



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORT
FOR STUDENTS
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN
COUNTRIES**

Dieter Schäferbarthold

**Economic and Social Support
for Students
in Central and Eastern European Countries**

Cover:

Poster design

**"Europe's stars are so close.
Get in touch."**

by **Nicola Prause**, University of Wuppertal.
1st Prize in the 1990 Poster Competition on "Mobility in Europe".

Dieter Schäferbarthold

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for Students
in Central and Eastern European Countries**

Bonn 1996

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The responsibility for the content of this publication lies with the author.

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Preface

The political and economic change which has been underway in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe since the late 1980s also calls for the education systems in these countries to be restructured. Within this process and with regard to the reform of the higher education sector, questions affecting the reorganisation of the social infrastructure are increasingly moving into the centre of attention. Priority is being placed on discussing both the restructuring of the student funding systems as well as the new organisational structures for the social and economic (financial) areas of responsibility which were previously integrated into the higher education institutions themselves. In the course of this discussion, the significance of this area both for the performance of the higher education institutions as well as for the question of equal opportunity as regards access to higher education has been clearly underlined. In some countries considerations on restructuring the social sector at the higher education institutions have already been specified and detailed to the extent that the first draft legislation bills have been tabled.

In the wake of German unification and the creation of Studentenwerke (Student Affairs Associations) in the new länder, the Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW (German National Association for Student Affairs) and the local Student Affairs Associations were able to make initial contact with government, university, college and student representatives from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Since August 1993 and within the framework of a project supported by the German Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology, the DSW has been advising and supporting these contacts as they reform the social infrastructure within their higher education sector.

Support for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in reorganising the social infrastructure at their higher education institutions and in promoting student mobility in these countries within the framework of European Union programmes is also of great significance to the success of the European integration process. At the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in June 1993, the member states of the European Union set the course for the accession to the European Union of the Central and Eastern European reform countries. Important concrete steps on the way to membership for these countries have already been initiated. So-called Europe Agreements which include the prospect of accession have already been signed with Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia.

The endeavours of the European Council for Student Affairs (ECStA) are also to be seen against this background. 1993 saw the ECStA founded in response to an initiative taken by the Deutsches Studentenwerk, its partner organisation in France, the Centre National des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires (C.N.O.U.S.), and other national organisations active in providing social support for students. The

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I. General situation

The roots of the oldest and for a long time only university in Bulgaria, the Kliment Ochridski University in Sofia, extend back to a teacher-training institute opened in 1888. In the course of the following 40 years, this so-called "school of advanced learning" developed many further faculties, including the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics and the Medical Faculty.

The whole higher education system was built up in the wake of the Second World War. Several faculties, including, for example, the faculties of medicine, agriculture and theology were reorganised as separate higher education institutions. Moreover, the post-1960 period saw the construction of higher education institutions outside of the capital. In the following years, institutes and higher education institutions were opened in various other cities, with a concentration on engineering, science and economics faculties.

Today, Bulgaria's higher education facilities are spread throughout the country, and are also to be found in the provinces. Bulgaria currently heads the league in terms of the number of higher education institutions per capita. In a country with a population of around 8,5 million, Bulgaria has 40 higher education institutions and 45 so-called special colleges which correspond with the level of the German Fachhochschulen. In the 1990/91 academic year, 142,329 students were registered in Bulgaria, of which 7,926 were foreigners. In the same year, 29,123 students were enrolled at the specialist colleges (of which 125 were foreign students). In 1995 there were 250,000 students in Bulgaria.

Since September 1991, Bulgaria has also had 3 private universities, including the so-called American University which is affiliated to Maine University in the United States. Some 400 students are currently enrolled there.

1991 saw a new Education Act passed in Bulgaria which provided higher education facilities with far-reaching autonomy. However, this process of liberalisation was accompanied by simultaneous deep cutbacks in state subsidies.

Access to Higher Education

Around 35–40% of the 80,000 pupils who annually gain grammar school-leaving qualifications are admitted to Bulgaria's higher education institutions. It is not expected that the number of study beginners will increase in the future.

As in many other Eastern European countries, the gaining of grammar school-leaving qualifications does not in itself qualify prospective students for admission to a university or college, but rather merely represents one condition for participation in an entrance examination. Furthermore, prospective students must, in order to be invited to sit the entrance examination, be able to provide proof of having reached a specified minimum grade point average in their school-leaving certificate. The en-

trance examinations for higher education access generally consist of written tests on an average of two to three subjects.

The study places for each subject are limited by state admission quotas whereby the study places are allocated to applicants in the order of the overall achieved grade point averages.

The higher education institutions themselves are responsible for organising and holding the entrance examinations. These entrance exams are based on standard state criteria.

II. Higher Education funding

The construction of higher education and general education facilities, student halls of residence and refectories, sports facilities, vacation and relaxation hostels, etc., is largely funded by the state.

To a certain degree, the Bulgarian state also contributes to the funding of student mass sport, tourism and social relaxation facilities.

Study fees

As a result of the political change in Bulgaria, state subsidy payments to students in Bulgaria have deteriorated substantially.

Up until 1991, higher education was free-of-charge for all students who had registered or enrolled on the basis of state criteria.

Since the adoption of the Academic Autonomy Act in 1990, various higher education institutions have begun to charge study or tuition fees.

Thus, tuition or respectively study fees are charged by schools as well as by higher education institutions, with the level differing from one higher education institution to the next and ranging from LEV 16,500 to 27,560.– (approx. US-\$ 210–351.–) per year.

1995 saw the Higher Education Act amended as regards study fees. The amendment stipulated that the Council of Ministers is responsible for setting the so-called state quota of students. This means that the government determines the number of students to be accepted by the universities and sets the level of state subsidies in accordance with the number of students. Studies will be free of charge for those students whose study place is one of the state quota places. If the universities award study places over and above this state-prescribed capacity, then these students (so-called private students – which currently make up around 50% of all students) must pay a study fee. Fee paying students whose academic achievements are particularly good may advance to the group of exempted or non-paying students after

one year. Similarly, students from the non-paying group can be “relegated” to the group of fee paying students. This arrangement is not linked to any social criteria. The decisive factor for placement in the fee paying or non-paying group is the result of the entrance examination or respectively of the later annual exams. Students in the fee paying group have no right to a place in a hall of residence and will only gain the right to live in a hall of residence once students from the exempted group vacate spaces in the hall of residence.

The average study fee per academic year at Bulgaria's three private universities amounts to US-\$ 7,500.–.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

In addition to student catering and student accommodation, social services for students in Bulgaria also include cultural and sporting events as well as job placement services and child day care facilities.

Back in the 1970s, a governmental decree already brought the fields of student halls of residence and refectories under central administration, separate from the higher education institution, and run by a state enterprise with branch offices in the cities of Plovdiv and Snishtov.

After several restructuring processes within these state enterprises, a Council of Ministers resolution in 1994 formed the Enterprise Association “Student halls of residence and refectories” which operates under general commercial conditions and rules.

Apart from running the student and academic staff refectories, the snack bars, restaurants, etc., the range of activities for this state Enterprise Association includes the administration of the student halls of residence as well as of smaller hotel contingents for visiting lecturers.

The main contingent which is managed by this system covers students, doctoral candidates, specialists, academics and lecturers from the universities, specialist colleges and engineering colleges.

The Enterprise Association is managed by an Executive Board which is comprised of a chairperson, a deputy chairperson, representatives from the Ministry of Finance and the Health Ministry, representatives of the student organisations, a delegated director of one of the 16 local organisations as well as one representative of the region of Sofia.

The Enterprise Association is a separate legal entity and works on a self-funding principle. However, due to the specific nature of its activities, the association receives subsidies from the state on the basis of currently valid legislation. Yet, the association may also engage in other activities in order to use its own resources efficient-

ly and meet the needs of society. The total budget for the Enterprise Association, which is 50% funded through self-earned revenue and 50% funded by state subsidies, currently amounts to approx. DM 12 million.

Although this organisation is affiliated to the Education Ministry, its funding comes direct from the Ministry of Finances, which also exercises financial control. Consequently, the Education Ministry has little influence on this separate division.

The state subsidies for student accommodation and student catering flow directly into the Enterprise Association "Student halls of residence and refectories" without – as mentioned above – reference to or participation by the Ministry of Science and Education or the corresponding higher education institution.

The Enterprise Association is itself responsible for distributing the subsidies to its 16 local organisations.

Direct funding on the part of the Ministry of Finance requires direct invoicing and settlement in accordance with the catering quotas achieved for students. Consequently, and in addition to the operative management and supervision, the Enterprise Association is audited by the state auditing services at certain intervals in order to monitor the use of subsidies. If the result of the audit is negative, individual work areas or the whole association can be subjected to sanctions.

In accordance with the currently valid economic mechanisms in Bulgaria, the Enterprise Association and its departments also have the right to undertake other functions and activities as well which are not stipulated in the budget. The revenue earned through these activities is used to provide additional support for the fields of student accommodation and student catering.

When the Act on the Academic Autonomy of Bulgaria's Higher Education Institutions came into force, Bulgaria's universities and colleges were given the opportunity to manage and run the field of student catering and student accommodation themselves. At present, a corresponding test is being carried out in three Bulgarian higher education facilities.

Furthermore, the Bulgarian Education Ministry approved three major student organisations, namely the Federation of Independent Students (FNSD), the Bulgarian Student Association (BSF) and the National Student Confederation whose responsibility is to care for the social concerns and needs of students, to express an opinion on general higher education issues and to support cultural activities.

1. Educational assistance

In accordance with Bulgaria's scholarships and grants system which has been in place since 1992, students receive a so-called achievement-orientated scholarship and a grant based on social criteria. Each student has the right, given certain achievement criteria and up to a certain income, to apply for a scholarship and/or a grant. The achievement-orientated scholarship is awarded in accordance with the results of annual examinations. It amounts to 70% of the state-defined minimum wage (currently around LEV 1,250.-), meaning LEV 875.- (around US-\$ 12.-) per month. The grant which is awarded on the basis of social criteria amounts to 60% of the minimum wage level, meaning around LEV 750.- (approx. US-\$ 10.5). Bulgaria is planning to introduce student loans with which students can then fund their studies. These loans will take the form of an interest-free full loan.

In addition to this direct support, Bulgarian students also receive financial state support of an indirect nature. For example, the costs for accommodation in student halls of residence and student catering are subsidised by the state.

2. Student accommodation

As explained above, a ministerial decision passed responsibility for the field of student accommodation to the state Enterprise Association "Student halls of residence and refectories", meaning that the student halls of residence are run and managed by the association. This association implements its responsibilities with the assistance of 16 companies or branches and their 8 further sub-branches which have been set up in all university centres.

There are 142 student halls of residence in Bulgaria with more than 48,000 beds. Students pay between 4 and 10% of the Bulgarian minimum wage for accommodation – the level being based on the category of the hall of residence. This averages out at around LEV 550.- per month (around US-\$ 7.-). Accommodation in the private sector currently costs around LEV 2750.- (US-\$ 35.-) per month.

At present, the state subsidises 80–85% of the actual accommodation costs. The accommodation quota in Bulgaria currently amounts to around 30% of all students.

3. Student catering

The field of student catering is also administrated and organised by the above-mentioned state Enterprise Association.

The Enterprise Association has 72 student and lecturer refectories with a capacity of more than 56,000 seats, plus more than 100 snack bars, cafes, etc. The operation

of these includes maintenance, reconstruction, refurbishment and modernisation of the material and technical stock, as well as surveys, project planning and investment monitoring.

Student catering is provided by the canteen refectories and snack bars set up in the educational facilities or via independent companies in the student cities or centres. The main meals – midday and evening – are state subsidised. The value of the meal voucher is set by the Ministry of Science and Education and corresponds to around 53% of the value of the products used. Furthermore, the state budget provides a subsidy for each meal served amounting to 47% of the meal value which is earmarked to cover the costs of the appropriate activities. The absolute values are variable and are dependent on the market situation in the country. The value of the meal voucher can only be changed by a resolution of the Council of Ministers in response to an appropriate proposal by the Education Minister.

The situation in the student snack bars is different, since these have to fund themselves. In this case, the student pays the full value of the breakfast or drink plus a minimal profit included in the price. Prices are kept relatively low in accordance with the social policy goals of the state.

Regardless of the amount produced and the capacity of the canteens, each refectory offers 2–3 soups, 5–8 main courses and 2–3 desserts every midday.

