Private	Universities	19 751	?	?
		Polytechnics	250 821	€1400-5600	€1400-5600
Greece	Public	Universities	303 010	None	None

		Polytechnics	175 863		
Germany	Public/ Private	Universities	1 351 817	€0-650	€0-650
		Polytechnics	30 444	€0-650	€0-650
Ireland	Public	Universities	114 262	None	None
		Polytechnics	2 644		
Italy	Public	Universities	1 285 809	€164-600	€1500-3000
		Polytechnics		?	?
Latvia	Public	Universities	91 745	€257-3029	€257-3029
		Polytechnics		?	?
	Private	Universities	27 199	€1050	€1050
		Polytechnics			
Lithuania	Public/ Private	Universities	139 244	€145	€145
		Polytechnics	6 540	€100-2500	€100-2500
Luxembourg	Public	Universities	?	None	None
		Polytechnics	?		
Malta	Public	Universities	9 614	None	€1900-7000
		Polytechnics	?	?	?
Netherlands	Public	Universities	182 900	€1450	€1450
		Polytechnics	325 800		
	Private	Universities	?	€1585-5210	€1585-5210
		Polytechnics	?		
Poland	Public	Universities	1 271 728	None	None
		Polytechnics		?	?
	Private	Universities	528 820	€440-910	€440-910
		Polytechnics			
Portugal	Public	Universities	170 653	€475-880	€1500-7500
		Polytechnics	54 672	?	?
	Private	Universities	54 672	€1900	?
		Polytechnics	59 501	?	?
Serbia and Montenegro (Serbia)	Public	Universities		€500-2000	€500-2000
Slovak republic	Public	Universities	141 205	None	None
		Polytechnics			
	Private	Universities	600	€800-1200	€800-1200
		Polytechnics		?	?
Slovenia	Public	Universities	98 510	None	None
		Polytechnics		?	?

	Private	Universities	2 948	€2340-7020	€2340-7020
		Polytechnics		?	?
Spain	Public	Universities	1 343 997	€500-770	€500-770
		Polytechnics	121 122	?	?
	Private	Universities	132 197	€5000-6000	€5000-6000
		Polytechnics		?	?
Sweden	Public/ private	Universities	380 000	None	None
		Polytechnics			
United Kingdom (England/Wales)	Public	Universities	1 843 300	€1500-4640	€1500-4640
		Polytechnics			
United Kingdom (Scotland)	Public	Universities		None	None
		Polytechnics		None	None

All numbers are in Euro pr year.

Numbers collected February 2004-February 2005.

The definition of fees in this section varies, as it was given by the NUS representative of each country.

Different ways of charging tuition fees

Pre-paid fees;

The "traditional" way of charging tuition fees to students. The student pays the fee before attending the education. Students are usually charged either per year, semester or per credit point they wish to take (later on part-time students). Exam fees, registration fees and application fees usually also appears in the form of pre-paid fees.

Pre-paid fees can be fixed, income contingent or dependent on field of study.

Pre-paid fees are either flat (equal amount charged to every one), or regulated after different measures. Such measures can be based on the student; income of the student or the student's parents, or it can be based on the institution and reflect the actual cost of your study, the popularity of the studies or other things.

Top-up fees

With the top-up fee you pay tuition fee when you exit university instead of when you enter. For every year you study (or every credit point you wish to take) you built up a certain amount in debt to the state that is to be paid back when you finish your studies and get a job. The system of top-up fees will be introduced in Great Britain from 2006.

The top-up fee differs from the graduate tax in the way that you only are charged to pay for a certain period of time, until you have reached the amount you owe in tuition fees.

No fees

A few countries have no tuition fees in public higher education institutions. These countries include not only the Nordic countries, but also Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland.

Graduate tax

The graduate tax is an extra tax to be paid by people who have attended higher education. You do not pay for going to university as you enter, but everybody that takes part in Higher Education pay the extra percentage for a certain number of years or for the rest of their life. The graduate usually has to start paying the tax when he or she reaches a certain level of income.

Budget places (income or merit based)

Most countries give "discounts" or free study places (budget places) to some groups of students. Budget places are usually only given to national students. Both are usually combined with the pre-paid fee.

There are two main ways of giving reduction / exemption from fees; on the basis of economical background, or on the basis of merit.

In the systems with economic budget places, the students with less ability to pay, are exempted from the fee or get to pay a lower fee. Ability to pay is based on the income of the parents of the student or the student itself.

In the second system the way of distributing budget places is based on merit,

The grades from either from gymnasium curricula, or based on academic achievements, either in entrance exams or last years university exams. Between 10 and 50 % qualify for the budget places.

Merit based systems also differ in the way students qualify for the budget place.

Students can be accepted for a whole study, either by their own choice or dependent on what studies they are good enough to get for free. In the last system the state decides on a number of budget places in each field of study, and the best students compete for them, which makes it harder to get a budget place in the more popular studies than in the less popular studies, as long as they are seen as equally relevant by the state.

Students can also be evaluated to see if they still qualify for the budget studies every year, dependent on their last academic achievements.

In some merit-based systems, you also have a small non-paying quota for students with disabilities, from rural areas, or with difficult family background (no parents etc).

Grants and loan equaling or compensating the tuition fee

Tuition fees are usually combined with some sort of grant or loan system. The level varies between covering the whole or part of the tuition fee or also part of the living cost of students.

This compendium does not deal with grants and loans to a large extent, as the differences and details are even more complex Europe-wide than in the case of tuition fees.

Tax reduction for people paying tuition fees

Some countries with pre-paid tuition fees give tax reduction to student or parents equaling to the amount paid in tuition fee, or the amount paid is not taxed.

