Peer Learning Activity "'We make a change': Making institutional cultures in higher education more inclusive"

Peer Learning Activity (PLA), titled **"'We make a change': Making institutional cultures in higher education more inclusive",** is organised within the framework of the INSPIRE project, led by the Co-chairs of Thematic Peer Group D on Social Dimension and partners.

The PLA focuses on Principle 5 (Counselling and guidance) and Principle 7 (Inclusive institutional culture) of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA. It aims to explore how higher education institutions and systems can strengthen counselling, guidance, and support services, while fostering inclusive institutional cultures that enable all students to participate, progress, and succeed.

Through peer presentations, interactive discussions, and exchange of practices, the PLA will provide a platform for participants to reflect on how counselling and guidance services contribute to inclusive learning environments, and how institutional culture, leadership, and everyday practices can support systemic and sustainable change. The activity will emphasise practical experiences, challenges, and lessons learned, supporting mutual learning across EHEA members.

A dedicated PLA report will be prepared following the activity, capturing key discussions, examples of good practice, and transferable insights to inform future work within TPG D and the broader EHEA framework.

Preliminary Agenda

Focus: Principle 5 (Counselling and guidance) and Principle 7 (Inclusive institutional culture)
Date & Place: 18-19 February 2026, Bibliotheksaula, Hofstallgasse 2-4, 5020 Salzburg, Austria

Day 1 - Peer Learning Activity (Continuation after 4th TPG D meeting)

14:00 - 14:10

Opening of the Peer Learning Activity

- Welcome and introduction
  INSPIRE project consortium and Rector of University of Salzburg, Bernhard Fügenschuh

14:10 - 14:40

‘Studierfähigkeit’ in German-speaking higher education: Exploring the dynamics between inclusion and exclusion

- Keynote by Dr. Magdalena Fellner, International Centre for Higher Education Research, University of Kassel

14:40 - 14:55
Coffee break

14:55 - 15:35

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Irish Higher Education

- Presentation by Laura Austin, Senior Executive Officer, Centre of Excellence for Equality Diversity and Inclusion Higher Education Authority

15:35 - 15:45
Short break

15:45 - 16:15

Inclusivity through software based on student admissions / DreamApply experience

- Presentation by Märt Aro, DreamApply co-founder

16:15 - 16:30
Coffee break

16:30 - 17:10

Connecting Policy, Practice and Quality: Tools for Advancing Inclusive Teaching and Learning

- Presentation and workshop by Szilvia Besze, Senior project coordinator, Tempus Public Foundation

17:00 - 17:10
Closing remarks

18:30
Dinner (Self-paid)
Sternbräu. Griesgasse 23, 5020 Salzburg

Day 2 - Peer Learning Activity

08:40 - 09:10

Arrivals - Coffee and networking

Opening of the Peer Learning Activities - day 2

09:10 - 9:50

Come as you are, stay because you belong: Evidence-based approaches to promoting belonging and academic success

- Presentation by University of Salzburg

09:50 - 10:30

Romanian National Plan for Reducing University Dropout

- Presentation (online) by Antonela Toma, Ministry of Education and Research

10:30 - 10:45

Coffee break

10:45 - 11.25

Making Institutional Cultures in Higher Education More Inclusive

- Presentation by Professor Graeme Atherton, Vice-Principal, Ruskin College and Director, World Access to Higher Education Network (WAHEN)

11:25 - 12:00

Enhancing Inclusive Culture and Counselling and Guidance Services in Greek Higher Education: Current State of Play and Future Perspectives

- Presentation by Nikoletta Chardalia, General Secretariat for Higher Education

12:00 - 13:00

Lunch

13:00 - 13:40

Support for Student Well-Being: Riga Technical University's path and conclusions

- Presentation by Viktorija Gaina, Riga Technical University

13:40 - 13:50
Short break

13:50 - 14:40
Panel Discussion
(Moderated by TPG-D co-chairs)

14:40 - 14:50
Wrap-up and Next Steps
- Key takeaways
- Closing of the PLA

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