

# Topics and trends in higher education policy

An update on higher education policy issues in nine Western European countries,  
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## 0 Trends en topics; een samenvatting

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 in negen West-Europese landen. Bij die inventarisatie gebruiken we vier thema's als leidraad: de hoger onderwijs en onderzoek infrastructuur, 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 aangaande 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 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?' Deze samenvatting is vooral bedoeld voor het tweede type gebruik. In het overzicht (tabel 1) zijn de onderwerpen weergegeven die in tenminste twee landen als belangrijk zijn te kenschetsen. Over de onderwerpen die in tenminste vier landen worden genoemd zullen we 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 de paragrafen drie tot en met tien kunnen van dienst zijn bij het voorkomen van verwarring die uit die verschillen kan voortvloeien.

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

	Oos	Dk	Fi	Vla	Fr	Du	Nl	Zw	VK	
<b>academisch personeel</b>					x	x	x	x		4
<b>graden structuur: bachelor/master</b>	x		x			x	x			4
<b>ICT</b>	x	x					x		x	4
<b>relatie HO-bedrijfsleven</b>			x	x	x				x	4
<b>structuur: wederkerend onderwijs/ III</b>		x	x	x	x					4
<b>accreditatie</b>	x					x	x			3
<b>financiën: bekostigingstelsel</b>				x			x		x	3
<b>financiën: studie financiering</b>					x	x		x		3
<b>bestuur/beheer: contracten</b>		x	x		x					3
<b>onderzoeksscholen</b>		x	x					x		3
<b>onderzoek: rol van hogescholen</b>				x	x	x				3
<b>structuur: fusies en samenwerking</b>		x		x	x					3
<b>financiën: collegegelden</b>	x								x	2
<b>bestuur/beheer: student-participatie</b>		x						x		2
<b>deelname: geslacht/ minderheden</b>								x	x	2
<b>structuur: niet-universitaire sector</b>	x		x							2

**Oos:** Oostenrijk; **Dk:** Denemarken; **Fi:** Finland; **Vla:** Vlaanderen; **Fr:** Frankrijk; **Du:** Duitsland; **Nl:** Nederland; **Zw:** Zweden; **VK:** Verenigd Koninkrijk

In de ‘top-categorie’ (onderwerpen die in ten minste vier landen zijn genoemd) bevinden zich vijf onderwerpen. Het eerste onderwerp betreft de vergrijzing van het academisch/ docerend personeel en de daaraan gekoppelde vervangingsproblematiek. In de meeste West-Europese landen is de leeftijdsstructuur van het academisch personeel zodanig dat in de komende vijf tot tien jaar een groot deel van het academisch personeel met pensioen zal gaan. In Frankrijk, Duitsland, Nederland en Zweden staat de vraag ‘Hoe krijgen we en houden we nieuw academisch personeel?’ op de agenda. Het onderwerp wordt zowel ten aanzien van het onderwijs als van het onderzoek als problematisch gezien. Een hieraan verbonden onderwerp is de discussie over de grote mate van ondervertegenwoordiging van vrouwen in het academisch personeel, vooral onder de hoogste rangen.

Het tweede onderwerp stond ook vorig jaar hoog op de lijst: de bachelor master structuur. Hoewel de eerste ‘opwinding’ over het onderwerp enigszins is bekoeld wordt het in Oostenrijk, Finland, Duitsland en Nederland nog steeds als een belangrijk onderwerp gezien. De positie van de ‘niet-universitaire’ hoger onderwijsinstellingen is een aspect dat in alle landen daarbij aandacht krijgt. De

belangrijke vragen daarbij zijn ‘Moeten die instellingen ook masters kunnen aanbieden?’ En zo ja, ‘wie moet daar dan voor betalen?’ In Duitsland staat de verhouding tussen de oude en de nieuwe gradenstructuur in de aandacht: moet de nieuwe (bachelor-master) structuur de oude vervangen of moeten beide structuren naast elkaar blijven bestaan? Dit laatste is de bestaande situatie maar de kritiek hierop richt zich vooral op gevaren voor de transparantie van het systeem en uiteindelijk voor de positie op de arbeidsmarkt van de ‘nieuwe’ afgestudeerden.

Informatie en communicatietechnologie (ICT) wint aan gewicht in de nationale debatten en het beleid. In Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk gaat de meeste aandacht uit naar instellingsarrangementen om ICT in het hoger onderwijs te stimuleren. In Oostenrijk en Denemarken gaat de discussie meer over hoe(veel) ICT geïntegreerd en uitgebreid kan worden in hoger onderwijs programma’s (binnen de bestaande instellingsarrangementen).

Hoger onderwijs wordt gezien als een belangrijke motor voor de ontwikkeling van nationale economieën. De relatie tussen hoger onderwijs en het bedrijfsleven is een belangrijk kanaal waarlangs de communicatie tussen hoger onderwijs en de economie plaats vindt. We onderkennen twee typen communicatie: via onderwijs (combinatie van leren en werken, stages) en via onderzoek (kennistransfer). In Finland, Vlaanderen, Frankrijk en het Verenigd Koninkrijk is kennistransfer een belangrijk beleidsonderwerp. De communicatie via het onderwijs is vooral in Frankrijk en het Verenigd Koninkrijk een punt van aandacht.

Het laatste onderwerp uit de ‘top-categorie’ heeft wederom betrekking op de onderwijsstructuur. Het betreft het wederkerend onderwijs en leven lang leren. In zowel nationale als internationale discussies over de toekomst van het hoger onderwijs en de positie in de samenleving komen deze onderwerpen regelmatig naar voren. Hoewel deze onderwerpen veel aandacht krijgen (vooral in Denemarken, Finland, Vlaanderen en Frankrijk) zijn er nog maar weinig concrete initiatieven ontwikkeld en geïmplementeerd.

Hoewel ze niet in de top-categorie staan, staan financiële onderwerpen in vrijwel alle landen op de agenda. Veranderingen in de bekostigingsstelsel worden in Vlaanderen, Nederland en het Verenigd Koninkrijk besproken. Veranderingen in het systeem van studiefinanciering zijn in Frankrijk, Duitsland en Zweden aangekondigd danwel doorgevoerd. Er bestaat een grote verscheidenheid in de wijze waarop de studiefinancieringsstelsels in de negen beschreven landen zijn ingericht. Deze verschillen hebben betrekking op het aantal studenten dat voor studiefinanciering in aanmerking komt, de omvang van de individuele bedragen, de manier waarop studiefinanciering wordt verstrekt( als een lening, als een beurs, indirect via belastingvoordelen voor de ouders, via

subsidiering van maaltijden of vervoer). In Frankrijk vormen deze aspecten een onderdeel van een meer omvattend plan ter verbetering van de sociale positie van studenten. Dit plan, gestart in 1998, werd in 2000 verder uitgebreid. In Duitsland en Zweden richt de discussie zich vooral op de wijze waarop studiefinanciering ter beschikking wordt gesteld. Daarbij wordt speciaal gelet op de effecten die studiefinanciering heeft op de toegankelijkheid van het hoger onderwijs. In Oostenrijk en het Verenigd Koninkrijk staan collegegelden hoog op de agenda.

De positie van de ‘niet-universitaire’ sector is een structuurkenmerk dat bij de bespreking van de bachelor-master discussie al aan de orde is gesteld. In een aantal landen wordt deze positie ook in de context van fusies en samenwerking met de universitaire sector besproken (Denemarken, Vlaanderen, Frankrijk en Nederland) en in de context van de onderzoekstaak van deze instellingen (Vlaanderen, Frankrijk en Duitsland). De wijze waarop het onderwijs voor het doctoraat moet worden ingericht en de rol van onderzoeksscholen daarbij is een onderwerp dat in Finland, Denemarken en Zweden op de politieke agenda stond.

Voor wat betreft het thema bestuur en beheer kunnen we twee onderwerpen aanhalen: contracten en de participatie van studenten in het bestuur. In drie landen vormen contracten een belangrijk onderdeel van de discussies over de relatie tussen de overheid en de hoger onderwijsinstellingen. In Frankrijk is het bestaande contractualiseringsbeleid nieuw leven ingeblazen. In Denemarken zijn voor/door alle universiteiten prestatiecontracten opgesteld. Het Finse beleid ten aanzien van ‘management by objectives’ kan ook worden gezien als een voorbeeld van contracten in de relatie tussen instelling en ministerie. De vertegenwoordiging van studenten als belanghebbende in bestuursstructuren was een onderwerp in Zweden en Denemarken.

Een laatste onderwerp dat nog niet genoemd is, is accreditering. Hoewel het onderwerp slechts in drie landen hoog op de agenda staat (Oostenrijk, Duitsland en Nederland) is het in veel landen onderwerp van gesprek in de context van het Bologna proces.

## 1 Introduction

With the CHEPS Higher Education Monitor<sup>1</sup> the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies tries to identify the structures that exist and the policies that are designed and implemented in Western European countries to meet the challenges of the knowledge society. Nine CHEPS Higher Education Monitor country reports were published. These country reports provide an in-depth description of each national higher education system. These descriptions cover four main topics: higher education and research infrastructure, finance, governance, and quality. This update report builds on these country reports and describes the latest developments in these countries.

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 Monitor update report provides insights into the latest developments in the higher education infrastructure, higher education finance, governance and quality assurance. 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 presentation of this information is the main part of this update report. In the concluding section we will try to look beyond the national level by identifying issues that are common in a number of national systems or even in most systems. With the rise of globalisation and European higher education spaces, it has become most relevant to know what is going on around us. No additional information is presented in the concluding section, but the cross-national presentation of issues in some cases casts a different light on the national issues.

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<sup>1</sup> The 'CHEPS higher education monitor' is an ongoing research project aimed at the monitoring of higher education systems and higher education policies in nine (Western) European countries. 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.

## 2 Austria

### 2.1 Educational infrastructure

#### 2.1.1 Further expansion of the Fachhochschule sector

In 1993, the Austrian Government introduced legislation to create a new vocationally oriented higher education sector. *Fachhochschule* programmes began operations in the academic year 1994/1995, and from 2000 the offerings of 68 programmes encompass the fields of business and economics, tourism, engineering, telecommunications and administration. In 1998-1999 there were almost 8,000 students attending these *Fachhochschulstudien*; the number envisaged for 2005 is 21,000 (Hochschulbericht, 1999).

#### 2.1.2 Implementation of Universitätsorganisationsgesetz 1993

The Legislation on University Reforms has now been fully implemented in all universities. This Act strengthens the autonomy of universities through substantial decentralisation and deregulation. The recently reorganised universities started working under the new legislation at the start of 2000. Legislation granting the universities full autonomy is to be introduced in the autumn of 2001. In 2001, a system of student fees will be introduced within the framework of these reforms (see section 2.3.1).

#### 2.1.3 New technologies

A total of ATS 100 million (7.3 million €) is to be made available in the next three years for a subsidy programme to promote the use of new technologies in higher education. The financial resources will be used principally to cover the costs of a transition phase which will take three years and in which the following objectives should be met (BMBWK, 2000a):

- Innovation in teaching: the new possibilities, such as multimedia and interactive communication, should improve the quality of teaching and make the syllabus more international.
- Intensification of contacts: existing innovations should be consolidated through interdisciplinary co-operation and the setting up of platforms for the exchange of information.

