

# NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LEARNING AND TEACHING IN EUROPE

A study from the LOTUS project

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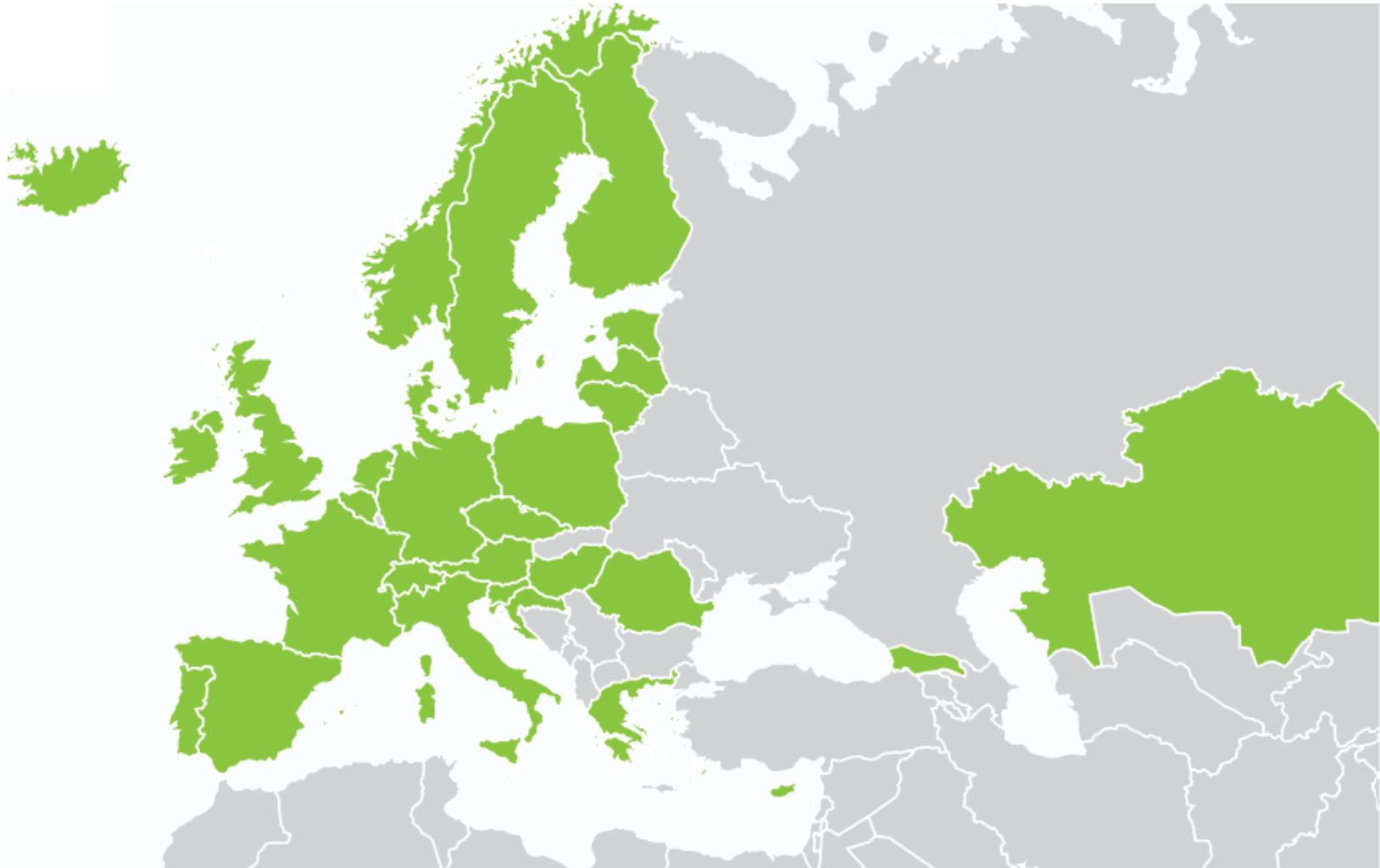
Increased attention to L&T in the past years:

- HEIs establishing more systematic and strategic approaches, with dedicated structures (Trends 2018)
- Attention at European policy level:
  - ✓ Paris + Rome Communiqués and Recommendations to national authorities endorsed in 2018
  - ✓ Part of European University Initiative
- 2018 study (EFFECT): state of play at national level and examples of good practices



# A study of national developments in learning and teaching

- 36 national experts interviewed between Spring and Summer 2021
- 30 EHEA countries
- Including 24 EU countries
- Semi-structured questionnaire
- Published in February 2022



# 1. Measures and initiatives by public authorities

Old solutions don't  
work anymore

Time has come to take action to better  
address challenges: growing and more  
diverse student population,  
addressing societal needs...