Tuition fees for special groups of students

Long-time students

Students using longer time than expected for their studies are charged more for their studies than students finishing on time. Example: Student studying a master in literature (normal study-time 5 year) pay for the studies from the 6th or 7th year and until they graduate. This fee is introduced as a mean to make students finish their study faster.

This fee is mainly present in countries that have a tradition for long studies (6-8 years).

Part-time students

Part-time students often have other economical conditions than full-time students. Part-time students often pay the full cost of the study, or a higher fee than full-time students.

International students

International students (or students outside of the EU/ EEA for members of EU / EEA) are charged higher tuition fees than national students in big parts of Europe.

Even in the Nordic countries, that usually have no tuition fee, there are suggestions to start charging non-EU students tuition fees. Some international students come to the study place through a student recruiting agencies and also pay a "commission fee" to the agency who found the study place for them.

Distance learners and Life-long learners

Distance learners are often put in a different category than “normal” students, and are charged more. Also life long learners (part-time or not) are some times charged higher fee than normal students (some of these students are paid by their employer, some not).

Renaming fees

Some institution and countries charges different types of fees to the students, using names as registration fee, application fee, entrance exam fee, exam fee, service fee, paper fee, graduate tax or other. Still they answer to the definition of a tuition fee as an economical contribution the student have to make to the institution or national higher education sector in order to enter, attend or finish a higher education.

Mixing

Different mixes of the above ways of charging fee results in the different national systems. Especially the mix of fees and grants/loan are closely linked.

Regulation of fees

There are two main ways of regulating the level of tuition fees, or if there should be tuition fees at all:

a) Fees are regulated by the state, either by the Ministry for education, by the parliament (national or regional) directly or by law regulations. Another option is to set a maximum fee, and let the institution decide individually on the fee within this limit.

b) Fees are set by the institution itself, either on basis of cost of study, or more usual by the reputation of the higher education institution.

The regulation of fees are often connected to by whom the fee is charged (institution or state), so if the student pays the fee directly to the institution it is more likely to be set by the institution itself.

(We have not looked at the level of fees in relation to who is regulating, but this might be an interesting approach).

Argument section

This section will outline some of the main arguments students face when discussing tuition fees. In the first section the main problems are addressed, while in the second section, some of the student response to this problem is presented. It is though to be mentioned that the implications of introducing or increasing tuition fees are as different as the countries the changes are suggested in. As an example some countries work hard to increase their number of graduates, whilst others have too many University graduates compared to the number of people pursuing vocational education. There is no “ultimate” solution to fighting tuition fees, but as the idea and models of charging them seems to spread rapidly from country to country we have collected some of the main arguments used by both sides when debating them.

1. The funding gap.

The question of tuition fees often boils down to a question of under-funding of the higher education institutions in general. The increase in student numbers the last 20 years and the increasing demand for quality in higher education is in most European countries not followed by an increase in funding.

Starting with this point might seem like grabbing the cat in the tail, but of all the Students Unions we surveyed about tuition fees and the arguments in favour, the lack of funding was an important part in almost every national discussion on tuition fees.

Ministries tend to see tuition fees as an easy solution to a pressing lack of funding/ willingness of funding.

Universities see tuition fee as a way for “fast” money, in order to keep up with raise in number of students, and to ensure the quality of education.

The notion amongst higher education institutions is that students are willing to pay, if they are “guaranteed” a high quality education. Tuition fees are usually justified amongst academics as a way of providing better student services, keep facilities up to date and establish a quality education.

2. Education – a benefit for the society or the individual?

One of the biggest “ideological” debates on tuition fees is whether higher education is mainly a public or mainly a private good. Education is by many seen as an investment in the students own future as higher education usually makes you get a better job and earn more money than a lower level of education. It benefits the individual, so the individual should pay. The students will profit most from their studies, so they should contribute more.

3. The evil Count or Robin Hood – exclusion or redistribution?

The most easy-spotted effect of tuition fees is that someone who is qualified to enter a certain study program might not be able to pursue that education purely out of economical reasons. Seen separately this is an obvious obstacle to giving everybody the chance to enter higher education. On the other hand students are more likely to come from well-off, academic families than from less well-off social backgrounds, this is also factual for countries without tuition fees. This means that higher education is in some ways comparable with the ruling of an Evil Count. Everybody pays taxes to him, but only the rich get to eat the cake.

At the same time tuition fees are sometimes presented as a fair solution preventing the rich from being subsidised by poorer people, by using the money earned for tuition fees to subsidise the less well-off students with grants or loans. This more “Robin Hood-like” way of charging tuition fees is called redistribution, and of course requires that tuition fees are not already being used for other purposes.

4. Academic impact of paying for your studies

With more and more countries acknowledging the problems of an aging population, most nations wish to have their young people joining the workforce at 23 (and preferably with at least one Master degree...) With the massification of higher education the last 20 years, and at the same smaller generations than before, more young people are being held back from the labour market than before, especially in some countries where the tradition until recently where the average time of study for a graduate was around 7-8 years. Together with shortening down the degrees in most countries, there is also a wish to make the students work harder, more effectively and finally not drop out from their studies. The traditional market approach that if you pay for something you take it more seriously has also become guiding star for many countries higher education policies.

Tuition fees are supposed to make us motivated, hard-working and efficient in our studies.

5. Other factors

A part from these main clusters of arguments, there are lots of smaller arguments, usually connected more to the national context the tuition fees are imposed in.

It is often stated that graduates are more likely to get a well paid job after their graduation, than people not undertaking higher education (not true for all types of higher education), therefore their contribution to higher education should be somehow bigger.

