Outcome report:

Peer-Learning Activities

BSWE FOR 2030

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Contents

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The peer-learning activities (PLAs) in numbers

1) [Towards an inclusive EHEA by 2030](#), 16-17 February, hosted by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in collaboration with the Dutch Center for Diversity Policy (ECHO) in The Hague, Netherlands
- Attended by 30 participants
- Covering 15 EHEA countries

2) [Towards an innovative EHEA by 2030](#), 20-21 April, hosted by the Ministry of Science and Education of Croatia in Zagreb, Croatia
- Attended by 25 participants
- Covering 9 EHEA countries

3) [Towards an interconnected EHEA by 2030](#), 23 June, hosted online by the European Students' Union (ESU)
- Attended by 25 participants
- Covering 14 EHEA countries

All participant numbers above include project consortium members, speakers and participants selected through a call for applications preceding each PLA.

Rationale and objectives

During the [2020 Rome Ministerial Conference](#), ministers for higher education set a vision of building an inclusive, innovative and interconnected European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that is able to underpin a sustainable, cohesive and peaceful Europe, by 2030. To support this process, the [BWSE FOR2030](#) project organised three PLAs, bringing together higher education ministries, higher education institutions (HEIs), students and other bodies active in higher education from countries across the EHEA. Each of the three PLAs followed the theme of one of the three overarching goals outlined in the Rome Communiqué: an 1) inclusive, 2) innovative and 3) interconnected EHEA.
The purpose of the three PLAs was to:
- focus on mutual learning and exchange of practices;
- identify potential solutions for existing barriers to achieving the three overarching goals;
- gather tangible recommendations to support the development and implementation of the Bologna Process in the long term.

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PLA1: Towards an inclusive EHEA by 2030

The event and its theme

As the exchanges among participants demonstrated, there was a broad understanding of what the terms "diversity" and "inclusion" (D&I) encompass in a higher education context. Understandings referred to inequalities and inequities due to characteristics such as age, gender, race, sexual orientation and identification, and native language; scholars and students at risk and in a situation of displacement; staff and students of various socio-economic, confessional and cultural backgrounds, as well as first-generation students; students and staff with special needs or mental health issues. Other mentioned aspects related to the understanding of the inclusion term were needs arising in the context of internationalized higher education, students' and other stakeholders' involvement in governance and decision-making processes; financial inequities at various levels; and the hegemony of Western European cultural and academic norms.

Key insights and outcomes

I.   Challenges

Participants identified four clusters of underlying challenges to making D&I in higher education a reality across the EHEA:

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1) Unrepresentative representation

As expressed by participants, HEIs are expected to better reflect today's diverse societies. This expectation is also supported by the [Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA](#), which take as their starting point the need for "the composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels [to] correspond to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large in the EHEA countries" (p. 3).

Yet to date, higher education at all levels, ranging from ministries, and HEI staff and leadership, to student representations, often tends to be insufficiently inclusive and, thus, diverse. As a result, those collaboration and consultation processes that are meant to assemble diverse perspectives and ideas often exclude the experiences and viewpoints of underrepresented groups.

In some cases, the involvement of underrepresented groups in representative positions, consultation bodies and decision-making processes may be limited or even hindered entirely by factors not pertaining to higher education. This may, for example, be the case with students who need to work or have caretaking obligations, and who therefore cannot afford to invest additional time and effort into engagement activities.

Finally, another facet of unrepresentative representation is that student involvement may take on the form of a mere token measure, with students either being involved at a late stage of a

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consultation or decision-making process, or their input weighs less than the input of other stakeholders.

2) Missing sense of belonging

Participants highlighted several factors limiting the accessibility of higher education, either as a physical infrastructure or as a space to obtain knowledge and skills in the broader sense, to specific groups of people. Examples include buildings, services and resources that are not adapted to people with physical impairments, as well as staff recruitment and career assessment policies that disadvantage women and first-generation academics, for example due to performance requirements that are incompatible with caretaking duties.

As a result, institutions may - deliberately or involuntarily - depict an image of higher education as a good that is exclusive to a specific section of society. At the same time, certain groups (e.g., white male staff or students) may get the impression that D&I policies either do not concern them, or are even directed against them. Meaningful and authentic D&I efforts should, however, not aim to exclude majorities, but engage every member of a higher education community.

3) Unequal financial means

Participants highlighted existing inequalities and inequities at supra-national, national, institutional and personal levels. Quality higher education that is inclusive and accessible depends on adequate financial means, with regard to general funding of higher education, funding of different types of HEIs, the financial means of students and staff, as well as a lack of more targeted approaches to funding. Not least, student poverty and the need to work or fulfil caretaking responsibilities are factors that may influence an individual's decision or capacity to study and graduate.

4) Outdated approaches

Finally, participants concluded that one crucial obstacle to diverse and inclusive higher education is that many outdated structures, approaches and ways of thinking prevail in higher education. Many of these outdated structures, approaches and ideas manifest themselves in the challenges outlined above, such as those relating to current recruitment and career advancement schemes, or inaccessible university infrastructure, which in turn is often caused by inadequate financial means.

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This obstacle can thus be considered as underlying the three above and will, therefore, require particularly committed action.

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II.   Needs and solutions

Based on the challenge clusters outlined above, the participants formulated needs and potential solutions to tackling these challenges. Four main pathways to achieving D&I in the EHEA stand out:

1) Ensure inclusive representation, governance and leadership

In order to ensure that representation, governance and leadership structures in higher education become more reflective of contemporary, diverse societies and are based on comprehensive, authentic and inclusive partnership models, participants recommended the following:

- **Formal student representative bodies** such as students' unions should evaluate to which degree their own structures and processes are inclusive, and potentially revise their current approaches, with a view to becoming more representative of the diverse student body.
- **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** should
  - give clear mandates to, as well as support and train students to give constructive input, so as to ensure that consultation processes are effective and efficient, instead of mere token measures, at all levels and for the whole policy cycle;
  - introduce continuous professional development for staff at all levels, including leadership, on D&I issues (e.g., inclusive language in the curriculum) so as to pre-sensitise university staff to existing challenges;
  - form equality networks (e.g., on department, faculty, institutional or alliance level) to foster the sharing of experiences and good practice.
- **All key stakeholders in higher education** seeking the input of students should reach out to formal and informal students' associations, groups or platforms and students in general, so as to ensure the voice of under- and unrepresented groups is heard, without bypassing formal representation structures.

