

New Perspectives for Learning - Briefing Paper 60

Higher Education Institutions' Responses to Europeanisation, Internationalisation and Globalisation

This is the final Briefing Paper of the project that started in November 2002

Context of the Research

Europeanisation, internationalisation and globalisation are trends that identify the increasingly supra-national context in which higher education institutions are operating. This new context represents a range of challenges that cannot be seen separately from the ones related to the developments towards a knowledge economy, the role of new technologies and developments towards lifelong learning.

This project has identified and analysed higher education's response to the challenges of Europeanisation, internationalisation and globalisation, the supra-national contexts, the organisational settings, and the policies and activities aimed to support this response.

The project addressed the following key issues: -

- The changing focus and scope of European-level policies in the context of Europeanisation and internationalisation of higher education.
- It determined how and to what extent national higher education policies are influencing the internationalisation of this sector.
- The impact of European-level policies at national level and how countries respond to globalisation in higher education.
- Institutional strategies with particular attention on how institutional actors perceive these trends and related challenges.

Initially, the project undertook an analysis of European Union and also national governmental policies for internationalisation in seven European countries (Austria, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United Kingdom). It then focused on how universities and other higher education institutions developed and implementation internationalisation policies.

Key Conclusions

1. Internationalisation of higher education is entering a new phase. Although student and staff mobility remains an important part of higher education international relations, key activities in the knowledge society are now based on a wide range of international relations policies.
2. The trend towards more economically oriented rationales for internationalisation is continuing. In the UK, it now appears to be the dominant driver of higher education internationalisation policy, although other countries are moving, more slowly, in a similar direction.
3. The aim of the economic rationales that are adopted, may be related to: -
 - Improving the international competitiveness of the higher education sector.
 - The importance of higher education for the knowledge economy in enhancing the international competitiveness of the national economy.

3. Different approaches are chosen to achieve these aims, ranging from: -
 - Competition as a result of globalisation.
 - To European wide international collaboration to help improve the performance of European universities generally and as part of a more general trend towards internationalisation and Europeanisation.
4. However, there are tensions between these two extremes that are particularly related to discussions on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) issue. In addition, there are many forms of international interactions between these two extremes, for example, bilateral arrangements between countries and between universities and development assistance to third world and to transition countries.
5. Regulatory frameworks, especially degree structures and quality assurance mechanisms are being adapted to take into account international issues such as professional mobility and European Credit Transfer. Consequently, the links between internationalisation policies and mainstream national higher education policies are becoming stronger.
6. The Bologna joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education in June 1999 has had an impact on this process. But, progress towards the establishment of the Bologna qualifications framework is uneven across countries and is often linked to internal political pressure to reform degree structures. However, there has been some convergence of degree systems, credit and accreditation frameworks.
7. As, implementation of European frameworks is a country responsibility and defined by national contexts, constraints and priorities - diversity may remain or even be reinforced.
8. The importance of language in international higher education policies is recognised. This is partially due to linguistic similarities like Greeks being dispersed all over the world and Portuguese speaking countries on other continents. But, there is also the growing importance of the emergence of English as the principal international language. Universities in several countries are establishing programmes, especially at postgraduate levels, that are taught in whole or in part, in English.
9. The increasing impact of both internationalisation and globalisation is presenting a challenge for national governments. Quality assurance, funding, deregulation, (privatisation and liberalisation) need to be reconsidered while taking into account both the opportunities for internationalisation of the country's own higher education institutions, as well as the potential effects on the establishment of foreign institutions in the country.
10. International activity is quite often associated with entrepreneurial types of activities by the institutions, i.e. the desire to generate income. A second major driver is the institutional desire to raise its profile nationally. A third driver is the belief in the intrinsic international nature of much scholarship. Finally in a few cases a sense of responsibility to assist in the development of developing countries motivates the activities.
11. Major explanatory factors for institutional choices are linked to their profile and history, which is clearly embedded in the national context, including the national legal and policy context, geographic location, language and cultural aspects.
12. Actors generally do not differentiate conceptually very strongly between internationalization, globalization and Europeanisation. However, globalization is more often associated with competition and internationalization with cooperation, while internationalization is seen as a broader concept than Europeanisation.