When speaking about the students' future contribution to the society, both economically, socially and politically, some groups of students end up as "black sheep". Foremost the international students, who in some countries study for free, and afterwards leave the country never to come back. One more student group seems to be more vulnerable to being charged with tuition fees than "normal" students; the part-time students and the life-long learners. In many countries special fees exist for these groups, as they seem to be more capable of paying them, than young full-time students.

Another issue arising is that the number of people who enter higher education will decrease with the implementation of tuition fees. Whether this is a good or bad thing varies depending on the national context and enrollment rates to higher education.

The last factor to be mentioned here is the general commodification of education. The explosion of private for-profit providers of higher education, and also transnational education shows that the "market" for education is there. A lot of students are indeed willing to pay a lot of money in order to have the education of their choice. Although it does not mean that all students are willing or capable to do this, it still is sending a strong signal to policymakers that higher education is "pure value for the money" for the individual student. Also the argument that systems of tuition fees works in other countries is often drawn up, pointing to countries like US or Australia.

Student replies to some of the questions being raised:

1. The funding gap.

Looking at “the funding gap” in public funding and higher education institutions expenditure, a few questions need to be asked;

- *Is it possible to get more public funds?*

The general conception of students, universities and governments is often that there are not possible to get more public funds. As argued below in the section on public good/private good, the need to redefine higher education from expenditure to investment in the society as a whole. In order for a country to be competitive within the “knowledge economy” the education level of the population needs to be high.

- *Is the existing funds used in a good way?*

The way public funding is allocated and used is varying a lot from country to country.

Traditionally the big public universities where given large budgets which was being governed in a rigid, bureaucratic way with scarce capacity for optimal use of allocated public money. There is no “European global solution” for creating more efficient use of funds, and the balance between efficient governance or management, and democratic decision-making processes is fragile. Amongst the models being tried out you find increase in autonomy for the higher education institutions, more specialised universities, more business-like management structures within the institutions and more direct money flows between central university board and each institute.

- *Are there better / more efficient ways of distributing the public funds?*

The way governments distribute their funding is also differing a lot. The difference in calculation of budget for the universities is seriously impacting the amount of funds given to the different universities. Traditionally most universities where given the funds for education based on the number of students (input funding), whilst with the implementation of Bologna have in more and more countries changed the funding to a system based on “production of candidates” either by each credit point passed by students, or by number of students finishing their degree (Output funding). Other places more “market-like” approaches are being considered; Voucher systems, universities competing for additional funds and governments contracting study places at different universities.

- *Do other possible external sources of funding than student money exist?*

Although students are usually reluctant towards taking alternative sources of financing in use for their universities, it is a possible source of income. Alternative financing sources will not be presented here, but it should not be forgotten as an option of solving some of the funding gap in higher education today. External sources of funding requires special care in order to keep the goals of higher education in providing high quality education, independent research and contribute to the development of the society in mind. Transparency in contracting and decision-making processes, policies regarding the use of alternative sources of financing and a possibility for government to give overarching regulations for the higher education sector are factors contributing to making external sources an actual alternative when looking to close the funding gap.

Returning to the question about the funding gap, a last aspect of tuition fees should be mentioned. Universities advocate tuition fees saying that it will give more money, which in turn can be used to improve the quality of the studies, and that students therefore should be happy to pay them. When you speak to ministerial representatives, the main reason for introducing tuition fees is seldom to increase quality, but to use money spent for higher education for other purposes. This has been an astonishing

fact until now, in all countries where tuition fees have been introduced; the tuition fees are not adding to the budget of the higher education institution, just replacing some of the public funding. This can for example be seen in Australia, which after implementation of new tuition fees, kept the budget lines for the Universities, just with student money substituting some of the public funding. Bottom line is that the funding gap cannot be closed, as long as fees are substituting and not adding to the public funding.

2. Education – a benefit for the society or the individual?

The debate on tuition fees often boils down to one question; who is benefiting from the education – the society or the student? The underlying consequence is simple; the one benefiting should be the one paying.

Both students and ministers in the Berlin communiqué of the Bologna process claim higher education is a public good and benefits the society just as much as the individual. Students usually also add that as a public good higher education should be freely accessible for all people and not be something exclusive only for the people who can afford to pay.

The statement brings out some questions. What is a public good? And why is higher education one?

Public good as an article of economic jargon is narrowly defined. Definitions of public goods are based on two core qualities:

Non-rival: Does one person's use of the good diminish another person's use?

Non-excludable: Can a person be prevented from using the good?

Common examples of public goods include lighthouses and national defence. The functioning of these two public goods is not compromised by the addition of more users, nor is their availability restricted if they are being used by one than more persons. Other "pure" public goods are often hard to define, as they are usually compromising to a certain extent with the definition. Most goods defined as public goods today have components of both and fall out of the straight economic conditions. When we still define higher education as a public good in a more political sense it is out of these reasons;

- Knowledge itself is a public good and the one of the main pillars of higher education is to accumulate and share knowledge and cultural capital. Though it is possible to exclude people from research results through legal means, knowledge as such is not reduced when used by more people.
- Education is a human right and should be treated as one, not excluding people for economical reasons. The United Nations declaration on Human Rights (article 26) states that: "Higher Education is a Human Right and should be freely accessible to anyone on the basis of merit." Higher education is also treated in the UN Covenant of Social Cultural and Economic Rights, Article 14,3.
- Higher education benefits the society as a whole by educating relevant labourers for all parts of society. The high, private economical return of higher education might be correct for students studying business management, but what about teachers and nurses who is vital for society, but might not expect a high salary because of their education? Higher education is also a source of independent research for the society.
- Higher education also serves the society by empowering people to improve their social position, getting a better job and better living conditions than before. Statistics also show that unemployment rates drops according to level of education. Example: Germany, unemployment rate among people with low level of education 14%, with medium level of education 8% and for people with higher education 4%. Statistics showing the same trend can be found for most European countries.