2) Build and maintain a sense of community and belonging

Participants recommended the following steps, with a view to facilitating a common sense of community and belonging among all members of an HEI's community, based on widely shared values and trust:

- **HEIs** should
  - review which standards, values and role models are communicated through campuses (e.g., statues, plaques), curricula (e.g., literature lists) and other institutional communications (e.g., the website and brochures) and seek to develop inclusive depictions of higher education, in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as students and civil society;

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- o ensure that their physical and online, as well as educational, social and other facilities, services and resources are accessible to all members of the university community (e.g., wheelchair-friendly toilets, learning materials that are affordable and adaptable to audio-visual impairments), and adapted to the size of the staff and study bodies (i.e., through sufficiently funded and staffed services);
- o create clearly defined and widely visible opportunities, spaces and processes for staff and students to express support needs (e.g., through easily accessible and widely known services), and foster individuals' capacities to grasp these opportunities (e.g., through targeted training);
- o provide holistic support to students throughout their studies' "life cycle", including preparation for the labour market and with a special focus on the first 100 days so as to support a sense of belonging and reduce drop-out rates in the long term;
- o revise staff recruitment and career assessment policies and procedures, with a view to ensuring that underrepresented groups have an equitable chance at following an academic career, for example through the introduction of family-friendly work models, the provision of targeted information and career guidance services, and an open discussion on the meaning of "excellence" in academia and to which degree current understandings of this term are still relevant.
- **National and supra-national governance bodies** should seek to jointly review approaches to academic careers and assessment **in collaboration with relevant stakeholders** such as HEIs and students.

3) Enhance financial equity

In order to reduce existing financial inequalities and inequities at the national and international level, as well as within and between HEIs, and in particular with regard to students, participants suggested the following actions:

- **National governments** should explore solutions to ease the financial burden on students, for example by
  - o revising taxation systems with regard to marginal employment (i.e., so-called mini jobs);
  - o exploring options to reduce tuition fees.
- **National, regional and local governments and HEIs** should **jointly**
  - o ensure easily accessible and clear information about available grants and loan schemes;
  - o facilitate equitable access to student dorms and housing;
  - o ensure adequate and sustainable funding streams to people, activities, infrastructure and other resources that support D&I in higher education with a long-term view, so as to ensure that funding decisions are not overly dependent on the preferences and views of individual leadership or governance bodies;
  - o explore other means of safeguarding independent action by civil engagement bodies, for example by diversifying funding options for student initiatives.

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4) Rethink old approaches

Finally, participants concluded that a cultural shift was needed to allow for existing challenges to D&I to be addressed in their full complexity, and not in isolation. In order to support such a broad-scale re-thinking, the following steps were recommended:

- **HEIs should**
  - establish streamlined processes to continuously monitor and evaluate whether their priorities, strategies, structures, frameworks and procedures (still) foster D&I;
  - consider how to engage their staff in this process, in a way that keeps overall workloads at a reasonable level (e.g., by comprehensively evaluating the different activities and their fitness for purpose, to free time for potential additional efforts aimed at enhancing D&I).
- **National governments and HEIs** should jointly explore how to introduce (more) flexible learning paths, including recognition of prior and extra-curricular learning.
- **All key stakeholders in education** should jointly
  - empower student agency at the individual level by facilitating opportunities for students to get engaged as representatives, mentors and teachers, with due acknowledgment and rewards (e.g., financial compensation, ECTS);
  - rethink, in an evidence-based manner, which learning goals and outcomes should result from higher education, with a view to ensuring that future graduates are readily equipped for the labour market, active and informed citizenship, lifelong learning, and any global challenges the presence or future might hold (e.g., by exploring ways to establish compassionate curricula that adequately represent values such as labour and civil rights). The conclusions from these deliberations also need to be reflected in how education is delivered (e.g., through more student-centred learning and teaching) and future approaches to collaborative structures (e.g., through closer ties between higher education and civil society).

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PLA2: Towards an innovative EHEA by 2030

The event and its theme

In the event, the term "innovation" was approached as both an outcome and a process, meaning both 1) approaches and structures through which higher education can contribute to innovation or innovative products (e.g., through research projects and collaboration with the business sector), and 2) innovative methods and practices in higher education itself (e.g., through innovative pedagogies such as service or project-based learning, living labs, hybrid approaches, flexible learning paths). This latter point also concerns all phases and aspects of the student life-cycle (e.g., enrolment, progression, assessment, recognition, certification) as well as continuous professional development and career paths of higher education staff.

Key insights and outcomes

Through several interactive sessions, participants generally defined the term "innovation" as both the process of a self-reflection on what can be done better, as well as the outcome of this process. It embodies disruption, transformation, risk taking, as well as out-of-the-box and forward thinking. Innovation thus requires openness, agility and adaptability.

Participants stressed that innovation ought to be a means and not an end in itself. Higher education learning and teaching should be innovated with a view to fostering context-sensitive knowledge and a comprehensive set of skills (e.g., soft, language, digital) and competences among learners that

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allow them to be innovative thinkers and responsible citizens of the world. Innovation should ultimately also serve all higher education stakeholders and society at large and, accordingly, depends on collaboration (locally, regionally, nationally and internationally) and the inclusion of ethical considerations. Such an approach to innovation would also help ensure that its outcomes are not in breach of higher education's responsibility to contribute to a sustainable, inclusive and just society.

I.   Challenges, needs and solutions

Through critical self-reflection, constructive dialogue and group work, participants eventually identified four underlying challenges to innovation in the EHEA. Based on these challenges, the participants then formulated needs and potential solutions to tackling the challenges. Many of the suggested measures are interlinked, due to the complexity of the raised issues:

1) Resources
How to ensure higher education has adequate and sustainable resources that enable the sector to be innovative and contribute to continuous innovation?