The serving principle corresponds to that of a self-service restaurant. Each student, regardless of where he or she is studying or living, can use any student refectory. Use of the meal vouchers is not restricted to certain dates or deadlines.

The general proportion of students eating in the refectories fluctuates between 60 and 70% on those days when courses are being held and between 35 and 45% on those days when courses are not held. The greatest proportion of students use the catering services 2–3 times a week.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

Contacts have been in place between the German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW) and the respectively responsible Bulgarian higher education representatives since 1991.

Numerous meetings of experts were held that year and a Bulgarian delegation came to visit German representatives in Cologne, Bonn and Karlsruhe to inform themselves about the structure and organisation of the social infrastructure for students in Germany.

In June 1993 a meeting was held in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria with representatives of the Ministry, the higher educa-

tion institutions and the student body on the possibilities of further-reaching cooperation.

During the 1994 visit to Bonn by the Bulgarian Minister of Education and Science, a meeting was also arranged between the Minister and the President of the DSW. At this meeting, the Minister once again underlined the great interest on the part of the Bulgarian government in new organisational forms in the higher education sector and asked the DSW, in view of its long-standing experience in the social sector at higher education institutions, to participate in this restructuring process in a consultative capacity. Further-reaching talks have been repeatedly delayed due to the ongoing government crisis in Bulgaria.

During the international conferences held in Munich in 1994 and in Vienna in 1995, representatives from Bulgaria were able to inform themselves in detail about possible structures for the social infrastructure for students.

The Act on the Academic Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions passed in 1991 now appears to contain some problems and in some cases not to cover all aspects. Amongst other things, the autonomy of the higher education institutions led to a restructuring of the higher education system in which a whole series of completely new degree courses and faculties were established without any kind of co-ordination with the central ministry. Thus, for example, eleven new law faculties were set up in the briefest of time.

The new Academic Autonomy Act also failed to provide legal clarity on the question of whether or not the so-called “private students” are able to use the student social facilities. So far they have been barred from doing so. This means that the “private students” currently do not have the right to live in the halls of residence or to eat in the refectories.

Furthermore, recognition of diplomas or degrees which students gained at one of the three private universities which were founded without a legal basis after the end of the Communist regime is also throwing up a number of problems.

Amongst other things, these legal uncertainties have resulted in Bulgaria in discussions on a reform of the Academic Autonomy Act. Consequently, several draft amendments have been elaborated which above all foresee the following points for a new Higher Education Act in Bulgaria:

- fundamental democratic principles should be presented and implemented;
- mandatory state standards should be defined which govern the acceptance of students as well as their final degree;
- the state – represented by Parliament – should create a standard procedure for the foundation of new higher education institutions, whereby the higher education institutions should be able to continue to work autonomously in all other areas.

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Estonia

I. General situation

– Access to Higher Education

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III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

1. Educational assistance
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**IV. Cooperation to date/
Important addresses**

I. General situation

The history of higher education institutions in Estonia dates back to 1632 when Estonia's first university, Tartu University, was founded by Sweden. Many well-known academics hailed from this university or studied there. The history of the Technical University of Tallinn extends back to 1918, that of the Academy of Music in Tallinn and the Tallinn College of Education back to 1919. In 1938, the Art University opened its doors. The Agricultural Science Institute split away from Tartu University in 1951 and was able to take up its work in 1994 as Estonia's independent University of Agricultural Science. For a long time, the six above-mentioned state universities were the only higher education institutions in Estonia.

Since 1991, a multitude of colleges have opened to join the six existing state universities. They have all been modelled on the German Fachhochschule-type institutions.

Of the total of 26 establishments which now exist in the higher education sector, 14 are state-maintained and 12 are run by private operators. The 14 state institutions are divided into the 6 state universities (see above) and 8 state colleges (Fachhochschule).

Lectures at all universities are held in Estonian. Indeed, this has been the case at the Technical University of Tallinn since its foundation, whilst Tartu University changed to Estonian in 1919. During the Soviet period, lectures were also held in Russian.

Estonia has a population of around 1.5 million. Approx. 62% of these are of Estonian nationality, 30% are of Russian nationality, and 8% are of other nationalities.

Of the total of 25,000 students in Estonia, around 18,000 are studying at the state universities – and of these 8,000 alone at Tartu University. 2,800 are studying at private higher education institutions and the rest are enrolled at the state colleges. The overall proportion of female students is around 51.8%.

Estonia's universities are mainly located in Tallinn and Tartu. In conjunction with the creation of the state colleges and private higher education institutions, the location of higher education facilities has been regionally extended to include Kohtla-Järve, Narva and Viljandi.

The creation of the state colleges and private institutions was in each case preceded by appropriate legislation. The new Education Act was introduced in Estonia on 23rd March, 1992, although it only outlined general framework conditions for the activities of higher education facilities. The legislation covering private schools, which also governs the work of the private higher education facilities, was adopted by the Estonian Parliament in June 1993. The new Higher Education Act, which governs both the rights and duties of public higher education facilities and state colleges, was adopted in January 1995. Amongst other matters, this new Higher Education Act also defines the autonomy of the higher education institutions.

Access to Higher Education

The basic qualification for admission to a higher education facility in Estonia is the grammar school-leaving certificate or a school-leaving certificate from a secondary-level vocational or special college.

Further conditions governing higher education access are governed on the basis of the higher education admission plan which each Estonian higher education facility itself draws up and in which the number of admissions for each subject or academic field is set. The standardisation of some fundamental admissions principles has been decided by the Estonian Rectors in agreement with the Council of Deputy Rectors. In future, the knowledge and qualification of the applicant, which must be proven in an oral and a written entrance examination, will represent a further standardised higher education admission criterion. An essential part of the entrance examination will constitute a written and a spoken test in the Estonian language. Furthermore, proof of a subject-related knowledge will be tested. Foreign students will be required to take the entrance test under the same conditions as Estonian students.

II. Higher Education funding

Around 18 % of the Estonian national budget is allocated to the Ministry of Culture and Education. The budget distribution within the Ministry of Culture and Education is as follows:

42.50 %	for salaries
13.90 %	for taxes
28.25 %	for operating and maintenance costs for the universities (for example, the refurbishment of Sanitary facilities)
5.35 %	for teaching equipment
3.78 %	for publication costs
2.09 %	for catering
4.51 %	for scholarships.

90 % of the funds for the state higher education institutions come from tax revenue distributed by the Education Ministry. Around 10 % of the funds originate from private foundations.

Study fees

The funding of the education system is currently the central discussion and problem issue in Estonia. Although study or tuition fees have not yet been introduced for Estonian students for attendance of state universities and schools, it seems like-

ly that their introduction will prove unavoidable in the future as a result of the underfunding of the education system.

Foreign students – both from EU countries, as well as from other non-EU countries – are charged study fees. The average level of these study fees is standard for all foreigners at approx. EEK (Estonian Kroon) 24,000.– (US-\$ 2,000.–) per annum. Private higher education institutions charge Estonian as well as foreign students study fees. The level of the fees varies from one higher education institution to the next and amounts to between EEK 10,000.– and 30,000.– per annum (approx. US-\$ 850.– to 2,550.–).

The feasibility of implementing a tax-funded “coupon system” is repeatedly debated and considered in Estonia. Under such a system, each family with children would receive an income-independent coupon from the state for the children's attendance of schools and universities. These coupons would allow the parents or respectively the student children the free choice of educational facility – regardless of whether it is a state or private institution.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

Estonia has no Student Affairs Associations comparable to the Studentenwerke in Germany. Whilst the Education Ministry is responsible for questions of educational assistance and the universities are responsible for student accommodation, the student unions are responsible for the organisation of cultural and sporting activities, as well as for the student job placement service.

1. Educational assistance

In January 1993, the Estonian government adopted a resolution regarding study grants and study loans for students. Whilst under the former state educational assistance system, state study grants had been dependent on study and social criteria, the new system now aims to award non-repayable grants or scholarships solely on the basis of achievement criteria. The distribution of assistance and support on the basis of achievement criteria is the responsibility of the universities. Only around 10 % of all full-time students will qualify for such a grant or scholarship amounting to around EEK 350.– (US-\$ 30.–) per month.

The resolution of January 1993 also introduced a state loan system for students in Estonia. Under this system, all students (meaning that the system is achievement and family independent) may receive a state loan, as long as a loan guarantee is

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Latvia

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– Access to Higher Education

II. Higher Education funding

– Study fees

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

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4. Medical care for students

**IV. Cooperation to date/
Important addresses**

I. General situation

The founding of the Riga Polytechnical Institute in 1862 marked the start of the development of higher education in Latvia. The idea to build up the first Latvian national higher education institution coincided with the foundation of the independent Latvian state and became ever more real a goal. This institution was opened on 28th September, 1919, called the Latvian Higher Education Institution. It was structured on the basis of the Riga Institute and adopted the academic staff, buildings, material and intellectual values of Riga's former Polytechnical Institute. In 1923, the higher education institution was renamed University of Latvia. From 1923 to 1957 several now well-known higher education institutions emerged from Latvia's university to become independent study and research centres of great importance. These include, amongst others, the Agricultural University of Latvia, the Latvian Academy of Medicine, and the Technical University of Riga.

Following the restoration of Latvian independence, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Latvia confirmed the restoration of the Constitution of the University of Latvia on 18th September, 1991, which reads that "this higher education institution is a state academic educational, research and cultural institution of the Republic of Latvia and serves the interests of its people". The same resolution also restored the former insignia of the University of Latvia, namely the university banner, logo, seal, chain of office of the Rector, robes of office of the Rector, the Deputy Rector and the Faculty Deans.

There are now a total of 17 state higher education institutions in Latvia and 5 state universities. Only one state-recognised higher education facility in Latvia is privately maintained. Of the 5 state universities, only the University of Latvia is equipped with the classical, comprehensive academic profile of a general education university. The other 4 state universities, namely the Technical University of Riga, the University for Aerospace Studies, the College of Education and the Latvian University for Agricultural Sciences, are specialised universities.

Most higher education facilities are subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science, with the exception of the following: the University for Agricultural Science is subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture; the Medical Academy is subordinated to the Health Ministry; and the Police Academy is subordinated to the Interior Ministry. The legislative basis for the higher education system in Latvia is provided by the Latvian Education Act and the Research and Science Act. The Education Act was passed by the Latvian Parliament (called Saeima) on 19th June, 1991. The Research and Science Act was adopted on 10th November, 1992. These acts recognise the higher education institutions and the academic, scientific and research institutes as autonomous facilities.

Up until 1994, Latvia was without a specific higher education act. Chapter 8 of the Latvian Education Act merely defined a number of fundamental principles on the

organisation and responsibilities of Latvian higher education facilities. Only in 1995 was a special Higher Education Act passed by the Saeima. This new Act now includes arrangements on consolidating the higher education system.

Within the scope of its areas of competence, the "Higher Education" department at the Latvian Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for developing and implementing state policies in the field of higher education. This department works in cooperation with the Academic Council, the Latvian Committee of Rectors and with other institutions and public organisations.

Latvia has a population of 2.6 million. The proportion of students amongst the total population is 1.4 % (approx. 36,000). 40 % of the students are male and around 60 % female. The proportion of foreign students in Latvia is around 4 %.

Access to Higher Education

Essentially all candidates who have successfully gained the general higher education entrance qualification (grammar school-leaving certificate) can enter into a higher education in Latvia. The universities and other higher education facilities are, however, at liberty to define admissions conditions in which candidates must also have gained a knowledge in specific elective subjects over and above the mandatory subjects usually taught at the grammar schools.

There are no mandatory higher education admission rules applicable to all higher education facilities in Latvia, meaning that differing admissions conditions will be found from one institution to the next, and even from one faculty to the next within one and the same institution.

As a rule, the following admissions procedure applies:

- 1-4 written and oral entrance tests;
- selection on the basis of the quality of the higher education entrance qualification with a subsequent oral test before the "admissions committee" covering general questions as well as questions relevant to the specific academic subject;
- selection solely on the basis of the quality of the higher education entrance qualification.

In accordance with the Latvian Education Act, Latvian is essentially the language of instruction in all state-funded study programmes. For this reason, applicants who did not take Latvian as a foreign language at school will also be tested on their proficiency in Latvian.

At higher education institutions funded by the Ministry of Education and Science, the admissions conditions and procedures of the various faculties are defined by the institution's Senate, whereby the number of admissions is determined by the predefined budget appropriations. At higher education institutions which are funded by one of the other ministries, the institution coordinates with the respective min-

istry on the structure of the admissions procedure. Here, too, the number of admissions is determined by the available budget.