- Other effects (externalities) to society (not always easy to calculate in money) are the facts that a highly educated population are have better health and therefore also stay longer in the active working life, they also transfer their knowledge to others, be it their family, friends, the company they work for, or the region they live in. Highly educated people also show a lower crime rate than less educated people.
- Higher education fosters critical thinking, and thereby promotes democratic empowerment by stimulating people to be active citizens.

Seen in light of these arguments spending money for higher education should be seen as an investment and not an expence as such for the state.

3. The Evil Count or Robin Hood - exclusion or redistribution?

Implementation of tuition fees raise a number of implications, some directly (by shutting students out of university) whilst some are long-term implications (like the indebtedness of graduates). In the end they can all be seen as factors that might endanger the equal access to higher education.

Social Implications of Tuition Fees

At the outset, it may seem that tuition fees only prove to be consequentially negative for the individuals who are made to pay them, yet this is not the case. It is of utmost importance to assess the consequences that the imposition of tuition fees has on individuals (and the households of such individuals in higher education), on groups (social, gender, racial and regional) and on society.

The role of higher education is one which, prior to defining the needs of universities, is to first define the needs of society. In each society, critical thinking, intellect, human resources, a continued ability to learn and to teach oneself, and generic as well as specific skills, are not only useful, but necessary. Higher education is also a means of protecting and preserving national culture, language, and heritage, it enhances the effectiveness of democracy, and promotes tolerance, peace and the u for human rights. It shapes attitudes and social advancement and is, furthermore, a means for building an identity, whether on a national or international level. The imposition of tuition fees for higher education thus brings about a large number of social implications.

Tuition fees may, and do, act as a deterrent for people from low or fair economic backgrounds. There are some who even start out by affording to take up studies, but who, for fear of not being able to keep affording such payments in the future, still do not enroll in a higher education institution.

Even where potential students do come from well-off financial backgrounds, they may still be deterred from pursuing a higher education where they feel themselves to be too burdensome on their family, especially where they are the eldest or one of the eldest children of their family.

In this sense, the imposition of tuition fees leads to social exclusion, in that it is only financially stable individuals who would be able to afford to take part in higher education.

Academically this also has various implications, since it gives rise to the exclusion of certain individuals who could have been very beneficial in shaping and determining matters in their higher education institutions and higher education systems.

Decreased or low enrollment in higher education necessarily has a number of social implications. In the first place, the above-mentioned positive affect that higher education felt less, felt very little, or perhaps not at all. Furthermore, the lack of graduates brings about a situation in which a large number of people possess, by and large, the same quality and quantity of qualifications, which in turn leads to increased unemployment, lack of specialised workers, and the possible need to resort to measures for brain gain.

Where, notwithstanding the imposition of tuition fees students do enroll in a higher education institution, this may lead to the taking of loans. This is highly undesirable on many levels.

In many societies, it is the household that takes the decision whether or not to incur a debt, particularly in middle class families. Middle class families typically try and draw on family resources across generations in

order to offset the costs of studying in higher education institutions. This burden on middle class families then translates also into the simple fact that such families (or students themselves where they are paying for their education) would not be able to participate as much as they would want to in society, would not go on holidays, and would have to work longer hours. This is due to the fact that debt necessarily brings about financial obligations, which limit a person's activity, and which has an inevitable affect on society, particularly in terms of birth and population rates, in that such a financial burden has an affect on the time when people chose to start a family, and on the number of children people choose to have.

With models of tuition fees and combined grants/loan systems spreading from one country to another one might also face unexpected cultural differences, which strongly affect the accessibility to higher education. Actions like taking up a loan in order to pay your studies is in some countries the norm, whilst in other it may be unthinkable to indebt yourself in order to enter a higher education study program.

Redistribution

Regarding a system of redistribution, where the richest are charged tuition in order to offer grants or loans to poorer students there are also some other dilemmas;

Students in general are not a rich group, even coming from well-off families; the students themselves are usually strongly dependent on their parents.

Not even taking the single student into account, another question arises. Redistributive tuition fees are often stated only to be charged to the rich families. Charging tuition fees from only the very rich people will be expensive to administer compared to the income you get from it. Even the Robin Hood way of charging tuition fees can prove not to be serving its intentions properly.

4. The academic impact of paying for your studies

The imposition of tuition fees is an encouragement for people to take up part-time jobs, in order for them to be able to pay for part or all of their studies whilst they are pursuing them. This has negative implications on their studies, in terms of the amount of time they have to dedicate thereto, which in turn may effect their success or otherwise in completing their studies.

Furthermore, tuition fees imply a restriction on students' freedom of choice in terms of their area of study. In this respect, students, upon being burdened with tuition fees, would tend to opt for an area of study that would give rise to a higher financial return upon completion of one's studies, avoiding other areas of study which they may be more genuinely interested in. This is done specifically because they need to have the security of mind that they would be able to pay back the expenses incurred while studying.

This could lead to less importance being given to, and in turn, a lesser investment in certain departments or faculties, both in terms of personal intellectual and general economic investment. This could eventually result in the closing down of these departments or faculties, which, even though of high academic value, become no longer sustainable because of their unpopularity due to the above-mentioned reasons.

This in turn would imply a lack of diversity in fields of study offered by higher education institutions, and thus an increased limitation of choice when students come to enroll.