Participants agreed that adequate resourcing, established with a long-term perspective in mind, is needed to ensure that higher education can fulfil its responsibility to provide innovative education and be a valuable member of innovation ecosystems. Nevertheless, it is often lacking, hence stifling innovation efforts. Participants highlighted that this challenge referred to all types of resources, including financial (e.g., project and institutional/core funding), human (e.g., staff, external experts), material (e.g., facilities, physical and digital infrastructure) and immaterial (e.g., availability of time for experimentation, continuous professional development, skills training) resources.

To address this challenge, participants suggested that HEIs should explore ways to foster more open, collaborative and cross-cutting approaches within and outside the institution. This would help to build competence, trust, solidarity and accountability and hence potentially lead to fairer, more equitable funding of innovation processes (e.g., with regard to funding of STEM projects in comparison to other fields). In practice, this means that institutions should
- foster more transdisciplinary approaches and transversal skills among their teachers and students; among other benefits, this would potentially enable project teams to write more convincing project proposals and communicate more effectively with other stakeholders (e.g., the public) about ongoing projects;
- establish frameworks for more teamwork across different staff categories (including academic and administrative staff), especially in the context of projects;
- always explore the full range of potential funding sources (e.g., foundations, crowd-funding, companies);
- continuously engage relevant stakeholders at the national, regional and local level (e.g., governments, businesses, media), as they may constitute or be connected to potential funding sources.

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In addition, the higher education sector and all its members

- should embrace the use of open science and open-source materials, so as to even out funding inequalities (e.g., between countries or regions) and ensure that innovation processes and outcomes are as widely accessible as possible;
- set up fair and transparent policies and processes for funding, budgeting and impact assessment in a way that brings together all relevant stakeholders.

2) Stakeholder engagement
How to ensure meaningful and authentic engagement of all key stakeholders in innovation processes?

Participants found that innovation depends on collaboration and the inclusion of relevant perspectives and new ideas, and therefore on the involvement of stakeholders (e.g., students, the business sector, the general public, etc. depending on the context). These stakeholders ought to be approached as partners in, not recipients of innovation. In addition, engaging stakeholders in innovation processes and conversations around these processes is a necessary pre-condition for raising public awareness of existing challenges, creating trust in the approaches to tackling these challenges and potentially increasing buy-in into the outcomes and benefits of innovation processes. Finally, the active engagement of relevant stakeholders is needed to safeguard a transparent and socially responsible approach to innovation, with the greater good of society in mind.

Current innovation approaches, however, do not always reflect these considerations, for example by excluding relevant stakeholder groups from the conversation around innovation, by approaching stakeholder engagement as a box-ticking exercise, by failing to concisely and transparently communicate current challenges and developments to stakeholders like the general public, or by not considering the broader, long-term impact of innovation products and processes on society at large.
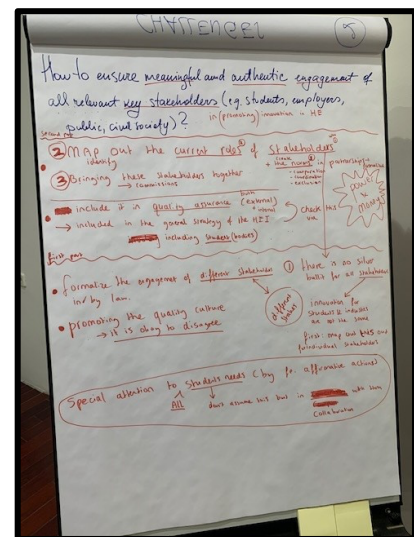
As a first step in tackling this challenge, participants highlighted the need to formalise stakeholder engagement as a responsibility of higher education, including a definition of who may generally be considered a key stakeholder. At the national/regional level, this would mean enshrining stakeholder engagement in law, whereas at the institutional level this would translate into including stakeholder engagement in the overarching institutional strategy and/or other specific strategies as relevant. In addition, consideration of stakeholder engagement should be included in both internal and external quality assurance processes.

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Further, participants stressed that different stakeholders have different stakes, experiences, perspectives and needs. This means that there is no one-size-fits-all approach for stakeholder engagement. Therefore, participants recommended that HEIs should

- always start processes of stakeholder engagement by mapping out the different stakeholder groups and how they relate to the innovation process;
- gather all identified stakeholders in the form of commissions with formalised rules of procedure, including rules for cooperation, coordination and potential exclusion of commission members;
- set up mechanisms and *modi operandi* within these commissions that promote a culture of open debate, focused on quality enhancement and with a safe space for potential disagreement.

Finally, participants found that students should always be considered the primary group of stakeholders and therefore be actively engaged as partners in innovation. This special role of students should also be formalised in legal frameworks, institutional strategies and through quality assurance.

3) Encouragement
How to encourage innovative methods and thinking in higher education among teachers and learners?

As outlined above under challenge no. 1 "Resources", teachers and learners often lack the necessary resources to invest in innovating their teaching and learning processes, not least time and space for reflection and experimentation. In addition, explicit incentives, such as recognition and rewards for teachers and learners to proactively innovate (e.g., in curriculum design, teaching and learning methods, assessment), are often lacking entirely or not embedded in a holistic and formalised manner. As a result, many teachers and learners have little reason to invest their time and energy in the design, implementation and evaluation of complex innovative approaches such as, e.g., transdisciplinarity, plastic curriculum design, or continuous training for teaching staff and life-long learning.

Another facet of this challenge can be a high degree of risk aversion and resistance to change among members of an institutional community, ranging from the student to the leadership level. This point is also connected with challenge no. 4 below.

