Designing and supporting inclusive practices in Higher Education –
the InclusiveHE project

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Inclusive higher education: a key priority for Europe

EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

Yerevan Communiqué 2015
Objective: achieve by 2020 an EHEA where "higher education is contributing effectively to build inclusive societies".

EUROPEAN UNION

Agenda for Higher Education 2017
Priority for action: "Building inclusive and connected higher education systems"

Inclusive higher education: a key priority for Europe

...with room for improvement

- Only a minority of countries in the EHEA have developed National Action Plans to follow up on their commitments

- Several universities have taken position in the EU, but they mainly focus on diversity or on some aspects of diversity

→ **Further action is needed** at institutional and national level to strengthen the inclusiveness of European HE systems

The InclusiveHE project

- Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme

- 1/12/2020 – 30/11/2022

- Coordinated by Åbo Akademi University (Finland)

- 6 partners from Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Latvia and Romania

What is inclusion?

Inclusion refers to policies, practices and measures that HEIs implement to provide real studying, learning and working opportunities to groups who have traditionally been excluded.

Identifying existing inclusive policies and practices in Europe

METHODOLOGY

SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Of peer-reviewed scientific studies from across the globe between the years 2000 to 2021.

REVIEW OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

At European and national level in Cyprus, Finland, Latvia and Romania.

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Organised at European and national level with key stakeholders: experts, academic and administrative staff, students.

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Targeting key stakeholders across Europe to identify further inclusive policies and practices.

Identifying existing inclusive policies and practices in Europe

- **National policies**' implementation is quite limited and focuses on admission.
- **Institutional policies** mainly depends on the existence of national policies.
- **Financial support** is available for disadvantaged groups in many EU countries.
- **Trainings on inclusion** are mainly non-compulsory.
- **Diversity offices** are quite common in Europe, although their sizes and scopes vary.
- **Student guidance and support** is available in most institutions.
- Change and improvements regarding **accessibility** started years ago, imposed by the law, but largely focus on mobility.
- Inclusive strategies developed by universities are **not necessarily connected between institutions and with the system.**

Identifying existing inclusive policies and practices in Europe

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide **incentives** to HEIs to widen access and improve completion rates.
- Define **long-term objectives** and monitor the access and completion of HE by students from under-represented groups.
- Support under-represented groups of students to access and complete HE.
- Make **staff training** on inclusion **compulsory**.
- **Inform** (potential) students about programmes, funding and other aspects of HE.
- Provide **flexible learning pathways**.
- Enhance **dialogue between all stakeholders**: universities, policy makers, public authorities.
- Ensure the **recognition of prior learning**.