- Ministries and institutional leaders becoming increasingly aware of the necessity to promote teaching, and introducing incentives to this end.
- Since 2017-2018, new regulation in only a few countries (5):
- Regulatory changes introduced in the immediate past years becoming implemented and yielding results:
  - ✓ Implementation of L&T centres, new databases, reward schemes for teachers, etc.
- « No need for more regulation »:
  - ✓ Autonomy and sufficient capacity of HEIs to develop own measures
  - ✓ Confidence in initiatives from grassroots level
  - ✓ Concerns over external interference and over-regulation

# 1. Measures and initiatives by national authorities

- Various national initiatives (with dedicated funding)
  - ✓ Dynamism and support
  - ✓ Several on digital capacity and competences, for HEIs and individuals (FI, SI, IE)
  - ✓ Rewarding, supporting teaching through a combination of measures: national awards, funding for HEIs to organise teaching enhancement, networks of teachers, etc.
  - ✓ Support for institutional capacity building: HEIs to increase their commitment towards L&T (virtuous circle – building on previous initiatives)
  - ✓ EU funding, in particular Erasmus+ and ESF funding, cited as contributing to new initiatives
  
- Importance of QA for L&T: ESG + changes in external QA frameworks:
  - ✓ 5 examples with changes or revision of EQA framework since 2017
  - ✓ Better supporting the place of teaching in academic careers, teaching enhancement, institutional capacity building for L&T

## 2. Structures and stakeholders

Dynamics for supporting learning and teaching come from an interplay of action led by HEIs, supporting national structures, and active participation of a range of stakeholders in higher education.

Countries with a dedicated national structure for L&T

- 5 countries / 30
- IE, DE (2021), KZ, NO, UK

No dedicated national structure, but needs covered by another or other actors

- Another 23 countries
- NRCs, networks of education developers, teachers, or L&T centres, regional networks, national E+ agencies, QAAs/Ministries

Role of L&T centres at HEIs

- Mentioned by 7 countries as a developing trend
- All universities have such centres in NL, SE, CH, Ukr, UK (Trends 2018)

## 2. Structures and stakeholders

### Commonly cited stakeholder groups involved in national policy-making for L&T

Ministries	Student associations	National Rectors' Conferences
Quality assurance agencies	National funding agencies	Labour market and employers' representatives Social partners

- Great variety in stakeholder cooperation for policy-making purposes, ranging from a system-level approach to ad hoc approaches coordinated by Ministry cabinets.
- Opportunities for exchanging between stakeholders and discussing different interests across the board could be increased.
- Ministries would not systematically take the lead in policy making in L&T:
  - ✓ More common = involvement in supporting some identified priorities or goals at the system-level
  - ✓ Complementarity between different actors, institutional autonomy, coordination across HEIs/in the sector, agency and capacity to act as HEIs

