



Lost in Transition Europe (LiTE)



SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS



MULTIPLIER CONFERENCE

Sofia 8 October 2013

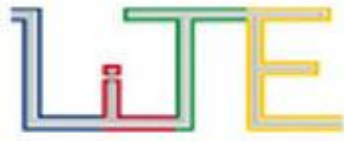


Project 'Lost in Transition Europe'



Lifelong Learning Programme, Sub-Programme Erasmus





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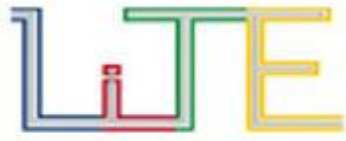


SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS: COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Focus

- Comparative analysis of the partner country studies, focusing in particular on mature entry to HE.
- Comparison offers new perspectives and alternative scenarios to deepen and refine our understanding(s).





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Background

- Growing convergence e.g. common qualifications framework; commitments to widening participation
- Varying priorities
- Varying definitions of maturity
- Policy attention on mature students in some countries



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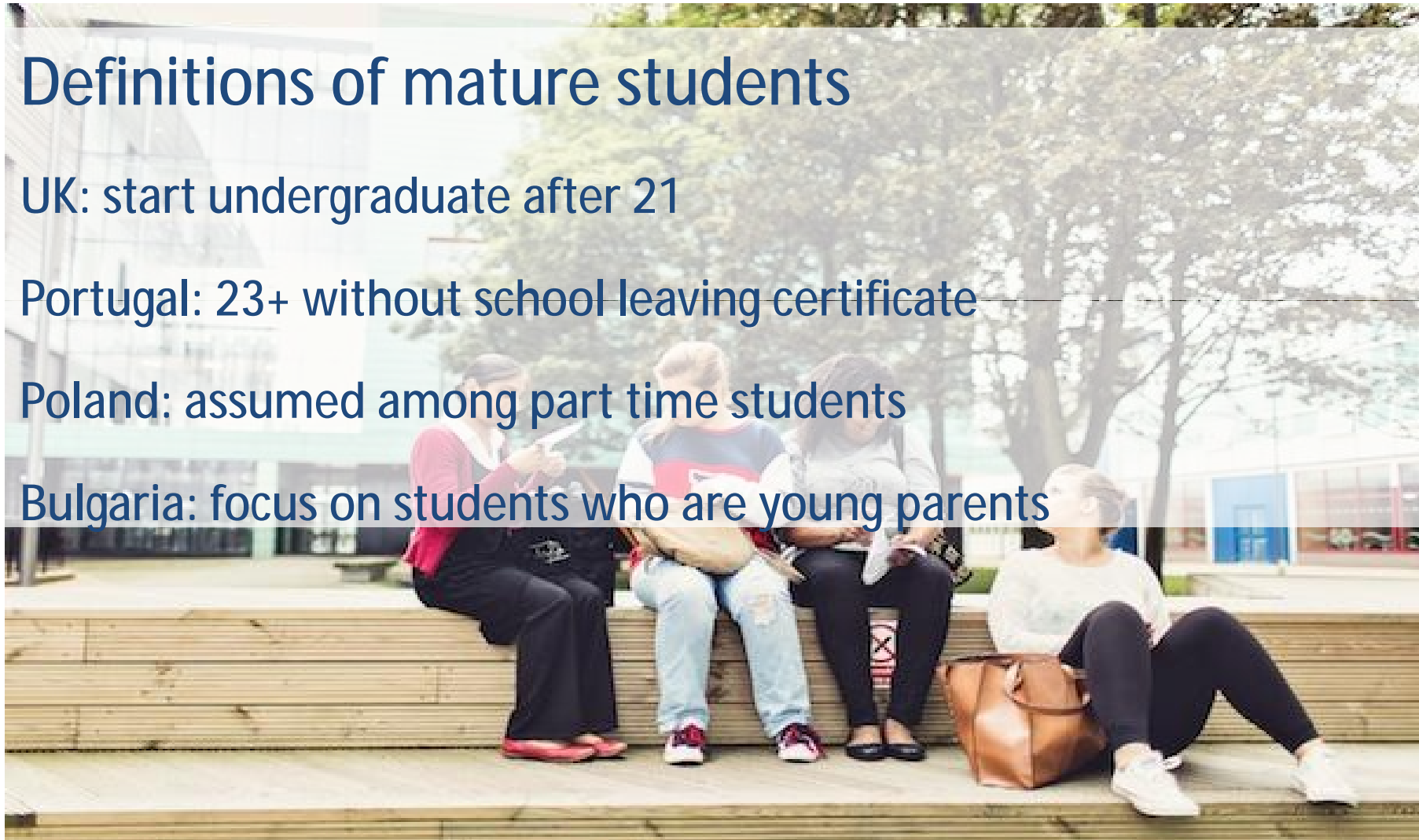
Definitions of mature students