- Easier access to education: the greater use of online teaching resources should make it easier and indeed possible in the first place for students to study at any time and from any place.

#### 2.1.4 Universität-Akkreditierungsgesetz

Since 1993, with the introduction of the *Fachhochschulen* that are funded by the *Länder*, the national government was no longer the exclusive provider of funds to higher education. In 1999 the range of higher education providers was broadened further by the *Universität-Akkreditierungsgesetz* enabling the establishment of private universities. Within the framework of the *Universität-Akkreditierungsgesetz* (UAG), which came fully into effect in 2000, higher education institutions can be accredited for a period of five years. After an uninterrupted operation period of ten years, the institutions are accredited for ten-year terms. Although the private universities have to comply with the national UAG, they can not receive any monetary contributions from the national government, with the exception of contract-based funding for certain learning or research objectives.

#### 2.1.5 Austrian higher education and the Bologna Declaration

The current debates in Austria focus on the position of the *Fachhochschulen* concerning the creation of a two-tier structure within higher education in Europe (three-tier when the PhD. level is included). Within the university sector there is already agreement upon the implementation of this structure. Since 1999, universities have had the opportunity to offer programmes in three cycles (*Bakkalaureat – Magister/Diplom-Ingenieur – Doktorat*). In the amendment of 1 September 1999, supplementary regulations were added to the University Study Act of 1997 that enables universities, on a voluntary basis, to convert *Diplomstudien* into two cycle courses. There has been a proposal to amend the Act on *Fachhochschulen* in a similar fashion, (conversion into a two cycle course) in order to prevent devaluation of *Fachhochschulen* degrees and to increase international comparability. The proposal, however, failed to secure a majority in the coalition government.

The main current impacts of the Bologna declaration include both the new impetus and acceleration that has been given to internationalisation activities. Furthermore, the declaration has prompted new initiatives aimed at strengthening the competitiveness of the Austrian higher education system (BMBWK, 2000b). In the near future the emphasis in the implementation process will be on the creation of a legal framework for the new structure and on the dissemination of information to those directly involved (administrators and academics).

## **2.2 Research Infrastructure**

The federal government has set out a new innovation policy. The aim of this policy is to keep Austrian science, research and development competitive in Europe. As part of this innovation policy, the Government Agreement for 2000 to 2004 sets the objective of increasing the share of research and development expenditure in the GNP significantly, i.e. to 2.0% by 2002 and to 2.5% by the year 2005 (BMBWK, 2000c). In another part of this agreement, a Council for Research and Technological Development will be established at the federal level. The establishment should also improve the networking with European partners in the framework of the 'European Research Area'.

## **2.3 Finance**

### **2.3.1 The introduction of student fees**

The government intervention that caused the most commotion – especially in the student community – was the introduction of student fees. Before 2000, university students did not pay fees. Starting in the autumn of 2001 students will have to pay ATS 5,000 (363 €) for each semester. The introduction of student fees is part of the broader process of university reforms. (BMBWK, 2000d).

## **3 Denmark**

### **3.1 Educational infrastructure**

The Danish government has set as a target that by 2010 50% of a year group are to complete a higher education programme (UVM, 2000a). The reform of the short cycle (KVU) sector, the creation of CVU's in the middle long (MVU)-sector, the creation of the Danish university of educational studies (DPU), and the further development of the university performance-contracts are all initiatives to increase the quality of education, increase the intake of students, and to enhance the completion rate.

In the higher education budget there are eight qualitative issues presented on which Danish higher education policy will focus.

- Describing the identity of the programmes and their core competencies, as well as stimulating the development and renewal of the subjects

- Merit and flexibility. More merit-based flexibility of the educational system will lead to more mobility, both within the Danish system as well as internationally. Issues at hand here are the broadening of entrance through the adult education system and the recognition of competencies gained through non-formal education. International flexibility should be enhanced by participation in ECTS and by making the Danish qualifications more transparent. A vital condition for mobility within the Danish system is that the institutions develop new forms of co-operation, e.g. establishing networks.
- Focus on internationalisation. Internationalisation is seen as an essential parameter of the quality of higher education
- Good teaching quality. In combination with the first issue, this issue is to enhance the ‘engagement’ of students and the completion-rate. Giving students more say in the (evaluation of) teaching is seen as a major instrument to achieve this.
- IT in teaching
- Enhancing the teaching qualifications of academic staff
- Quality assurance. The higher education institutions have to perform self-evaluations. The *Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut* is responsible for further developing external evaluations of teaching.
- Continuing education. For the development of continuing education activities it is seen necessary that institutions develop local and regional networks with public and private organisations. Through these networks, the higher education institutions may keep in touch with the needs of their environment regarding continuing education activities.

For the universities, there are two additional issues:

- Assuring that in bachelor programmes the educational activities will have links with research activities
- The creation of research schools (see section 3.2)

### 3.1.1 The creation of the Danish university of educational studies (DPU)

The creation of the DPU is largely driven by the need to promote research into new learning methods and pedagogical processes. The DPU, a merger of three existing institutes, offers *Kandidat* and Master level programmes as well as Ph.D. programmes. (UVM 2001). The DPU has to co-

operate with the new type of middle long cycle institutions, the CVU's, in the education sector (UVM 2000b).

### 3.1.2 Reform in KVVU and MVU

According to the Ministry, the decision to revise the KVVU programmes and gather them in 15 main groups has been well received by the students. This observation is based on the large number of applicants to KVVU programmes.

In the MVU sector, there is also a major reform going on. In 2000, six centers for higher education (CVU's) were established. CVU's are expected to strengthen the MVU programmes (UVM 2001). The CVU's are intended to meet the need for stronger institutions embedded in the local and regional communities. The co-operating institutions should combine their forces in providing an attractive environment for participating in higher education throughout the region. The creation of CVU's is voluntary. MVU-institutions have the possibility to establish such a CVU. These new institutions may have four forms: a full merger of the participating institutions, a merger in-time (participating institutions will merge into one legal entity after a period of time), network co-operation (around an existing CVU, a number of stand-alone MVU's participate in a network) or a group of stand-alone institutions. The new law on MVU is the basis for these new institutions. In that law it is also stressed that CVU's and MVU institutions should strengthen the relationship between higher education institution and practice and profession. One proposal which is in line with this is the creation of a new degree: the professional bachelor. In these new programmes, the interplay between theory and practice has high priority.

In the budget for the year 2000 an experimental scheme was announced to remedy the shortage of engineers. The scheme entitles foreign students admitted to a LVU programme in Denmark to student support from the Danish state education grant and loans scheme.

### 3.1.3 Life long learning

At the end of 2000, the ministry announced a pilot project on the creation of 'competence-units' in six universities. The project is aimed at the stimulation of the relation between the universities and the public and private professional fields. The programmes offered should contribute to the lifelong development of competences. In addition, there are a number of CVU's that will start experiments in this realm (UVM, 2000d).

### **3.2 Research infrastructure**

In May 2000, a political agreement was reached on the principles for research in Denmark. The aim of that agreement is to contribute to an optimal use of all Danish research resources and to ensure stable framework conditions. Detailed regulation in the financing of research should be eliminated, and there should be a reduction in the number of different funding pools and programmes. The ratio of research and education at universities should not be altered by the agreement. The goals are to be achieved through initiatives in three areas:

- recruitment: funds for new doctoral programmes and research schools have been set aside and new positions for young researchers are to be created;
- renewal: groundbreaking research is to be stimulated through co-operation across institutions, research fields and industrial sectors. New financial incentive structures (management and development pools for universities) are to promote this. Large interdisciplinary research groups are to be established.
- continuity: in order to ensure the permanent integration of programme-financed research an ‘embedding pool’ will be established.

(Ministry of Research and Information Technology 2000a)

### **3.3 Governance**

There is a marked difference between the universities and the other higher education institutions regarding their governance. For instance, in the university sector, the ministry uses performance contracts to implement its policies. In the KVVU and MVU sectors, the laws on KVVU, MVU, CVU and DPU are used to steer. (UVM 2000a).

#### **3.3.1 University performance contracts**

In January 1999, the Government presented the university and research policy report . In this report, the Government set the goal of entering into university performance contracts with the universities. The university performance contracts are a management reform offering greater latitude and a more flexible scope for action to the universities, in relation to the challenges they are facing. The aim of the reform is to focus on the management of goals and results rather than on the consumption of resources, budgetary constraints and general regulations.

University performance contracts thus herald new values and a paradigm shift in the relationship between the universities and the ministries, as they mark a shift from control and top-down regulation to dialogue and agreements based on the universities' own goals and commitment. The university performance contracts are the result of a comprehensive dialogue at the individual universities involving a number internal and external participants: management, staff, students, elected bodies, consultation committees, external members of bodies, advisory councils, and committees of representatives. Views on goals and ambitions have been weighed against each other in the process of reaching the final formulations which were been approved by the Academic Councils in 2000. Although there was no obligation, all universities signed a contract. Some universities primarily confine themselves to defining overall strategic goals. Others supplement the overall goals with a detailed action plan.

Issues covered in the contracts:

- **Research.** Planning and evaluation, benchmarking, and research training. The universities will establish new research schools and increase intake, for instance by involving external partners. A special effort will be made in areas where, under the universities' own recruitment or on the basis of demand from the wider society, a lack of staff with research training has already been *determined* or may be *expected*.
- **Education and Students.** In the contracts, a large number of goals have been defined which will help secure a high level of academic and pedagogical quality in study programme activities. Study programmes will be subject to ongoing quality assurance, IT will be integrated in teaching, and better credit transfer options will contribute to flexible study planning and co-operation with other sectors on the range of study programmes offered. Moreover, efforts should be made to ensure that more students finish their studies. The number of diploma and professional master's programmes should be increased, and concurrently with intensified internationalisation, more and more programmes will be offered in English.
- **Relations with the outside world.** The universities emphasise the importance of developing and intensifying relations and co-operation in terms of research and education etc. with society-at-large, both locally, regionally and internationally.
- **The University as a Place of Work.** The Universities want to recruit and retain the most qualified staff. A clearly-formulated human resource policy and a well-integrated human resource policy action plan must be in place, contributing to creating an attractive and modern

workplace. This supports the universities' goals and strategies for research, study programmes and activities in general.

- Libraries and Museums. The universities will strengthen the university libraries, primarily by introducing new technologies. Joint initiatives in connection with the extension of Denmark's Electronic Research Library will play a significant part in the development effort. In the museum area, the founding of a new museum is being considered.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The goals and visions for the area of ICT show an ambition to build a number of core strengths with IT as the common denominator.
- Infrastructure. Up-to-date and functional buildings and infrastructure in general constitute an absolutely crucial precondition for future research, education etc. at all universities.
- Organisation and Management Forms. The latest changes to the Danish Universities Act have given the universities increased freedom - as part of a university performance contract - to adapt to their own needs and wishes. The university performance contracts thus provide the universities with the possibility of experimenting with new organisation and management forms. An Academic Council may, for instance, test schemes under which executives are employed with their result commitments stated in managing director contracts.

