

EMN OECD Inform: Impact of COVID-19 on international students in EU and OECD Member States

Stanislavs Lopatinskis, EMN Latvia Expert

“Presentation of key findings”

Aim and scope of the 2nd EMN OECD Inform

Aim: To determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international students

Scope: International students – third country nationals who have applied to or have been accepted by HEIs. The Inform only focuses on full-time students

Time frame: February – June 2020, unless indicated otherwise

Managing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on admission and stay

- Legislative changes
- Guidelines to HEIs
- Delays in the application procedure for visas or residence permits
- Impact on the number of students wishing to enroll in HEI
- Health checks
- Online courses

Policy and legal changes

6 EU MS, UK and NO reported **policy and legislative changes**



Netherlands reported that HEIs were accepting TOEFL IBT Special Home Edition TEST as well as students could be admitted into HEIs without fulfilling some requirements



Czech Republic changed their admission procedures for all students – rescheduling examination dates

Some MS managed the process within existing legal and policy frameworks

Guidelines to HEI

8 EU MS and UK developed **guidelines** on the implementation of changes to national policy



United Kingdom developed updated guidelines available on the Home Office website

4 EU MS and NO reported **no change** to their national policies, **but still provided guidelines**



Italy did not change its procedures; however, the government updated the document regulating entry, residence and enrolment at HEIs for 2020/2021

Delays in the application procedure for visas or residence permits for international students

- Most of the EU MS (15) as well as UK reported **delays in their application process**
- Only four EU MS declared that they did not experience such delays between March and June (EE, ES, PT, SE)

Impact on the number of students wishing to enroll in HEI

- About ¼ reported **negative impact** (BE, ES, LT, NL, PT, SE and NO)
- About ¼ MS did not observe such negative trend (CY, EL, FI, FR, MT, SK)
- More than half of MS and UK reported that it was **too early to assess the full effects** (BE, CZ, DE, EE, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LV, LU, NL, PL, SE, SI and UK)

Measures to check the health status of students

10 EU MS have taken new measures to check the health status of international students at departure from their country of origin and / or upon arrival:

- **Health screening** (e.g. ES, FR, NL);
- **Temperature checks** (e.g. ES, MT, PT);
- **Compulsory 14-days quarantine** (e.g. EE, LT, LV);
- **In some cases result of biological test for COVID-19** (LU).

Impact on students already residing in the host country – Part 1

- Three EU MS and UK reported that they **adjusted the working time** for international students (BE, FR, IE)



France increased hours spent at work from 60% to 80% of full-time equivalent



Ireland allowed students to work maximum time (40 hours) if classes are not running

- Six EU MS reported to have put in place **funds** that could help disadvantaged students (BE, DE, FI, FR, IE, PL)
- In four EU MS similar measures were implemented by subnational administrations or HEIs (IT, LT, LV, PT)



Germany modified and extended its student loan program of 650 euro per month to all international students

Impact on students already residing in the host country – Part 2

- 9 EU MS and NO implemented **support mechanisms** for international students at local level
- In 11 EU MS and UK HEIs established **additional mechanisms** aimed to help students



University of Luxembourg took a lenient approach to the payment of accommodation costs by students



Most universities reduced the cost of accommodation, provided psychological help and the possibility to apply for a reduction in tuition fees



Measures to ensure that a residence permit would be granted or would not be withdrawn

- In 12 EU MS, students were protected under general provisions to **extend residence permits** terminating during period of COVID-19 restrictions;
- Several MS and UK introduced **specific measures** for international students.



Residence permits/visas were not withdrawn if students failed to arrive due to lockdowns or were undergoing temporary online studies



Implementation of a 'digital semester', allowing students to be granted a residence permit even where the lectures and courses were to be held online.

Admission for online courses

- Online studies introduced as an effective measure to limit physical presence.
- Granting admission for full online studies differed across MS.



The Ministry for Higher Education and Research and related agencies promoted on-line courses programme during the lockdown to attract international students



The Finnish Immigration Service granted a residence permit also to those applicants whose tuition would be carried out as “teletuition/-study”



Measures to address the impact of COVID-19 on those who graduated in 2019 and 2020

- EU MS overall did not make any specific changes – students could stay in MS under general regulations provided for by the EU Students and Researchers Directive to seek employment.



The lower salary criteria to find a job as a highly skilled migrant was extended for all recent graduates (and academic researchers) up until three years after graduation



Conclusions

- Several EU MS reported on **changes in legislation** and **guidelines** provided to HEIs;
- Majority of EU MS, NO and UK reported on **delays in the application process** for student due to closure of immigration offices and consulates;
- Number of student wishing to enroll in HEIs – ¼ of MS **negative impact**; ¼ of EU MS **no negative** trend; ½ of EU MS **too early to assess**;
- MS reported on **different forms of support** to international students – support was provided at national level as well as at local level and by HEIs;
- **Online studies and online admission** is a way for how HEIs could limited physical presence during COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your attention

Contact: stanislavs.lopatinskis@pmlp.gov.lv



Funded by the European Union's Asylum,
Migration and Integration Fund