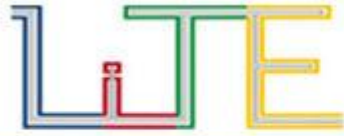
UK: start undergraduate after 21

Portugal: 23+ without school leaving certificate

Poland: assumed among part time students

Bulgaria: focus on students who are young parents



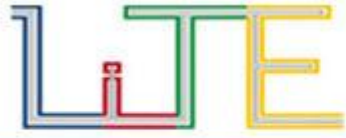


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Barriers facing mature learners: Pre-admission

- Lack of a national strategic focus on supporting mature student entry to HE (Poland, Bulgaria),
- Inflexible institutional entry requirements (Portugal, Poland, Bulgaria),
- Lack of preparation for higher education (all)
- Lack of formally recognised national schemes for recognising prior professional/experiential learning (Poland and Bulgaria),
- Potential financial deterrents related to tuition fees and loans (England in particular),
- Family responsibilities.



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Barriers facing mature learners: Post-admission

- Transition challenges – personal, social, academic and institutional
- Lack of specific strategies to support mature students with such challenges
- Lack of monitoring requirements and data collection mechanisms, leading to inadequate data to inform policy on attracting and retaining mature students



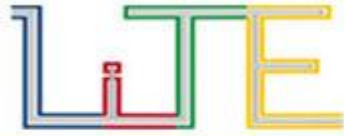
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Pre-admission support strategies (recruitment)

- Awareness-raising – marketing and events (Portugal, UK)
- Financial incentives – variation in funding models
- Flexible entry requirements – away from reliance on school leaving qualifications
- Support before entry to university – specialist programmes (Portugal) and access courses (UK)



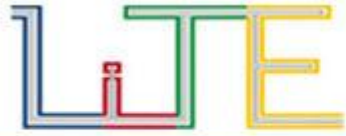


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Post-admission support strategies (retention)

- Post-enrolment advice and guidance
- Focus on first year of study ('pinch-point')
- Specialist groups and associations e.g. Society for Mature Learners (Cardiff University, UK)
- More flexible modes of delivery – timing, location, e-learning
- Authenticity – incorporating simulation and enterprise

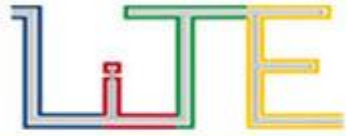


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Conclusions

Commonalities	Differences
Importance of expanding and widening participation	Definitions of 'maturity'
Value of Bologna process in increasing flexibility of provision	HE structures
Acknowledgement of barriers to participation	Selection and admission procedures
Mature students are not a policy imperative	Funding and fees
	Varying strategies to recruit and retain mature learners



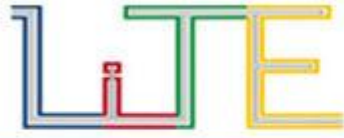
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Recommendations

Policy level

- Develop national strategies to support specific groups of under-represented students in HE
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the recruitment and retention of such groups
- Develop guidelines on more flexible selection procedures for mature and other under-represented groups
- Monitoring the impact of the new tuition fee system on mature student participation in England



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Recommendations

Institutional level

- Further experimentation with (flexible) delivery formats and modes of attendance that fit mature students' needs
- Further improvements in pre-entry guidance, marketing and on-course support for mature students

Individual level (staff)

- Further use of 'buddying' students and (e-) mentoring systems that ease transitions and facilitate social engagement and interaction among mature learners



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Choose from the following resources for HEI staff working with students

Links and contact details

www.lite-project.eu

<http://hetransitiontoolkit.eu>

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 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Involving staff in students' social and academic integration</u>	 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Creating student-centred learning environments</u>	 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Managing students' expectations</u>	 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Preparing and engaging students</u>
 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Developing students' learning capacity</u>	 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Accrediting prior and professional experience</u>	 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Developing students skills</u>	 ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND PREPARATION <u>Improving quality</u>



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