An "admissions committee" has been set up at all Latvian higher education facilities and is composed of academic staff from the respective institution. It is responsible for implementing the admissions procedure.

II. Higher Education funding

Study fees

The adoption of the 1991 Latvian Education Act also stipulated that higher education in Latvia is not free of charge. Rather, all students, including those at state higher education institutions, are charged an annual, predefined study fee. The study fees collected from students may be partly or fully paid by the state. Since the number of places funded by the state is limited, selection tests are carried out and the state pays the study fees for the best students at each Latvian higher education institution. Students whose test results are not good enough to receive a "free-of-charge" study place, but who nevertheless pass the selection test, may still enrol at the universities, whereby they must pay their own study fees (= approx. 20 % of all students).

The level of the study fees for these students is set by the respective higher education institution itself and currently averages out at LAT 18.- to 27.- (US-\$ 40.- to 50.-) per month at state institutions. The collected funds which currently still flow into the budget of the respective higher education institution are used to pay the salaries of the academic staff at the institution, and for other purposes.

Study fees are generally charged at private Latvian higher education institutions. The level of these is set by the respective institution. The average level of study fees at private higher education institutions is approx. LAT 11.- (US-\$ 20.-) per month for Latvian students and LAT 540.- to 1,620.- (US-\$ 1,000.- to 3,000.-) per annum for foreign students.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

Latvia, too, does not have any Student Affairs Associations comparable to the Studentenwerke in Germany. Questions of educational assistance are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. The universities are responsible for student accommodation and student catering.

The student parliaments and unions – in many cases together with the universities – offer and organise cultural and sporting activities as well as competitions.

At Latvia's leading educational establishment, the University of Latvia, a Student Council was first founded between the two world wars (1919–1939) – the so-called "Small Parliament" which took on responsibility for student affairs and for solving related problems. The Council was composed of representatives of the various student parliaments and unions who were elected in direct, equal and secret elections. During the period of affiliation to the U.S.S.R., the Komsomol, a Communist youth organisation, organised student life. In 1990, the student parliaments and councils were re-established.

Today, each higher education institution has a student parliament which is composed of elected representatives of the student unions. Whilst the activities of the student parliaments were initially limited to the organisation of cultural and sporting events when they were first restored, their political and administrative influence in the field of the social infrastructure for students is now becoming ever greater.

Consequently, the creation of a national Student Union is planned for the future, which will, quasi, act as an umbrella organisation for the individual student parliaments and will commit itself to the social and economic affairs and interests of students.

1. Educational assistance

Those students whose study fees are paid by the state (so-called "quota students") may also receive an additional state scholarship. This state support is dependent on the student providing proof of academic achievement and is non-repayable. The level of the scholarship is calculated on the basis of a 1992 government resolution. According to this resolution, a scholarship will amount to at least LAT 7.5 (approx. US-\$ 14.–) per month and a maximum of LAT 15.– (approx. US-\$ 28.–) per month, depending on the relevant social criteria.

In 1994, the Latvian Education Ministry started a national support programme according to which some 150 students would be able to receive a state loan of around LAT 11.– (US-\$ 20.–) per month. However, this state loan system project was already discontinued by the Latvian Ministry of Finances in 1995 on account of the

difficult financial situation in which Latvia found itself. A new state study support system is currently being developed in Latvia.

In addition to the above-mentioned educational assistance, a limited group of students, namely orphans, disabled students, etc., may also receive a state loan to support them.

Deliberations are currently underway on the possibility of creating state loans for all students. However, due to the Latvia's poor economic situation such a uniformly implemented loan arrangement would probably result in the introduction of study and tuition fees for all students. The level of the loan would be set to cover at least the absolutely essential basic requirements of students, calculated at approx. LAT 54.– (US-\$ 100.–) per month. Those students who agree to enter into the civil service at a later date can have their loans transformed into a grant, meaning that after one year in the civil service, repayment of a predefined amount of the loan is waived.

2. Student accommodation

Student halls of residence in Latvia fall under the control of the universities which administrate and operate them. At present, student accommodation is still state subsidised, meaning that rent levels for the halls of residence are very low, averaging out at LAT 2.5 (US-\$ 4.5) per month. By comparison, the monthly rent for a private one or two room flat amounts to between LAT 2.7 and 5.5 (US-\$ 5.– to 10.–). The accommodation rate in the state-supported halls of residence is approx. 15 %. Since individual halls of residence are only open to students of a certain faculty, the capacity utilisation of student halls of residence is often imbalanced, with individual halls being completely overcrowded and others being only partly occupied. The rooms in the halls are around 10 – 15 m² large and are occupied by 2 – 4 students. The vast majority of halls were built in the Soviet period and were designed so that one floor had around 35 rooms (in which between 70 and 100 students live), one kitchen, two toilets and two washrooms. Two showers are provided for the whole hall of residence, meaning for between 200 and 500 students.

Future plans aim to discontinue the state subsidies for student accommodation. Consequently, the rent levels will also rise significantly in the halls of residence, meaning that the private accommodation market will become a competitor for the halls of residence.

3. Student catering

Student catering at the universities and other higher education institutions in Latvia is organised and administrated by the so-called "State enterprises for public nutri-

tion". These state enterprises are responsible for the refectories and cafeterias, as well as for the food shops and cafes. Depending on the institution and faculty, between 25 and 30% of all students attend the university refectories. In conjunction with the liberalisation of the national economy, 1991 saw the food prices "released" from state control, resulting in a considerable increase in the price of refectory meals. The following table shows that the average number of users of the university refectories in Latvia has consequently dropped continuously:

Number of users and served meals at student refectories

Year	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Users	5,000	4,800	4,250	3,500	2,200
in %	95 %	80 %	70-75 %	50 %	25-30 %
Served meals					
Breakfast	1,000	1,800	1,500	750	660
Lunch	4,000	3,000	2,750	2,750	1540

The average price for a refectory meal is LAT 1.- (US-\$ 2.-). Student meals were subsidised by the state up to the beginning of 1994. Now direct state subsidies for this sector have been discontinued. Indirect subsidies are however granted insofar as the state enterprises are not required to pay rent for the university premises, and the ancillary costs, such as electricity, water, heating, etc., are free of charge. Furthermore, the university refectories are not obliged to pay value added tax. However, amended legislation has already been passed in Latvia which will discontinue these indirect state subsidies. The current tax saving amounts to approx. 18 % of turnover.

4. Medical care for students

In principle, there is currently no comprehensive health insurance system for all population groups in Latvia. Health care costs must therefore be largely carried by each individual and are consequently quite expensive. The so-called "student ambulance" does, however, make free-of-charge medical aid available to students. The legal status of this student ambulance is, however, quite unclear at the moment. Whilst it used to be a local authority institution of the Riga City Council, the student ambulance was transferred to Latvia's universities for reasons of cost and is now funded from the universities' budgets.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

Latvia, too, is working towards a future comprehensive restructuring of the social sector at higher education institutions. The representatives responsible in the Student Council at the University of Latvia and in the Student Parliament at the University of Riga, as well as representatives from the Ministry have therefore had talks on these problems with the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. The result of this meeting was the creation of a working party responsible for analysing the current situation and elaborating a state development concept on the social support of students. This working party is composed of officially-delegated student representatives, higher education institution management representatives, as well as the civil servants responsible for this field in the Latvian Ministry.

In order to support their work, the Deutsches Studentenwerk organised a workshop for 6 Latvian representatives in Bonn from 6th November to 12th November, 1995, in addition to the joint events held with representatives from Estonia and Lithuania (see page 31). The focus of this workshop was information on the various student support models and on the necessary legal requirements for the creation of legislation governing the work of student affairs associations. Furthermore, in February 1996 the student representatives responsible in the Latvian Student Councils came for an information visit on the general topic of "Creation and organisation of student unions and parliaments/student co-determination rights in higher education institutions" held in Berlin/Dresden.

The relevant representatives in Latvia are interested in ongoing cooperation with the DSW. The funding required for this is by the EU's TEMPUS-PHARE programme. A corresponding application has been submitted, although no decision has yet been reached.

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Lithuania

I. General situation

– Access to Higher Education

II. Higher Education funding

– Study fees

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

1. Educational assistance
2. Student accommodation
3. Student catering

**IV. Cooperation to date/
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I. General situation

The roots of higher education in Lithuania extend back to the sixteenth century when, in the wake of the creation of a formal education system, the foundation and development of universities was declared to be a general necessity and a matter for the state. The first higher education facility in Lithuania was the Jesuit College. It was organised as a university in 1579 and since then has been regarded as the fundamental academic, educational and cultural centre of Lithuania.

Whilst initially almost all higher education institutions located themselves in the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, more recent times have seen an academic centre also begin to develop in Kaunas.

There are 14 state higher education institutions in Lithuania, 19 state research institutions and 29 state research institutes, whereby the latter not only engage in research, but also act in conjunction with the higher education institutions in training academics and experts. Furthermore, two seminars have been established by the Roman-Catholic church. Of the 14 state higher education institutions, 6 are equipped with university rights. 3 of these universities, namely Vilnius University, the Vytautas Magnus University and the Klaipeda University offer a broad based range of academic subjects. By contrast, the College of Education in Vilnius, the Technical University in Vilnius and the Technological University in Kaunas are more specialised universities.

The restoration of Lithuania's independence led to the situation, that new concepts for a higher education reform, that had already been developed by Lithuania's academic society, by teachers and professors served as a basis for legislation in this field (for example, the Academic Research and Higher Education Act).

The new system of academic research as well as higher education in Lithuania is based on the "Act on Academic Research and Higher Education", which was adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania on 12th February, 1991. This Act, on which the reform of Lithuania's higher education system is based, is guided by, amongst other aspects, the following principles:

- state financial support for the systems;
- legitimisation of the status of the indivisibility of academic research and higher education;
- reaffirmation of academic liberty;
- university autonomy.

In late May 1994, the Ministry of Education and Science was established, thus replacing the "Lithuanian Agency for Questions of Higher Education, Research and Development", which had until then been responsible for the implementation of government decisions in the field of education.

Lithuania has a total population of around 3,723,000. The number of students amongst the total population is around 53,100, whereby approx. 40 % of the students are male and 60 % female.

The number of students in Lithuania has dropped substantially in recent times. On the one hand, the reasons for this are to be found in a reform of the courses of study which restricts the admission of students to certain programmes and faculties, and, on the other, the difficult general economic situation which has been caused by the change from a planned economy to a market-orientated one. The production volume in Lithuania has decreased substantially and, consequently, so too has the funding for the higher education system. Resources from the national budget for the higher education sector have seen not inconsiderable cutbacks.

Where a few years ago the index of student numbers per 10,000 inhabitants was still comparable to most Northern European countries (in 1986 the index was 208, in 1989 it was 196), it had by 1993 dropped to merely 143. The proportion of students amongst the total population is now under 1.5 %.

Access to Higher Education

Some 10,000 students are annually admitted to higher education institutions in Lithuania. Around 30–40 % of those pupils gaining a senior secondary-school leaving certificate (grammar school) apply to study. The most popular subjects are teacher training programmes and engineering disciplines.

The capacities at Lithuanian higher education facilities are restricted. A further criterion for higher education admission has been introduced in addition to the results of the school-leaving certificate, namely an oral and a written entrance test. Furthermore, those students who win academic and scientific competitions set for senior secondary level pupils receive preferential treatment. Socially disadvantaged prospective students, such as orphans, disabled people, etc., may also find easier conditions than their co-applicants when applying for admission to higher education.

II. Higher Education funding

In addition to the base funding for higher education institutions through state grants and subsidies, other sources of state higher education funding in Lithuania include the state's financial participation in national research programmes. Furthermore, individual institutions may receive resources from various academic, scientific and study funds, such as, amongst others, the Lithuanian Research and Higher Education Fund, and the Innovation Fund. The Council of the Lithuanian Republic (the so-called Saeima) must pass all budget appropriations to science and higher education. In 1994 the Lithuanian higher education system was supported with 6.1 % of the total national budget. However, the subsidies and grants from the national budget only form part of the financing required to cover the costs of the

higher education institutions. In 1993, Lithuania's higher education institutions found 20 % of their funding from other sources; in the case of the state research institutes, this was around 30–40 %.

Study fees

In addition to the above-mentioned sources, a further source of funding for the higher education facilities involves charging some students study and tuition fees. In principle, higher education in Lithuania is free of charge. Only in certain cases must students also pay study fees.

