



3ª CONFERÊNCIA NACIONAL ENSINO SUPERIOR E INVESTIGAÇÃO

Afirmar o papel estratégico
do Ensino Superior e da Ciência

HIGHER EDUCATION AND CRISIS IN SPAIN

Or work more for less (if you are lucky enough to have a job)

For the seminar “*Impact of the Economic Crisis on Higher Education and Research in Europe. ROME 25th and 26th October 2011*” and FENPROF’s National Conference. Lisbon, 4th and 5th November 2011

Background

This section is an overview of Higher Education in Spain, starting with the structure of the HE system, some data about our universities and research system, our regional structure and one classification of staff in universities.

Structure of Higher Education in Spain

There are four levels in HE in Spain (“*Real Decreto 1027/2011, de 15 de julio, por el que se establece el Marco Español de Cualificaciones para la Educación Superior*”):

- Nivel 1: *Técnico Superior*. (ISCED 5B): Tertiary VET and others.
- Nivel 2: *Grado* (Bachelor). 240 ECTS. Universities and other institutions.
- Nivel 3: *Máster*. Universities and other institutions.
- Nivel 4: *Doctor*.

Spanish universities. Some data

- 0,9% of GDP expenditure on HE.
- 78 universities:
 - o 50 Public universities (including 1 national distance learning university).
 - o 28 Private universities (including 4 distance learning universities).
- 1,556,377 students in 2009. A 10% increase in that year and maximum.

- 88.9% study in public universities
- Women are 54.2%.
- 108,000 teaching and researching staff:
 - Less than 9% work in private universities.
 - Women are 36.6%.
 - Less than 4% of this staff are mobile and mobile women are only 25% of mobile teaching and researching staff.

Research. Some data

- 0,79% of GDP expenditure on research.
- Contraction of a 9% in the past two years.

Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Some data

(Spanish National Research Council)

It is the largest researching institution in Spain and the third largest in Europe.

- 153 research centres and institutes.
- 4010 researches.
- 1435 trainee researchers.

Central Government vs. 17 regions (Autonomous Communities)

Laws and regulations come from Central Spanish Government, from Regions and from the university level. Some regions have a regional university law, some regions do not.

Different kinds of staff (see table below) can be ruled in different aspects by different laws, coming from the three different levels mentioned above.

Education in Spain is a decentralised matter, so regions finance their education systems and within it, their public universities. Also, some funds come from Central Government (7% of total in all levels of education). Central government finances directly one distance learning university.

This complex frame of regulations and funding makes bargaining and monitoring the execution of some agreements very difficult tasks.

Grants and research programs (including funds to hire researchers) come from both Central Government and regions. Also, regions can finance their own research structures.

There is one national Quality Assurance Agency, and 11 regional Quality Assurance Agencies. Only ANECA, the national QAA, can provide accreditation to gain access to, and to promote within the “fonctionnaire” career. ANECA and other four regional QAA are registered in EQAR.

Staff in public universities (5 main groups):

| <i>Staff paid under regular budget (i.e. regular funds mainly coming from Regions)</i> | | <i>Staff paid with external funding.</i> |
|---|--|--|
| Teaching and Researching Fonctionnaire At least 51% of TRS in public universities | Supporting Staff Fonctionnaire | Non Fonctionnaire and generally, no tenure/no career. Deregulation/Discrimination |
| Teaching and Researching Non- Fonctionnaire Tenure or non tenure | Supporting Staff Non- Fonctionnaire | |

European Higher Education Area

This is the *second school year* in which at least the 1st and 2nd years of all bachelor degrees are adapted to Bologna Process. Lack of coordination, improvisation and late application of Bologna process are a reality in Spain at all levels. The legal frame work has been modified again in 2010. No real financing of the implementation of Bologna process, quite the contrary, as will be detailed below, cuts. The Bologna process has been used as an excuse to reforms that have nothing to do with it.

Tertiary VET, artistic, music and sport degrees, are in, theory included, in HE but in practice little has been done but, in some cases, increasing the fees.

Work load has increased (including a substantial increase in bureaucratic work, but not only) for Teaching and Researching Staff, as a direct consequence of our way to implement the Bologna Process. All this is because the three cycles Bologna structure is very different from our previous structure and because Student Centred Learning approach is considered essential. However, resources including the number of Teaching and Researching staff have not increased according to the needs. In some occasions, the number of non-tenure and part time teachers has increased, as a direct consequence of the Bologna process, although the total number of part time teachers has decreased as a direct consequence of the cuts in funding.