Participants concluded that, in order to encourage innovative approaches, experimentation and risk-taking among teachers and learners, HEIs should

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- create and promote platforms, processes and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and staff exchanges among teachers, so as to foster the further spread and development of innovative thinking and new practices;
- facilitate such exchanges especially across disciplines and promote transdisciplinary approaches (e.g., in staff training, curriculum design);
- establish at the same time policies and processes for risk assessment preceding the implementation of new methods or formats, so as to not jeopardise the students' learning;
- allow for more flexible formats (e.g., fully digital, hybrid) and teaching hours, since the classic lecture hall and 45 or 90-minute session do not create optimal teaching and learning conditions for all pedagogies;
- allow for alternative learning pathways for students;
- rethink, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders and students in particular, how learning outcomes are assessed, including how learning progress is measured, how to assess progress in the long term, as well as potential intangible learning outcomes;
- establish clear and well-communicated incentives for teachers to innovate (e.g., teachers piloting new pedagogies, seeking out continuous professional training), in the form of processes for recognising innovation efforts and rewards for achievements.

4) Flexibility vs regulation

How to balance the need for flexibility and experimentation with the need for frameworks and regulations that ensure accountability and quality?

Participants observed that the flexibility and experimentation that is required for innovation to happen, and which might in their very nature entail erring, may sometimes be perceived as jeopardising the regulations and frameworks that are meant to ensure that final outcomes of innovation are always geared towards quality and accountability (e.g., quality assurance, curricula, assessment frameworks, enrolment practices). Looking at the matter from another angle, participants highlighted that frameworks and regulations are occasionally overly rigid and bureaucratic, thus stifling flexibility and experimentation. Such situations may ultimately limit the fitness-for-purpose of those regulations and frameworks since they reduce the capacity of higher education to fulfil its mission to foster innovation in and through their activities.

To overcome this challenge, participants stressed that HEIs should
- as an initial step define what the purpose of the provided education ought to be (e.g., with regard to desired learning outcomes, graduate attributes, contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, etc.);
- establish and promote a culture of trust, quality and accountability instead of one of responsiveness to top-down regulation, including
  - context-sensitive, self-steered mechanisms for self- and external assessment;
  - establish closer ties between internal and external quality assurance;
- complement teacher training with evaluation of the skills teachers have, so as to allow for a personalisation of training needs;

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- embed flexibility in the design of entirely new programmes, which will allow for swift, unbureaucratic adjustment in case of erring;
- maintain a continuous discussion with all relevant stakeholders (e.g., in the above-mentioned commissions) on whether current outcomes of education and innovation, and if performance indicators are still relevant.

PLA3: Towards an interconnected EHEA by 2030

The event and its theme

Which 3 keywords represent your understanding of the term "interconnectivity" in European higher education?

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In the event, the concept of an interconnected EHEA was addressed and discussed with a focus on the following aspects: physical and virtual student and staff mobility; cross-border collaboration, including in the context of accreditation and quality assurance; and shared frameworks and tools. The event aimed to maximise opportunities for participants to share their own understanding of and experiences with interconnectivity in European higher education in collaborative, interactive formats.
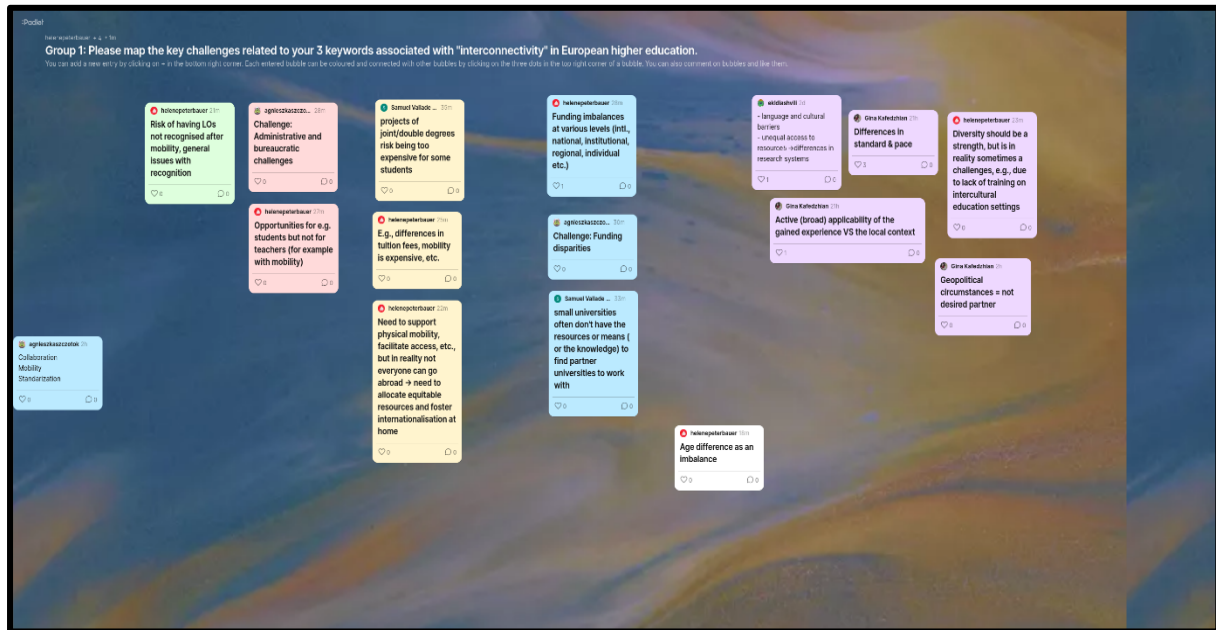
I.   Challenges

Participants eventually identified four underlying challenges to interconnectivity in the EHEA:

1) Equity

In the course of the discussions, participants raised various examples of a lack of equity preventing true, i.e. balanced interconnectivity across the EHEA. This lack of equity concerns several levels and includes skills, resource, access and geographical inequities. At the individual level, such inequities may, for example, take the form of individuals lacking the financial means to take advantage of physical mobility opportunities, or the digital skills or resources to engage in virtual mobility. At the institutional level, inequities may materialise in the form of a lack of administrative capacity or pre-existing networks that would enable access to further networking opportunities or platforms. An often-encountered inequity at the national or international level is unequal mobility streams and invitations to collaborate in projects, which may leave some regions or even entire countries, particularly in the South-East, overlooked.