Students who have successfully taken the entrance examination and who are enrolled in one of the regular study places funded by the state need not pay study fees. Students who are enrolled in one of the state funded study places, but whose academic achievements are poor, must pay a proportion of the study fees (around LIT 275.– or approx. US-\$ 69.– per semester). Students who are enrolled in a study place not funded by the state as well as outside students must pay the full study fees which currently average out at LIT 800.– (approx. US-\$ 200.–) per semester.

The study fees for foreign students (regardless of whether they come from an EU country or a non-EU country) average out at LIT 1,200.– to 5,200.– (US-\$ 300.– to 1,300.–) per annum.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

Lithuania has neither a regional nor a national contact office responsible for the economic and social support of students which is comparable to the Student Affairs Associations (Studentenwerke) in Germany. Whilst the educational assistance sector is one of the areas of competence for the Ministry of Education and Science, questions of student accommodation, student catering, culture and sport, are the responsibility of the universities or respectively the other higher education institutions. A state institute (similar to a labour office) is responsible for organising student employment/career counselling. All above-mentioned working areas are coordinated at national level by the ministry responsible.

1. Educational assistance

Students in Lithuania have the opportunity to receive financial support through state grants. This payment is a non-repayable, state grant for which students must com-

pete and is awarded to students achieving a fixed grade point average. Around 80% of all students in Lithuania receive such an achievement-dependent grant.

The parameters for the financial calculation of the level of the achievement-orientated grant are based on the minimum subsistence income level. In Lithuania this is currently LIT 55.- (around US-\$ 14.-) per month. The level of the grant consequently fluctuates between LIT 55.- and 80.- (US-\$ 14.- to 20.-) per month. First semester students are excluded from receiving state achievement-orientated grants. Students who pass their semester examinations but fail to reach the grade point average required to qualify for the achievement-orientated grant may receive a social grant of LIT 18 (US-\$ 4.5) per month.

In addition to these, some students may receive a so-called "company grant". For students to receive this grant, a contractual agreement must be reached between the company, the university and the student applying for support.

On 31st March, 1994, the Lithuanian Government passed a resolution on providing Lithuanian students with loans. This time-limited loan system will allow students at Lithuanian higher education institutions and with Lithuanian citizenship, as well as Lithuanian citizens studying at foreign higher education institutions, to receive a state loan.

The loan capital is made up of financial resources allocated in the national budget which are administrated by the Ministry of Education and Science. The direct pay-out of the loans to the students is managed by the Lithuanian Rural Bank, which has a branch office in every larger Lithuanian town. The budget for the state grant fund is not affected by the new loan system.

Each student can submit a loan application to the Rural Bank for a maximum of LIT 1,320.- (US-\$ 330.-) per annum, as long as he or she can guarantee repayment of the loan. The loan period must not extend beyond the standard period of study for the student's subject. The loan level is based on the subsistence level which is calculated for each running month. The loan is subject to an annual interest rate of max. 5 %.

Repayment of the loan must commence at the latest 18 months after successful completion of the studies. If there are objective reasons for the student having to prematurely discontinue his or her studies, then the repayments must begin 12 months after this date. If the student is sent down (compulsorily taken off the university register) then the loan repayment must commence within three months of that date. The bank responsible is informed by the individual higher education institutions on whether students gain a degree or whether they are taken off the register.

The loan must be fully repaid at the latest after a period twice as long as the period spent studying.

The above-mentioned loan system is merely a temporary transitional arrangement.

2. Student accommodation

The student halls of residence in Lithuania fall under the authority of the higher education institutions. The student halls of residence are operated by the hall of residence office of the respective higher education institution. All students whose parents do not live in the university or college town are considered for a place in a hall of residence.

The situation of the student halls of residence in Lithuania will be described here, taking the Technological University of Kaunas as an example:

The Technological University of Kaunas with its 8,000 or so students has 15 halls of residence with around 5,000 places. One of the 15 halls of residence is reserved for university staff, one hall of residence is for student families and the remaining 13 halls of residence accommodate students. Two types of accommodation exist:

- multiple rooms in which up to 3 persons share a room; and
- single rooms, in which each student has his or her own separate room.

The allocation of hall of residence places is undertaken by a committee composed of representatives of the Dean's office, the student union and representatives of the hall of residence community.

The halls of residence are funded by state subsidies and rent income. At present, students pay an average monthly rent of LIT 14.- to 18.- (US-\$ 3.5 to 4.5) plus local services.

3. Student catering

Lithuanian higher education institutions generally do not have a central refectory, basically due to the local conditions of the university facilities. Almost all major faculty buildings at higher education facilities do have refectories. They are partly operated by state enterprises and partly by private companies.

Indirect subsidies towards student catering are provided by generally not charging the operating company any rent.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

In regard to the cooperation to date it is referred to chapter IV under Estonia.

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Poland

- I. General situation**
 - Access to Higher Education
- II. Higher Education funding**
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 - 1. Educational assistance
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There are a total of 170 higher education facilities in Poland. 90 of these institutions are state maintained (including 11 universities), 80 are privately maintained. With a population of 39 million, Poland has 750,000 students (1.92%). 53 % of all students are male, 47 % female. The proportion of foreign students in Poland amounts to 0.75 %.

The number of students in Poland is rising continuously. Whilst 64,000 students were newly registered at higher education institutions in 1989, the number of new registrations in 1993 already amounted to 95,000. The number of students increased from 361,000 in 1989 to around 473,000 in 1993 and in 1995 amounted to 750,000. Although the number of academic staff has risen slightly, the student:teacher ratio is annually deteriorating by around 12 %. This situation is not least a consequence of the Polish education system suffering from the brain-drain syndrome. Highly-qualified academics earn around ZI 810.- (Polish Zloty) (US-\$ 312.-) per month. Indeed, the insufficiency of financial resources is the main problem faced by Poland's academic and scientific community. In addition to low salary levels, this shortage also results in obsolete equipment and a substantial lack of investments. As in other areas, the new Act transfers areas of competence to the higher education institutions with the aim of raising the efficiency and level of higher education study.

Access to Higher Education

The admissions requirements for access to Polish higher education institutions, which were essentially time and time again used to control the number of students, have been repeatedly changed over the years.

Since the 1950s, the Ministry for Education, after first coordinating and agreeing with the higher education committees, set the number of first-semester students for the respective academic year and the regulations governing the conditions and the implementation of the admissions procedure to higher education.

The following criteria were decisive for admission to higher education study:

- prospective students were required to hold a grammarschool-leaving certificate with an appropriate grade point average;
- the result of their entrance examination had to meet a satisfactory standard;
- the social background and moral-political views of the student.

In 1990, the admissions conditions were redefined by appropriate legislation. The school-leaving certificate and successful participation in the entrance examination which had to be taken before the selection committee of the respective higher education institution, continued to form the decisive admission condition. The entrance examination now generally consists of oral and written tests orientated towards the chosen academic subject as well as a foreign language test. The further admissions conditions are set by the Senate of the respective university or college and may therefore vary from one higher education institution to the next. According to the new Higher Education Act, a fee for the entrance examination is to be introduced for

prospective students. The level of the fee is set by the Rector of the higher education institution. The maximum fee is set by the Education Minister. Since 1990, the capacity for new students has been set by the individual higher education institutions themselves.

II. Higher Education funding

With the passing of the new Higher Education Act, the universities received far-reaching autonomy regarding their structure and organisation. The Ministry for National Education merely supervises expenditure of the financial resources which are allocated to the universities from the national budget.

Each state higher education institution receives subsidies from the national budget for didactic activities, investments for the construction of university and college buildings and facilities, subsidies for the implementation of research activities, etc. Furthermore, financial resources are provided from the appropriate sections of the national budgets to fund social support measures. However, the Polish higher education institutions are not only able to draw their financial resources from the national budget, but also from the budget of the local authorities or their corporations, and from donations and gifts. In addition to the above-mentioned state grant fund, each higher education institution can set up its own scholarship fund to financially support students as well as academic staff, although this fund must not be fed from state resources. These scholarships are awarded independently of the state grants.

Study fees

Polish residents can study at public universities free of study or tuition fees. The new Act makes it possible to charge study fees from Polish students whose studies extend beyond the standard period. Prospective students who do not hold Polish citizenship must pay an annual study fee over and above the one-off registration fee of currently approx. ZI 80.- (US-\$ 31.-). The level of the annual study fee differs depending on whether the higher education institution is subordinated to the Ministry for National Education or the Ministry for Health and Social Welfare and ranges from between ZI 1,620.- and 2,026.- (approx. US-\$ 623.- to 780.-). The Ministry for National Education sets the principles for charging foreign students study fees for attendance of public higher education institutions.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

Essentially three student organisations were responsible for the social affairs of students in the 1960s. These were the Association of Rural Youth (ZMW), the Association of Socialist Youth (ZMS) and the Communist-orientated Association of Polish Youth (ZMP). At the first congress of Polish students in 1973, the merging of the above-mentioned student organisations and associations led to the creation of the Socialist Association of Polish Students (SZSP). This association was responsible for registering and controlling student social life as far as possible. As a result of the activities of the above-mentioned associations, the 1982 Higher Education Act gave students the right to participate in the committees of the student parliament and unions as well as to form national, regional and university organisations. However, the right to form student organisations and associations which the 1982 Act gave to students was restricted again by appropriate regressive stipulations passed in 1983 according to which students were only allowed to unite in such organisations and associations which had been registered before the Act came into force on 21st July, 1983.

The September 1990 Act created completely new conditions. The only official representation of the student body is the student parliament which is elected by the students at all higher education institutions in Poland. This means that students are no longer represented by the student organisations and student associations, but rather only by the freely-elected student parliament which guarantees students a broad influence on all higher education affairs.

The student parliaments at Polish higher education institutions, whose statutes must be agreed with the higher education institution, are responsible for the social, material and cultural affairs of students. Furthermore, the student parliament committees decide on the distribution of funds which the higher education institution's committees earmark for student purposes.

Representatives of the individual student parliaments formed the All-Polish Representation of Student Parliaments (the Polish student parliament – OPSS). This student representation has the right to evaluate and to be heard on all legal provisions which affect students. All draft legislation which contains legal provisions affecting students is presented to the OPSS by the Education Minister. The annual allocation of financial resources which are required for the activities of the All-Polish Representation of Student Parliaments is provided by the state.

So far, Poland does not have any central or regional contact office responsible for all questions of economic and social support for students. In late 1995, the Ministry responsible in Poland tabled a project to reform the student grants system which also included the creation of an agency responsible for these matters both at central and well as at local level. The concrete implementation of planning has not been

carried out yet, since the project has still not been finally discussed with the higher education and student representatives.

This reform project, which primarily aims to govern the reorganisation and administration of state study funding, foresees the introduction of long-term student loans which can be partly repaid by the state as soon as the appropriate study achievements have been reached by the student.

Three alternative models are currently under discussion for the implementation of the new grants system:

Alternative 1:

The student loans are paid to the students by the banks which use their own financial resources for this. The interest accrued is repaid by the state.

Alternative 2:

Those banks responsible for carrying out the financial operations are allocated capital from the national budget with which to fund the student loans.

The payment and repayment formalities for the loans are the responsibility of the banks.

Alternative 3:

A statutory agency will be created which is responsible for the following within the system of social grants and assistance

- for awarding scholarships, grants and student loans as well as for administering the funds and repayment instalments;
- for the management of the basic social facilities in cooperation with the universities, their student parliaments and other student organisations;
- for administering the financial resources, which this project will continue to call the Fund of Material Assistance for Students, through its own network of local branch divisions.

At central level, the organising committees of this newly-created agency are to be:

- The Education Minister (as the officially appointed Chair of the Supervisory Board);
- The Supervisory Board (comprised of representatives of the ministries, the Minister of Finances, the Central Higher Education Council, the parliamentary Committee for Education);
- plus five university or college Rectors and representatives of the student organisation.

At regional level, the local branch divisions of the agency, the local Supervisory Boards as well as the student committees will assume responsibility for the grants system. The responsibilities of the local committees will be divided as follows:

- Responsibilities of the local branch divisions:
 - the administration and assessment of student grant applications before these are forwarded to the central agency;
 - conclusion of the loan agreements with the borrower;
- Responsibilities of the local Supervisory Boards which are appointed with an equal number of academic representatives and student representatives.
 - supervisory body for the local agency;
 - assessment of candidates applying for the position of head of the local branch division;
 - assessment of student grant applications;
- Responsibilities of the Student Committees.
 - collection of loan applications and assessment of these.

The newly-created agency is to be funded by additional special budgetary appropriations (for information on the newly-planned forms of material assistance for students see III.1).