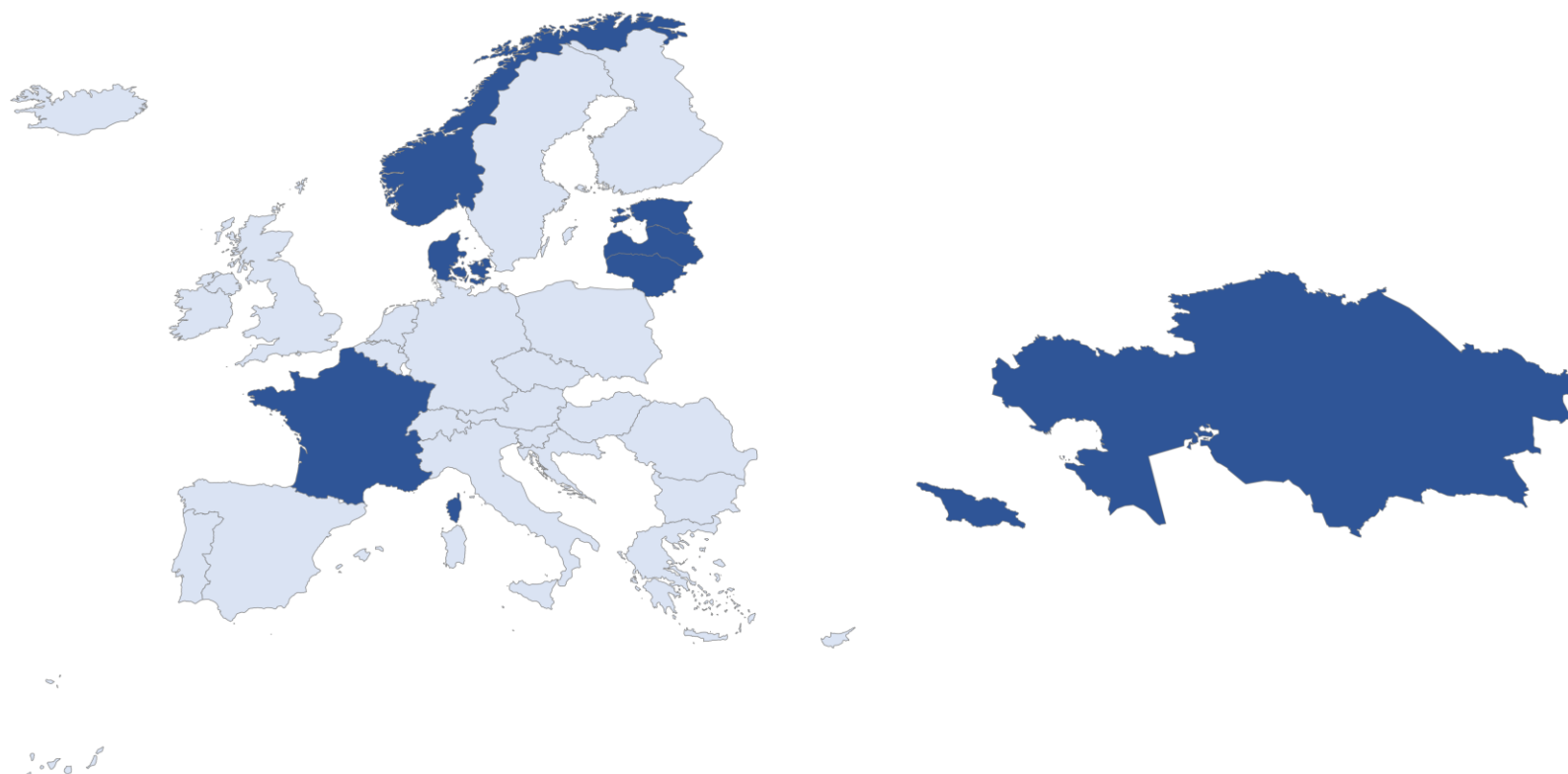
### 3. Teaching enhancement

**Not a legal requirement in most countries (22/30)**

**In 6/8 countries where it is regulated: recent changes, to contribute to change academics' attitude and commitment towards teaching (careers, min. training required, sabbaticals, etc.)**

**TE recommended on a regular basis, but implementation left to HEIs.**

Country-level regulation on teaching enhancement





### 3. Teaching enhancement

- HEIs have their own requirements, esp. when hiring and for career progression:
  - ✓ Mandatory follow-up/support by the university's Learning Lab or L&T centre; mandatory advancement/achievement in pedagogy to demonstrate for becoming a full professor (demonstrated through evaluations, innovation and efficiency, must include different initiatives); etc.
  - ✓ Often at entry level, but less support or offer as continuous professional development or for senior academics
- In nearly all countries, TE offered by HEIs, typically through a L&T centre, with sometimes a common offer across several HEIs.
- TE also proposed by national, dedicated structures, or specific networks (discipline-based, targeting specific categories of staff)