(Ministry of Research and Information Technology 2000)

### 3.3.2 Act on democracy in the education system

In May 2000 a new act was passed by the Danish parliament. This act among other things gives students the right to set up a students' council and to have representatives on the department board. Furthermore, students are to be represented in all councils and committees set up by the higher education institution which deal with matters of interest of them. The act will be followed by a number of ministerial orders which will provide more detailed provisions concerning the activities of the councils and the institutions' obligations vis-à-vis the students' councils (UVM 2000c).

### 3.3.3 New governance system: the Danish Technical university

On January 1st 2001 DTU became an **independent** institution under the Ministry of Education. The statute of DTU has not yet been finally adopted, but a law has been passed in Danish parliament, which gives DTU ownership of campus property and buildings and set down the legal framework for a board of directors at the independent DTU. Both within DTU and in Danish higher education there has been some debate on the merits of this new structure.

## 4 Finland

### 4.1 Educational infrastructure

#### 4.1.1 AMK network complete

The AMK's were created gradually over the 1990s. The standard of former higher vocational education was raised and incorporated into multidisciplinary AMK's. Since the AMK Act was passed in 1995, the Government has accredited some AMK's annually to operate on a permanent basis. The criteria used in accreditation include proven excellence in experimental and development work. The national AMK network was completed on 1 August 2000: all 29 AMK's now operate on a permanent basis.

#### 4.1.2 Master programmes at AMK's?

In the spring of 2000, there was a lively debate concerning the introduction of post-graduate (master-level) degrees to AMK's. As yet, it is possible to take only Bachelor-level degrees in AMK. The idea is to create Master-level programmes of 40 to 60 credits (twelve to eighteen months of full-time studies) in the fields of business studies, technology and health care. There is strong opposition to the whole idea, especially among university people and some social partners. No decision has yet been made.

#### 4.1.3 Multi-disciplinarity through Master programmes

Previously, the Bachelor's and the Master's degrees usually included studies in one major subject and in one or more minor subjects. The degrees were regulated by field-specific decrees. As mentioned in the country report (Beverwijk and Schier) the government and universities promoted the right to study minor subjects more freely across faculty and department boundaries a few years ago. The new development plan<sup>2</sup> indicates that in the future the Master's programme will be increasingly used to promote multidisciplinary. The development plan does not indicate how students will be facilitated to follow different courses in different fields of specialisation. However, as indicated by a Finnish expert in the field of higher education, multidisciplinary has been used as

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<sup>2</sup> Under the Decree on a Development Plan for Educational and University Research in the Administrative Sector of the Ministry of Education (1998), the Government mentioned that they would adopt a plan for the development of education and research which come under the competence of the Ministry of Education. By the end of December 1999, the government had adopted the development plan for the years 1999-2004.

a slogan for some years. It may work in teaching, but in research projects it is much harder to get funding for these kinds of projects. It is not clear if the government has any steering instruments to implement multidisciplinary because universities make their own decisions in matters concerning teaching.

## **4.2 Research infrastructure**

### **4.2.1 Developing co-operation between universities and the business sector**

Nowadays, the government uses the term 'national innovation system' when they refer to universities and scientific research. The core of this innovation system consists of universities and research institutions, companies with R&D operations, business, industry and government organisations responsible for science and technology (Academy of Finland, 2000, 11).

It is commonly agreed within the Ministry of Education that research and knowledge contributes to innovation of technology and the economic growth. Therefore, to make sure that research continues to contribute to this growth, the role of government will increase in this field (Academy of Finland, 2000, 12).

One of the key issues of the government is to balance the relationships between universities and business companies. The education and research strategy for 2000-2004 indicates that universities and business companies should work more closely with one another in identifying research needs and in conducting joint research projects. The main reason for this is because the government believes that basic research (mainly conducted by universities) and applied research (mainly conducted by industry) should be more tuned in order to have research output and results that are more valuable and related to societal needs. According to the government, a close interaction between universities and business stimulates multi-disciplinarity that contributes to lowering the traditional boundaries between basic and applied research.

Co-operation between universities and the business sector have been funded through R&D projects financed by companies, through various jointly funded projects, and through fee-based services. Those fee-based services, provided by the government, were to be used to finance the operation of universities themselves, but also to promote an exchange of information between business companies and other sectors of society and to provide necessary supplementary education.

The government's additional funding programme for research means that universities are now under increasing pressure to deliver results in terms of research impacts. The first evaluations point out that the universities do not pay enough attention in their collaboration with industry to the specific interest of the private sector. It is also acknowledged that industry itself does not necessarily always appreciate the role of basic research in guaranteeing knowledge reproduction.

At the same time, government emphasises that the national innovation system should leave enough space for the independent development of science policy and the research system and their own internal objectives, activities and means that are not constructed through co-operation with industry or activities aimed at production of innovation (Academy of Finland, 2000, 114).

#### 4.2.2 Expansion of post-graduate programmes

Five years ago, in 1995, a graduate school system was established with the aim to support a more systematic professional training for researchers (Beverwijk and Schrier). The graduate schools form a network, ranging from units concentrated in a single faculty or locality to nation-wide establishments combining the resources of several faculties (Haven, 1999). Before, the traditional way to acquire a doctor's degree was to take a post in the faculty (i.e. as an assistant) in which it was possible to work on one's thesis. In the graduate schools, students take top-level intensive courses, work preferably in interdisciplinary groups and enjoy efficient research tutoring. One of the main goals of the recent intensification of PhD training is to shorten the time of studies (the median age in 1995 of PhD's was 37) (Ahola et al, 1999). Due to the fact the evaluations point out that the graduate schools have a positive impact on the progress of the graduate schools, the government now wants the postgraduate education system to be expanded with a view to making the graduate schools central and the main track to a doctorate. However the post-graduate course will not be the only track to a doctorate (Development plan, 1999).<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.2.3 Centers of excellence

A centre of excellence is a research unit or researcher training unit which comprises one or several high-standard research teams with shared, clearly defined research goals, and which is at, or has good potential for reaching, the international forefront in its field. The Academy of Finland funds

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<sup>3</sup> According to our experts there is a report written on this subject that indicates why this was successful. Next up-date report

the centres of excellence in research together with other funders, such as the universities, the National Technology Agency (Tekes), ministries, business enterprises and foundations. Research teams working outside the universities may also be awarded centre of excellence status.

Twenty-six new centres of excellence started at the beginning of 2000. These centres are receiving funding for their activities for a six-year term. The government has proposed to allocate FIM75 million (12.6 million €) to continue the programme with new centers starting in 2002 (Academy of Finland 2001).

### **4.3 Finance**

#### **4.3.1 Cost-effectiveness and the efficiency of higher education institutions**

In the Development Plan the government focuses more on the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of higher education systems. There are different ways in which the government will assist the higher education system to operate in a more cost-effective efficient way. The government stimulates the universities to be more efficient in their activities and to shorten the graduation times. According the development plan, this could to an extent be reached through large-scale pedagogical renewal towards student-centred teaching methods. The development of teaching and learning will especially capitalise on network-based learning such as open learning and distance-learning. Teaching, guidance and advisory services will be developed to promote individual learning so that they support progress in studies, on the one hand, and enable studies to be assessed and monitored more efficiently, on the other hand. Moreover, pedagogical in-service training of university teachers will be intensified and will also take account of the skills needed in the new learning environment. (Ministry of Education, 1999). What the results of these plans will be remains uncertain. As indicated by a Finnish expert in the field of higher education, cost-efficiency and effectiveness have been slogans. They are part of the normal discourse in the field of higher education policy-making in Finland. The present problem is that universities and polytechnics are autonomous institutions with large internal autonomy. Therefore in matters related to teaching methods, there is not much the ministry can do.

#### **4.4 Governance**

##### **4.4.1 Strengthening the autonomy of AMK's**

AMK's are either locally or privately run. In the latter case, local authorities have founded private companies to run an AMK. Because of the regional nature, most of the publicly owned AMK's are run by municipal federations (Ministry of Education, 2000). The Development Plan states that the autonomy of AMK's and higher education will be strengthened simultaneously with relaxed regulation. In addition project performance-based financing will be developed (Ministry of Education, 1999, 38). However, the plan does not indicate how the autonomy will be strengthened or point out what the possible implications will be for the institutional governance.

#### **4.5 Quality Assurance**

Recent legislation led to the creation of the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC), which is a supportive body assisting the universities and polytechnics and the Ministry of Education in evaluation matters and promoting evaluation as an integral part of institutional operations. FINHEEC is governed by a twelve-member Council consisting of representatives of universities, polytechnics, student organisations and business and industry. The members of the Council are appointed by the Ministry of Education for a four-year term.

The Council organises evaluations of the quality of education and also institutional, programme and thematic evaluations. Furthermore, it provides advisory and consultancy services in the implementation of evaluations, develops evaluation methodology and disseminates good Finnish and international practices to higher education institutions and the Ministry of Education.

The Council works also as an accreditation body to extensive continuing education programmes offered by universities and polytechnics. These programmes include e.g. MBA programmes, professional development programmes and specialist studies in different fields. The Council is responsible for maintaining the register of accredited programmes.

(<http://www.minedu.fi/julkaistut/Hep2001/Edusys/4Steering/Steer3.html>)

## 5 Flanders<sup>4</sup>

### 5.1 Educational infrastructure

Internationalization, improvement of the transparency and the rationalization of the course supply, the improvement of the quality assurance system and life long learning are still important issues on the higher education policy agenda in Flanders.

The Flemish government has stated several times that the necessary adaptations are first of all a matter of the institutions and their umbrella organizations. Nevertheless the minister of education has set out a clear course. She has emphasized the necessity of:

- Deregulation of educational legislation
- Bringing the Decree on Universities (1991) and the Decree on 'Hogescholen' into line with each other without affecting the nature of university and college education.
- More mergers between 'hogescholen' (recently the number of 'hogescholen' has decreased from 29 to 27)
- More cooperation between higher education institutions
- More cooperation between (the institutions of) the three educational networks
- Transparency and rationalization of course supply: the courses have to be adapted to the needs of the emerging knowledge society
- Developing an educational structure for life long learning
- Improvement of the use of ICT in higher education
- Improvement of the efficiency of transfers between the three types of higher education
- Improvement of the transfer between secondary and higher education
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of entrance exams
- Some kind of intermediate qualifications for students who do not complete their training
- An increase of study grants from 2001-2002

Furthermore, the Minister declared that the Flemish higher education system will maintain its binary structure, but has to be adapted to the guidelines resulting from the Bologna declaration.

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<sup>4</sup> Due to a change of government in June 1999 the implementation of the plans described is uncertain.

Next to setting out a course, more concrete measures have been announced (or are already partly implemented). The Flemish government has the intention to conclude covenants with higher education institutions that contain agreements on rationalization and optimization of their course supply. In return for signing such covenants universities and 'hogescholen' receive a financial reward. Furthermore, the government will adapt elements of the funding mechanism that in the recent past proved to be obstacles for educational reforms. In the meantime the establishment of new university study programs is only permitted if the total number of programs does not increase, i.e. for each new study program an old one has to be dissolved or two existing ones have to be merged.