1. Educational assistance

According to the new Higher Education Act, each Polish student has a firmly established right to material assistance from the state, including a social grant, insofar as the student finds him- or herself in a material or financial crisis situation. The student can also receive the above-mentioned assistance for a non-employed spouse and for dependent children.

The Polish system of material assistance for students is based on the constitutional principle that all citizens must be given equal opportunity to enter into higher education. The conditions, procedures and level of the financial support was defined by decree of the Council of Ministers on 22nd January, 1991.

The financial resources appropriated to material assistance for students, including subsidies towards refectory catering, are taken from the national budget. Each year, the Ministry for National Education awards each higher education institution a subsidy for this purpose. The level of the subsidy is mainly orientated towards the number of students and the number of student hall of residence places at the specific higher education institution. At the same time, the financial position of the state and the priorities placed by the Ministry of Finances in its budgetary planning are decisive. The resources are allocated by the Education Ministry per decree of the Council of Ministers of 22nd January, 1991, and in addition to the direct subsidies for financial assistance also cover funds for the renovation of the student halls of residence and refectories.

The framework of direct subsidies differentiates between the following three types of state material assistance:

- grants and scholarships;
- financial assistance in cases of hardship;
- additional funding for student halls of residence and student refectories.

The framework of grants and scholarships differentiates between social grants and motivation scholarships (academic scholarships). Whilst the social grants essentially comprise family-dependent support, meaning that receipt of such a grant is dependent upon the respective material situation of the student's family, the so-called motivation scholarship is achievement-orientated, meaning that it is dependent upon the respective examination results of the student. In addition to these forms of direct state support for students, each higher education institution has the right to create its "own" scholarship system. The aim of these "university and college own" scholarship systems is to make financial support also available to those students who for formal reasons cannot be assisted by state grants or scholarships and also to those academic groups who, in the opinion of the higher education institution, deserve an award for particular academic achievement. The scholarship fund of the higher education institution may also award scholarships to foreign students as well as to doctoral and postdoctoral candidates.

Financial assistance in cases of hardship covers support which can be awarded to students who find themselves in temporary serious difficulties (special contingency funding), for example, after the death of a close family member. This material support is also paid directly by the state and is non-repayable.

By contrast, the additional state funding for student halls of residence and student refectories represents indirect support which students do not receive directly but rather which provides students with an opportunity to live in halls or residence or to eat in the refectories.

The level of the subsidy for a bed in a hall of residence is calculated by the difference between the actual maintenance or operating costs and the rent which a student actually pays. It averages out at 50 % of the actual costs.

Primarily, those students receive a state subsidy for refectory catering who have passed their examination within the stipulated time and who do not originate from the town in which the higher education institution is located.

The subsidy is awarded for 9 months in a year. The level of the subsidy is dependent upon the difference between the catering costs paid by the higher education institution and sum total of payments received from students.

All higher education institutions in Poland distribute the funds appropriated to them by the Ministry for National Education on the basis of internal regulations. The transfer of payments (their level and purpose) depends upon the current financial capacity of the respective higher education institution and on the priorities set by the student parliament. The student parliament decides, in agreement with the administration of the respective higher education institution, the criteria according to

which the academic scholarships and social grants, non-repayable assistance and subsidies towards student hall of residence places and catering in student refectories are to be awarded.

The awarding of all the above-mentioned state assistance is only possible within the framework of the financial resources in the national budget which are distributed to the educational facilities via the ministry responsible.

The "university or college own" scholarship system is funded through fees which are paid in by students or from profit resulting out of the institution's own commercial activities.

In addition to the above-listed state assistance, Poland's students also have the firmly-established right to 50 % fare reductions on local public transport and free-of-charge medical care.

In accordance with the planned project to reform the grants system, the social grant, the accommodation subsidy, the issue of meal vouchers, as well as financial support from the funds of the student committee are to be regarded as non-repayable material assistance for students. Furthermore, the provision of, by contrast, repayable student loans is planned. Achievement-orientated scholarships will continue to be awarded. However, these cannot be funded out of the resources of the agency or of its local branch divisions.

In order to finance these student grants and scholarships, a fund is also to be established which will be comprised of the annual subsidies from the national budget, the repayment instalments for the loans, commercial profits made by the agency and clubs, refectories and student halls of residence affiliated to it, as well as donations and gifts from sponsors.

2. Student accommodation

The state of the student halls of residence in Poland differs greatly and is dependent on the respective higher education institution.

The student halls of residence at the smaller higher education institutions which were established in the 1970s are in quite a good state. These usually have two bedded rooms which are then linked up to create a four person unit (two rooms) which shares sanitary facilities and a kitchen unit.

The situation at the well-known higher education institutions in the larger cities differs greatly. In most cases, these have several student halls of residence with varying standards and degrees of wear and tear. The well-maintained student halls of residence have single and double rooms in four person units provided with a bathroom, toilet and large kitchen. The older student halls of residence, on the other hand, only have one sanitary facility and one kitchen per floor.

Hall of residence places are awarded on the basis of the following criteria:

- distance of travel to the university (more than two hours);

- achievement component (meaning whether or not the student has successfully completed the academic year);
- the student's financial and material situation.

The level of the rent to be paid by the student differs from one higher education institution to the next. It is set by the institution's Rector together with the student parliament.

Whilst the organisation and administration of the student halls of residence used to be exclusively arranged by the universities and the student parliaments, some halls of residence have become privately maintained since 1992, now being operated by foundations and private persons.

3. Student catering

Most refectories are located in relatively new buildings at the respective higher education institution and are consequently in a relatively good condition. Students are offered the choice of two meals.

As a result of the fact that the refectory meals are state subsidised, the prices are lower than those of private providers and are consequently quite affordable for students.

Whilst the refectories used to be operated by a cooperative, the organisation and administration of the student catering facilities are now fundamentally the responsibility of the universities. However, here too, as with the student halls of residence, more and more refectories are becoming privately maintained. For example, all three student refectories at the Jagiellonen University were leased to private tenants. According to these contracts, the university provides the tenant with premises and equipment and commits itself to undertake major renovation work. Small repairs and maintenance work on the refectory equipment are the responsibility of the tenant. Furthermore, the tenant carries the wage costs for refectory staff, pays taxes and is responsible for the accounting and administration of the facility. According to the lease agreements reached between the Jagiellonen University and the tenants, the university carries the costs for major renovation work and provides water, gas and power for heating, lighting and meal preparation free of charge. Furthermore, the university contributes 40 % to the food costs. The tenant is obliged to prepare the meals on a commercial basis.

At present, a midday meal in one of Poland's student catering facilities costs on average less than US-\$ 2.-, whilst students who have a right to reduced prices pay around US-\$ 1.-.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

In 1994, the German National Association for Student Affairs (Deutsches Studentenwerk – DSW) was able for the first time to carry out an information event held in Warsaw for the relevant representatives from Poland. The conference, which was held under the overall heading of “Higher Education and Social Policy” was attended by representatives of the Polish Education Ministry, the higher education institutions, the student unions and parliaments as well as the Polish Parliament. This event already saw the Deputy Rectors for Student Affairs agree to hold regular meetings on questions relating to “Higher Education and Social Policy”. The first meeting of experts was held during the Polish Conference of Deputy Rectors at Poznan University in June 1994. The main topics at this conference were fundamental questions regarding the structure of the higher education grants and scholarships system and the comparison of benefits and drawbacks of the individual grants and scholarship systems. The next regional meeting of Deputy Rectors was held in Kraków in Spring 1995.

In addition to these, talks between experts were held at the DSW at which participants had an opportunity to inform themselves on the specific structuring of autonomous, university or college independent administrative facilities responsible for the social sector at higher education institutions. The appropriate Länder (Federal State) legislation on the Student Affairs Associations (Studentenwerke) was translated. The first conceptional ideas were developed in the Polish Ministry and these were discussed during a regional meeting in Kraków. It is intended to develop regional facilities which are organised along the lines of the German Student Affairs Associations (Studentenwerke).

In order to implement this project, a conference of experts on the topic of “Re-constituting the statutory basis in the field of infrastructure” is being planned for 1996/97.

Several staff members and students from Polish social facilities comparable to the Student Affairs Associations participated in trinational meetings and seminars which were organised with the financial support of the German-French Youth Work (DFJW).

As was already the case for the German-French Youth Work, the DSW has, since early 1995, also acted as the central office for German Student Affairs Associations, organising the allocation of support funds provided by the German-Polish Youth Work (DPJW).

1995 saw the first nine meetings between German and Polish students and student affairs association staff receive support within this programme. On the one hand, new contacts were formed between German and Polish facilities, and, on the other, contacts were refreshed which had previously existed between the then economic

and social sections at the higher education institutions in the former GDR and the Polish universities.

Financial support from the DPJW was again approved for 1996, namely for the support of German-Polish cooperation projects.

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Slovak Republic

I. General situation

II. Higher Education funding
– Study fees

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students
1. Educational assistance
2. Student accommodation
3. Student catering

**IV. Cooperation to date/
Important addresses**

I. General situation

The Slovak education system has been undergoing a number of significant changes since 1990. For example, ideology was removed from the curriculum and foreign language teaching decisively promoted. The education system has thus evolved into an efficient tool for the promotion of a market-orientated economy as well as for the development of democracy in the Slovak Republic.

The Slovak Republic has around 5.3 million inhabitants. The number of students is around 111,150 of which around 37 % are female and 63 male. 3 % of the student body in the Slovak Republic are foreigners.

II. Higher Education funding

Study fees

Higher education institutions in the Slovak Republic do not yet charge Slovak students any study or tuition fees; by contrast, foreign students must pay study fees of SCR (Slovak Crown) 104,000.- (US-\$ 3,500.- to 7,000.-) per academic year.

Although study fees are not charged in the Slovak Republic, as mentioned above, each student must pay a registration fee of around SCR 100.- (approx. US-\$ 3.4) per semester as well as an examination fee of around SCR 300.- (US-\$ 10.2).

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

1. Educational assistance

There is no uniform system of support in the Slovak Republic. Rather, the faculties award scholarships on the basis of criteria which they themselves define. The focus of support is on indirect assistance.

Direct assistance for students is provided in the form of achievement-orientated scholarships, social grants and child benefit payments. Only around 5 % of the students receive an achievement-orientated scholarship, which averages out at SCR 300.- per month (approx. US-\$ 10.2). Upon application by individual students, the Dean at each higher education institution may award additional support up to a maximum level of SCR 1,000.- (approx. US-\$ 34.-).

Child benefit is paid to all parents for their children still in education, although only until they reach the age of 26. Deliberations are currently underway in the Slovak Republic on reforming the child benefit arrangement with a view to only paying out a family-dependent child benefit, meaning only to low-income families.

The focus of state support lies on indirect assistance for students. On the one hand, for instance, students do not pay any health insurance contributions, and, on the other, the costs for local public transport are only one sixth of the normal ticket price. In the past, tax allowances were also possible for students in employment. At present, students engaged in paid employment are taxed at the general tax rate and have to pay tax on 15 % of their income.

2. Student accommodation

There are 44 student halls of residence in the Slovak Republic with a total of 38,980 beds. The actual number of inhabitants is approx. 38,000. Around 17,500 of the inhabitants are female, and approx. 680 of the inhabitants are not students.

The rent for a bed in a student hall of residence averages out at SCR 350.- (around US-\$ 12.-) per month. Accommodation is in three or four-bed rooms.

The following allocation conditions govern allocation of a place in a hall of residence:

- the parental place of residence must be at least 200 km from the university or college town;
- the family must not be able to support the student child with a sum of more than SCR 1,000.- (approx. US-\$ 34.-) per month.

Accommodation on the private market is around ten to twelve times more expensive than in a student hall of residence.

3. Student catering

Students in the Slovak Republic can use any of the 36 refectories or one of the 46 cafeterias. The number of meals served amounts to around 42,000 and the seating capacity to 10,500. The price of the subsidised refectory meals is set by the faculties themselves.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

Detailed meetings of experts have also been held with representatives of the Slovak Republic on the question of the social infrastructure at their higher education institutions. The international DSW conferences held in Munich (1994) and Vienna (1995) were also attended by delegations from the Slovak Republic.

Furthermore, within the framework of its projects with the Franco-German Youth Work (DFJW), the Deutsches Studentenwerk organised an event in Dresden with French, Slovak and German students.