Staff is very stressed because of all the requirements imposed to progress in their careers. QA agencies, which also evaluate Teaching and Researching Staff, lack of transparency in the way the work, in their criteria they use and in their resolutions. For example, the requirements of Catalanian Quality Agency (AQU) are impossible to fulfil in terms of the amount of publications required and deadlines. Some very experience staff cannot progress in their career and after years of training they have to leave. Unions have little presence/influence, or none at all, in QA Agencies.

Mobility is on the agenda and *social dimension is not achieved at all*. Grants from Central Government have experienced a 10% yearly increase but grants given by the Regions have been reduced in some cases.

Privatisation

More and more private HE institutions are opened in Spain. Many of these (there are notable exceptions) do not meet the minimum quality standards and are just teaching institutions that do not research.

Note that four of the five distance universities are private.

Public universities are encouraged by Central Government and regions to attract private funds (just when the private sector investment has decreased).

Also, fees have increased by +50% in past 10 years. Fees will increase more than +5 % this school year in bachelor level but some Regional Governments have announced up to a +30% increase in master and doctorate studies.

Crisis and reforms

Crisis

We do not see the end of our crisis because it is very deep. And we are expecting its worse effects, also in HE. In Spain, there are 4.3 million in the unemployment list, but in fact 5 million unemployed (*over 20% unemployment rate*); 2 million of young people unemployed (*over 45% youth unemployment rate*). Instead of investing in education for a shift in the productive model (now based in building sector and little added value products and/or low qualification and low paid unstable jobs), we are suffering cuts in education and all sorts of attacks to our profession and against HE as a public good. We are also suffering attacks to collegial governance and doubts about our efficiency and efficacy are cast by bankers.

Trends in *public funding of public universities* vary among regions and years. Let see what has happened in the past years before going to the present and immediate future situation.

Universities funding mainly comes from Regions under “funding plans” that establish rules common for all public universities during several years. Some problems have arisen in the interpretation of those plans. Two extreme cases happened in 2008 when Valencia and Madrid public universities suffered from one day to the other cuts over 30% as a consequence of a “new” interpretation of the funding plans in those regions and the rectors announced that universities could not pay their staff. As current plans expire, new ones have to be negotiated between the universities and the Regional Governments. In these new plans more requirements are imposed to the universities that have to compete among themselves for less and less funding. All these new requirements emphasise on the ideas of accountability,

efficiency, productivity,... whereas some of the social benefits of public universities are not measured at all under the current models.

As a general trend, in the past two years public funds have decreased or have not increased at the same rate they did in previous years. Something that is parallel to what is happening in other education and public sectors. For example, in two in 2010 and 2011 the financing coming from the Regional Governments has contracted over 4% in most regions: Galicia (total -12,86%), Aragón (-10,78%), Extremadura (-9,45%), Cantabria (-8,11%), Madrid (-7,99%), Canarias (-6,68%) or Navarra (-4,72%). In only 3 of the 17 regions there was an increase in funding.

The result has been a slow process in which either universities have contracted or not grown, leading to underfinancing. One consequence of this is a steadily decrease in the number of positions, but nothing apparently so dramatic, just part time teachers (up to 30% of part time teachers were not renewed in some universities), the position of the retired professors are not covered, researchers are not hired after they finish their programs...

In fact, this is a real problem because implementation of EHEA has been carried out without enough resources (not only human) and this inevitably leads to the above mentioned increase of work load and a decrease in the quality of the public service.

All this leads Spain far from the objectives of the the EU's growth strategy, "Europe 2020", the "Plan de Acción 2010-2011 para la Enseñanza Superior", or the "Estrategia Universidad 2015", whose achievement is incompatible with the present financing.

In the past two years there have been cuts in *research funding* from both, Central Government (-8.4% in 2011 and -5.5% in 2010), and regions. There has been a decrease in the number of non-tenure researches hired in HE institutions. These researches are hired under public funded research programs and after completing several of these programs (more than 12 years of career) they find that there is not a tenure position in either a university or a public research institution. Private research in Spain is a very small sector that does not absorb all this researchers.