## 4. Inter-institutional cooperation

- Importance and value of partnership and collaboration at all levels: within institutions, between institutions, across higher education systems, and beyond (Trends 2018)
  - ✓ Role of university alliances and associations in enabling cooperation between HEIs and transforming into communities of practice
  - ✓ Collaboration also takes place through national initiatives or projects aiming to bring HEIs together.
- BUT still mostly happening through bilateral or multilateral cooperation between HEIs (ad hoc, own initiative, sometimes own funding)
- When organised in a structural way:
  - ✓ NRCs
  - ✓ National structure dedicated to L&T
  - ✓ Networks organised on a territorial, linguistic, or institutional profile basis

## 4. Inter-institutional cooperation

- National support for participation into international inter-institutional cooperation exists, although it is not widespread:
  - ✓ 11 countries have identified specific, additional national support (funding) for taking part in a European University Alliance (EUI).
- Inter-institutional cooperation can be supported through other means, e.g. counts in accreditation or evaluation criteria in their EQA framework.
- Challenge in systems where HEIs compete against each other (funding, students).

## 5. Plans for the future

- In many countries: currently no plan (yet)
  - ✓ Still mapping and evaluating phase
  - ✓ Example: “Next Steps” by the IE National Forum
- Attention to digital will remain, with regulatory changes needed for online/blended/hybrid learning in some countries (additional funding, national plans and projects, etc.).
  - ✓ A lot of digital and open policies were not fit for purpose when the pandemic hit.
  - ✓ Digital competences (teachers), workload (students), how adapted current standards (e.g. accreditation) are.
  - ✓ But also increased awareness that it is not about technology; it is about pedagogy.
- Attention to academic integrity

## 5. Plans for the future

Most commonly cited obstacles	Most commonly cited drivers
<p><b>Lack of recognition for teaching in careers</b></p> <p>Recognition, time, resource distribution and visibility, increasing pressure over academics vs obsolete regulations</p>	<p><b>General and genuine interest in the HE community to « do better »</b></p> <p>Opportunity to train new generations of teachers</p>
<p><b>Lack of support for teaching at HEIs</b></p> <p>Own funding, lack of expertise, capacity building</p>	<p><b>Post-pandemic window of opportunity: public attention</b></p> <p>Accelerate digital, and generally innovation in T</p>
<p><b>Lack of clear framework or commitment at national level</b></p> <p>Adequate support and funding, significant differences across HEIs, no consensus building across different actors</p>	<p><b>Recent changes have contributed to better equip HEIs and individuals</b></p> <p>L&amp;T centres, new regulations for better recognising teaching, national awards, etc.</p>
<p><b>Uncertainty towards the future</b></p> <p>Momentum created with the pandemic vs “teaching fatigue”</p> <p>What would be the added value of on-site education?</p>	<p><b>Collaboration on learning and teaching</b></p> <p>Collaboration with different stakeholders, culture of student engagement, international exchanges, communities of practice on teaching</p>



- The level of **institutional autonomy**, both within institutions and when cooperating with other institutions, is crucial for the enhancement of learning and teaching.
  - ✓ HEIs themselves play the biggest role (CPD, collaboration with other HEIs, better promoting T): forerunners for good practices in place
  - ✓ Other actors acknowledge the central role of HEIs in learning and teaching, and see their own role as a supportive and/or complementary one.
  - ✓ Need for institutional capacity building: role of exchanges and collaboration; peer support and structural support
- Giving value to **teaching in academic careers** remains the main, structural obstacle.
- Leadership in teaching: teaching as an individual // collective activity?
  - ✓ What can be done at individual / institutional / national level
  - ✓ Also highlights difficulties related to the role of teaching and innovating teaching in academic careers.



“Leadership” as both the **agency** to develop strong strategic oversight, coordination and implementation for learning and teaching, and the **institutional collective capacity** to address organisational development towards enhancement.

## Challenges to reflect upon:

- ✓ What is the right, fit-for-purpose complementarity between existing structures and stakeholders active in learning and teaching?
- ✓ How to ensure the sustainability of good practices initiated through fix-term projects?
- ✓ How to create shared and common understandings of needs in enhancing learning and teaching, for different stakeholders in the system, and for a critical mass of individuals?
- ✓ In a general context of increased needs for expertise in teaching/pedagogy, how to support and grow a culture of evidence-based, research-based policy making for learning and teaching?

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

The publication:

<https://eua.eu/resources/publications/1005:national-developments-in-learning-and-teaching-in-europe.html>

[http://bit.ly/LOTUS\\_EU](http://bit.ly/LOTUS_EU)

