



Ministerial agreement on portability of grants & loans

Berlin communiqué (19 September 2003) the Ministers of Education reaffirmed:

“ ... to remove all obstacles to mobility within the European Higher Education Area, and
... to take the necessary steps to enable the portability of national loans and grants ... ”



O N D E R
O N C S U M
L T U U R
N E T E M
S C H A P

Nessie

Network for Experts of Student Support In Europe

- Informal network
- www.nessie.nu



Attractiveness of student support systems

O N D E R
U C S U M
L T U U R
N E T E M
S C H A P

- **G**enerosity: how many get how much?
- **O**pportunities for portability of support
- **C**an foreign students claim support ?



Attractiveness of student support systems

O N D E R
U C S U M
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Forms of support:

- Direct support: grants/scholarships, loans
- Indirect support: family allowance, tax benefits

Portability: short-term study abroad

Almost all support available for short-term study abroad: **direct and indirect support**

But: ... study visit in framework of the study program followed at the home institution

Portability: long-term study abroad

Indirect support generally portable for long-term study abroad (family allowances and tax benefits)

But ... portability of direct support often limited (grants & loans)

Student support: position of EU-students

What are the conditions to claim support in another EU-country ?

EU-employees (ex-employees or self-employed) and their children: are treated similar to national citizens

Other EU-students: when studying in another member state, they should have sufficient means of subsistence (Student-directive)
> no need for student support from the hosting country

Tensions: national policies - ECJ decisions

ECJ stretches the non-discrimination principle

Major challenge of the Bidar case:
can one claim maintenance support in another
member state if not gainfully employed ?

If ECJ allows such claims, it implies a major threat :

EU students may claim in the hosting countries with
generous direct support systems (and use indirect
support from home country)

Tensions: ECJ decisions and portability

Another issue:

Can other EU-citizens use support for study abroad ?

EU- employees and their children basically can, if:

- national students are allowed so
(not widely possible in most countries)
- if they meet certain residence requirements
(see Nordic countries)

But, this can lead to unintended use of support
(U-turn: using foreign support to study in home country)

Tensions: ECJ decisions and portability

In addition... Do the residence requirements stroke with the principle of non-discrimination ?

All such possibilities may lead to unintended use of national student support and make governments reluctant to expand the portability of support !

Portability: experiences with current arrangements

Most countries can live with current situation

But, they keep opportunities for portability limited
→ risks (of unintended use) are still small

And they realistically accept the difficulties with portability in the current EU-policy setting

Portability: intentions for the future

Quite some countries would like to expand portability:
Austria, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, Latvia,
Lithuania, Scotland and Slovakia
(in the Nordic countries already the case)

Fear that a broad interpretation of EU-citizenship will
lead to “student finance tourism”

Portability: intentions for the future

Nowadays a mix-up of the home- and hosting-country perspective in the financial responsibility for students

Call for a stronger coordinated policy-approach

Dutch EU-presidency put this issue on EU-agenda

EU-Commission installs legal expert-group that will explore this problem

Questions: where do we go from here ?

Home- or hosting-country perspective ?

Residency requirement a potential way ?

A role for an EU-scholarship program for full-time study abroad ?