

Higher Education Institutions and Regions

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Outline

1. HEIs and regional development
2. Regional disparities in EU higher education
3. The concept of regional engagement
4. Challenge to regional convergence and policy responses
5. EU cohesion policy and HEI regional engagement
6. Other issues

HEIs and regional development

Regional relevance of higher education:

- HEIs are critical for EU economic competitiveness and sustainable development
- Important contribution to regional competitiveness and towards achieving the Lisbon strategy goals at regional level
- Complementarity in support between:
 - reforms in education and training systems
 - EU policies (R&D, innovation, cohesion)

EU higher education policy

- Lisbon agenda and HE systems reforms:
 - Bologna process (EQF, EUROPASS, ECTS, ENQA)
- EU cooperation in higher education (OMC)
- EU programmes (student mobility)
 - Tempus
 - Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus
- European Research Area
 - FP7 “People” Programme – “Industry Academia” Action
- Other means of support:
 - CIP, Structural Funds, EIB

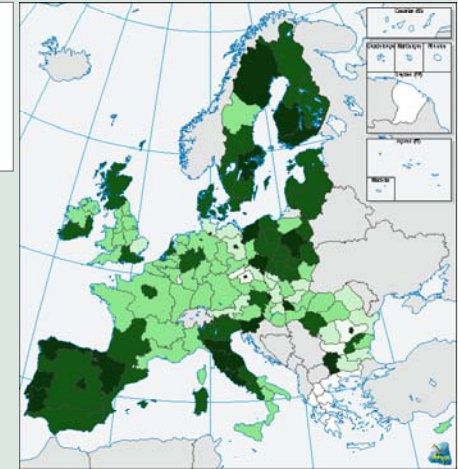
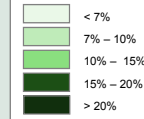
Regional disparities in EU higher education

- Substantial differences in educational attainment levels and research outputs across the EU-27
- Heightened variations at regional level compared to national level due to significant disparities within MSs.
- Reflects differences in:
 - socioeconomic development levels
 - intra-EU mobility (“brain drain”)
 - agglomeration effects (capital cities, strong regional HEIs)
- Difficult to separate HEI-related RTDI from other sources, hence focus on educational data

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Concentration of tertiary students

Tertiary education students (ISCED 5 and 6) as a percentage of all pupils and students by NUTS level 1 regions, 2001/02

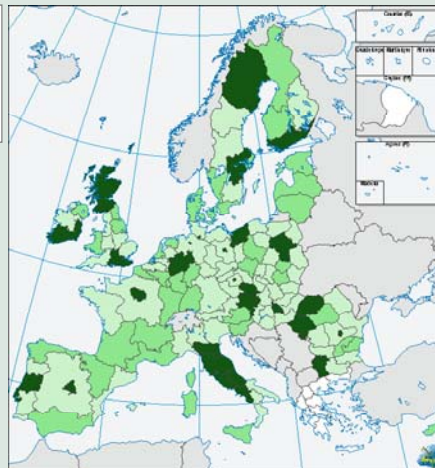
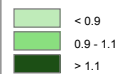


Source: UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT and population statistics

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Student population density

Ratio of the proportion of tertiary education students (ISCED 5 and 6) to the proportion of the population by NUTS level 1 regions, 2001/02



Source: UNESCO-UIS/OECD/EUROSTAT and population statistics

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EU / US education gap (1)

Population aged 25-64 with tertiary education (2005)

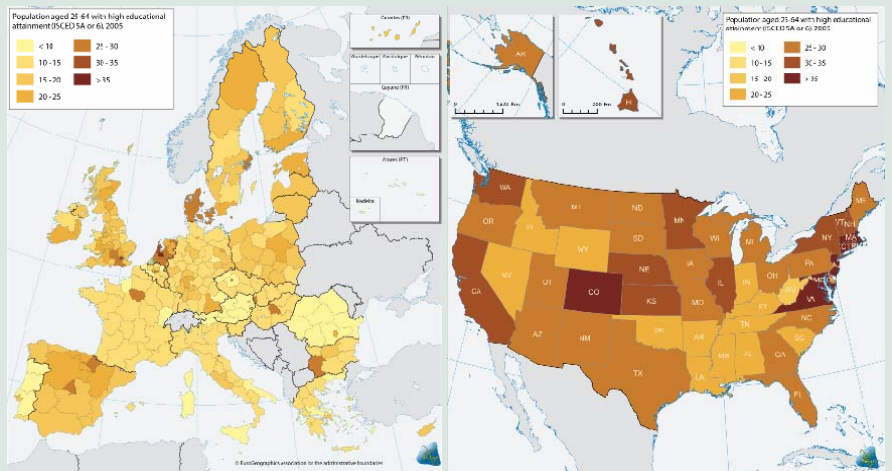
- US: 39%, EU-27: 23%
- Finland: 35%

Population aged 25-64 with university degree (2005)

- US: 29%, EU-27: 16%
- Netherlands: 28%, Denmark: 26%

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EU / US education gap (2)



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The concept of “regional engagement”

- Linked to the advent of knowledge-based regional development strategies
- Emergence of regional engagement as a supplementary role for HEIs (beyond traditional community outreach)
- Increasingly formally and explicitly recognised in policy-making and HE management and structures
- Requires interaction with regional stakeholders:
 - adaptation to the local labour market
 - support for users of research
 - contribution to LLL and entrepreneurship

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Challenge to regional convergence...

Threat of increased disparities in higher education:

- Increased global competition in higher education
- ↓
- Focus on “excellence” as a factor for allocating budgets
- ↓
- Risk of concentrating resources in advanced regions
- ↓
- Potential rise in regional imbalances (education supply, RTDI potential)

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... and policy responses

Corrective funding mechanisms are necessary to:

- Mobilise higher education in support of regional development
- Strengthen human capital, skills and adaptability in deprived regions
- Stimulate endogenous R&D potential and exploit distinctive innovation pathways
- Guarantee access to knowledge in rural areas and peripheral regions
- Promote employment opportunities in less developed regions

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EU cohesion policy

Enabling HEIs to better respond to regional needs

- Coordination of resources and new forms of management
- Links between universities, research centres, enterprises and regional authorities
- Support measures for teaching and training, R&D and innovation
- ERDF investments (EUR billion, estimates):

	2000-06	2007-13
– research (universities + public instit.)	2.7	7.4
– technology transfer	4	5.2
– education infrastructure (all levels)	-	7.8

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Other issues

Considerations for debate:

- Better evaluation and impact assessment tools are needed
- Possible stronger selectivity in arbitration of public expenditure for higher education
- The social returns of higher education may also be questioned
- Expectations on private funding may not fully materialise

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Key messages

- Regional engagement supposes that all regions can take part (HE engagement needs to serve the development of all regions)
- No single model for HE regional engagement: individual strategies must be tailored to the needs of each region
- Concentration v cohesion: how to combine excellence (specialisation) with access to knowledge for all?
- Create employment opportunities in order to maintain regional skills

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More information

Inforegio

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy

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