Identifying existing inclusive policies and practices in Europe

THE INCLUSIVEHE FRAMEWORK
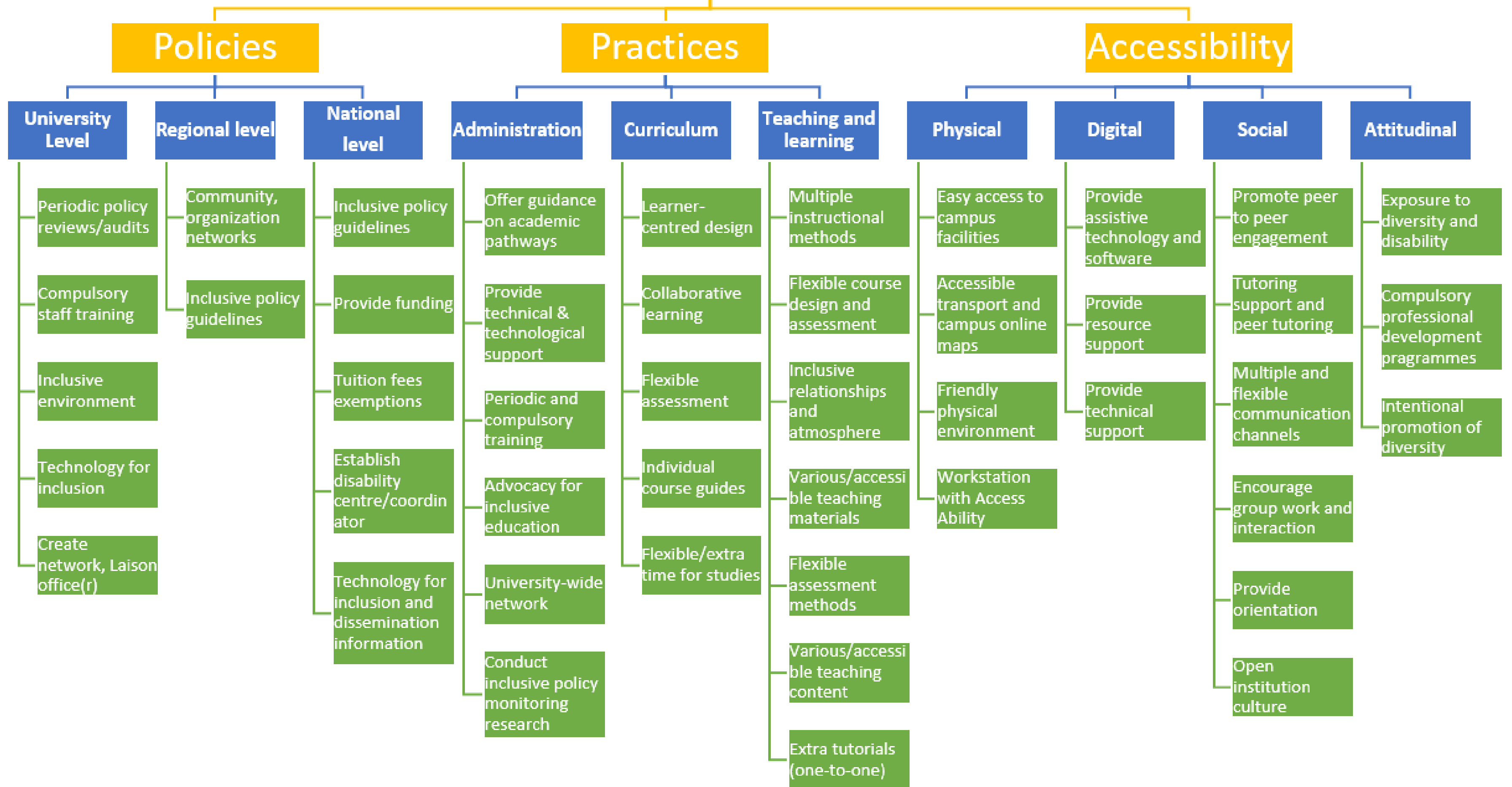
POLICIES
↳ national
↳ regional
↳ institutional