Finally, this could also negatively affect society in the sense that it discourages diversity of areas of interest and development. It further leads to a lack of specialisation in certain areas and an over-specialisation in others. Another aspect of choosing field of study is that in countries with differentiated tuition fees according to institution or field of study, you might end up with students choosing their path not out of academic interest, but by what university or study program they can afford to attend.

An argument often used in favour of tuition fees is that students are made directly responsible for their studies where they are made to pay tuition fees, and thus are more efficient, and more likely to complete their studies in a pre-determined period of time.

This argument is an erroneous one due to the fact that it presupposes that the purpose for which one enrolls in a higher education institution and pursues a certain field of study, is a purely economic one. In the same way that the role of higher education is not simply linked to providing individuals with the capacity to find employment, individuals do not pursue higher education studies solely to find well-paid employment upon completion of their studies. In particular, personal development and fulfillment, the increase of one's capacity to learn and to teach oneself, and the appreciation for others' interests and points of view, are individual aims and consequences that do not translate into the presupposition that students seek the value for the money they are paying in terms of tuition fees.

This argument is also an erroneous one in the sense that where tuition fees are imposed with the consequence that it is only individuals from well-off financial backgrounds that are able to enroll in higher education, such individuals' attitude towards money is very cautious or careful, particularly where it is the parents of such individuals who pay the tuition fees.

Moreover, where students are not from financially stable backgrounds and therefore opt to take up some type of employment in order to meet the financial burden imposed by tuition fees, this means that such students would then find themselves in the labour market at the same time they are in the student market. Such students have less time for their studies, and for social activity, and are also much more likely to discontinue their studies due to their inability to cope with such a situation.

Even the United Kingdom, where the tuition fee debate has been going on for years, the government hasn't used the argument that students work more efficiently when they pay tuition fees. What has been seen is an increase in complaints rather than academic performance.

Furthermore, in certain countries where there is a mixture of state-sponsored students and students who are made to pay tuition fees, it has been seen that it is the former group of students that is more likely to complete their studies.

An example of this is coming from Serbia and Montenegro and the University of Belgrade.

The University has about 1/3 of the students on budget places, based on merit (not paying tuition fees). The last 2/3rds are paying tuition fees. According to the "theory" that paying students are more motivated, these students should be especially hard-working and finish their degrees in as short time as possible. Truth is that the students paying for themselves have a much bigger chance for dropping out of their studies than the budget students. The reasons for this is of course several, but the fact that most of them have to work next to their studies in order to finance them, and thereby gives the paying students less time to work on their actual studies, is contributing heavily to the high drop-out rate.

A final question can be raised regarding student motivation and tuition fees;

What is more important for a student in order to be motivated and serious; a high quality study, or paying tuition fees?

When saying that a student's motivation for studies increase when paying tuition fees the institution is giving away it's responsibility to provide high quality teaching. Comparing the "internal" motivating factor in a high quality study, or the "external" motivation of students paying money for their education, the strongest incentive for hard work is a good study environment and inspiring teaching,

If the goal with of tuition fees is to make us better and more active and motivated students, it is better to work on improving the teaching and the curricula.

5. Other factors

Starting with the argument on the students later contribution to the state, versus the benefits the student might get from obtaining higher education, it must be said, that for countries with progressive taxation, the graduates who end up in well-paid jobs, who because of their valuable higher education are already contributing more than a normal worker, due to progressive way of taxations.

The positive side of having a tuition free system (where even international students are not paying) is for the country, that you might be able to attract some smart people to come to study in your country and stay in the country when they graduate, and this way help the national economy and society in general. Also the other way around; a tuition fee free system will help you keep your young people from brain draining off to other countries (as this usually will be more expensive for them than staying in their country). An example of a such occurring could be if Estonia choose to raise its tuition fees, while the Finns (neighbouring country, with similarities in language) kept their education tuition fee free.

Charging part-time students and life-long-learners extra tuition fees have also become a trend. This is often building on the assumption that these students are older people in established jobs, with willingness and ability to pay. It leaves out the fact that many part-time students are young people who cannot afford to study without a full-time or big part-time job, or other persons in different situations which makes it impossible for them to follow a full-time study. Other examples of this are students with small children and students with physical or psychic problems.

The general process of commodification of education is clearly impacting the view among policy makers when it comes to tuition fees. Higher education is to a larger and larger degree being seen as something students are willing to pay for themselves. Though is this only one side of the coin, as a lot of students do not have the funds to enter higher education if it would be charged with high tuition fees. Unluckily the process of commodification of education is impacting the national policies towards higher education. The general state responsibility for proper financing of the higher education institutions are losing momentum in the national budget agreements. Also the students are to a larger and larger degree being looked at as customers, and not active partners in the academic community. This way the students' right to influence the decision-making process is being reduced into the role of a consumer, who might like or dislike the product, but have no other way of influencing it than complaining.

The last point mentioned in the introduction was the argument that tuition fees seems to be working in other countries. Two short examples can be given here, Australia and US. In Australia impacts of the tuition fees can be seen amongst others in the declining applications for expensive courses from students from less well-off families. Also it shows lower entry scores for those able to pay. In the United States it turns out that 33% of the students base their decisions on field of study on cost, not on grades. This seen in a setting where government grants barely cover 40% of the cost of a degree (50/60000STG)

Concluding comments:

This is not at all a final list of arguments of tuition fees. A lot is left out, and due to the rapidly changing situation and the national context that may impact when it comes to tuition fees, a compendium on tuition fees and their arguments is an everlasting project.