13. In general, two approaches in internationalization can be discerned; one placing internationalization activities in a market competition framework, the other in the more traditional framework of networking and collaboration. In most European countries studied, the approach that favours cooperation in higher education is still prominent. However, a competitive approach in the internationalization of higher education is emerging, and most actors involved acknowledge the changing landscape.

Key Recommendations

1. Higher education institutions should be encouraged and enabled to develop and pursue their own distinct internationalisation profiles, based on choices that fit their strengths, particular characteristics, environment and their own steering models (e.g. more or less centralised, more or less competitive approaches).
2. Such autonomy requires from the national policy level in particular a further deregulation (e.g. with respect to admission, tuition fee and language policies) in order to enable the institutions to be internationally active and more responsive to challenges of globalisation. At the same time, more efficient and effective management of higher education institutions is necessary as leadership and management are more complex in an international context.
3. A further convergence of regulatory frameworks at the European level is necessary, especially in the areas of degree structures, quality assurance, recognition of qualifications. The continuation of the Bologna Process will help to create the European Higher Education Area, although the process and the area itself should be better thought through for their consequences for internal and external dimensions of cooperation and competition.
4. Correspondingly, the relationship between European cooperation and international competitiveness needs to be better understood in the context of the Lisbon Agenda. Further consideration also needs to be given to how this process of convergence at European level relates to deregulation at national levels.
5. Depending on the context, there will be a need to develop policies that enable the internationalisation of higher education. This is especially where incentives and conditions, like institutional autonomy, stimulate institutions sufficiently in their internationalisation agenda or when they are in danger of closing down unless they can gain other sources of revenue.
6. In any case, they should pay adequate attention to activities at the sub-institutional level like in international research cooperation), and differentiate more between undergraduate and graduate levels, (e.g. between short and long term mobility of students). National governments should ensure that internationalisation policies for higher education are not hindered by measures in other policy areas like immigration policies.
7. As internationalisation takes a more central role in higher education policy, there is a need to know more about its impact on participation, access, equity, funding and quality, particularly to ensure transparency for students as they move from one institution to another.
8. The knowledge on effective management and leadership of higher education needs to be extended to the international context. There is also a need to know what particular management challenges, requirements and leadership characteristics can be identified as exclusively or particularly relevant in this context and how can senior administrators and leaders be prepared for this?

Further Information

Final Report - "Higher Education Institutions' Responses to Europeanisation, Internationalisation and Globalisation: Developing International Activities in a Multi-level policy context" (December 2004)

Project website: <http://www.utwente.nl/cheps/documenten/heigloupdate.doc/index.html>

Key Publications

On Cooperation and Competition: National and European Policies for the Internationalisation of Higher Education. Jeroen Huisman and Marijk van der Wende (eds.) 2004. ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education. Bonn: Lemmens. ISBN 3-932306-54-6

Forthcoming: On Cooperation and Competition 2: Institutional responses to globalization, internationalization and Europeanisation. Jeroen Huisman and Marijk van der Wende (eds.). ACA Papers on International Cooperation in Education. Bonn: Lemmens ISBN

More info at: http://www.aca-secretariat.be/05publications/aca_papers.htm

Research Institutions

CHEPS, University of Twente, The Netherlands

University of Athens, Greece

University of Kassel, Germany

Institute of Education, University of London, United Kingdom

Norwegian Institute for Studies in Research and Higher Education (NIFU), Norway

Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CIPES), Portugal

Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies at Austrian Universities (IFF), Austria

Contact Person

Prof. Dr. M.C. van der Wende

CHEPS

University of Twente

P.O. Box 217

7500 AE Enschede

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 53 4893263

Fax: +31 53 4340392

Email: m.c.vanderwende@utwente.nl

For more information about other Briefing Papers on "New Perspectives for Learning" go to <http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/index.htm>