2) Diversity

Participants stressed that the diversity of the EHEA, its higher education systems and institutions should be seen as a strength, but the day-to-day practice in higher education renders it a challenge all too often when moving, operating or collaborating across systems. These challenges can range from language and cultural barriers to differences in legislative frameworks, standards (e.g., in accreditation, programmes, qualifications) and academic calendars.

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3) Complexity

A related challenge to the one outlined above is the complexity of the various systems and frameworks that make up the EHEA. An example illustrating this point are joint programmes and the administrative challenges that may prevent more such programmes from being offered. Participants highlighted that the European approach for the quality assurance of joint programmes remains under-used by HEIs, since most EHEA countries have yet to create a national framework that renders its application a practical possibility. This forces many HEIs to either apply two different quality assurance or accreditation processes, or to refrain from establishing a joint programme altogether in order to avoid the bureaucratic hassle this entails.

4) Quality

Finally, participants stressed that lack of trust in the quality or comparability of higher education provided in another EHEA country remains a challenge, leading for example to remaining uncertainty among mobile learners whether their qualifications or study periods from abroad will be recognised. The proliferation of diploma mills and other entities engaging in education fraud has not helped to alleviate this underlying lack of trust. However, the EHEA and other international bodies such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe have also provided crucial transparency tools and common frameworks (e.g., qualifications frameworks, ESG, Lisbon Recognition Convention) that have driven the harmonisation of the EHEA and allow national authorities, institutions and individuals to assure themselves of the quality and comparability of the education provided in another country. Yet not all countries are exploiting the full potential of these tools and frameworks.

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II.   Needs and solutions

Based on the challenges outlined above, the participants formulated needs and potential solutions to tackling them, suggesting that **HEIs**

- seek appropriate cooperation with external stakeholders, such as enterprises, civil society and their local communities;
- integrate internationalisation at home in their curriculum design and teacher training, in order to support their students in obtaining vital intercultural competences, both in preparation for a potential upcoming mobility period and as a complementary offer to physical and virtual mobility, in close consultation with students;
- explore options for offering more blended mobility, so as to support a broader range of students in taking advantage of mobility opportunities.

With regard to **national governments**, participants suggested that they

- explore options to ensure an equitable distribution of financial and other resources across HEIs, thus enabling all institutions to engage in opportunities to connect with peers nationally and internationally;
- (re)invigorate efforts to align their national legislation, standards and systems with

already existing European tools, frameworks and approaches;

- enhance efforts to communicate options to engage internationally (e.g., in the form of projects and mobility programmes) to HEIs and their staff and students;
- make it a national priority to coordinate the implementation of these tools, frameworks and approaches across the higher education system, in close collaboration and consultation with relevant stakeholders, including HEIs and students;
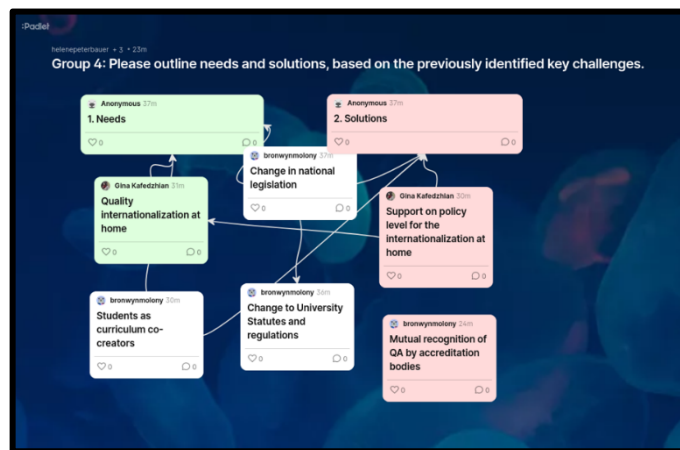
With regard to the **EHEA**, participants suggested that policy-makers and other decision-takers within it

- continue and, where possible and useful, enhance efforts to monitor and support the implementation of existing Bologna and other tools that help to interconnect the EHEA;
- coordinate efforts to implement these tools at the international and national levels, with the objective of eliminating redundancies across tools, systems and approaches;
- maintain an open, outward-looking perspective, seeking cooperation with and inspiration from higher education systems outside the EHEA, especially with regard to projects and mobility programmes.

Participant feedback

After each PLA, the participants were invited to fill in a short feedback survey on the organisation and programme of the event. Of the 80 participants that attended the PLAs, 29 took part in the surveys, the results of which are summarised below:

Organisation and venue
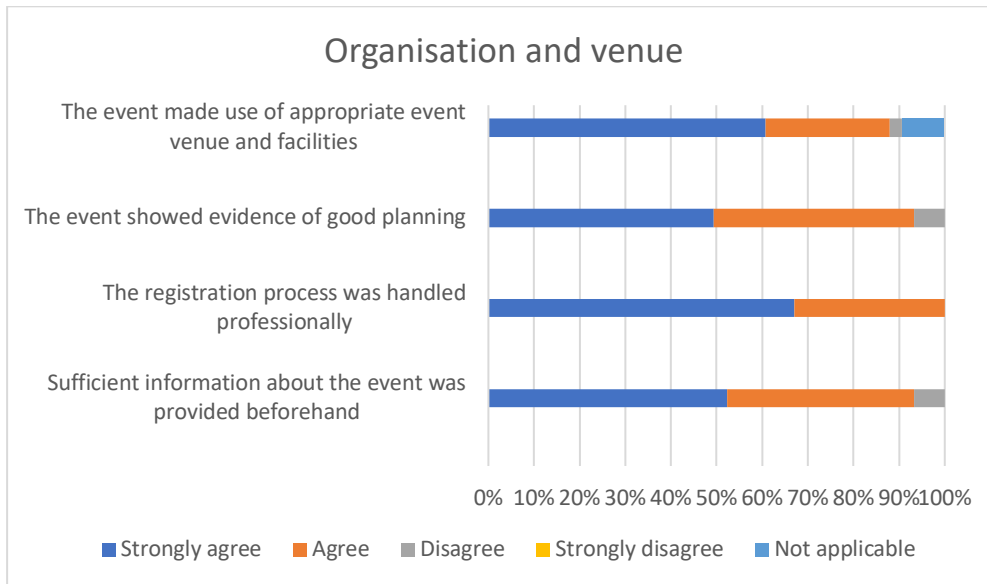
The survey results indicate overall satisfaction with the event organisation, the materials, resources and equipment used, and the programme. Participants particularly appreciated the diversity of sessions, the opportunity to meet peers from across the EHEA, and the content of the PLAs.