Constantly ESIB has members focusing on tuition fees, running campaigns, lobbying their governments or trying to provide alternatives to the fees. Amongst unions with capacity on tuition fees the last years can be mentioned NUS UK (UK), SSU (Slovenia), fzs (Germany), USI (Ireland) and SFS (Sweden). Please give inputs for adding to this section on coco@esib.org.

Students rejected Bologna Reform as Pretence for Tuition Fees

The attempt to burden students for the costs of reformed Higher Education in Slovenia

Higher Education System and Financing background

In Slovenia there are three public universities and some smaller independent Higher Education Institutions. The largest university counts roughly 70 000 students on 26 faculties. The undergraduate study is free from tuition fees, meanwhile for the graduate and doctoral study there is some financial contribution from the state. A considerable share of students is represented by those who are studying the part time study¹. These students are subject to an administratively prescribed tuition fee. The public universities are undergoing a gradual process leading towards greater financial autonomy (the so called *lump sum* financing model). In mid 2004 the Higher Education Act was reformed and brought Slovene Higher Education on the way to European Higher Education Area. Considerable changes influenced the financial aspect of Higher Education as well.

Bologna reform in the Slovene Higher Education System

In the late autumn 2003, following the Bologna process ministerial summit in Berlin, a group of specialists and stakeholders in Higher Education was formed by the ministry of Education Science and Sport. The group was often referred to as *the Bologna reform group*. It started with the process of drafting the proposal for the set of amendments to the Higher Education Act, referred to as the Bologna reform. Students had their representative in the group and contributed actively to the drafting process. A large share of proposals was examined seriously and was included in the final draft proposal. However not everything made it through to the consensus.

Financial trap within the reform

Before the Bologna reform the structure of Slovene higher education was based on the long undergraduate study (4 or more years for the first university degree) plus the time required preparing the diploma thesis. Then valid higher Education Act excluded the possibility for tuition fees for the full time undergraduate study. According to the draft proposal of the reform the cycles would be shortened into the *bologna formula*. First and second cycle degrees would together not exceed 5 years. In this scenario tuition fees would be applicable for the *magister* degree. This would mean a step back from a part of public funding of Higher Education. In addition, the possible tuition fees policy for the second cycle would influence the access to post graduate studies and therefore jeopardise the possibility for students to fully benefit from the reformed structure in Higher Education.

¹ Part time study was primarily aimed at accommodating employed people motivated for obtaining degree in higher education. The program is adjusted to meet the time possibilities of such students. Contact hours are concentrated at the end of the week and might be reduced down to 30% of the time prescribed for regular study. Part time study especially flourished in the fields of economy, management, social sciences

Student position

As the minister would not agree to assure in the legislation the tuition free second cycle degree it was not possible to reach the consensus in the Bologna working group at the ministry. The student representative in the group announced that students would not give up at this issue and would look for other ways to obtain their aim.

The student position was clear: They wanted the amended Higher Education Act to include:

1. The full public funding of both first and second cycle degree
2. The exemption of non employed part time study students from paying the tuition fee

Student response

A large strategic plan conceived in advance was launched all over the country. Slovenian Student Union (SSU) prepared the ground for lobbying in the national parliament through campaigns and information delivery (leaflets, booklets, press conferences, public debates, etc.). The universities signed a letter of support for the cause and major opinion makers and stakeholders in Higher Education were contacted and explained the position and arguments in favour of tuition free higher Education. Student representatives appeared on major national TV and radio channels and slowly gained the sympathy of the public opinion.

The strategic communication with the decision makers was carried out on all levels and maintained the equidistance to all parliamentary political parties. On a well developed web page there was a constant updating on the developments of the campaign and once the lobbying in the parliament started, the position of parliament members (if the personal authorisation was granted) was published. One out of three ruling coalition parties demanded the government to adjust the draft reform bill in order to comply with the student proposal. Unfortunately that party left the coalition the week after as a part of pre-election manoeuvres. The MPs of the other two coalition parties pressed the government to reach some sort of consensus with students. That opened another round of negotiations with the Minister of Education, Science and Sport. The opposition supported the students all the way.

Verdict

In June 2004 the proposed amendments were approved by the parliament. The outcome of the negotiations brought a compromise between the two opposite banks:

1. First cycle remains free of charge for regular study.
2. A tuition fees free second cycle degree is guaranteed by law for at least 30% of enrolled students.
3. The students who would study free of charge in the second cycle would be chosen mainly according to their economic background. A marginal percentage of criteria would be represented by regional balance and deficitary professions arguments.
4. If tuition fees are introduced, it will be decided upon in the parliament.

Unfortunately it was not possible to obtain results on the field of part time study. At the time it was far from realistic for the state budget to introduce the student proposal in this field.

Evaluation and opinions

There are various views on the success of the whole anti tuition fees campaign. Some claim that the whole strategy should have been rougher, more aggressive and less open to negotiations and compromises. But given the fact that the two government parties were backed with a firm majority in the

parliament and expected to win more or less smoothly the upcoming elections and taking in account the powerful status of the Minister in charge for education both in the government and the biggest parliamentary party, the success was considerable. Furthermore the chosen strategy enforced the image and position of SSU as credible and competent partner in Higher Education with a serious and argument based approach.

Follow up

Half a year later the elections for the Slovene National Assembly took place. The opposition won and formed a governing coalition. Soon after the constitution of new government the new Minister responsible for Higher Education publicly confirmed the will of previously opposition parties to make their position on free first and second cycle a reality. So far there is no written guaranty, but there was a good will expressed.

Tuition fees in Switzerland - a case study

Indeed, there are tuition fees existing in Switzerland. There are no exact data about the time of their introduction available – all information is lost in the mist of time... but it seems they have been there in different forms for more than 100 years.