This school year, 2011/2012, we are facing a much worrying situation in all public services. After the regional elections, nearly all Autonomies have right wing governments. These are advancing the Popular Party policy for the National Government in the case this party wins the general elections in November. The excuse of these new regional governments is that they are facing a big debt left by the previous socialist governments. Not all regions had elections or changed the government (as it is the case in Madrid or Galicia) but, nevertheless, the measures are similar. Again, the reforms and cuts are not even across Spain. Madrid, Galicia and Castilla la Mancha have cut the number of teachers in the primary and secondary levels and all unions are very active carrying out strikes and protest more intensively in these regions, but also we are carrying out protests and actions at national level. Catalonia is attacking the public health and universities. Redundancies have been announced in Catalanian universities in in process

with a real formal “expediente de regulación de empleo” (employment regulation expedient) in which the staff will be restructured. The rectors in Castilla la Mancha and Valencia have recently announced that they are facing problems to pay their staff.

But yet, for year 2012 we expect that the worse is yet to come with *severe readjustments in most universities*, because we expect more budget cuts now that the resources of the institutions are exhausted after all these years of under financing. We are afraid that redundancies and the closing of faculties will happen.

Reforms

In the past 18 months Spain has suffered dramatic reforms whose consequences are in the short and long term. This is a short summary going from general reforms to sector reforms.

General reforms

Cuts in the salaries of public servants (by decree in May 2010) of a -5% on average, but for most of Teaching and Researching staff salaries have decreased nearly -8%. In 2011, salaries of public workers are frozen and also all pensions are frozen. We *stroke* against this cuts in June 2010.

Labour Law reforms in September 2010 (we *stroke* in September 2010) and a new labour reform in September 2011 and *Collective Agreement law reform* (June 2011). Those two reforms have not been negotiated, bring more precariousness and enable the fragmentation of the collective bargaining. This Labour Law reform has not helped against unemployment which is the argument used by our government to implement it. Those reforms affect non fonctionnaire staff. CCOO has launched an “Iniciativa Legislativa Popular”, that is, we have presented an alternative text (to the Labour Law) in parliament accompanied by more than half a million (in fact, one million signatures).

Again, without negotiation, in December 2010, the Government changed the contributions that institutions have to pay to *Social Security* for new *fonctionnaires*. Before, the contributions were lower for fonctionnaires and this favoured the hiring of personnel with this status which is t stable one.

In January 2011 *pensions have also been reformed*. After negotiation with the two largest confederations (CCOO and UGT) the reform was less harmful and also some positive aspects were introduced.

Spanish Constitution Reform. Outrageous reform performed in only fifteen days in August/Septembre 2011, without any public debate. The aim: “gaining the trust of markets”. This reform sets a limit for the public deficit. Only Izquierda Unida and the left wing unions opposed this reform.

Sectorial reforms

Related to *career and salaries*, the existing regulation for Teaching and Researching Staff (dated 1985) does not fit EHEA needs and universities are profiting of the legal blank to worsen our working conditions. We have been negotiating (following the legal procedures) a royal decree that will regulate teachers working conditions and career but the government has been in parallel in a non-legal "negotiation" with the General Conference of Rectors in which lots of very negative aspects have been introduced, undoing all what we had negotiated before. We do not expect this Royal Decree to see the light before the general elections of November. **Some of these negative aspects have been introduced, by the back door and without negotiation, in a draft decree that will regulate the structure of universities.**

The new regulation of *Doctoral Studies* (January 2011) introduces for the first time Doctoral Schools. It enables privatisation and discrimination of doctoral students.

The modification of the *Law of Science, Technology and Innovation* has introduced new types of precarious contracts and made even more precarious other existing types.

And the cherry to this cake is in the *draft decree about the structure of universities* ("borrador de proyecto de real decreto por el que se establecen los requisitos básicos para la creación, reconocimiento y funcionamiento de universidades y centros universitarios y se determina su estructura mínima"). **This decree blurs the present structures in our universities and its governance. It favours commercialisation and outsourcing, and as mentioned above introduces very negative aspects for teaching personnel. Introduces rankings.**

These are the foundations of a clear strategy: Starve public universities, and at the same time cast doubts about their efficiency and accountability, leading to an unsustainable situation that will be followed by reforms attacking the autonomy and democratic collegial governance, and by privatisation. All this is in line with international trends in which markets have targeted HE. The objective is to put Higher Education under markets and control the education of citizens.

More information and contact person:

María Luisa Sánchez Simón

mlsanchez-ensi@galicia.ccoo.es