At the end of 1999 the Minister of Education asked the Flemish College Council (VLHORA) to write a report about the educational and financial aspects of a rationalization and optimization of the course supply of 'hogescholen'. After the publication of this report a discussion between the Minister and representatives of the VLHORA turned out to be very unfruitful. The VLHORA blamed the Minister for not having concrete ideas about an adaptation of the funding mechanism of the 'hogescholen' and issued a press release that said that the Minister should make concrete suggestions with regard to this adaptation by the first week of February 2001, otherwise protest actions will follow.

With regard to life long learning the Minister has organized a public discussion and financed (independent) research to further this discussion. The results of discussion and research, it is expected, will form an input for institutional and inter-institutional policies on life long learning. In the field of internationalization it is worth mentioning that the University of Maastricht and the 'Limburgs University Center' will cooperate with regard to education and research under the name 'Transnational University Limburg' (TUL). The concept treaty between the Netherlands and Flanders declares that:

- Students who graduate at the TUL obtain a double degree, namely the Dutch title 'doctorandus' and the Flemish degree 'licentiaat'.
- The TUL is entitled to introduce the bachelor-master system immediately.

The Dutch government has granted a onetime subsidy for the development of the TUL. Furthermore the TUL is funded through the regular payments available for the University of Maastricht and the

'Limburg University Center'. It is expected that the TUL starts its operations in the academic year 2001-2002.

## **5.2 Research infrastructure**

With regard to the research at universities the Minister of Education has expressed her concern about the increase of contract research at the expense of basic research. Contract research commissioned by the Flemish government, the so-called policy-oriented research related to the policy priorities of the government, will be organized in a more structural manner and not on an ad hoc basis as currently is the case.

In accordance with former policies the government wants to stimulate applied research at 'hogescholen' with two-cycles. For the year 2001 the Minister of Education and her colleague of the Department of Trade and Industry will supply an amount of 240 million BFr (5.94 million €) for technological research at 'hogescholen'. Furthermore, the Flemish government will co-finance research projects of the so-called 'Collectieve onderzoekcentra'. These research centers focus on industrial research for the benefit of entrepreneurs and support the activities of service orientated technology. A research budget of 588 million BFr (14.6 million €) is needed. Half of this will be paid for by the research centers themselves, the federal government will pay 143 million (3.55 million €), and 92 (2.27 million €) will be funded by the Flemish government (the remaining amount will be paid for by the Walloon government).

## **5.3 Finance**

One of the main priorities of the new Flemish government is a fundamental reform of the funding mechanism for universities and 'hogescholen'.

The minister of education has commissioned a new (independent) research into the funding of the 'hogescholen' in relation to the rationalization of their course supply. In the meantime the lumpsum (enveloppe) for 'hogescholen' has been raised with 200 million BFr (4.96 million €), a onetime amount of 69 million (1.7 million €) has been provided for educational activities and onetime financial compensation to repair 'mistakes from former days' has been announced.

The working payment of universities (for covering the costs of teaching and teaching related research) has been raised and is no longer related to the number of students. In the recent past the link between funding and student numbers was one of the main barriers for a rationalization of the university course supply. This policy measure, however, is only a transitional arrangement. In the period 2001-2004 an examination of alternative funding mechanism (in relation to a rationalization

of the university course supply) has to lead to an outline of a new funding system. The main touchstone of the new system has to be 'quality', according to the Minister of Education. Furthermore, the government intends to increase the (structural) basic funding for research, to cut back ad hoc funding of specific research projects, and to combine a number of smaller funding programs. Objective of these plans is to enlarge the freedom of universities to conduct research at their own discretion. So far the government has increased the basic funding of universities with 200 million BFr (4.96 million €), the budget for investments with 225 million BFr (5.58 million €), and will provide funds for the development of the confederalist university of Antwerpen and the foundation of the Transnational University Limburg.

#### **5.4 Governance**

The elections of 13 June 1999 have changed the political landscape of Flanders completely. The christian democrats who within living memory literally ran Flanders were thrown out of office. The new government, a purple-green coalition of liberals, social democrats, environmentalists and moderate Flemish nationalists, was determined to break with the christian democrat style of governing. Positively formulated the christian democrats tried to develop policies in dialogue and cooperation with societal interest groups. From the perspective of many of their opponents the christian democrat style of governing was about wheeling and dealing leading to unclear compromises and ineffective policies. Moreover, many political decisions were already made before formal discussions in parliamentary commissions and formal decision making in parliament had taken place. A way of operating which is not undisputed from a democratic point of view.

The new government is resolute to restore the 'primacy of politics'. In her paper on the main policy initiatives for the period 2000-2004 the new Minister of Education Vanderpoorten emphasizes that decision making on educational policies is the responsibility of government and parliament.

Consultation with interest groups in the educational field is of the utmost importance, but after the deliberations the political authorities decide. Furthermore, Vanderpoorten makes a clear distinction between the responsibilities of government and the responsibilities of educational institutions.

This change of attitude expresses itself in the way of operating with regard to one of the main questions in the field of higher education. Like her predecessors, the minister strives for more transparency and rationality of the course supply in the higher education sector. The previous administration (christian democrats and social democrats) appointed special government commissioners, viz. two former vice-chancellors of universities and a former college director, who had to develop plans for the optimization of university and college education. These commissioners had to finish their plans

within five years and in conference with the higher education sector (Van Den Bossche, 1995-1996, 1998). The present minister goes about it in a different way and tries to influence the sector more directly (for instance new mergers of hogescholen, a new funding system and covenants with regard to rationalization of course supply are announced). The special commissioners have been or will be released of their duties.

The more direct governance style has led to unrest in the higher education sector. According to the Flemish Education Council (VLOR) the new government is not fully aware of the necessity of cooperation between the authorities and the field of education ([www.klasse.be](http://www.klasse.be)). This commotion was strengthened by a recent comment of the Flemish Prime Minister with regard to a possible dissolution of the educational networks ('netten'). For many observers it looks like if the government has the intention to replace the segmented (pillarized) higher education system by a more uniform framework.

The tension between government and policy field increased in strength due to governmental plans concerning the reorganization of the formal structure for advice and consultation. First of all the unclear division of labor between the Flemish Educational Council (VLOR) and the Flemish Negotiating Committee (VOC) raised questions (Vlaamse Onderwijs Raad, 1999). In the VOC trade unions, the organizing bodies of the community education, the subsidized official education and the subsidized private education (the three educational networks) and representatives of the government negotiate about the implementation of legal rules. Members of the VOC are denied a position in the VLOR, which advises the government on societal and educational issues (Vanderpoorten, 1999). This division implies that the organizing bodies of the three educational networks will not participate in the VLOR anymore. Perhaps, another indication that the new government aims at a fundamental reform of the segmented structure of Flemish education.

Finally, the Flemish government considers to grant the joint universities and the joint 'hogescholen' the authority to sign collective labor agreements (Vanderpoorten, 1999), which would mean a substantial increase of the autonomy of higher education institutions.

### **5.5 Quality assurance**

The Flemish government considers the development of the system of internal and external quality assurance as a main priority. But once again the government takes the view that the higher education institutions and their umbrella organizations should have the chance to take initiatives.

## 6 France

### 6.1 Educational infrastructure

#### 6.1.1 The strengthening of professional tracks and programmes

In the academic year 2000-2001, the new degree (*licence professionel*) was introduced. Between 4000 and 5000 students are enrolled in the 195 approved programmes. (Claeys 2000).

In the reorganisation of the Ministry of Education and Research, after the departure of Allègre and the arrival of Lang, a new (assistant) minister for professional education was installed. This marks the priority given by the government to professional education.

#### 6.1.2 A reorientation on the post-baccalauréat programmes

The *recteurs* of the *académies* (responsible for STS and CPGE) are asked to provide an overview (*schéma*) regarding the higher education programmes following the *baccalauréat*, in co-operation with all partners concerned (university presidents and presidents of IUTs). With those overviews four national objectives should be served: assure a better entrance of holders of the *baccalauréat technologique* into IUT and STS, improve the entrance of holders of the *baccalauréat professionnel* in IUT and STS, stabilise and rebalance the map of CPGE, and stimulate the development of DEUG in the scientific track (Claeys, 2000). These combined overviews should enhance the quality of information to pupils and their parents and improve the ‘tuning’ of the entrance-procedures in the first year of STS, IUT, DEUG, and CPGE.

#### 6.1.3 Reform of first and second cycle programmes at universities

The renewal process in the first cycle consists mainly of:

- building up information on job openings in the labour market and the studies envisaged. More particularly, an open week for new students is organised at the start of the university year, to facilitate their integration
- setting up a module system to enable students to change courses if necessary, or to resume their studies
- creating a new extension of studies, which will allow students who have exhausted all the possibilities of repeating, to take up their studies again after interrupting them

- setting up a tutorials system to allow more individual catering for students, enabling them to integrate better into the university and helping them with study methods
- stepping up modern language teaching.

The issue of the organisation of the programme in the first cycle is still a topic. Partly due to the success of *Université 2000* enrolment has grown tremendously, and although there has been a strong growth in the short programmes (STS and IUT) there has been no clear reduction of the pressure on the universities. Since selection for the first cycle at universities is irreconcilable with the republican values, attention is focused on the process of orientation.

Parallel to this reform of the first cycle, the second cycle has been in the process of being re-organised, in order to streamline (and render more comprehensible) certification methods at both national and international levels, by limiting the number of diplomas and strengthening universities' capacity to take initiatives and gain in teaching autonomy within the contractual framework.

#### 6.1.4 Reversing the decline in interest in science education

There is a growing concern regarding the level of enrolment in science programmes both in universities and engineering schools. However, there are considerable differences between areas of science. In technology and engineering-related sciences, enrolment has risen. Taken as a percentage of total enrolment it shows that the interest for science programmes is waning. Interest in technology/ engineering programmes has grown. The government has taken some measures regarding this issue, including a reorganisation of the DEUG *scientifiques* programmes.

#### 6.1.5 Reform of IUFM

In 1998 a process of evaluation of the IUFM was started. Round table conferences and other discussion forums were held to catalogue the problems and suggest solutions. At the end of this lengthy process, in February 2000 Minister Allègre came up with an outline of a plan to reform IUFM. The two major points were the introduction of a period of practical orientation in the first year and the introduction of a 'third' year, in which young teachers would work as teachers, be it with some limitations on their workload. During that year, the IUFM would council young teachers. (Cédelle 2000)

After Lang replaced Allègre, a two-man committee was asked to advise the new minister on the measures needed to improve the functioning of IUFM. Their proposals (regarding the admission criteria, the examination, the status of staff) are used by Lang to install a working committee on the contents of the IUFM programmes (the content of the first and especially of the second year, of the definition of a 'third' year, and of recurrent education). The committee is due to report in December 2000. In January 2001 a reformplan will be presented.

Lang has presented some of his ideas on the future development of IUFM. He wants the first year to be of a high level as far as the subject field is concerned and include good on-the-job teacher training. The latter can be achieved, a.o. by a short orientation period in the classroom. The second year should much more be geared towards the pedagogical aspects, through working periods. Another concern of Lang is the weak research-function, which he considers important in a university related institute as the IUFM. Although IUFM are not equipped to perform fundamental research, they should be able to perform applied research in co-operation with universities and other research institutes. (MEN 2000c).