What can be said for sure is that the amount and the purpose of the fees have changed. Around 1980, the fees were at their historical minimum, since then, they steadily grew higher. At the moment there are fees levied at all higher education institutions. As most of the universities are under cantonal jurisdiction², every legal framework concerning fees has to be decided on at the cantonal level; for the two federal polytechnics, the decision is taken at federal level and for the applied higher education institutions decisions are taken between cantons and the federal State.

The height of the fees ranges from 320 Euro³ up to 1282 Euros per semester for Swiss citizens. For foreigners, the fees are sometimes a bit higher: The Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI) in the Swiss canton of Ticino charges double fees for foreigners; 2564 Euro.

Included in the „tuition fees“ are at some HEI also the so called „semester fees“ which are levied for university sport activities, other services and the student union. In general, the total amount the universities and the federal polytechnic HEI charge from students approximately 29 Mio Euro per year.

An overview about the actual situation concerning tuition fees in Euro can be given with the following template – excluding the HEI of applied science (winter semester 2003/2004):

	Basle	Berne	EPF Lausanne	ETH Zürich	Freiburg	Geneva
Tuition fees	448	384	379	352	320	320
Semester fees	0	35	32	37	67	0
Total	448	419	411	388	387	320
Additional fees for foreigners	0	0	0	0	96	0
Total amount for foreigners	448	419	411	388	483	320

	Lausanne	Luzerne	Neuchâtel	St.Gallen	Tessin (USI)	Zürich
Tuition fees	320	458	320	512	1280	410
Semester fees	38	0	0	77	0	27
Total	358	458	320	589	1280	436
Additional fees for foreigners	0	0	176	96	1280	64
Total amount for foreigners	358	458	496	685	2560	501

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² Switzerland is a federal State, and it has 22 full Cantons and four half – Cantons that are in fact own States with an own constitution, legislative, executive and judicative etc.

³ Exchange rate 1.10.04 1 Euro = 1,56 SFr.

In addition to that, there are many private or half-private institutions or institutes, often more or less tightly bound to universities that charge massively higher fees – up to more than 6400 Euro per year. The average fee of the applied HEIs are between 640 and 1280 Euro. Some charge even more than 2560, the most expensive ones even 5760 Euro.

The Swiss federal institute for statistics has given the number of 94 Mio. SFr. (57,7 Mio. Euros) coming from tuition fees. This would be approximately 2% of the general budgets of the HEI in Switzerland.

The financial burden for the about 130'000 Swiss students emerging of the fees is even accentuated by the fact that grants and other financial aids like loans are not regulated centrally: Every canton has its own grant/ loan system... The cantons use their own, different indicators for the height of the grants and loans. Sometimes the subsidies for families, for children etc. are taken into account when it comes to determinate the height of financial aids. Generally, it can be said, that the grant amounts differ a lot from canton to canton. For the moment, there is a sort of a quiet agreement between the HEI. They are not raising the fees (or just a bit... what is generally explained with the adaptation to general rise in prices or new services).

Furthermore it is to mention, that in Switzerland there is almost no student accommodation, the students live with their parents or in private flats. There are no reductions for the public transports, insurances etc.

⁴ Source: Homepage of the Swiss profession advice offices: <http://berufsberatung.ch/dyn/2674.asp>

The Bologna-reforms and tuition fees

All across Europe the discussions about tuition fees and other fees levied from students (inscription fees, service fees, collegium fees, etc.) - now more and more euphemistically called "learner contribution" - are gaining speed, importance and weight. The arguments in favour and against the different models are known and outlined in this publication.

The question remains, why we added a chapter dealing with the Bologna-reforms in relation to the tuition fees to our compendium.

To say it clear and loud at the beginning: Fact is, that there is no link to tuition fees in the official Bologna declaration and the following ministerial communiqués in Prague and Berlin. Even the documents treating different aspects and parts of the reforms in various conferences never advised to introduce or rise tuition fees.

Fact is furthermore, that the Bologna Process has generated a far-going reform dynamic in the Bologna member States - even in other countries that are not member of the process. This dynamic resulted in legal changes within the HE systems in several countries.

As the reforms emerging from Bologna were also emerging from a simple "declaration", e.g. the good will of the ministers, the ongoing reforms are not introduced homogenously top-down; Fortunately on the one hand, as ESIB has expressed several times in its policy papers the negative opinion towards a totally harmonised European Higher Education Area (EHEA) which would lose the different cultural and linguistic characteristics. On the other hand, the declaration opened the way for many different interpretations of the mentioned goals (and the way to reach them), what has the consequence, that the taken steps differ from country to country, even from institution to institution and sometimes even within the same institution.

Political reform following Bologna

Anyway, when there is a trend and a dynamic for changes in a certain country, stakeholders try to influence the outcome, e.g. a legal framework in their interest. A good example for this is given by the way tuition fees are treated within the reforms rolling across Europe in the aftermath of the Bologna-declaration. Therefore we have a direct link to the ongoing reforms and the tuition fees, even if the link between the European level discussions and the ones in the respective countries is indirect.

Several stakeholders have interest in the introduction of tuition fees, and the ways of linking their introduction or raise to the Bologna-reforms somehow are various.

Bologna and the tuition fee discussions interfere at different levels.

First, there should be mentioned the fact, that with some ongoing reforms of the higher education system tuition fees are simply either introduced or raised, just because it is convenient to do several changes together and the legislative is favourable to such kind of ideas.

