

CONCLUSIONS & RECCOMENDATIONS

Due to Covid-19 pandemic situation other alternative ways were required to carry out the activities provided by HEREs and to ensure, also, the widest possible dissemination of information. One of the ways applied by the Albanian HEREs was that of conducting a seminar through the TV show "Auditor Arsimi" broadcasting it on RTSH channel, thus significantly increasing the possibility of watching it not only through broadcast on National TV, but also through uploading it to the 'You tube' channel.

To receive opinions / comments and suggestions from persons involved or interested in the topic 'Social dimension of HE in Albania', HERE team and the Albanian NEO made available the relevant email and facebook addresses.

The referenced materials as well as the discussions on this topic reached the following conclusions:

1. The implementation of the provisions for the 'Social dimension in HE' is no longer an optional issue. Nowadays it constitutes a key commitment of our country within the Bologna Process, as a member country of this process since 2003. Signing of the Paris Communique' in 2018 by the ministers of 48 member countries of the European Higher Education Area is the act of Albania's commitment to meet this objective. In this context, the inclusion of this objective is considered a necessity in the development strategy of HE in Albania.
2. MESY is encouraged to strengthen cooperation with other institutions, for the preparation of a database that includes students from specific categories. A good source of data that can support the development of strategic elements in this regard is the 'EUROSTUDENT survey' which is conducted in Albania. Since 2015, MESY has signed the agreement with EUROSTUDENT to implement it in Albania. The Department of Statistics at UT has been defined by MESY as the implementer of this questionnaire in all HEIs in Albania. At <https://www.eurostudent.eu/> you can find information on the data of the sixth round of EUROSTUDENT. Seventh round of this questionnaire is currently being implemented.
3. In the same line is the recommendation for HEIs, who should take measures of capacity building in HEIs of their staff, in order that this commitment to become a useful reality for HE system in Albania and most importantly for the whole society.
4. It is important that ASCAL, but also MESY must be able to set the relevant provisions regarding the social dimension in the Quality Code, in respect of 'European Quality Standards', as well as to provide a way to monitor the implementation of these standards.
5. MESY should provide the appropriate mechanisms to ensure that this commitment of the country is implemented in HEIs, which has to be supported by the mechanisms provided by the law of Higher Education, in accordance with university autonomy and in cooperation with HEIs.
6. HEIs should include the social dimension in their strategic development plans up to the level of teaching in the auditorium, making available human and financial resources and the necessary infrastructure that enables the support of all students according to the characteristics and their individualities.
7. HEIs should increase cooperation with business to enable the employment of students in their profiles at the end of their studies, and in particular in the case of those students who

belong to specific categories. In this regard, it is needed a better adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of the labor market. Also, a key element would be a better orientation of these student categories in the selection of study programs.

8. Considering the COVID-19 emergency situation which is associated with financial problems for students and their families, a more efficient and effective HE system and its management is required. It may be necessary to increase financial support for students from HEIs through various forms, ensuring their effective access and participation in education as a form of their social responsibility.

9. The cost of living of the student results in an average value of 175 Euro / month, but it is believed that the costs are higher and this is supported by field data that a large number of students are unable to cover costs with family support or resources. Others are forced to work during their schooling period. Based on this reality, it is recommended that HEIs should plan and create funds dedicated to student support, especially for those from special categories.

10. In the framework of the reform of the admission system in HE, including the expansion of opportunities for students coming from special categories, it is recommended to organize a consultation at the national level on the social dimension strategies that support the development of this dimension in the field of HE in Albania: 'Experiences, Tasks and Challenges'.

11. HEIs should be encouraged/ stimulated to take measures that facilitate the entry of students from specific categories into the labor market.

12 As an expression of the SD, HEIs are encouraged to apply criteria that support a greater involvement of students from specific categories in mobility that is realized within the programs e.g. Erasmus+ etc. In this context, HEIs are encouraged to keep data on the number of mobilities and the characteristics of their beneficiaries in the development of institutional policies related to the Social Dimension.