Materials and equipment

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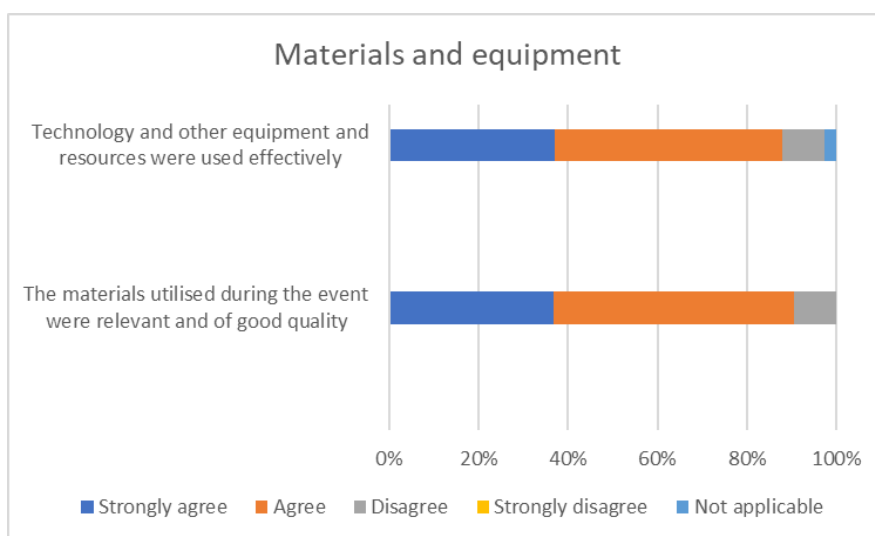
The results of the feedback surveys on PLA1 and 2 were taken into consideration in the planning of PLAs 2 and 3, respectively. As points for improvement, the participants of PLAs 1 and 2 suggested that sessions should be shorter, and that more time should be given to interactive sessions and less to presentations. This feedback was particularly taken into account by the project consortium when planning the third PLA, which was shorter than the preceding two PLAs and only had very brief presentations (max. 5 minutes each) functioning as discussion prompts. Survey participants of this last PLA, however, advised that the event could have been a bit longer, in order to allow for more in-depth discussions and presentations. For any potential future projects and PLAs, the project consortium will thus aim to strike a happy medium in the event length.

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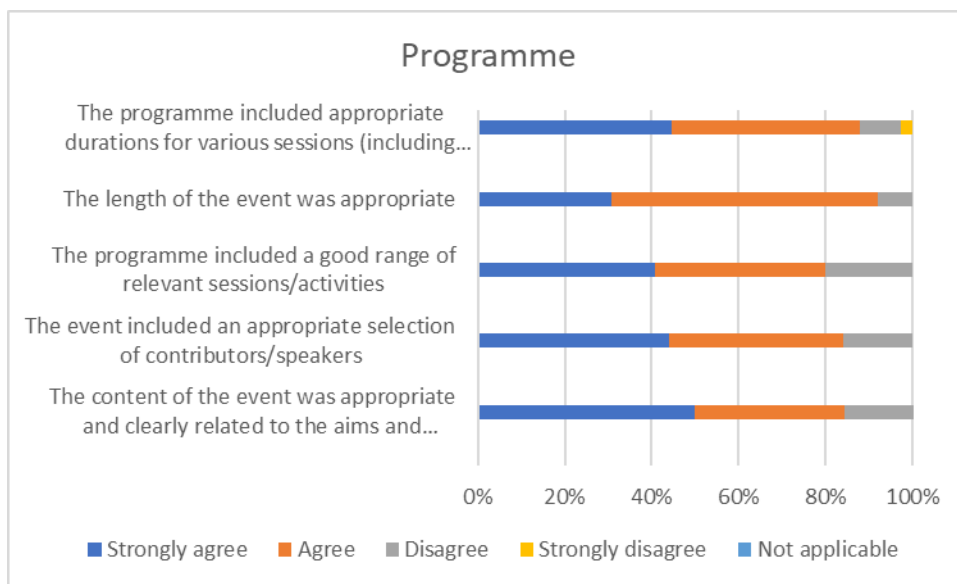
Annex: PLA programmes

PLA1: Towards an inclusive EHEA by 2030

Day 1 – 16/02/2023	
09.00 – 10.15	**Session 1 : Introduction** *Goal: Getting to know each other.*
09.00 - 09.15	**Arrivals and registration**
09.15 - 09.20	**1.1 Welcome by Helene Peterbauer (EUA) and Nuria Portero (ESU)** **Helene Peterbauer** is a Policy Analyst at the European University Association's (EUA) Institutional Development Unit, with a particular focus on learning and teaching as well as academic recognition. Prior to joining EUA, Helene worked as pre-doc assistant and lecturer at the University of Vienna in Austria. **Nuria Portero** is a Project Officer and Researcher at the European Students' Union (ESU). Her work is particulary focused on the integration of Social Dimension in Higher Education in Europe, and the better implementation of the Bologna Process. Nuria has also worked in the European Parliament, and in an EU agency.
09.20 – 09.25	**1.2 Welcome by Jonas Westhoek on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (host of this first PLA)**
09.25 – 10.15	**1.3 Opening and introduction of participants – by Mary Tupan-Wenno and Annejet Lont (ECHO)** Brief explanation of the program followed by an introduction: Where did your journey, both personal and professional, with regard to the topic of inclusion begin? **Mary Tupan-Wenno** and **Annejet Lont** both work for ECHO, Expertise Center Diversity Policy, a non-profit organization focused on Diversity and Inclusion in (higher) education and the labor marked with a specific focus on cultural diversity, emphasizing strength instead of deficiency.
10.15 – 10.45	**Coffee break**
10.45 – 14.15	**Session 2: Inclusion** *Goal: What does inclusion mean in the context of higher education? Creating a shared language and exchanging frameworks and concepts.*
10.45 – 11.45	**2.1 Expert reading** **Zakia Essanhaji** is a PhD candidate and researcher at the Department of Sociology of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the politics of diversity in Dutch academia and in knowledge production more generally (examples of her

