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Mapping study of the field of Cyprus Higher Education

ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MESY) has proceeded with the administrative survey entitled "Mapping of the Educational Field of Higher Education of Cyprus for the academic year 2021-2022". A total of sixty (60) Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): ten (10) Universities (three Public and seven Private) and fifty (50) Institutions of Tertiary Education (seven Public and forty-three Private) operated during the academic year 2021-2022. The data were collected through standardized Excel files, which were completed by all Cyprus HEIs. Data collection related to the: a) student population (demographic variables) such as gender, age and country of origin were collected. In addition, data were collected on variables related to their studies such as the category of the Higher Education Institution they attend (University or Institution of Tertiary Education, Public or Private), the field of their program of study, the level of study, the type of study (full-time or part-time), the teaching methodology (face-to-face, distance or hybrid), participation in practical training as part of their study programme, participation in mobilities, scholarships etc. For the collection of data national and international taxonomies were used such as the National Qualification Framework as well as the International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2013 for the Fields of Study. The results of this report are presented in six sections as follows: a) Demographic variables of students and variables in relation to their studies, b) Strengthening the social dimension of Cyprus Higher Education, c) Mobility, d) Scholarships, e) Students who started their studies in Cyprus Higher Education Institutions in the academic year 2021-2022 and f) Students who completed their studies in Cyprus Higher Education Institutions in the academic year 2021-2022.

According to the results of the mapping study, in the academic year 2021-2022, the total number of students studying at Cyprus HEIs in Cyprus was 52544, of which 43217 (82,2%) attended Universities and 9327 (17,8%) in Institutions of Tertiary Education (ITE). Compared to the previous academic year (2020-2021), there was a small decrease (3%) in the total number of students. In relation to the demographic characteristics of HEIs students, 42% were men and 58% were women. Regarding to age, the data collected by HEIs for the entire student population ranged from 17 to 75 years with an average age of 27.62 (SD 8.65). In relation to the country of birth of Higher Education students, these were divided into three categories: Cyprus, European Union (EU) countries and Third countries. Based on data collected, the academic year 2021-2022, 45% were born in Cyprus, 41% in EU countries and 14% in Third countries. Most students in both Universities (71.4%) and ITE (91.8%) studied in Private HEIs. Regarding the level of studies, most students (48.8%) attended at programs of study at NQF level 6 (bachelor's degree) and a large percentage (41.2%) at NQF level 7 (postgraduate). In relation to the field of study, most students attended programs of study in the field of Business Administration and Law (31.4%), Education (20.5%) and Health Sciences (11.3%). The same pattern was observed for the student population in Universities where the program of study of the majority of students belonged to the field of Business Administration and Law (27.5%), Education (23.8%) and Health (12.7%). Regarding the field of study for the student population in ITE, most students attended programs of study in the field of Business Administration and Law (49.2%), Services (16.5%) and Social Sciences, Journalism and Media (7%). The

majority of students in HEIs were full-time students (68.7%). In Public Universities, the percentage of full-time students was 99.2%, while the corresponding percentage in Private Universities was 81.7%. In both Public and Private ITE the percentage of full-time enrolment was the same and was 94.1%. The majority of all students in Universities (57.7%) and ITE (82%) attended in programs of study that employed a face-to-face teaching methodology. A significant percentage of students studied in distance learning programs of study (35.4%) and a very small percentage (2.6%) hybrid/blended programs of study. Finally, during the academic year 2021-2022, 19,9% of the total student population participated in an internship/practical training as part of their program of study.