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Slovenia

I. General situation

– Access to Higher Education

II. Higher Education funding

– Study fees

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

1. Educational assistance
2. Student accommodation
3. Student catering
4. Job placement services for students

**IV. Cooperation to date/
Important addresses**

I. General situation

Slovenia has 35 higher education institutions or respectively independent faculties. The higher education institutions are divided amongst two university centres, namely in Ljubljana and Maribor. The University of Ljubljana, which was founded in 1919, today has 14 faculties, 3 academies and 4 special colleges affiliated to it at which 1,768 professors are active in teaching and research.

The second university town in Slovenia is Maribor. The University of Maribor is a very young university, having been founded in 1975. It has developed 8 faculties.

The Slovenian system of higher education was marked in recent years by numerous significant restructuring processes.

In the 1970s, the status of the institutions in the higher education sector was influenced by the decentralised model with which the so-called socialist self-administration system attempted to govern the legal status of commercial enterprises. The faculties and higher education institutions were regarded as independent units which were merely obliged to merge and form a university. All important decisions which related to academic responsibilities and tasks were independently and autonomously taken by the individual faculties and higher education institutions. At this time, the institution of a "university" could be described as merely a "self-administrative community" of various higher education institutions and not a specific academic establishment. The ensuing imbalance which this organisation form caused between weaker universities which threatened to break up and the independent and mighty faculties resulted in substantial problems in the 1980s.

In 1981 the "Act on Career-Orientated Education" was adopted. In accordance with this Act, both secondary schooling and higher education were to be strongly profession, vocation and career orientated, meaning that the higher education institutions primarily concentrated on teaching and largely neglected the field of research. The so-called "Slovenian Spring" in the late 1980s resulted in movements against this Higher Education Act and in favour reforms to the Slovenian education system. Upon application by the two university centres in Ljubljana and Maribor, these were commissioned by the National Assembly in 1988 with the preparation of guidelines and directives for a new draft Higher Education Act. In the course of the five-year preparation phase, the status and organisation of the universities was repeatedly amended and developed until they were finally – with the adoption of the new Higher Education Act in 1993 – equipped with far-reaching autonomy and the legal status of "proper universities" was also restored to them.

According to the new Slovenian Higher Education Act, state faculties are obliged to organise themselves into a university and its organisational committees are obliged to guarantee the academic level and quality of the education and training offered. Professional colleges can, on the other hand, work as independent higher education institutions. Private faculties additionally have the alternative choice of

either operating independently of the state universities or affiliating themselves to a state institution and thus adopting the latter's academic standards. Whilst the private faculties and professional colleges will, according to the Slovenian higher education system, primarily operate in the commercial sector, the state faculties will primarily concentrate on building up and expanding the degree, research and development programmes. Within the new system, the greatest responsibility regarding the quality of teaching and the academic standards in Slovenia's higher education system falls to the University Senate and the Higher Education Council. In the first year following adoption of the new Slovenian Higher Education Act, endeavours were primarily directed towards the reorganisation of the two existing major university centres in Ljubljana and Maribor. In December 1994, regulations were adopted aimed at supporting these endeavours; the model of universities as "self-administrative communities" was abolished. December 1994 saw the foundation of the Hotel Studies College in Portoroz, the first private higher education institution in Slovenia.

Slovenia has a population of around 2,002,000. The number of students is around 43,000; approx. 32,000 students are registered at the university centre in Ljubljana, and around 11,000 students at the university centre in Maribor. The proportion of male students is 44 %, that of female students 56 %. The proportion of foreign students is 1.6%.

Over the past five years, a strong increase in the number of students has been registered (1990/91 33,600 students; 1994/95 43,000 students). In the 1994/95 academic year, almost 30 % of all 19 year olds were registered.

Access to Higher Education

The admissions requirements for entrance into a Slovenian higher education institution are a senior secondary school-leaving certificate plus successful participation in the university entrance examination.

II. Higher Education funding

The higher education facilities receive their funding from the national budget of the Slovenian Republic, from study and tuition fees and from other service revenue.

Study fees

Study and tuition fees are not charged to Slovenian students. On the other hand, students from other countries must pay study fees amounting to between SIT

199,000.– and SIT 265,380 (Slovenian Tolar) (US-\$ 1,575.– to 2,100.–) per annum. This annual fee includes a health insurance premium. In exceptional cases, studies by foreign students in Slovenia are free of charge, namely when this is stipulated in bilateral or multilateral agreements and contracts, or when foreign students receive a scholarship from the government of Slovenia or from one of its ministries. The level of the study fees is set by the Ministry for Education and Sport. The study fees are collected and administrated by the universities themselves.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

Slovenia has several institutions and facilities which are committed to a certain extent either to the social or to the economic interests of students. Particularly important and responsible for all student affairs, as well as acting as the regional contact office for all questions relating to economic and social support for students, are the student organisations in the two Slovenian university centres, the SOU Ljubljana and the SOU Maribor. Together with all the local student clubs and student interest groups, the SOU Ljubljana and the SOU Maribor form the "Slovenian Student Union – (SSU)".

Back in the 1970s – and as a consequence of the one-party system in Slovenia – students were already permitted a certain degree of self-administration. For example, even in those days, students had – if only limited – influence in the field of higher education sport, culture, media, etc.. Although the student body itself enjoyed a degree of independence in these areas, the student organisations which were integrated into the ZSMS (Union of Socialist Youth) in the wake of the 1973 student movement, had to bear a certain degree of subordination to the education system of the day. During the period of political and economic change, the influence of the student body in organising its own economic and social situation became ever greater. In 1989, the student organisations at the universities of Ljubljana and Maribor were re-founded and since then have been gaining ever greater influence and status. After lengthy disputes with the government and the higher education institutions, 1994 saw legislation adopted by the National Assembly in which the legal status of the student organisation was once again anchored in the statutes. The student organisations are now public institutions on the basis of special legislation.

1. Educational assistance

The Ministry for Family and Social Affairs is responsible for the field of educational assistance.

Each year, some 58,000 grants are awarded. Of these, around 11,000 (approx. 25–30 %) are awarded to students, the rest being awarded to school pupils.

The state grants are solely awarded on the basis of social criteria, meaning on the basis of the income level of the student's parents. Each student can apply for a state grant by submitting the relevant form in his or her home town. The local "labour office" examines the financial situation of the parents. If the per capita income of the family exceeds SIT 170,000.– (US-\$ 1,342.–) gross per month, then the application is turned down there and then. If this income ceiling is not exceeded, then the application is forwarded to Ljubljana for further processing.

In addition to and independently of these state social grants, purely achievement-orientated scholarships and awards are provided to particularly talented students, both by private as well as state institutions. Furthermore, there are the so-called corporate scholarships which companies make available to potential staff.

So far, the student organisations have had no influence on the type and distribution of the grants and scholarships. The student organisations SOU Ljubljana and SOU Maribor do however maintain small lump-sum payments for financially particularly disadvantaged students who must apply to receive these.

2. Student accommodation¹

The system of student accommodation is organised by the public student organisation called "Studentski dmovi v Ljubljana (SDL)", which was founded by the SOU Ljubljana together with the University of Ljubljana.

In 1993/94, some 32,000 students in Ljubljana (11,000 in Maribor) had around 7,000 (2,000) hall of residence places or beds available. This means around 25–27% of the students in Ljubljana could be allocated a place in a hall of residence. Most rooms are equipped as twin rooms. Whilst the newer houses have one kitchen/bathroom facility per two or three room unit, sanitary facilities in the older halls of residence are on average used by the inhabitants of five rooms (10 persons). The price for a place in a hall of residence differs in accordance with the standard of the hall and averages out at between SIT 6,785.– (US-\$ 54.–) and SIT 4,240.– (US-\$ 34.–) per month.

60 % of the actual costs are covered by the student rent payments. The remaining 40 % of the actual costs are covered by the state. In Ljubljana there are 25 hall of residence blocks located on around 103,000 m² of land. The owner of these houses is the state, which also contracts out the construction work. The halls of residence

¹ The figures in brackets apply to Maribor.

are administrated by SDL. The rent contracts are also concluded directly between the students and the SDL. The rent collected by the SDL remains with the student organisation specifically for the purpose of redevelopment projects and repair costs. It is not permitted to make investments with the rent payments.

On average, twice as many applications for acceptance in a hall of residence are submitted as places are actually available. The allocation criteria for places are therefore based on two criteria:

1. The distance criterion:

Students whose parents live within 25 km of the university town cannot be considered at all for the acceptance procedures.

2. The social component:

Parental income is seen as a further criterion. The per-capita income must not exceed SIT 170,000.– (approx. US-\$ 1,343.–) gross per month.

Rent periods are not limited in Slovenia as they are, for example, in Germany. The students can live in the hall of residence up to completion of their studies. The proportion of foreign students in the halls of residence is minimal, probably because the proportion of foreign students registered at Slovenian institutions is generally low as a result of the lectures being held in Slovenian.

3. Student catering

Student catering is based on the so-called "Voucher System". Some 51 private catering companies (including 16 canteens of which 10 are located in various faculties and 5 within the halls of residence) have been selected by the SOUs on the basis of specific criteria, such as the quality of the meal, the nutritional value, the hygienic preparation of the food, and the price, and have been contracted by the student organisations. Students can purchase the monthly food vouchers in the SOU offices which are valid for 20 meals. The average price per voucher, which the student has to pay, is currently SIT 150.– to 170.– (US-\$ 1.20 to 1.35). The actual price for a midday meal is around SIT 430.– (US-\$ 3.40) however. Each meal is state-subsidised with SIT 210.– (US-\$ 1.65). The difference between the actual costs of a meal and the price paid by the student plus the state subsidy is booked as a commercial discount by the individual catering facility. The 20 meals per voucher are not transferable to the next month and the vouchers may only be used for warm meals. Approx. 14,000 – 16,000 students in Ljubljana (meaning 50–60 %) use the voucher system each month. Only around 4.2 % of the students in Ljubljana have never purchased a food voucher. A total of around 300,000 vouchers are sold every month.

The Voucher System was approved in 1992 as a limited, fixed-term SOU project and has meanwhile gained a firm place in the national budget. The Ministry for Fami-

ly and Social Affairs is responsible for the financial support of this system. At present, the Ministry makes a total of SIT 8,480,000.- (US-\$ 67,100.-) available for the student catering sector. Payment of the funds is made twice-monthly via the SOUs on the basis of the invoices received from the private catering companies. Consequently, the restaurants basically pay in advance until the funds are reimbursed by the Ministry. The government now plans to discontinue this principle of "good will" in the field of student catering by placing the subsidy system for this sector on a statutory footing. Together with the SOUs, it is planned to annually assess and set the level of financial resources available for student catering on the basis of student numbers.

4. Job placement services for students

The student job placement service is also organised and administrated by the SOUs. The Student Job Service of the SOU Ljubljana employs 20 full-time staff. Each student and each company can register on the computer file for a fee of SIT 1. Students have to complete an identity card for registration which is then, where necessary, sent to the requesting company. If the job placement is successful, a contract is signed between the company and the SOU. The company receives the student's identity card via the SOUs and must note down wage payments on it and return it to the SOUs. The wages are paid to the student via the student organisations, which set up an account for each student. For this "service", the SOU receives 10 % of the wage payment to the student from the company. The company, for its part, receives a tax saving from the state which is equal to the amount of this 10 % payment. The income which the SOUs make from the job placement service represents one of the greatest financial sources for the student organisations (85 %).

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

Back in 1994, the DSW was already able to make contact with the Slovenian student organisation SOU Ljubljana and invite a delegation of six representatives of this organisation to an information visit to Germany. In Spring 1995, a German delegation informed itself in Slovenia on the activities of the SOUs. Specific consultancy sessions and discussions supported the ongoing development of these organisations.

So far, state grants in Slovenia have been solely awarded on the basis of social criteria (cf. III.1). The ministry plans to make the future awarding of state grants depen-

dent not only on the social component, but also on achievement criteria. However, it is unclear at the moment as to which procedure is to be applied in order to monitor and assess students' achievements. Furthermore, deliberations are underway on introducing state loans on the basis of the bank model to run parallel with the grants.

For the future, the SOU Ljubljana is working towards the establishment of a network of student refectories. In order to expand its know-how in this field (and in the field of student accommodation), the SOUs plan and seek increased cooperation with other European institutions.

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Czech Republic

I. General situation

– Access to Higher Education

II. Higher Education funding

– Study fees

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

1. Educational assistance
2. Student accommodation
3. Student catering

**IV. Cooperation to date/
Important addresses**

I. General situation

The development of higher education policy and of the higher education sector in the Czech Republic can look on a long tradition which extends back to 1348 when the oldest university in Central Europe, namely the Charles University in Prague, was founded.