#### 6.1.6 Relation between grandes écoles and universities

Due to the fact that there is a substantial number of higher education institutions that are too small to offer their students optimal study conditions, the ministry stimulates the co-operation between *grandes écoles* and universities. In that perspective some *grandes écoles* are developing research activities and research training, in co-operation with university research centers. There are two new types of institutions in which the further co-operation may take place: the technological university (*université de technologie*) and the *centres polytechniques universitaires* (CPU). The first CPU was created in September 1999 as a merger of a university and three *grandes écoles*; in 2000 three technical universities existed. The first technical university was created in January 1999 (Senat 1999)

#### 6.1.7 Continuing education/ life long learning

Continuing training which falls under the category of higher education is organised in the training centres of universities which offer facilities to adult students: special timetables for full-time workers, validation, etc. Furthermore, a certain number of diplomas can be studied for in the training centres of some *Grandes Écoles* which are authorised to provide them. The ministry urges higher education institutions to open up their programmes for adults and to recognise professional

qualifications. The ministry subsidises part of the continuing higher education programmes. Furthermore, institutions may compete for funds that are made available for projects developing continuing education. The number of projects which are approved, however, is relatively small.

#### 6.1.8 Student life (Plan social d'étudiant)

The Plan Social Étudiant (PSE) is aimed at raising the level of grants by 15% and covering 30% of the students within the four-years period of the plan, and aims to take down financial and other material barriers to access to higher education. In the third year, the level of grants is raised by another 3.5%, the criteria for receiving a grant on social criteria are loosened and the number of special grants is augmented.

#### 6.1.9 Staff

Apart from the 600 new academic positions (300 *maitres de conference*, 300 temporary positions) to be created in 2001, there are plans to ameliorate the situation of academic staff, especially the career perspectives of the *maîtres de conférence*. Although the student staff ratio has improved, the *senat* considers the growth of academic staff insufficient, especially since there are no new positions for professors. In the budget for 2000, the increase in staff positions was considerably higher. It is also feared that the education in the first cycle of universities is left more and more to secondary education teachers (Senat 2000, p.8-9)

### 6.2 Research infrastructure

The new minister for research (in April 2000, the former ministry of education and research is split into a ministry of education and a ministry of research) advocates a policy in which public higher education and research institutions and industry are brought together to boost the international competitiveness and to stimulate the national economy and employment. The two keywords in that policy are innovation and technology transfer. The minister uses a wide range of policy instruments.

- *Loi sur l'innovation et la recherche* (13 July 1999); the law permits research staff to commercialise (*valoriser*) the results of their research, by creating or participating in a commercial company
- incubators; special structures within universities or research organisations to facilitate innovative and young technological enterprises, related to the university, research organisations and private investors.

- a national contest for starting innovative enterprises; in 2000 296 out of 1800 proposals were granted a prize. The total budget was 200 mln FFr (33.5 million €).
- National centers of technological research (*Centres Nationaux de Recherche Technologique*, CNRT); the CNRTs promote efficient collaborations between public research laboratories and the research departments of large industrial firms, in order to develop technological research activities. The first twelve CNRTs were created by Roger-Gérard Schwartzberg on July 5, 2000. The mission of the CNRTs is to develop research thanks to close collaborations between public and private research. The central aim is, first and foremost, to increase the international competitiveness of the French industry. To achieve this goal, it is necessary that all those concerned be involved in this effort: university laboratories, public research institutions, industrial centers, and SMEs/ SMIs. Research will be devoted to the technological areas which are of interest to enterprises and which are listed among the national priorities for research
- Technology research and innovation networks (*réseaux de recherche et d'innovation technologiques*); the object is to promote collaboration between state-funded research and industrial research. The research should be demand-driven. The ministry of research is funding part of these activities from the FRT (Ministry of research 2001)
- Technological platforms; the plan U3M permits the creation of around 80 of such platforms. SMEs/SMIs may participate on a contract-base, in order to favour of technology transfer. The platforms may involve technical and professional *Lycées* as well as higher education institutions offering technological programmes (IUT, STS, universities and *grandes écoles*). For the education institutions participation opens an opportunity to expand their relations with local and regional industry and by that enhance the employment perspectives of their graduates.

The latter three actions are also aimed at stimulating public private partnerships (Ministère de la Recherche 2000).

### 6.2.1 Research policy

In the 2001 budget for civil research and technological development, four main priorities are described:

- an increase of the human capacity in research by creating new positions for researchers and support staff and making the scientific careers more attractive.
- an increase in the resources for laboratories

- continuation of the policy regarding priority disciplines. Additional funds are provided to research in three disciplines through the *Fonds National de la Science* (FNS) and through the *Fonds de la Recherche et de la Technologie* (FRT).
- Further development of innovation and R&D in industry. It is felt that the part of R&D in industry is too small, compared to other countries.

### **6.3 Governance**

The contractual policy was initiated by Jospin in 1989. In 1998, the concept was relaunched. The aim of this contractual policy is both to give genuine new autonomy to universities and to allow the State to exercise fully its responsibility to boost and co-ordinate activity in higher education. Each institution draws up a four years development plan corresponding both to national objectives and to local training needs. The plan covers all the activities in the establishment (teaching, research, internationalisation, management, etc.), regarding all actors (students, staff, public authorities, and external parties). The plan is addressed to the appropriate department of the Ministry, and then negotiated with it. Finally, a four-year contract is signed.

The contract is not a legal contract but has to be seen as a set of mutual, explicit and formalised engagements. However, this is not considered to be a problem since it serves other purposes as well:

- the contract is a factor in the overall development policy, common to all the players in the institution,
- the contract provides a unique opportunity for dialogue between the State and institutions,
- the contract is a management tool enabling projected means to be allocated (particularly operating funds).

In 2000, 188 higher education institutions (universities, IUFMs, engineering schools and *Grandes Écoles*) are involved in the contractualisation policy, comprising more than 75% of total enrolment.

## **7 Germany**

### **7.1 Educational infrastructure**

#### **7.1.1 Bachelor/ Master**

At the end of the 1980s, there was a widespread belief in Germany that the higher education system was in a crisis and that there was a growing need for reform. Within the framework of the debate on

higher education reform, the ministry published a reform paper in 1997, '*Hochschulen für das 21. Jahrhundert*' (Higher Education Institutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), in which the most important objectives of a reform policy were formulated. According to this policy paper the German higher education system suffers under structural deficiencies which threaten its effectiveness and competitiveness. One of the goals in the paper regards the improvement of the attractiveness of German higher education at an international level (*Studienstandort Deutschland*). In this context the possibility of introducing Bachelor's and Master's degrees also should be considered seriously. In the latest change of the federal framework law on higher education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*, 1998) institutions of higher education are permitted to award Bachelor's and Master's degrees (see article 19, HRG).<sup>5</sup>

As a result of this amendment to the federal law on higher education, universities and *Fachhochschulen* have started to set up new Bachelor's and Master's degrees. This experimental phase has led to discussions about whether the Bachelor's and Master's degrees should exist in addition to the old structure or whether they should replace the old degrees. For the moment the new degrees exist in addition to the old degrees.<sup>6</sup>

A Bachelor's degree offers students a professional qualification for the labour market. A Master's programme is open to graduates of different Bachelor's programmes. In contrast to *Diplom* degrees (where in case of a *Fachhochschule* graduate *FH* is added to the *Diplom*), there is no formal distinction in titles granted by a university or *Fachhochschule*. Two kinds of degrees are awarded. On the one hand Bachelor/Master of Arts/Science degrees for academic oriented courses and on the other hand Bachelor/Master of Engineering degrees for vocational oriented study courses. All these courses, which are funded by the German government, must be accredited<sup>7</sup> instead of registered, as

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<sup>5</sup> Article 19, HRG: '(1) Zur Erprobung können Studiengänge eingerichtet werden, die zu einem Bachelor- oder Bakkalaureusgrad und zu einem Master- oder Magistergrad führen. (2) Auf Grund von Prüfungen, mit denen ein erster berufsqualifizierender Abschluss erworben wird, kann die Hochschule einen Bachelor- oder Bakkalaureusgrad verleihen. Die Regelstudienzeit beträgt mindestens drei und höchstens vier Jahre. (3) Auf Grund von Prüfungen, mit denen ein weiterer berufsqualifizierender Abschluss erworben wird, kann die Hochschule einen Master- oder Magistergrad verleihen. Die Regelstudienzeit beträgt mindestens ein Jahr und höchstens zwei Jahre. (4) Bei konsekutiven Studiengängen, die zu Graden nach den Absätzen 2 und 3 führen, beträgt die Gesamtregelstudienzeit höchstens fünf Jahre.'

<sup>6</sup> The university of Bochum, however, is the first and the only in Germany to abolish the *Diplom* and started with only BSc and MSc in the academic year 2000/2001.

<sup>7</sup> In the plenary session of 21 and 22 February 2000 the Association of Universities and Other Higher Education in Germany (the *Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*, HRK) made proposals to implement the assessment procedures.

is the case for the ‘old’ courses. According to the recommendations of the HRK and the *Akkreditierungsrat* applicants for the Master-courses should be admitted only on the basis of selection.

Numerous German institutions of higher education offer international degree courses which consist of a number of modules. Each module represents a certain number of credit points (credit point system). At the moment more than 600 Bachelor or Master courses are offered of which about 8% have been accredited. The range of study opportunities covers undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate courses. The predominant or exclusive language of instruction, at least in the first semesters, is English.

### 7.1.2 Staff

One of the centerpieces of the programme of the minister of education was the reform of the legislation regarding staff (*Dienstrechtreform*). In September 2000 a proposal was put forward by the ministry to the higher education institutions. The reform aims to strengthen the productivity and innovativeness of higher education. “The change of generation has to be used in the renewal of higher education” (BMBF 2000). The proposal has two main issues: the introduction of a junior professor and the introduction of performance based elements in the salaries of professors.

Junior professors will be on temporary contracts (two time three years) after which they may be promoted to professor positions. The candidates do not have to hold a *Habilitation*. The Ph.D. study, as preparation for a junior professorship, should last no longer than three years.

Proposed payments based on performance in research, teaching, or other activities may be added to a base salary. These base salaries should also be adapted. Another consequence of the proposal is that professors at *Fachhochschulen* are to be re-evaluated.

The proposals are based on an expert-committee which reported in April 2000.

The reform requires a change in the *Hochschulrahmengesetz*. The reform (at the federal level) enables the *Länder* to introduce a performance based payment at higher education institutions.

## 7.2 Research infrastructure

### 7.2.1 Role of Fachhochschulen

The ministry of education and research stimulates the role of *Fachhochschulen* in applied research. The aFuE (*angewandte Forschungs und Entwicklungsprogramm*) has been increased by more than

15%. Although *Fachhochschulen* are seen as important in the co-operation between higher education and industry, the size of the programme is limited (DM16.5 million; 8.4 million € in 2000) (BMBF 2000a)

### 7.3 Finance

#### 7.3.1 Reform of the student support scheme Bafög

In 1998, the coalition planned to reform the student support system (*Bafög*). In Spring 2000 the minister of education proposed a drastic reform of the *Bafög*. However, this proposal was rejected by the *Bundeskanzler* (DUZ 3, 2000, p.11). In December 2000 a new proposal was submitted to parliament. (Duz 18, 2000). The new system will be implemented on 1 April 2001.

