

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

# Slovenia



## Policy Frameworks

**Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?**

### Policy Document

- ➔ Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 41/11): <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=RES071>

Measure 44: The integration of underrepresented groups of the population in tertiary education

- Responsibility: Government of the Republic of Slovenia (Higher Education, Social Affairs).
- Explanatory note: An analysis will be undertaken regarding the structure of the student body with the intention of determining the representation of individual groups of the population and identifying groups that are underrepresented in higher education. Following the analysis of the structure of the student body and the identification of underrepresented groups of the population, incentives that support the inclusion of these groups in higher education will be formulated. An additional 1.5 million euros per year will be allocated for this purpose. Higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges will be encouraged to develop ways of attracting and including underrepresented groups of the population and assisting them in the completion of their studies. Funds will be available for these activities within the framework of the new developmental stream of funding.
- Funding of the measure: A sum of 50,000 euros for the research analyses and funds for the additional support for the inclusion of the identified groups will be allocated from the new development stream of financing.

- ➔ National Study - Report in Slovenian language: Study on the state of organisation (inclusion) of special groups of students in higher education, 2018.

### Guidelines

The Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency published Guidelines for Accessibility in Tertiary Education in the Republic of Slovenia. The guidelines are intended to guide HEIs in enabling disabled students to access education. <http://test.nakvis.si/sl-SI/Content/Details/409>

### Legal Acts

- ➔ The Higher Education Act (Official Gazette of RS, Nos. 32/12 - official consolidated text, 40/12 - ZUJF, 57/12 - ZPCP-2D, 109/12 , 85/14 , 75/16 , 61/17 - UPS and 65/17): <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO172>

The Higher Education defines the group of students with disabilities and special status and lays down exceptions considering the student status.

Article 69.a - definition (Students with disabilities and special status)

Students with special needs are blind and visually impaired students or students with impaired visual function, deaf and partially deaf students, students with speech-language disabilities, physically handicapped students, long-term ill students, students with autistic disorders and students with emotional and behavioural disorders.

Students with a special status under this Act are students top athletes, students renowned artists and other students who attend (regional) international competitions. Students with a special status are students who during their studies become parents. Students with disabilities and students with special status are entitled to:

- Preferential treatment in the selection process in the case of limited enrolment,
- Adapting the implementation of study programs and additional professional assistance in their studies, which can help them advance and complete their studies over time, as envisaged by the

study program, while retaining other rights and privileges of students from the first paragraph of Article 69 of this Act.

Procedures and detailed method of exercise of the rights referred to in the preceding paragraph determines the minister responsible for higher education.

- Article 70 (termination of student status): "...the student's status may also be extended for justified reasons, but for a maximum of one year".
  - ↘ Female students who give birth during their studies and students who become fathers during their studies are entitled to a one-year extension of their student status for each live-born child.
  - ↘ The manner and form of providing information regarding the termination of the student status shall be determined by the minister responsible for higher education.
- Other legal documents lay down rules for subsidizing student dormitories, transport, meals, health insurance.
  - ↘ Students with disabilities have the right for more subsidized meals than other students, as well as students with children.
  - ↘ Students from remote areas and students from low-income families or with health problems have the right for preferential accommodation subsidies, including the escorts of student with disabilities.
  - ↘ Higher Education Institutions have special rules taking into account students with special status and disabilities.
  - ↘ There is no fees for all student health care. There is no tuition fees for students including students from underrepresented groups.
- The International Protection Act (Gazette of RS, No. 16/17- official consolidated text): <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO4911>

The International protection act lays down the fundamental principles and guarantees in procedures for international protection, the procedure for granting, extending and withdrawing international protection, the duration and content of international protection and the scope of the rights and obligations of applicants for international protection and persons who have been granted international protection.

Article 1 (definition of terms): The individual terms used in this Act have the following meaning:

1. "International protection" means refugee status and subsidiary protection status;
  2. "Person who has been granted international protection" means a person who has been granted refugee
  3. Refugee status or subsidiary protection status;
    - ↘ "refugee" (hereinafter: refugee) is a third-country national or a stateless person who has been granted the protection referred to in the second paragraph of Article 20 of this Act;
    - ↘ "person with subsidiary protection" is a third-country national or a stateless person who has been granted the protection referred to in the third paragraph of Article 20 of this Act.
- Article 88 (education)

“(1) In accordance with the regulations governing compulsory primary education, applicants shall be guaranteed the right to primary education no later than three months from the day of submitting the application.