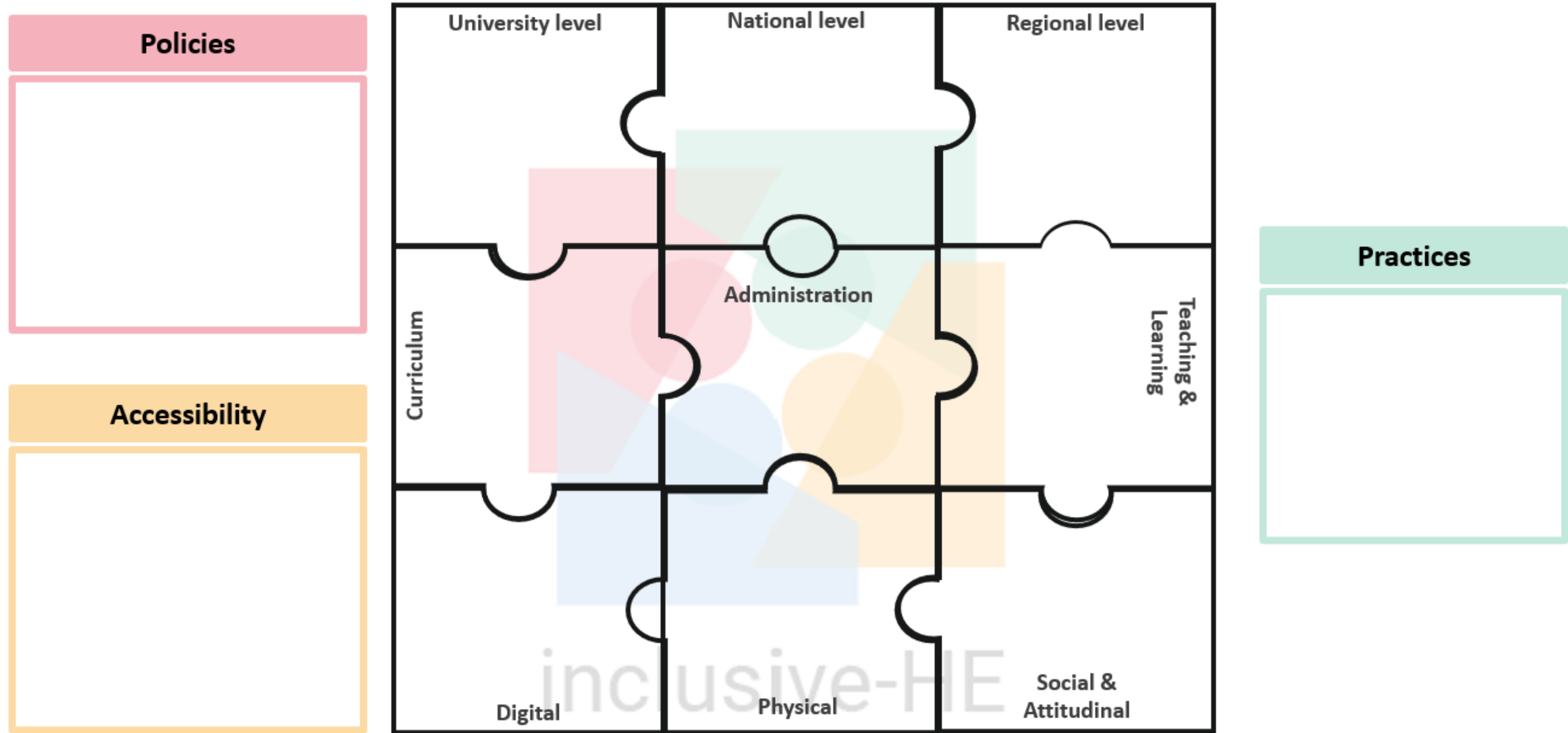**PRACTICES**
↳ administration
↳ curriculum
↳ teaching & learning

ACCESSIBILITY
↳ physical
↳ digital
↳ social & attitudinal

Inclusive HE Best Practices

Policies

University Level
- Periodic policy reviews/audits
- Compulsory staff training
- Inclusive environment
- Technology for inclusion
- Create network, Laison office(r)

Regional level
- Community, organization networks
- Inclusive policy guidelines

National level
- Inclusive policy guidelines
- Provide funding
- Tuition fees exemptions
- Establish disability centre/coordinator
- Technology for inclusion and dissemination information

Practices

Administration
- Offer guidance on academic pathways
- Provide technical & technological support
- Periodic and compulsory training
- Advocacy for inclusive education
- University-wide network
- Conduct inclusive policy monitoring research

Curriculum
- Learner-centred design
- Collaborative learning
- Flexible assessment
- Individual course guides
- Flexible/extra time for studies

Teaching and learning
- Multiple instructional methods
- Flexible course design and assessment
- Inclusive relationships and atmosphere
- Various/accessible teaching materials
- Flexible assessment methods
- Various/accessible teaching content
- Extra tutorials (one-to-one)

Accessibility

Physical
- Easy access to campus facilities
- Accessible transport and campus online maps
- Friendly physical environment
- Workstation with Access Ability

Digital
- Provide assistive technology and software
- Provide resource support
- Provide technical support

Social
- Promote peer to peer engagement
- Tutoring support and peer tutoring
- Multiple and flexible communication channels
- Encourage group work and interaction
- Provide orientation
- Open institution culture

Attitudinal
- Exposure to diversity and disability
- Compulsory professional development programmes
- Intentional promotion of diversity

Inclusive Higher Education Canvas

Policies

Accessibility

Practices

University level	National level	Regional level
	Administration	Teaching & Learning
Curriculum		
Digital	Physical	Social & Attitudinal

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Inclusive Higher Education SWOT Analysis

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Strengths

- What do you/your institution do well with regards to inclusive policies and/or practices?