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	work: 1, 2). In doing so, she studies the different problems that diversity can present in and across universities and how diversity policies, which may aim to tackle these problems, may end up reproducing them. There will be room for questions from the participants.
11.45 – 12.30	**Lunch break**
12.30 – 13.15	**2.2 Diversity and inclusion frameworks and concepts by Mary Tupan-Wenno and Annejet Lont (ECHO)** An introduction to the differences between diversity, inclusion and exclusion in policy, approaches and practices, followed by an interactive conversation.
13.15 – 14.15	**2.3 Workshop fishbowl dialogue by Mary Tupan-Wenno and Annejet Lont (ECHO)** A dialogue to discuss the need to embed inclusion in education, as well as practice in inclusive communication skills.
14.15 – 14.45	**Coffee break**
14.45 – 17.30	**Session 3: Bringing inclusive education to the next level** *Goal: Which policies for inclusive education are already in place in Europe, and for whom? Creating ideas for one's own context.*
14.45 - 15.30	**3.1 Panel on good practice in the Netherlands: Students-4-Students (S4S) campaign – Khaled Tamimy and Marette Ebert, led by Mary Tupan-Wenno** Both a student and staffmember from different higher education institutions where projects from the S4S campaign (for a short impression about the campaign, see this video) took place, will discuss why it is necessary to develop and implement social inclusion together with students.
15.30 - 16.15	**3.2 World Café exercise by Mary Tupan-Wenno and Annejet Lont (ECHO)** After hearing the example from the Netherlands, a brainstorm will follow to get a sense and understanding of different diversity and inclusion policies and good practices in Europe.
16.15 – 17.15	**3.3 The inclusivity of the Bologna Process by Horia Onița and Nuria Portero (ESU)** This interactive session sets the scene for Day 2 of the event by inviting participants to identify and discuss national and European policies that support – or hinder – inclusive higher education.
17.15 – 17.30	**End-of-day reflections by Helene Peterbauer (EUA)**

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Day 2 – 17/02/2023	
09.00 – 12.30	**Session 4: Outcomes** *Goal: Outcomes and policy recommendations.*
09.00 – 09.05	**Opening by Helene Peterbauer (EUA)**
09.05 – 10.00	**4.1 Interactive expert readings by Caroline Sundberg (Universities South Sweden) and Horia Onița (ESU), chaired by Helene Peterbauer (EUA)** In this session, PLA participants will learn more about the context and rationale behind the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, and discuss which steps are still needed to turn the text into reality. **Caroline Sundberg** is a former Vice President of the European Students' Union (ESU) and currently the Brussels representative at the Universities South Sweden Brussels Office. During her time as ESU Vice President, Caroline was involved in the creation of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA. **Horia Onița** is Vice President of the European Students' Union (ESU), where he works on Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Europe, represents ESU as co-chair of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Working Group on Social Dimension, and follows EU developments on education funding and monitoring through National Recovery and Resilience Plans and the European Semester. Selected participants have received the Principles and Guidelines ahead of the event, so to enable them to actively contribute to the discussion.
10.00 – 11.00	**4.2 Think Tank exercise by Mary Tupan-Wenno and Annejet Lont (ECHO)** A brainstorm activity to develop ideas for policy improvement/development at the institutional, national and EHEA level that support inclusion of marginalised perspectives and voices.
11.00 – 11.30	**Coffee break**
11.30 – 12.30	**4.3 Towards shared recommendations by EUA/ESU/ECHO** In this session, participants will build upon the input from the previous Think Tank exercise to work towards a shared vision for the policy recommendations.
12.30 – 12.45	**Wrap-up and final reflections by Helene Peterbauer (EUA)**
12.45 – 13.30	**Lunch**
13.30 – 15.30	*BWSE FOR2030 project consortium meeting (upon separate invitation)*

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PLA2: Towards an innovative EHEA by 2030

Day 1 – Thursday, 20/04/2023	
09.00 - 09.30	**Welcome and Registration**
09.30 – 09.45	**Opening** Introduction of the BWSE FOR2030 project, PLA programme and participants. - **Dijana Mandić**, Director General for Higher Education, Ministry of Science and Education of Croatia - **Helene Peterbauer**, European University Association (EUA) - **Katrina Sproģe**, European Students' Union (ESU) Facilitated by Ana Jerković, Ministry of Science and Education Croatia
09.45 - 10.00	**Tour de Table** The participants will be kindly asked to briefly (max. 1 minute) share their own personal and professional experiences with innovation.
10.00 – 11.00	**Keynote Speeches** - **Pauline Ravinet**, Policy Officer, DG EAC, European Commission about how innovation is addressed in the European Strategy for Universities - **Lidija Tepeš Golubić, Zagreb University of Applied Sciences, European Network of Innovative Higher Education Institutions – ENIHEI** on the Recommendations on Innovation in European Higher Education **Q&A**
11.00 – 11.30	**Coffee Break**
11.30 – 12.30	**Innovation in Higher Education – the Digital Era and New Skills** Croatian examples and new perspectives on the usage of IT in higher education: - **Predrag Pale, Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, University of Zagreb –** Innovation and ICT in Higher Education, Member of the educational technology research group at the University of Zagreb whose interests are related to using ICT in education. - **Tihomir Markulin, CARNET – Projects e-Universities and BrAIn** - Croatian academic and research network – CARNET implements the e-Universities and BrAIn projects with the aim of digital transformation of higher education in Croatia as well as implementation of artificial intelligence into the higher education system. - **Berta Paz Lourido, Director of European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education, President of ApSU Association, Universitat de les Illes Balears, Spain and Alvaro Ribeiro, European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education -** Service-Learning (SL) as an Innovative Pedagogy