(2) Applicants shall be provided, a minor and an unaccompanied minor, in cooperation with a legal representative, shall be provided with access to education at vocational and secondary schools under the conditions applicable to citizens of the Republic of Slovenia.

(3) Applicants shall be provided with access to higher professional education, higher education and

adult education under the conditions applicable to citizens of the Republic of Slovenia.

(4) Access to the education system shall be provided no later than three months from the day of submitting the minor's application. Where appropriate, preparatory learning assistance shall be provided to the minor in order to facilitate access to the education system.

(5) The costs of public transport to educational institutions shall be covered for applicants who are included in the regular education system in accordance with the first, second and third paragraphs of this Article and who regularly attend education.

(6) The burden of proving the education acquired in the country of origin shall be borne by the applicant."

→ Article 101 (education and training of persons granted international protection)

"(1) Persons with recognized international protection shall be equal to the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia in exercising the scope of rights in the fields of pre-school education, primary, secondary, higher professional education, higher education and adult education.

(2) Persons with recognized international protection are entitled to a state scholarship and accommodation in student dormitories under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia.

(3) The costs related to the recognition and evaluation of education attested by a foreign diploma, certificate and other evidence of formal education of persons granted international protection shall be borne by the Office.

(4) The Office shall also cover the costs related to the recognition and evaluation of prior education in cases where persons with recognized international protection of formal education cannot prove it with documents.

(5) For persons with international protection without their own income or otherwise guaranteed subsistence for three years from the recognition of the status of international protection, other costs related to participation in the regular program of education and primary school for adults shall be covered by the Office."

→ Decree on the methods and conditions for ensuring the rights of persons with international protection (Gazette of RS, Nos. 72/17): <http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=URED7189>

The Decree lays down the rights of persons with international protection - accommodation, monetary compensation, integration and participation in upper secondary education programs, as well as participation in short-cycle higher vocational study programs and higher education study programs

The ministry responsible for higher education prepares Rules on the procedures and the manner of exercising the rights of students with special needs and special status in higher education. It includes obligations of HEIs..

**What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?**

Please see the answer above.

Policy document: Including students from underrepresented groups of the population in higher education, assisting them in the completion of their studies.

**Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?**

No.

**Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)**

→ Low-income or lower socio-economic background students

- Students with disability
- Refugees of all kinds (internally and externally displaced; deported)
- Other: students from remote areas; person with subsidiary protection

### Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?

No.

### Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?

- Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Infrastructure
- Ministry of Health
- Higher Education Institutions
- Slovenian Student Union
- Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
- Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund

### Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)

- Higher Education Institutions' Associations
- Civil society organisations
- Student Organisations/Association

## Achieving Policy Targets

### Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

There is no specific outreach work, but the following is worth mentioning:

- Part of the institutional funding of HEIs by the ministry responsible for higher education is performance based; the Development Pillar of Funding (DPF) encourages student - centred teaching and provides for additional resources for inclusion for the period 2021-2024.
- Academic and career guidance and counselling is provided by Higher Education Institutions.

Measure 1 of the Resolution on the National Higher Education Programme 2011-2020: "... All HEI will offer adequate support centers to their students and staff, such as career centers or career, academic and psychological counselling, modern HE libraries which will ensure access to literature and sources, sports facilities and professionally conducted sports activities."

In that respect, the ministry responsible for higher education co-finances, together with European structural funds, the university career centers.

### Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

The Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia awards scholarships including disadvantaged students: <https://www.srips-rs.si/en/scholarships>. The Fund as well promotes employment of people with disabilities, including HE graduates, and the preservation of their jobs. It also decides on the rights and obligations of people with disabilities and employers in compliance with applicable regulations.

Centers for Social Work award Government Scholarships for disadvantaged students: (<https://www.gov.si/teme/drzavna-stipendija/>) award scholarships to students from low-income families.

### Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

There is no special monitoring, but each Ministry responsible for a certain legal act is responsible for the implementation of the rules which are laid down in the act.

### What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

No information is available.

### What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

No information is available.

### How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

1. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
1. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries
2. Policy setting
3. Technical assistance and capacity building

## COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

### How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?

The ministry responsible for higher education has been preparing a national Digital Education Action Plan, which will also address lessons learned during COVID-19.

## Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the *“ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education”* report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8<sup>th</sup> ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARCS\)](#) on *“Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe”* on 10 September 2021.

All information in this country brief was provided by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia, as of 23 September 2020.