Weaknesses

- What could/should be improved? Is there a lack of resources, knowedge, skills, etc?.

Opportunities

- What are your/your institution's goals with regards to inclusive policies and/or practices?

Threats

- What kinds of obstacles are there for meeting the goals?

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Inclusive Higher Education Strategy

[Worksheet Template]

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Description:

The Inclusive Higher Education Strategy Worksheet serves as a vehicle to support higher education institutions in developing their own plan for moving their inclusive policies and practices forward from their current state.

How to use this template:

- First assess, reflect and analyze the current state of inclusive policies and practices in your institution using the Inclusive Higher Education Checklist, Canvas and SWOT-analysis template.
- Then use this template to define strategic goals and initiatives and create an inclusive higher education strategy for your institution/department/other.
- Use the Inclusive Higher Education Framework and Database for inspiration and guidelines from the current state-of-the art of good policies and practices in higher education across Europe.
- Share the results with all those involved in the implementation of the designed actions, strategies and plans.

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Initiative 1: [insert a title]	
Goal(s)	- Define the goals and describe the initiative
Action(s)	- Identify and list/describe the actions that will be taken
Timeframe	- Define a timeframe for the initiative or actions
Priority	- Identify the priority level of the initiative as either high, medium or low
Actors to be involved	- Identify internal and external actors that will be involved in the initiative

Initiative 2: [insert title]	
Goal(s)	- Define the goals and describe the initiative

Tools to support the development of inclusive higher education

TOOLKIT

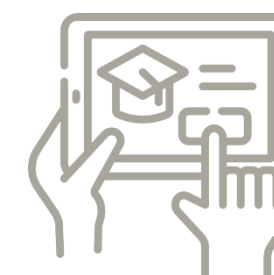for administrators and policy makers at HEIs to support them in developing inclusive policies

Available online

TRAINING COURSE

for learning designers and academics on how to design inclusive education programs

Available by April 2022

E-LEARNING PLATFORM & MOOC

on inclusive practices for academics and support staff

Available by November 2022

Encouraging exchange of experience and peer learning to foster inclusion in higher education

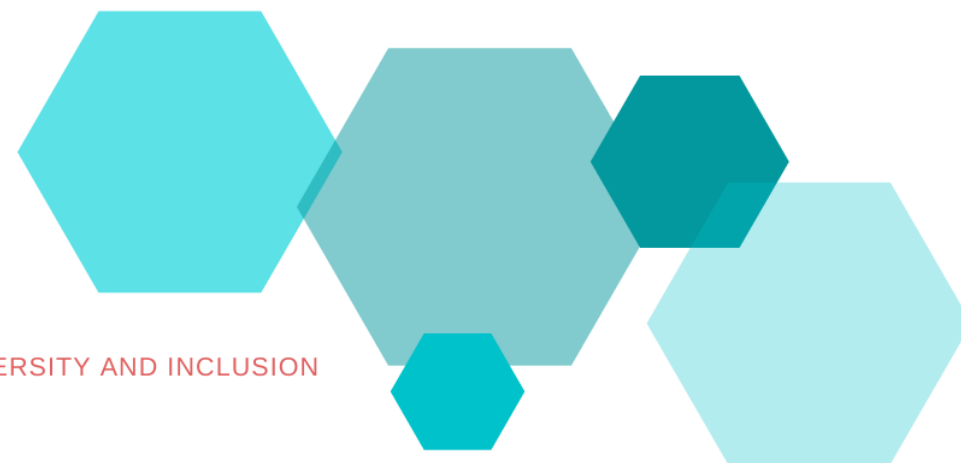- Focus groups in Cyprus, Finland, Latvia and Romania and at EU level

- Consultations online

- Inclusive Europe social media and newsletter

Inclusive Europe
THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MEDIA LINK TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Get involved!
projects@eucen.eu

Thank you!

projects@eucen.eu

https://inclusivehe.eu/en/