The goals of the reform are:

- enhancing social justice, enabling a higher rate of participation;
- to relieve the financial burden of families with children in education
- removing the existing differences in support for students in the old and the new *Länder*
- Internationalisation of student support
- creating a simpler and more transparent law
- shortening of the time to completion and reducing of the drop-out rate

The key elements in the reform are:

- a widening of the group of people eligible for student support
- raising in the amount of support students receive
- the harmonisation of the ‘tariffs’ on which support received by students in former East and West Germany are based;
- an extension of support for study abroad
- more options for interdisciplinary study; master does not need to be in the same discipline as the bachelor in order to be eligible
- lowering of the maximum loansdebts

## 8 The Netherlands

### 8.1 Educational infrastructure

#### 8.1.1 Bachelor/Master

To be more competitive on the international level, a Bachelor/Master degree system (the so-called BaMa) will be introduced in the Netherlands. From the academic year 2002, university graduates will be able to adopt the title of bachelor and master in addition to the traditional diplomas of *doctorandus (drs.)*, *ingenieur (ir.)* or *meester (mr.)*. Graduates from the Dutch universities of professional education (*hogescholen*) will be able to adapt the title of bachelor in addition to the traditional diplomas of bac or ingenieur (ir). Under the new “BaMa” system, university students will first take a Bachelor’s programme lasting at least three years and will then be able to go on to enter a specialised Master’s programme. The existing regulations on the maximum time students can study will remain in force. Universities will also be encouraged to set up an elite programme for excellent students. Students at *hogescholen* will be awarded a Bachelor’s degree after four years of study. Like the universities, the *hogescholen* will also be able to set up Master’s degree programmes, but contrary to the universities, these master degree programmes will not be financed by government. It is expected that students will soon be able to choose whether to use the international degree title (Bachelor or Master) or the Dutch ones (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2000a).

#### 8.1.2 ICT in higher education

##### **Open University**

Like in many other countries, in the Netherlands the development in the use of ICT in offering higher education is a booming business. In the Dutch context, the Dutch Open University was/is one of the core providers of higher initial distance education and can be seen as one of the “revolutionary” providers of higher education. At the start of the Open University (OUNL) in 1984, the OUNL aimed to offer an educational opportunity for those who never had the chance to enter higher education (the so-called second chance or second way students). In more recent years the OUNL’s role as a booster for technological and educational innovation in higher education, coined with the term ‘third generation distance education’ has gained importance. However, in the last years a debate is going on about the position of the OUNL. In relation to the changing

circumstances (mainly the decline in student numbers from 36,000 in 1991 to 21,500 in 1999), and the debates on the role of other public providers of distance education, the Dutch government has put forward two scenarios for the future of the Open University in its latest Higher Education and Research Plan (HOOP 2000). The first scenario implies a merger with a university (the proximity of the University Maastricht suggests amalgamation with this institution). The second scenario implies the development of a consortium in which the Open University co-operates with other higher education institutions. Furthermore, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture (Hermans) proposed a cutback of 15 million Dutch guilders (6.8 million €) in the annual governmental payment for the coming three years; starting with a cutback of 10 million guilders in 2002 and another 5 million in 2003 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2000b and Onderwijsraad, 2000).

### **Consortium the “Digital University”**

Partly because of the debate about the position of the Dutch Open University and because of the fact that more and more “traditional” higher education institutions have gotten involved in offering higher distance education, plans have been made to establish a digital university. In the summer of 2000, the Dutch Open University, three “traditional” universities and 8 *hogescholen*, all signed a declaration of intent to set up a digital university (estimated annual budget is about 40 million Dutch guilders; 18 million €). At this moment, the business plan of the consortium is still under construction. However, the Dutch government decided to fund this new initiative.

#### **8.1.3 Selection and numerus fixus**

Admission to higher education institutions is fairly open (for the requirements, see the country report on the Netherlands, Boezerooy, 1999). The only limitation to this open admission is the system of *numerus fixus*, which only applies to a limited number of study programmes. There are nowadays three types of *numerus fixus*. The first type (also the oldest one) is known as the capacity fixus. When the number of applicants exceeds the national teaching capacity, the Minister decides upon the number of places (nationally and at the institutional level) which will be available. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science may also limit the intake of students if it can be shown that the supply of graduates from a particular programme exceeds the need of the labour market by a substantial amount and when this is expected to be the case for a number of years (labour market fixus). In practice, a combination of the capacity fixus and labour market fixus is applied to

determine the *opleidingsfixus*. For the year 1999-2000 this fixus is applied to medicine, biomedical sciences, biomedical health sciences, veterinary science and dentistry at the university level and to ergotherapy and some other therapy studies, tourism, journalism and social juridical service at the universities of professional education. A third type of *numerus fixus* is the institutional fixus. Higher education institutions are given much more autonomy in determining their teaching capacity. If the number of applicants exceeds the expected enrolments in such a way that the teaching capacity of a particular institution is insufficient (in fact endangering the quality of teaching), the institution can apply for selection (Boezeroy and Huisman, 2000).

Starting in the academic year 2000/2001, the *opleidingsfixus* for the physiotherapy studies at the universities of professional education has been abolished. For other, more university oriented, medical studies, it is expected that the *numerus fixus* will slowly disappear in the coming years. In the summer of 2000, it was announced that within 3 years an extra 390 places will be open for new entrants in the medical university studies (this is about one quarter of total capacity for new entrants; a rise from 2100 to 2400 new entrants a year). (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2000c).

## **8.2 Research infrastructure**

In the year 2000, one of the main topics concerning research in the Netherlands, was the discussion about research personnel at the universities and especially about the gender balance in scientific positions. During spring/summer of 2000 a projectgroup, chaired by Van Vucht Tijssen published the report “*Talent voor de toekomst, toekomst voor talent*” (Talent for the future, future prospects for talent). On behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture this projectgroup conducted a research about the situation of the problems in personnel at universities and other research organisations. The recommendations of the report showed that:

- Talented young scientists have to be paid higher salaries,
- Universities have to think about career planning opportunities for all of their scientific staff
- The image of the universities as employers should be improved
- More efforts have to be made to attract more women for (higher) scientific positions.

During autumn of 2000, Minister Hermans made extra money available to deal with the above mentioned recommendations. For example, 72 million Dutch guilders (32.7 million €) a year is put aside to deal with the price and wage adjustments. Furthermore he made about 40 million Dutch

guilders (18.1 million €) a year available to offer young scientists a better perspective on a scientific career (arrangements will be made in higher salary payments, career planning, conditions of employment, etc.) and an extra amount of 30 million Dutch guilders (13.6 million €) has been transferred to the NWO for the so-called “*Vernieuwingsimpuls*”.

The last recommendations of the project group ‘Van Vucht Tijssen’ deals with the gender balance within universities and other research organisations. In the Dutch situation, it is very clear that women are underrepresented in (senior) scientific positions. While more than half of the number of undergraduate students and about one third of the doctoral students is female, women make up only 5% of university professors. The Dutch Minister of Education, Science and Culture, sees this as a precarious situation and decided to make some money available in order to strengthen the position of female senior scientists. The money has been transferred to the NWO, and this organisation started a stimulation fund (7,5 million Dutch guilders (3.4 million €) for the next 10 years) to strengthen the position of women in sciences. One of the programs of this stimulation fund is the Aspasia program (a budget of one million Dutch guilders, 454,000 €). By means of this program the NWO wants to stimulate the circulation of women from the lower (*universitair docent*) to the higher (*universitair hoofddocent*) scientific positions.

### **8.3 Finance**

#### **8.3.1 Increase in the budget**

Contrary to the former 22 years in which ‘cutting in the budget’ were well-known words, the governmental debate on the education budget in September 2000 ended with an increase in the total budget for the whole education sector by 1.4 billion Dutch guilders (635 million €) for the coming years. For the higher education sector this meant that for the year 2000 about 354 million Dutch guilders (160 million €) was set aside, while this amount will rise to 583 million (265 million €) in 2004.

As was already indicated in the update 1999/2000, (Beverwijk, et al, 2000) the funding rates of the non-university sector (*hogescholen*) are based on an estimate of the teaching load (budget based on both the number of graduates and the number of drop-outs). As student enrolments are increased during the last couple of years (from 235,000 in 1990 to 276,000 in 1998), *hogescholen* now are facing financial problems. Already in the Spring of 1999, Minister Hermans made an extra amount (about 92 million Dutch guilders; 41.8 million €) available to the *hogescholen* to solve these kinds of problems. Also in 2000, extra money was made available: for the year 2000 the budget was

increased with an additional 52 million Dutch guilders (23.6 million €). This amount will rise to 284 million Dutch guilders (129 million €) in 2004. Like the *hogescholen* sector, the university sector is also receiving an additional amount of money from Minister Hermans; for the year 2000 this ended up in an increase of the budget with 16 million Dutch guilders (7.3 million €), while the budget for the year 2001 will have an additional 35 million Dutch guilders (15.9 million €) (Uitleg, nr. 21, September 2000).

Another way to face the problems of the increasing student numbers is to widen access to programmes under the *numerus fixus* (see also the paragraph about selection). For the academic year 200-2001, additional places for students in medicine programmes were funded by the government with the amount of 4 million guilders (1.8 million €), this will rise to 40 million Dutch guilders (18 million €) in 2004.

### 8.3.2 A new way of funding higher education

In the autumn of 2000, Minister Hermans announced a plan which centres around flexibility for students. One improvement in flexibility concerns the change in student financial support: in order to enable students to have more flexibility in taking up their support entitlements, a student can apply for a basic grant on a monthly basis, though within ten years of their first enrolment (see for more detailed information update 1999/2000 (Beverwijk, et al., 2000). Another way to strengthen the flexibility of students can be found in the funding mechanisms of higher education. The plan of Minister Hermans indicates that higher education institutions (both the university and the *hogescholen* sector) will receive payment by credits: for each credit a student achieves, the higher education institutions will receive a certain amount of money. This is more or less similar to the voucher experiment (see Beverwijk et al, 2000)

### 8.4 Quality assurance and accreditation

As was already indicated in the up-date winter 1999/2000 (Beverwijk, et al. 2000), in the Higher Education and Research Plan 2000 (HOOP 2000) it is stated that in addition to the existing quality procedures for both the universities and the *hogescholen*, accreditation will also be introduced. In November 2000, Minister Hermans installed the accreditation committee 'Franssen'. The committee 'Franssen' is going to look which quality criteria can be used to develop a new system of

accreditation. The committee will report its finding by September 2001 (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2000d).

## **9 Sweden**

### **9.1 Educational infrastructure**

#### **9.1.1 Admissions**

Over the last several years the government has been trying to increase the number of young people entering higher education directly from upper secondary school. It is estimated that partially due to the regulations for admitting mature students, there is too much competition for places for young secondary school graduates. One of the measures the government has taken to address this problem is by increasing the numbers of new entrants (see Klemperer, 1999 and Beverwijk et al., 2000). Currently around 30% of upper secondary school graduates enter higher education before the age of 25. The government has set a target of increasing this to 50% within the next few years (de Laine, 2000b).