A second level would be the linkage between the degree structure and the fees. There are introduced different levels of fees for the two cycles bachelor and master. Especially in countries where tuition fees are not existing at the moment, the fees are introduced now at the MA level. This can also be used as a way to discourage students to choose to continue their studies, and would then be a sort of a "hidden" numerus clausus. Another disguise for the same kind of acting is the differentiation of study financing with grants or loans for the two cycles (for example that grants are only granted for the BA studies, and changed into loans for the MA studies).

Erasmus Mundus – shortly about tuition fees

The Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses

Studies will result in two or more degrees recognised or accepted by the participating countries concerned. In most European countries this will cause major problems, since it is only in a few countries where legislation at the time being allows joint degrees as they are described in the programme. The consortium is free to charge fees from the students as it wishes according to their national legislation and according to the agreement reached within the consortium. In those European countries where higher education aiming at a degree and recognised by the country is free of charge, tuition fees for Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses are very problematic. Tuition and registration fees are not for single universities within the consortium; they are to be paid to the consortium and are valid for the whole Masters Course. The consortia are not allowed to keep a percentage of the grantees' scholarships to cover administrative or other expenditure.

Scholarships for incoming mobility (third-country students and scholars coming to Europe)

For each student the scholarship amounts to 21,000 Euro per academic year. This includes 10 monthly grants of 1,600 Euro and a fixed amount of 5,000 Euro for fees, travel expenses, relocation costs, etc. For Courses lasting two years, the student receives double this amount, i.e. 42,000 Euro. The amount of an average scholarship for scholars is 13,000 Euro. This includes three monthly grants of 4,000 Euro and a fixed amount of 1,000 Euro for travel expenses. The Erasmus Mundus Masters consortium pays the grants to students and scholars according to their own payment arrangements which are communicated to the grantees in advance.

As EU is competing for economic and political power in the world, it can be said that Erasmus Mundus also handles education as a factor of competitiveness. Actions of the programme are very close to the Fulbright programme of the United States, the original aim of which was to strengthen the political position of the United States in post-war Europe. As the European Council has stated in March 2000, the Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. Does modernisation of the education systems really mean that we need to start providing high quality higher education to only a limited number of high quality students?

Because of the tight implementation schedule for the academic year 2004/2005, consortia were not in a position to call for applications from third-country students and scholars after the Erasmus Mundus Masters Course had been selected. The consortia were actually invited to submit a list of 10 third-country students and 3 third-country scholars proposed to receive a scholarship. So the professors were actually given a possibility to choose their favourite students and colleagues to take part in the Masters Courses. Is this really in line with the principle of transparent admission conditions and application procedures the consortia are obliged to have?

In some countries the principle of free higher education has been questioned. The argument is based on irrationality: EU-funds are available and the country's legislation prohibits their use. Suddenly the amount of 5000 € that the student gets in order to pay tuition fees has become a factor in higher education discussions, when previously the wellbeing of students has been low on the agenda – if at all making it to the discussions. But now, since the money (or part of it) only travels through the student and ends up with the consortia, the 5000 € suddenly has become an issue worth discussing. Finally, one can of course ask whether the programme truly reflects the multitude of higher education in Europe, since the majority of coordinators and partners are from Western Europe.

Appendix

As a part of the work in working group 3, "Higher Education-Public Interest or Private Benefits?" during the 9th European Student Convention the participants from the various countries listed their systems of tuition fees based on some different parameters.

Overview of situation in fees (both traditional tuition fees & other) in participants' countries. (In not for-profit higher education institutions/ public universities)

Country	Tuition fees	Other obligatory costs	Where	Who regulates	Same for all?	amount	Average month income students
Finland	-	HEIs student organisation	Student body	Student body	yes	50-100€/year	1000 € (404 € grant)
Norway	-	Student welfare	Student welfare organisation	Student welfare organisation	Yes	50 €/term	1000 €
Switzerland	Yes	Books,copies, everything	HEI	Cantonal government	Yes	1000€/year	1000 €
Estonia	-/yes (different groups)	Different	Student union/university	University	Yes (<50%)	Small (+/- 10 €) 1500€ (selffunded)	500€
Poland	Yes	Copies, registration fees	HEI	HEI	no	50-70€/year	500€
Lithuania	Yes	Registration fees, copies of diploma documents, '3rd exam'	university	Gov/university/student union	No/yes (50%)	300-500/semester	500€
The Netherlands	Yes	Student material	HEI	government	yes	1500€/year	800€ (basis grant 230€)
Spain	Yes	Student material	university	Regional government	yes	Technical HEIs 1200€, others 900€	750€
Slovenia	- (only for student with adequate study tempo)	Registration fee, study material, 4 th material	faculty	University	*Normal students *paying students *parttime students	20-30 € paying: 1200 (some differentiation between faculties).	700
Croatia	Yes (40%)/no	Registration fee, exam fee	faculty	State (top) University (rest)	yes	500-1200/year	500-700€
Slovenia	-	Study material	-	-	-	50-70 €	400€
Country	Tuition fees	Other obligatory costs	Where	Who regulates	Same for all?	Amount (in Euro)	Average month income students

Additional reading

Additional reading such as documents and links will be accessible from www.esib.org in short time. Do you have documents that are of value to the topic, please send to coco@esib.org. The documents can also be sent to you on e-mail if you send a mail to the same address. For people who understand German fzs has some resources on: <http://www.kein-spiel-mit-bildung.de/> and <http://www.fzs-online.org/>, same for Nordic speaking on SFS webpage: <http://www.sfs.se/avgifter/avgifter.html>. From the 2003 NUS campaign against fees: <http://www.nusonline.co.uk/campaigns/stopfeesnow/>

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