The second section of findings presents data on the participation of students from vulnerable groups, disadvantaged groups and groups that are usually under-represented in Higher Education in the context of the strategic objective of the DHE "Strengthening the social dimension of Higher Education". More specifically, for the first time, data were collected for the entire student population on: a) disabilities, b) mature students, c) students with children, d) students from ethnic minorities and e) Cypriot students coming from displaced families due to Turkish invasion. Gender participation in Higher Education was also explored in this section. In the academic year 2021-2022, the total number of students with disabilities at Cyprus HEIs was 879 (1,7%). Specifically, 713 students (81.1%) attended Universities and 166 (18.9%) attended ITE. Most students with disabilities faced learning difficulties (60.9%), 13.3% social and communication difficulties, 13% mental disorders, 12.7% chronic diseases and health problems, while 12.6% language disorders. Regarding the type of support provided by HEIs to students with disabilities, the largest percentage of students with disabilities received support in relation to evaluation and assignments (74.4%), 49.4% received support in relation to teaching and 27,5% received support in relation to educational material (both in print and electronic form). The total number of mature students (aged 30 and over) during the academic year 2021-2022 was 14819 (28,2%). Most mature students studied at Universities (81%) and mainly at Private Universities. The number of Higher Education students with children could not be determined because HEIs stated that they do not collect this type of data. Regarding the ethnic origin of Cypriot students (Greek Cypriots/Turkish Cypriots) as well as the number of Cypriot students belonging to minorities religious groups for many students (14718 out of a total of 23412 students or 62.8%) again no data was collected and provided by the HEIs. Based on available data, 0.08% come from the Turkish Cypriot community and 0.15% from the minority religious groups of Maronites, Armenians and Latins. The total number of students coming from displaced families, due to Turkish invasion, was 1878. Finally, regarding gender participation in Higher Education, it appears that about two-thirds of the student population in Public and Private Universities were women, while the opposite is true for Public and Private ITE, i.e. two thirds of the student population are men. In relation to the participation of both genders in programs of study at various NQF levels, in Universities at all NQF levels the majority were women, with the highest percentage being noted in programs of study belonging at NQF level 7. In ITE at all NQF levels of study the majority are men, except for NQF level 8 where the majority were women. Finally, in relation to gender choices for the fields of study, in the fields of Education, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Journalism and Media and Health Sciences the vast majority were women. In the fields of Business

Administration and Law, Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics, Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary Medicine there was approximately an equal participation of men and women and in the fields of Information and Communication Technologies, Engineering and Construction and Services the majority were men.

Participation in mobilities for studies or training abroad was also explored (third section of findings). According to findings, a very small percentage of students participated in mobility programs during the academic year 2021-2022. More specifically, only 213 students (0.4%) out of a total of 52,544. The vast majority (211 or 99%) participated in Erasmus+ mobility programmes, with Greece being the first country of choice (108 or 51%), with second and third being Spain (14 or 7%) and third choice was Italy (12 or 6%).

The fourth section of findings presents data in relation to scholarships. For a significant part of the student population (22 335 or 42.5%) HEIs did not have this type of information available in their registries. Regarding the student population for which this information was available, 14.6% received some kind of scholarship. Of these, the vast majority (92.7%) received only one scholarship, but there were students who received more than one. Most scholarships were provided for covering part of the tuition fees (95.9%), 77,3% of scholarships were provided on an annual basis and 92.4% the main provider was students' HEIs. The number of scholarships allocated to students from developing countries, Small Island Developing States and African countries for access and participation in Higher Education (according to UNESCO 2030 SDG index: 4.7b for sustainable development) was 350.

The fifth section presents findings regarding students who started their studies in Higher Education in the academic year 2021-2022. Findings show that a total of 15 830 students started their studies in 2021-2022, 12 917 (81,6%) attended Universities and 2 913 (18,4%) attended ITE. In relation to their level of studies, 50.6% started their studies in programs at NQF level 7 and a large percentage (39.7%) started their studies in programs at NQF level 6. Finally, in relation to their choices for the field of study, the majority choose the field of Business Administration-Law (39.6%), followed by the fields of Education (13.8%) and Social Sciences, Journalism and Media (10%).

The last section of findings presents data on students who completed their studies in the academic year 2021-2022. A total of 10 230 students graduated from Cyprus HEIs during the academic year 2021-2022, 8251 from Universities (80,7%) and 1979 from ITE (19,3%). In relation to the level of the programs of study they completed, 52% graduated from programs at NQF level 7 and a large percentage (32.6%) from programs at NQF level 6. Finally, in relation to graduates' field of study, the majority graduated from the fields of Education (32.9%) and Business Administration and Law (26.7%).

Finally, it is important to clarify that the findings presented in this report are based on the data sent by Private ITE in December 2021 and June 2022 for the Fall and Spring Semesters respectively as well as on the data sent by Public and Private Universities and Public ITE in June 2022 for both semesters. It is possible that this data changed by the end of the academic year 2021-2022 (i.e., August 2022).