Technical developments of the time played a significant role in the foundation of the Czech School of Engineering in 1707, which was eventually transformed into a higher education institution in 1863. 1979 saw the above-mentioned institution reformed into the Czech Technical University.

A further significant period in the development of higher education began in 1945 with the liberation of Czechoslovakia. In the 1945–1950 period, an additional university as well as further higher education institutions with various subject orientations were founded.

1948–1949 saw the Communist Party gain increasing political influence on the state. The development of higher education policy was influenced by the party's ideologies and policies. From 1949 to 1990 higher education was essentially controlled by the state authorities, whereby research and teaching were increasingly influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideologies. Although the number of students increased during this time, the number of students in proportion to the overall population was far lower than in other comparable European countries. The network of all institutions in the higher education sector was extended to include the regional centres, with buildings as well as student halls of residence being erected by the state. Nevertheless, this development was not sufficient to meet public demand. Dissatisfaction with the development of higher education policies increased amongst the population, especially in the course of the 1980s, and finally led to the dissolution of the Communist Party's political power. Students made a not inconsiderable contribution to this development.

1990 saw fundamental changes implemented in the field of higher education. The new Higher Education Act which came into force in May 1990 underlined the self-administration of higher education and greatly restricted the control of state authorities over these institutions. The Czech Education Ministry is now responsible for ensuring that the conditions for the ongoing development of higher education institutions are provided and, moreover, for distributing state funds to the higher education institutions.

Whilst the Czech schoolsystem knows a number of private facilities, responsibility for the higher education sector remains exclusively under state authority.

The Czech Republic has 23 universities, whereby recent years have seen the creation of a number of new faculties – also partly with new subject areas. The universities and faculties are spread throughout the territory of the Czech Republic, although most facilities are located in the capital, Prague, and in Brno. The 23 uni-

versities are all subordinated to the Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports and are structured as follows: 8 full universities, 4 technical universities, 1 veterinary medicine university and 1 economics university, 2 chemical engineering universities, 2 agriculture and forestry universities, 1 college of education and 4 academies of art. Higher education institutions are divided into faculties. There are a total of 98 faculties, whereby engineering leads with 27 faculties followed by economics with 16 faculties. Furthermore, there are 3 law faculties. The higher education institutions gained a great amount of self-administrative competence with the new Act. Great significance is now placed on the Council of Higher Education Institutions. This Council is a self-administrative body of higher education facilities and is composed of representatives of the Academic Senates found at all higher education institutions in the Czech Republic. The Council voices its opinion on proposals made by the Education Ministry regarding questions of importance to higher education. With a total population of 10.3 million, the number of students is 115,000; of these 2,500 are foreign students, 11,000 are so-called "part-time students" and 100,000 are "undergraduate students". A large proportion of women have always studied at the Czech universities. Their proportion amongst all students is currently around 45 %, although this figure differs from one faculty to the next.

Access to Higher Education

Traditionally there has always been a great interest in higher education in the Czech Republic. After successful conclusion of secondary schooling with an appropriate school-leaving certificate, prospective students register for the entrance examination. Since 1990, the higher education institutions have been free to decide for themselves on the acceptance of students. The selection procedure consequently varies from one university to the next and corresponds with the content and specifics of subjects taught at the respective institution. Usually, the exam will comprise a written test on general knowledge and a language test. As a rule, students will be required to take a second part which consists of a selection interview.

The application procedure and the admissions requirements are essentially the same for disabled students and non-disabled students. However, the higher education institutions may in exceptional cases admit disabled students who have not fulfilled the usual requirements for higher education admission to their institutions, if their school-leaving grades and their other school work indicate that they will also be able to carry out university study.

Each prospective student has the right to apply to several higher education institutions or faculties. Consequently, many more applications are received each year than there are prospective students. The interest on the part of the prospective students in individual academic orientations or subjects very often differs substantially. Faculties which do not receive an excessive number of applications will therefore, in individual cases, dispense with the usual entrance examination, if the

applicant can prove that he or she achieved good results at school. If the school-leaving certificate was gained at a foreign school, then the institution's Rector decides on whether or not it can be accepted.

II. Higher Education funding

Up until 1995, the costs of the higher education institutions were completely covered by the national budget, meaning that students were not required to pay study or tuition fees. The financial resources for higher education were completely set by the government and parliament and were allocated to the individual institutions by the Education Ministry. These funds included appropriations for investments, professorial salaries, scholarships, etc., which were all specifically defined and could not be used for purposes other than those for which they had been earmarked. The overall financial resources for higher education exceeded CZK 5 thousand million (US-\$ 1.- = approx. CZK 27.-) in 1990. The new Higher Education Act also identified the national budget as the main source of funding for higher education. Furthermore, the institutions are also allowed to earn revenue from other activities.

Study fees

At the end of 1994 agreement was reached between the Ministry and the student representatives on the introduction of study and tuition fees as of the 1995/96 academic year amounting to between CZK 3,000.- and 10,000.- (US-\$ 110.- to 370.-). However, this will not apply to students already engaged in their studies, consequently only applying to those who start their studies as of this academic year. Foreign students will be charged study fees of between CZK 94,400.- and 242,800.- (US-\$ 3,500.- to 9,000.-) per academic year.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

There is no regional contact office responsible for all questions relating to the economic and social support of students in the Czech Republic. Responsibility for questions of educational assistance, student accommodation, student catering and cultural affairs is split between the Ministry and the universities as well as the student organisations.

The new 1990 Higher Education Act equipped students with rights which they did not have under previous legislation. For example, students can now form their own parliaments or unions with which they are at liberty to represent their interests, rights and opinions, as well as independent associations (clubs, unions, professional bodies) at the higher education institutions.

Indeed, all higher education institutions have student organisations which are open to each and every student. An important one of these is the Czech Student Union which operates student halls of residence, hostels and restaurants and also organises cultural activities.

1. Educational assistance

Czech students have the right to a state grant or scholarship. These awards differ between an achievement-orientated scholarship which is dependent upon the study results, and a social grant which is paid for social or health-related reasons. The decisive factor for the level of the payment is, on the one hand, the student's achievements and, on the other, the degree of social need. Over and above this, the institutions themselves are able to provide support in the form of subsidies towards accommodation and catering. The level of these subsidies and the detailed conditions under which they are awarded are defined by the corresponding directives of the higher education institutions and by the respective award decrees issued by the ministry responsible. The grants and scholarships system is also likely to undergo amendment in the near future. It is intended that in future the so-called social grants will be paid to the families via the local authority offices responsible for these questions. It has been assessed that around 25 % of all students will receive such a grant. In this case, the funds required for such payments would no longer come from the budget of the Education Ministry, but rather would be included in that of the Social Affairs Ministry. A final decision has not yet been reached regarding this change of responsibility.

In general, the trend in the social sector in the Czech higher education landscape can be seen to be moving away from material support towards more financial support. For example, in future students are to be able to decide for themselves which services they wish to use their state support for.

Health insurance and basic medical care are free of charge for Czech students. As all other citizens, students, too, must themselves pay a proportion of their medical costs, for example, towards prescriptions.

The Czech government also awards scholarships to students from other countries. The level of these scholarships is set at such a low level, however, that it only covers the costs for the absolute basic essentials. So far, foreign students have had no additional opportunity to receive financial support, grants or subsidies. However,

these students are protected by the national social welfare network in the Czech Republic. For example, they can make use of the medical care provided by the student "health care centres" as well as other local or specific medical facilities.

Costs incurred by those foreign students who receive a scholarship are covered by the "general health insurance company". Foreign students without a scholarship can take out health insurance for a monthly premium of around CZK 810.- (US-\$ 30.-).

Students from other countries can apply for a full-time work permit in the semester vacations. However, they are only allowed to take up part-time work during the semesters.

2. Student accommodation

There are 109 student halls of residence with approx. 57,000 beds in the Czech Republic.

In 1993, the allocation conditions for acceptance in a student hall of residence were changed. Only those students now have a right to a place in a student hall of residence who live outside of the university town.

(Note: The amendment to the allocation system has resulted in students who actually live in the same town in which their higher education institution is located changing their official place of residence to a location outside of the town in order to gain the right to a place in a hall of residence).

Up until 1993, the rent for the halls of residence was strongly subsidised. However, due to the financial cutbacks in the national budget, the state subsidies for hall of residence places have been discontinued and students no longer only pay a part of the actual costs, as they did up until 1993, but rather must now pay the full sum. The average costs for a hall of residence place are currently approx. CZK 400.- (US-\$ 15.-) per month.

Additional revenue is furthermore earned by offering the hall of residence rooms as accommodation for tourist groups during the semester vacation periods.

The halls of residence generally have twin rooms, whereby four persons (two rooms) then share the sanitary facilities and a kitchen unit.

As far as the halls of residence are concerned, pressure is already being put on co-operation between the higher education institutions. Since smaller units do not have their own halls of residence, cooperation agreements between the higher education institutions currently have to be concluded in order to be able to provide a balanced provision of hall of residence places for students. The first steps have already been made here towards merging the social facilities in the respective towns or regions. The administration and organisation of the student accommodation sector are primarily undertaken by the appropriate departments within the higher education in-

stitutions, although the Czech Student Union is also involved. Privately operated student halls of residence are unknown as yet.

3. Student catering

There are refectories both within the higher education institutions and within the halls of residence in the Czech Republic. At present, the universities have more than 58 refectories with approx. 17,000 seats and a daily capacity of 77,000 meals.

The refectories are administrated by 17 variously-organised directorates. These administrations, which are operated as ancillary divisions of the higher education institutions, employ a total staff of 1,400.

Each student has a right to 2 main meals per day. The price for a meal has been set by the state at around CZK 4.-. The state subsidies cover all wages, material and operating costs as well as expenditure for required investments. 1993 saw more than 5.5 million meals, meaning breakfast, lunch, evening meal and cold snacks, served. The largest administrative unit in the country, the Charles University in Prague, has 11 catering facilities which served more than 2 million meals to around 23,000 users in 1993. In addition to the refectories, students can also take their meals from the buffet service counters and the breakfast rooms. The additional revenue from these services is credited to the administration. Additional revenue is also earned by renting out the rooms and premises during the semester vacation periods for the purposes of events such as conferences, congresses and festivities.

The refectories are till now state subsidised, so that students need only pay a proportion of the actual costs. The prices in the refectories have however been subject to continual rise in recent times. It is being considered whether all the subsidies paid by the state for the social field should be paid out directly to the students within the framework of educational assistance funding, after which students could then be charged cost-covering prices.

At government level, new legislation or new directives are being considered in order to balance out the great differences between the smaller and the larger higher education institutions and thus to encourage cooperation between the higher education institutions in the field of social facilities and services. The catering facilities are still completely state maintained. There are no private tenant facilities.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

From 23rd January to 28th January, 1995, a delegation of six representatives from the Ministry, the higher education institutions and the student body came to Leipzig and Bonn for information events. The focus of these events lay on "The restructuring process for the social infrastructure at higher education institutions in the former GDR" as well as the legislation relating to the Student Affairs Associations (Studentenwerke) in the individual federal states (Länder).

A continuation of this cooperation with the relevant representatives from the Czech Republic is planned for 1996/97 with a country-orientated conference of experts being held in Prague. The Czech Republic is preparing new legislation which aims to govern the support for students' social affairs and interests. In November 1994, the Deutsches Studentenwerk was already able to hold talks with the Deputy Minister responsible for the social sector on the concrete structuring of this legislation. Furthermore, a concept for the establishment or transformation of the economic and social facilities is under preparation. For this reason, the above-mentioned conference will concentrate on the following topics:

- the current state of reform deliberations regarding the reorganisation of the social infrastructure in the Czech Republic;
- the restructuring of the educational assistance system;
- the current status of the debate in the Czech Republic on the introduction of study fees.

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Hungary

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I. General situation

Whilst the public discussions on the necessity for far-reaching reform measures in the field of higher education policy already began to mount back in the mid-1980s, the fall of Hungarian ruling party head, János Kádár, in May 1988 heralded in a fundamental reorientation within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and also throughout society. Thus, in 1987, the Rectors of the universities and higher education institutions with university status already informally gathered to form the national "Hungarian Conference of Rectors" which was soon to begin to exert an influence on the higher education policy of the country. At the same time as the open crisis of the Kádár regime, Spring 1988 saw the first autonomous political youth and student organisations form. These form the roots of the "National Higher Education Association for the Protection of Student Interests" (HÖKOSZ) – an umbrella organisation of student parliaments and unions whose objective it is to completely restructure the higher education institutions as well as to increase substantially state appropriations to the higher education sector.