#### **9.1.2 Contract education**

In Sweden undergraduate education may be contracted out to public or private employers who wish to pay the full costs for higher education for their employees. Individuals are not allowed to purchase courses. A special ordinance was passed in 1998 enabling individuals to earn credits for work undertaken in contract courses which meet the academic standards. (Fritzell, 1998).

A recent (1999) survey of undergraduate level contract activities at higher education institutions was undertaken by the National Agency for Higher Education. The survey found that the volume of contract activities varied a lot between institutions, accounting for between 3 and 17 percent of the total income for undergraduate studies (National Agency for Higher Education, 1999a)

#### **9.1.3 Minority and women's participation**

A recent (2000) report of the National Agency for Higher Education explained that there is a growing awareness of gender equality issues at institutions of higher education. According to the

survey taken, all institutions abide by laws and regulations and have policies relating to the development of equal opportunities. The report mentioned, however, that the awareness of the problem that exists at the top management level is often not shared by lower levels of the organisation. In addition, there seem to be differences between disciplines, with people working in the areas of social sciences and humanities generally being more aware of problems than people in other disciplines.

The same survey also investigated institutional practices and policies with regard to achieving social and ethnic diversity. (At the national level, no legislation specifically mentioning the higher education sector exists.) The survey found that there are only a few institutions with specific policies in this area. In some institutions this has been an issue that is connected with efforts to increase enrollment in engineering and natural science programmes. The introduction of the so-called “science or technology basic year” seems to have been quite successful in bringing new groups into higher education. This basic year leads to further studies in engineering and natural sciences, and is aimed at people who do not have the qualifications for these studies. Among others, unemployed people may apply to this programme (National Agency for Higher Education, 2000, and de Laine, 2000b).

#### 9.1.4 Postgraduate Education

The long length of postgraduate studies and the high rate of dropout have been issues of concern for many years. One of the aims of implementing research schools was to better structure postgraduate studies, and it was hoped that the increased structuring would lead to shorter degrees and a reduction in the drop-out rate.

Research schools were introduced relatively recently (in the 1980's) in Sweden, and increased their numbers in the 1990's. In the year 2000, the National Agency for Higher Education conducted a study of research schools in Sweden. According to this study, the concept of a research school has not been well defined in Sweden. The provision of education varies greatly from a few short courses to a full postgraduate programme lasting four years.

On the positive side, the Agency's study reported that the research schools provide postgraduate students with networks which can be valuable to them both in their studies and in their future careers. A disadvantage of research schools that was mentioned was that they sometimes focus too

narrowly on the subject, or are too tightly controlled and have too many requirements and too little scope for students' own initiative. Another concern is that often the financing period is too short, as it takes time to build up a programme. The existence of research schools is widely believed to increase the efficiency of postgraduate studies, but the Agency's study could not reach any conclusions as to whether or not the period of doctoral studies is actually reduced, because the students are not separately registered in these programmes (National Agency for Higher Education, 2000)

In its research policy bill *Research and Renewal*, the Swedish government presented its plans regarding research schools. The government proposes to distribute SEK 214 million (23.8 million €) between sixteen graduate schools in the years up to 2003.

The purpose of the graduate schools is to encourage new recruitment, further the development of postgraduate education and promote interaction between institutions of higher education. It is important to give institutions that lack the right to award research degrees the opportunity to participate in this form of postgraduate education. This will strengthen the research link at all institutions of higher education. For each graduate school, the Government Bill specifies a particular field, the host university responsible for the school and other institutions of higher education acting as partners.

One prerequisite for good postgraduate education is effective supervision. The Government therefore proposes the introduction of a new provision in the Higher Education Ordinance, requiring universities and other institutions of higher education that offer postgraduate studies to arrange training courses for research supervisors. The Council for Higher Education will receive SEK 5 million (0.56 million €) via the National Agency for Higher Education's budget appropriation, part of which is intended for the development of courses for research supervisors (Swedish ministry of education and science, 2000b).

## **9.2 Research infrastructure**

### **9.2.1 New organisation for financing research**

In March 2000, the Government Bill "Research for the future – a new organisation for financing research" (1999/2000:81) was presented.

Three new research councils were proposed in the Bill. Firstly a National Science Council, and secondly two mission-oriented research councils – one for social issues and working life and the

other for the environment, agriculture and community planning. In addition a new agency is being set up to finance research and development in support of the innovation system and sustainable development and growth (Swedish Ministry of education and science 2000a).

From 1 January 2001, the newly set-up Swedish Research Council (*Vetenskapsrådet*) takes over the activities previously pursued by the Swedish Council for Planning and Co-ordination of Research (FRN), the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR), the Swedish Medical Research Council (MFR), the Swedish Natural Science Research Council (NFR) and the Swedish Research Council for Engineering Sciences (TFR). There are three subject committees in the Swedish Research Council: one for culture and the social sciences, one for medicine and one for the natural and engineering sciences. The Swedish Research Council aims to support basic, top-quality research to ensure that Sweden is a leading research nation. To achieve this, the Swedish Research Council promotes interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary science, works towards innovation and equality, and stimulates co-operation and communication. The Council is controlled by a majority of researchers (Vetenskapsrådet 2001).

### 9.2.2 Research policy bill

The Government's research policy bill, "Research and Renewal" (2000/01:3), was inspired by three considerations: the impending generational change in the Swedish research community, the need to make concentrated efforts in important research areas and the need to stimulate interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research.

To meet the increased need for trained researchers, the Government is committing new resources to postgraduate education and young researchers. Graduate schools will be established in a range of fields so as to further the development of postgraduate education, encourage new recruitment and promote interaction between institutions of higher education throughout the country. In order to improve prospects for young researchers who have just completed research degrees, more positions will be established for new recruits and special funds will be set aside to support outstanding young researchers. In addition, special initiatives will be taken in eight high-priority areas.

During the period 2000-2003 the Government will allocate an additional SEK 1,279 million (142 million €) to research and postgraduate education. The 2001 Budget Bill sets a planning frame for the distribution of SEK 939 million (104 million €) from these newly allocated funds. SEK 340 million (37.8 million €) has already been distributed (Swedish ministry of education and science, 2000b).

### **9.3 Finance**

#### **9.3.1 New student support system**

On 1 July 2001 the various forms of Swedish study support will be brought together into one integrated study support system. Students at compulsory and upper secondary school level as well as college and university students can apply for study support within the new system.

Some of the forms of study support available in the old system, for example the Special adult study support (SVUX) and the Special adult study support for unemployed (SVUXA), will cease to exist in the new system. The new system of study support is based on the current Study Allowance structure. The support is therefore known as Study Allowance.

The Study Allowance will consist of a study grant and a student loan and will be awarded for full-time or part-time studies. The total amount of study allowance (study grant and study loan) will be the same for all students. As in the current system, the amount of allowance will be tied to the official price base amount, as published by the Swedish government. The general level of the allowance will be the same as the level of study allowance in the old system, and the amount paid will be based on a study unit of one week. For 20 weeks' full-time studies the total amount of study allowance will be 32,120 SEK (3,575 €). The study grant part of the allowance will not be taxable. There will be two levels of study grant within the new system; a basic level grant and a higher level grant for special priority students. The basic level grant will be raised from 27.8% of the total amount of study allowance in the old system to 34.5% in the new system. The higher level grant is primarily intended for students aged 25 or older studying at compulsory and upper secondary school level. The higher level grant will be 82% of the total amount of study allowance. In certain circumstances, students aged 25 or older may be awarded an additional study loan of 1,600 SEK (178 €) per month. The additional loan will be awarded for full-time studies for a maximum of 120 weeks (3 years). An additional study loan may also be awarded for certain important additional costs, e.g. in connection with studies abroad or for the purchase of particularly costly study materials such as musical instruments.

For studies at college or university level, study allowance may be awarded for a maximum of 240 study weeks (6 years). Study allowance (study grant and study loan) may be awarded to students

aged 50 and below. The entitlement to study loan will be gradually reduced for students aged 41 and above.

A certain level of independent income is allowed without reduction of the study allowance. This level is increased in the new system, from 54,000 SEK (6,010 €) per year in the old system to 91,000 SEK (10,128 €) annually.

The grant part of the study allowance will count as income in respect of future state pension. In calculating the amount of annual income which will form the basis for future state pension, the grant amount will be multiplied by 1.38 in order to be equivalent to a taxable income sum.

The right for study time to count towards state pension will also be granted retrospectively for the period January 1995 to June 2001.

Repayment of the study loan commences six months after the study allowance payments have ceased. However the obligation to commence repayments comes into force at the beginning of a calendar year; hence if the last term of study allowance was an autumn term, the respite period will be a full calendar year. The new study loan is an annuity loan, where the maximum repayment period will be 25 years, or up to the year of the debtors 60th birthday. However if the debt is small the repayment period will be less than 25 years. The rate of interest will be set by government for each calendar year on the basis of the Swedish state's cost of borrowing. The annual repayment amount will depend on the total amount the student has borrowed, on the rate of interest and on the length of the repayment period. If the rate of interest is unchanged the annual repayment amount will still be increased by two per cent. Because of the incremental increases to the annual repayment amount, annual repayments will be lower during the first years of repayment and then increase gradually.

The new study loan system contains in-built safeguards for those on low incomes. It is possible to apply for a reduction of the annual repayment amount to 5% of the debtors annual income.

However the eligibility for reductions changes at the age of 49. From the age of 50 the annual repayment amount may be reduced to 7% of the debtors annual income, which will then be deemed to include any capital gains/private income. If studies are recommenced once repayments have started it is possible to apply for a complete reduction of repayments during the study period. Any CSN debt remaining at the age of 68 will be written off. The debt may also be written off under certain special circumstances. The debt will also be written off if the debtor is deceased.

Students who have received loans under both the old and the new system may choose to repay the loans separately. The alternative is to transfer the old loans to the new annuity system, giving a fixed repayment period for the total debt. If a reduction in repayments is granted, the percentage repayment amount will be applied proportionally to the debts in the old and the new system respectively. (CSN 2001, National Agency for Higher Education 2000b)

#### **9.4 Governance**

The governmental bill ‘Student Influence and Quality Development in Higher Education’ (2000) suggests some changes that the government intends to make concerning student participation in higher education governance. The government intends to ensure that there is student representation on all governance boards that deal with educational matters and the situation of students. The government bill wants to ensure that all students’ views are being represented (not just the views of the representatives) and wants to make it an obligation that representatives inform and consult the student body of (pending) changes.

In addition, the governmental bill proposes that students should be represented in all organs that prepare changes (students are not currently represented in these organs). It is hoped that this will increase the influence of students, as it will involve them in the process of change at an earlier stage (Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, 2000).

#### **9.5 Quality Assessment**

The current system of quality assessment includes both institutional audits and subject or programme reviews. Both of these functions are carried out by the National Agency for Higher Education. A recent (2000) governmental bill entitled “Student Influence and Quality Development in Higher Education” proposes some changes to the current system. One of the main aims is that student influence in the system should be increased. This should be achieved in a number of ways: student assessments of courses should become mandatory, and the results of these should be better utilised. In addition, student viewpoints should be represented in the annual reports of the universities and university colleges.