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	Q&A
12.30 – 13.30	**Lunch break**
13.30 – 14.30	**Innovation of the Bologna Process and how to Foster Innovation** In this session, participants will be asked to share information about and experience with policies for innovative education formats that are in place in their country/context, followed by a discussion about the challenges and opportunities to implement innovation in the higher education system across the EHEA. The focus will be particularly on: - AI / digitalization in Higher Education - Flexible Learning Paths - Open science Facilitated by Helene Peterbauer, European University Association (EUA)
14.30–15.00	**Transfer to site visit**
15.00–16.00	**Site visit – Company Rimac Automobili (part of Bugatti Rimac within the Rimac Group)** Rimac Automobili is a technology powerhouse manufacturing electric hypercars and providing full technology solutions to global automotive manufacturers. Along with the visit to the premises, we will hear the concept behind this successful business and vision on how to connect education, science, technology and innovation. The company employs numerous engineers who acquired their knowledge at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture of Zagreb and the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology of Osijek, who developed study programs and a long-term cooperation with the company as a result of smart specialization and innovative approach to teaching and learning.
16.00–16.15	**Closing of Day 1**
16.15–16.45	**Transfer to Bus Station**
	Free time
19.00	**Visit to the Museum of Illusions, Ilica 72** The Museum of Illusions was founded by two Croatians and their company Metamorfoza in 2015, with the goal of edutainment, offering visitors a mix of education and entertainment, interactive and photogenic exhibits and rooms of illusion. It has expanded rapidly, operating at 35 locations around the world, including Toronto, New York, Dubai, Chicago, Athens, Vienna, Paris, Madrid, Istanbul etc. It has become the largest chain of private museums in the world. Combining education and entertainment proved to be a success for students,

	adventurers and young people by challenging their mind, logic and creative thinking as well as attracting them to culture.

Day 2 – Friday, 21/04/2023	
09.00 – 09.30	**Welcome Coffee**
09.40 – 10.15	**Building links between business, research and academia** - **Prof Nikola Godinović phD, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture (FESB), University of Split -** International Cooperation of FESB and CERN – the European Organization for Nuclear Research. As a result of the cooperation between FESB with CERN, more than 1,100 scientific papers have been published, many doctorates were obtained, and the Faculty started designing chips for the new generation of detectors in CERN. - **Prof Danijel Topić, Vice-Dean for Teaching, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Information Technology (FERIT), University of Osijek -** FERIT: Innovative Study Programs based on the needs of industry **Q&A** Facilitated by Ana Jerković, Ministry of Science and Education Croatia
10.15 – 11.15	**Think Tank – Bringing innovative education to the next level** A brainstorm activity to develop ideas for policy improvement and development at the institutional, national and EHEA level, with the aim to encourage and support innovation in higher education. Faciliated by Katrīna Sproǵe (ESU) and Helene Peterbauer (EUA)
11.15 – 11.45	**Coffee break**
11.45 – 12.45	**Towards shared recommendations** In this session, participants will build upon the input from the previous Think Tank exercise to work towards a shared vision for the policy recommendations. Facilitated by Helene Peterbauer (EUA)
12.45 – 13.00	**Wrap-up and Final Reflections**
13.00 – 14.00	**Lunch**
14.00 – 15.00	***BWSE FOR2030 project consortium meeting (upon separate invitation)***

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PLA3: Towards an interconnected EHEA by 2030

Friday, 23rd June 2023	09.45h – 14.30h CEST	Online		
09.45 – 10.00	Room is open	**Mentimeter audience poll**
10.00 – 10.15	**Welcome & Introduction** **Helene PETERBAUER**, Policy Analyst, EUA **Nuria PORTERO**, Project Coordinator, ESU
10.15 – 10.30	**Tour de table**
10.30 – 10.50	**Interconnected EHEA by 2030** Setting the scene: what do we understand by 'interconnected' EHEA? Perspectives from students, universities, and other institutions. **Katrīna SPROĢĒ**, Vice-president, ESU **Helene PETERBAUER**, Policy Analyst, EUA **Daliborka LUKETIĆ**, Associate Professor, University of Zadar, Croatia Moderator: **Nuria PORTERO, ESU**
10.50 – 11.00	**Pocket of Inspiration I: Diana Soares, Universidade Católica Portuguesa about Learning Innovation Labs** A short presentation by a participant selected through the call for applications about a particular approach to interconnectivity in higher education, followed by Q&A. Moderator: **Nuria PORTERO, ESU**
11.00 – 11.50	**Carving out the challenges** Participants will be invited to identify key challenges associated with an interconnected EHEA. Moderator: **Helene PETERBAUER, EUA**
11.50 – 12.20	**Break**
12.20 – 12.30	**Pocket of Inspiration II: Liv Teresa Muth, Ghent University about quality assurance and interconnectivity** A short presentation by a participant selected through the call for applications about a particular approach to interconnectivity in higher education, followed by Q&A. Moderator: **Louis BRAU, ESU**

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12.30 – 13.10	**Finding solutions** Based on the previously identified key challenges, participants will outline needs and solutions to achieving an interconnected EHEA. Moderator: **Louis BRAU, ESU**
13.10 – 13.25	**Break**
13.25 – 14.20	**Policy Recommendations** An open, facilitated discussion with participants on how to formulate policy recommendations geared towards fostering an interconnected EHEA by 2030. Moderator: **Katrīna SPROĢÉ, ESU**
14.20 – 14.30	**Final Remarks** **Helene PETERBAUER,** EUA

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