March 1990 initially saw the then valid Education Act amended and those legal provisions abolished which were bound to the former socio-economic structures. Furthermore, the legal principles for the foundation of private higher education institutions were created and state intervention into the autonomy of the higher education institutions reduced to a necessary minimum. In Autumn 1990, a commission composed of representatives of the higher education institutions was commissioned by the Education Ministry with drawing up an initial concept for a Higher Education Act. Finally, the Act on the Higher Education System of Hungary was passed in July 1993 and came into force on 1st September, 1993.

However, the new Higher Education Act was soon the subject of criticism. Contradictory regulations and unclear divisions of areas of competence led to confusion in various areas. For this reason, a six-person committee composed of representatives from the fields of higher education and politics was appointed in December 1995, commissioned with reforming the Hungarian Higher Education Act. The committee will above all tackle the questions of funding, teaching structures, the merging of institutions as well as management of the higher education institutions. Their proposals are to be used to accelerate the modernisation of the higher education institutions, despite ever shorter public funds. The new draft act was passed by the Government in May 1996 and forwarded to Parliament.

In the run-up to this draft, the Hungarian Conference of Rectors had already drawn up a so-called "Integration Paper" which foresees the introduction of a step-for-step adaptation of modern management structures in the higher education sector. The key elements in this paper are the integration of the higher education institutions, stronger achievement and performance structures as well as the funding of the higher education institutions on the basis of standardised costs per student.

The benefits of merging institutions are presented along with other elements involved in redeveloping the higher education sector and institutions.

At present, Hungary has 88 higher education facilities. Of these, 56 institutions are state maintained, 4 are privately operated and 28 are Church maintained.

Access to Higher Education

Given a total population of currently 10 million people, 133,956 students are registered at Hungarian higher education institutions. Around 18,000 staff (including 7,000 professors and lecturers) are available to provide teaching and research to these students. The number of students in Hungary has grown by around 60 % over the past 5 years. Nevertheless, higher education participation in each enrolment year is only around half that found in Western countries. Whilst 11 % of an age group entered into higher education in the late 1980s, the figure now is 17 %. By the year 2000, it is estimated that the figure will have risen to around 25 % of an age group entering into higher education. As a result of the significant increases in student numbers, a strict selection process is currently being applied to higher education admission. The admissions qualification is based firstly on the grade achieved at grammar school and secondly on a state-organised written entrance examination followed by a selection interview carried out by the university. In 1994, around 54,000 students nationwide were rejected in this selective admissions process and 35,000 students were accepted.

II. Higher Education funding

In the era of the state-socialist planned economy (from 1950) higher education institutions received state appropriations on the basis of centrally-determined priorities. With the collapse of the economic system and, since 1990, the introduction of the possibility to found privately- or Church-maintained higher education institutions which also have a right to claim state support, a new system became necessary in which the funding of the higher education institutions could be bound to the number of students and to the subjects being studied. Consequently, one central responsibility for the higher education reform process is that it brings about a fundamental renewal of the higher education funding system. The new Higher Education Act which came into force on 1st January, 1995, and covered higher education funding created the legal provisions for an achievement-orientated deployment of available state resources. It also gave the higher education institutions the legal basis on which to earn their own revenue by offering additional, partly tax-free, services, undertaking commercial activities and collecting donations. This extra rev-

enue could then be used to consolidate the central support received from budgetary appropriations.

Study fees

Furthermore, the new Higher Education Act also introduced general study and tuition fees as a further source of income for the universities. Each higher education institution is at liberty to set its own fee level within the framework of state-defined parameters. In addition to the so-called basic study fees of FT 2,000.- (approx. US-\$ 14.4) per month, the universities are allowed to charge further "special fees" up to a maximum level of FT 8,000.- (approx. US-\$ 57.6) per month. This means that the worst-case scenario for students would entail study fees of FT 10,000.- (approx. US-\$ 77.2) per month (by comparison the average salary of a lecturer is currently FT 43,000.- (approx. US-\$ 309.-) per month, a doctoral scholarship is around FT 18,000.- (approx. US-\$ 130.-) per month). The right of the universities to charge study and tuition fees, which is contained in the new Higher Education Act, has led to numerous student strikes which initially resulted in only the "basic study fees" being charged as of 1st September, 1995. The introduction of "special fees" as state higher education institutions is expected on 1997. Non-state higher education institutions are already charging these fees.

Since September 1995, Hungarian students have paid average study fees amounting to FT 25,000.- (US-\$ 180.-) per annum. These payments partly remain with the individual universities and are used for predefined purposes to fund appropriate construction measures or refurbishment and redevelopment work at the universities. In order to ensure a system of "equal opportunity-orientated compensation for study fees paid to the state higher education facilities", the new Higher Education Act provides for, amongst other elements, exemption from study fees for students from weak social backgrounds. A government decree also provides for study fee exemption for the best students. Around 20% of all students are currently exempted from the payment of study fees on the basis of this provision.

Along with the introduction of study fees, the government cut back the budget for the universities. These budget savings are to be used as from January 1996 to modernise the universities and higher education institutions.

III. Organisation of the social infrastructure for students

Hungary has no regional contact office responsible for all questions relating to the economic and social support of students that can be compared with the Student Affairs Associations in Germany (Studentenwerke). Rather, responsibility for the

individual areas which affect the social affairs of students are divided up between the state, the university and the student organisations. Questions of educational assistance and student catering are the responsibility of the universities in collaboration with the HÖKOSZ, the association of local student parliaments which has 106 offices and around 135,000 members at all higher education institutions in the country. The student halls of residence are almost exclusively administrated by the higher education institutions.

1. Educational assistance

The bank models which were occasionally discussed in Hungary failed to establish themselves. Given an inflation rate of approximately 20–25 %, interest charges at this level could neither be subsidised by the state nor afforded by students.

1990 saw the system for distributing grants and scholarships liberalised and a state educational assistance system developed with the following award criteria:

The state pays each university a sum for each registered student. This grant of FT 65,000.– (approx. US-\$ 466.–) is paid for each ten-month period. This amounts to FT 5,417.– (approx. US-\$ 40.–) per month, which is half the minimum wage of a worker. Consequently, the grants are not paid directly by the state to the students, but are rather distributed to each student by the student organisation located at each university. The state does not stipulate or define any guidelines for the awarding of these grants and each university is at liberty to decide for itself. The proposals for the grant award principles are submitted by the student representation to the universities and must be taken into consideration by these.

However, the new educational assistance system will be almost solely based on the following three standardised principles:

- a basic sum for all students;
- an increased amount for social reasons (social criterion); and
- an achievement component for fulfilment of the academic progress defined in the study plan with which the level of payments can be increased.

The definition and assessment of social need on the part of students is still proving difficult, since the income tax return system currently used in Hungary is still flawed. However, at the moment this form of proof is the only objective criterion for presenting the social situation of families or respectively students.

In addition to the above-mentioned educational assistance, each Hungarian student also receives indirect support in the form of reduced fare tickets (50 %) for the use of all public transport as well as so-called book vouchers.

Whilst the faculty commissions stipulated the required book purchases up until 1990 and made the requisite financial means directly available for the officially ordered books, the liberalisation of the grant award system also released this so-called "book

grant". Now, each student receives a book voucher and can then immediately decide for himself or herself which books are to be bought.

2. Student accommodation

The administration of the 100 or so Hungarian halls of residence is carried out by the higher education institutions. A total of 35,000 hall of residence places are available for the just under 134,000 students in Hungary.

Of those students who apply for a room in a student hall of residence, only around 20 % receive a place. For example, 1994 saw 900 of the 1,600 first semester students apply for a place in a hall of residence. Of these, only 240 applicants could actually be offered a place.

All rooms are equipped with 2 – 4 beds. Up until August 1995, each student paid a standard, state-defined price of FT 600.– (approx. US-\$ 4.3) per place per month, regardless of whether this bed is in a two or four bed room. Since September 1995, the rent level may vary according to the quality of accommodation, although it may not exceed FT 3,000.– (approx. US-\$ 21.–) per month. The actual costs for a bed amount to around FT 4,500.– (approx. US-\$ 32.5) per month. The government is therefore endeavouring to reduce the costs so that these can be covered by the students' rent payments.

The allocation of hall of residence places is undertaken by the respective regional student hall of residence administration, whereby the distribution of beds is based on the following three criteria:

- the student's achievements at the university;
- the social situation of the student's parents and
- the distance between the student's parental home and the university.

During the semester break (non-lecture period) places in the halls of residence may also be rented out on a private basis. The rent payment is then made to the university or higher education institution, whereby a certain percentage is allocated to the student hall of residence administration.

3. Student catering

Essentially, the universities are responsible for the organisation and administration of the student catering facilities. In exceptional cases, agreements may be concluded with private tenants in this sector, although these give the universities a substantial say over the tenants as regards pricing policy and calculation. The agreements exceptionally concluded with private tenants will generally run for one year only.

Refectory meals are not directly state-subsidised, meaning that the refectory must work on an almost cost-covering basis (with the exception of operating and staff costs). Consequently, the meal prices are not substantially lower than those of private caterers.

Recent times have seen a drop in the services of the catering sector. Although the kitchen capacity – for example at Szeged University – is designed for an average production of 4,000 meals per day, only around 900 students take their meals in the refectory. A higher degree of “customer orientation” is planned for the field of student catering in the future.

IV. Cooperation to date/ Important addresses

Hungary, too, plans the further development of the social infrastructure sector at its higher education institutions along the lines of independent public facilities according to the model of the Student Affairs Associations in Germany (Studentenwerke).

In March 1995, the President and the Deputy Secretary General of the Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW) informed themselves in the relevant Hungarian Ministry on the current reform deliberations for higher education and for the higher education social sector in Hungary and advised the competent Hungarian representatives on the possibilities of setting up and expanding the social infrastructure for students. Support for the student organisations in the creation of student unions and parliaments is also an important part of the counselling and advice which the DSW can provide. For this purpose, a delegation of 20 representatives of the Hungarian student organisation FEKOSZ were invited to Germany to an advisory seminar concentrating on “Essential questions of managing and administrating student halls of residence” in April 1995. Furthermore, individual meetings of experts with the competent representatives from Hungary were held on the possibilities of expanding the social infrastructure.

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Tables

I. Proportion of students in relation to the total population

Country	Population (in millions)	Students (total; in thousand; all institutions of higher education)	Percentage of students of the total number of population in %	Percentage of women of the total number of students in %
Bulgaria	8.5	250	2.1	≈ 50
Czech Republic	10.3	115	1.1	45
Estonia	1.5	25	1.7	51.8
Hungary	10.0	134	1.3	52
Latvia	2.6	36	1.4	60
Lithuania	3.7	53	1.4	60
Poland	39	750	1.9	47
Slovak Republic	5.3	111	2.1	37
Slovenia	2.0	43	2.1	56

II. Study fees

Country	Students (total; in thousand; all institutions of higher education)	Study fees in ECU for home students (There are different regulations for foreign students.)
Bulgaria	250	*
Czech Republic	115	88-296
Estonia	25	no
Hungary	134	Ø 337/year***
Latvia	36	384-480
Lithuania	53	**
Poland	750	no
Slovak Republic	111	no
Slovenia	43	no

* Half of the Bulgarian students pays no study fees (government-paid tuition quota), the other half pays between 163 and 272 ECU per year.

** Students who have obtained an state financed (planned) university place, do not have to pay study fees; except for students with poor study performance, these students have to pay a part of the study fees (about 55.20 ECU per semester). Students who are enrolled without having obtained a state financed university place and other persons attending lectures have to pay full study fees, currently about 160 ECU per semester.

*** Students from a low social background can be exempted from study fees or get a reduction.

III. State of student accommodation

Country	Students (total; in thousand; all institutions of higher education)	Halls of residence from studentenwerke, Universities, Colleges, foundations		Private rooms
		Accommodation rate (in %)	Rent in ECU (per month)	Rent in ECU (per month)
Bulgaria	250	30	5.50	27
Czech Republic	115	45.7	Ø 12	29-146
Estonia	25	50	4-10.40	33.60-136
Hungary	134	50	16.28	-
Latvia	36	15	3.60	22-44
Lithuania	53	-	2.80-3.60	-
Poland	750	-	-	-
Slovak Republic	111	34	Ø 10	14-47
Slovenia	43	25	27-43.50	70-100

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