Another change that has been proposed is that all subjects or programmes should be assessed once every six years. This type of assessment exists already, but up to now has mostly been focussed on vocational areas. The idea is to extend this to all areas including research studies. It has been proposed that this should begin early in 2001. The institutional audits (inspection of internal quality assessment systems by external committees) will also continue to take place, coordinated by the

National Agency of Higher Education. The National Agency will be responsible for presenting a collective report to the government, and the institutions will provide the government with their response to the reports and will list the improvements they intend to make (Swedish Ministry of Education and Science, 2000)

## **10 The United Kingdom**

### **10.1 Educational infrastructure**

#### **10.1.1 Access and participation**

One of the largest discussions in the British media in the past year has been the entrance of working class students in elite universities, most importantly Cambridge and Oxford. (AUA-weekly Press Digests) This discussion is held against the background of the decline of less privileged students in British Higher Education in general (2,000 fewer students). These developments are largely blamed on the strong increase of tuition fees and the decrease of maintenance grants. Former polytechnics are attracting the largest share of poorer students, yet government is spending a large part of the moneys to raise the amount of poorer students entering the universities (£151 million; 237 million €) on improving the number of poorer students that apply for 'leading universities'. Initiatives to encourage less privileged students entail bursaries for youth from inner-city areas, summer school programmes on giving information about the roots to higher education.

#### **10.1.2 Foundation degrees**

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has started a scheme of foundation degrees (HEFCE 2000a). These are two-year qualifications for full-time students with a large work based element in them. Universities are being asked to form consortia with employers and further education colleges to offer the new degrees from 2001. Universities validate the degree, employers are involved to secure that there is a local or national demand for the skills involved. There are questions whether students are interested in this type of degrees, as there has been a sharp decline in applications for the two-year Higher National Diplomas. Ministers however are optimistic that work-linked courses will appeal.

A total of 40 foundation degree courses will be offered throughout England by 21 consortia, involving 35 higher education institutions, 70 further education colleges and a range of employers,

national training organisations and other organisations representing industry's needs. The HEFCE has allocated £5 million (7.9 million €) in development funds and 2,000 student places for the new courses.

### 10.1.3 e-University

The HEFCE has recently published the business model for a new way of delivering high quality higher education to students via the Internet, the e-University (HEFCE 2000). The e-University project aims to establish the UK as a leading player in the market for 'virtual' learning over the web, building on its international reputation for quality and innovation, and the position of English as a world language. Any UK higher education (HE) institution will be able to deliver courses and student services through the e-University, provided they meet quality and standards thresholds. The e-University will not develop its own programmes, but will act as a facilitator and broker. The e-University will work with universities and colleges to develop, assemble and deliver a diverse range of courses aimed at individuals, companies and public organisations, both at home and overseas.

## **10.2 Research infrastructure**

Top research universities have pointed out the problem that due to the governmental system for the funding of research (research assessment exercise) they experience pressure on their research budgets (Greenaway and Hayne; London Economic). There is a fundamental problem involved in the distribution of money in the British system that has to do with the fact that the amount of money a university receives is linked to the evaluation results of the research assessment exercise. The highest level of quality an institute can receive is a 5\* rating. The problem is that many of the top-institutes have reached that level years ago. While at this moment other institutions are slowly improving their research grades they are stuck at the 5\* level. This means that in the distribution of a fixed amount of money the top institutions see their share slowly reduced. Top research universities claim that they cannot internationally compete with declining budgets. They plead that either the research assessment exercise should become more selective or that they should be allowed to charge top-up fees to their students.

### **10.3 Finance**

#### **10.3.1 Tuition fees**

The single biggest issue in English Higher Education has been the matter of top-up fees. According to a report commissioned by the Russell group (a network of the top 13 leading universities in Britain comprising Oxford, Cambridge, LSE etc....) universities should have the freedom to charge students extra tuition fees. The report (Greenaway 2000) uses six arguments for the freedom to charge extra tuition fees. First, if universities are to expand as the government wishes, only with extra sources of income can this be realised without deteriorating the quality of education. Second, if universities are to compete on a global market they need more resources. Third, since universities have different cost-structures fees should vary accordingly. Fourth, fees in this system would reflect the quality of teaching. Fifth, fee differentiation would allow universities to charge more to those students more able to pay. Sixth, top-up fees would mean greater market discipline and less need for costly regulation.

Opponents of top-up fees fear the implementation of high fees (up to £ 4,500; 7,078 €) and the exclusion of poorer students. Risks are higher for less privileged students because they are less likely to enjoy the higher career earnings secured by graduates from richer backgrounds with the same degree results. Opponents further point out that in America and Australia freeing tuition fees has led to an explosion of the fees and a drop in the overall participation in higher education, especially among less privileged students.

### **10.4 Governance**

The devolution of powers over higher education to the Scottish parliament has resulted in a constitutional battle between the Holyrood parliament and Westminster. By reintroducing student grants north of the border, the Scottish executive has abolished tuition fees in their present form and reinstated maintenance grants for poor students. (AUA-weekly Press Digests) This creates problems, as the government at Westminster wants to retain tuition fees for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Under the deal, students from Scotland would receive a much better deal than their counterparts in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - even if they were studying side-by-side at the same institution.

The changes are expected to stop short of calling for the complete abolition of tuition fees but will recommend they be replaced by a graduate contribution scheme. Scottish students will not have to pay tuition fees while at university. Instead, the executive would pay the fees and students would only begin to pay back the money once they had graduated and found employment at a minimum of

£10,000 (15,728 €) a year. It is also expected to call for maintenance grants of up to £2,000 (3,156 €) to be restored for the poorest students. The Scottish package, which would cost an estimated £60 million (95 million €) a year, would cost 10 times that if applied to England and Wales.

## 11 Issues across the countries

The descriptions presented above provide a rich overview of the major issues in public and political debates regarding higher education. 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.

This information may be used in two ways. The first use is by the reader with a particular national perspective. This reader might ask the questions: Do our national issues occur in other countries as well? and do issues pop up in other countries that might become relevant for my country? The second use is for the reader who has a broad interest in higher education (policy). (S)he want to identify the main trends and issues in European higher education. The paragraph below is intended for the second type of reader. In the overview (table 1), the issues that are identified as major issues in at least two countries are listed. For the issues that are major ones in at least four countries, some summarising comments are made. In using the table and comments, the reader has to be cautious. It is important to understand that in the different countries there are differences in the ‘tone’ of the debate, in the participating actors, and in the policy-contexts in which the debates are embedded. The descriptions presented in the sections above may help to prevent confusion which may arise because of this.

Table 1: Major issues in higher education

	Au	Dk	Fi	Fla	Fr	Ge	Nl	Sw	UK	
<b>academic staff</b>					x	x	x	x		4
<b>degree structure: bachelor/master</b>	x		x			x	x			4
<b>ICT</b>	x	x					x		x	4
<b>relation HE-industry</b>			x	x	x				x	4
<b>structure: continuing education/ III</b>		x	x	x	x					4
<b>accreditation</b>	x					x	x			3
<b>finance: funding mechanism</b>				x			x		x	3
<b>finance: student support system</b>					x	x		x		3
<b>governance: contracts</b>		x	x		x					3
<b>graduate education: graduate schools</b>		x	x					x		3
<b>research: at non-university HEIs</b>				x	x	x				3
<b>structure: mergers co-operation</b>		x		x	x					3
<b>finance: student fees</b>	x								x	2
<b>governance: student participation</b>		x						x		2
<b>participation: gender/ minority</b>								x	x	2
<b>structure: non-university sector</b>	x		x							2

In the ‘top-category’ (issues that are mentioned in four countries) there are five issues. The first issue is the renewal of academic staff. In most Western European countries the age structure of academic staff is such that within the next five to ten years a large proportion of the academic staff members will retire. In France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden the question ‘How to get and keep new academic staff’ has been put on the agenda. The issue has an impact on both teaching and research activities. Redressing the gender imbalances among academic staff is also an aspect that is discussed.

The second issue is the hot issue of last year: the bachelor master structure. Although the issue has ‘cooled down’ a little, it is still on the agenda in Austria, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. The position of the non-university institutions is a common aspect of the discussions. Should these institutions provide master programmes? and if so, Who should pay for them? These questions fuel the debate in these countries. In Germany, the relation between the old degree structure and the new structure has got significant attention; should the new structure replace the old structure or should they coexist? The latter is the current situation, but it is argued that this is a serious obstacle to the transparency of the system and ultimately to the employability of the new degree holders.

Information and communication technology is gaining weight in the national policies and debates. In the Netherlands and the UK most attention is given to institutional arrangements for promote ICT in higher education. In Austria and Denmark the discussion is more on how (much) ICT can be integrated and expanded in higher education programmes (within the existing institutional structure).

Higher education is seen as an important motor for the development of the national economies. The relation between higher education and industry is an important channel through which the communication between higher education and the economy takes place. There are two types of communication: through education (combining learning and working, practical work) and through research (knowledge transfer). In Finland, Flanders, France, and the UK knowledge transfer is an important policy issue. The communication through education is particularly an issue in France and the UK.

The last issue in the 'top-category' is again a structural one. It refers to continuing higher education and life long learning. In national as well as international debates on the future of higher education and its position in society, this issue pops up frequently. There is a lot of attention in the debates (especially in Denmark, Finland, Flanders, and France), but concrete actions in this respect are much less well developed.

Although they are missing in the 'top-category', financial issues are on the agenda in most countries. Changes in the funding mechanisms are discussed in Flanders, the Netherlands, and the UK. Changes in the student support systems have been made in France, Germany, and Sweden. There is a wide variety in student support systems in the nine higher education systems described. Countries differ in the number of students eligible for support, the level of support for each individual, and the way support is provided (as a loan, as a grant, indirectly through tax reductions or subsidised meals or transportation). In France, all of the aspects mentioned above are part of a large plan regarding the social position of students. This plan, started in 1998, was extended in 2000. In Germany and Sweden, discussions focus on the way support is provided. The function student support has in opening access to higher education to all is an important element in the policies. In Austria and the UK student fees are high on the agenda.

The position of the non-university sector versus the university sector is a structural issue we already discussed in the context of the bachelor master discussion. It is also discussed in the context of mergers or co-operation within and between institutions of both sectors (Denmark, Flanders,

France, and the Netherlands), and in the context of the research function of non-university sector institutions (Flanders, France and Germany). How to organise graduate education and the role in this of graduate schools is a topic that is closely related to the discussion on academic staff renewal. In the three Nordic countries (Finland, Denmark and Sweden) this was on the policy-agendas.

As for governance issues, there are two issues mentioned: contracts and student participation. In three countries, contracts have been part in the discussions on the relationship between the higher education institutions and (central) government. In France, the existing policy of contractualisation has been revitalised. In Denmark (universities) performance contracts were implemented by all universities. The Finnish policy regarding management by objectives can also be seen as an example of contracts in the relation between institution and the ministry. The representation of students as stakeholders in the governance structures was an issue in Denmark and Sweden.

A final issue not yet mentioned is accreditation. Although the issue is high on the agenda in only three countries (Austria, Germany and the Netherlands), it is discussed in most countries within the context of the bachelor master structure and the process following the Bologna Declaration.

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