



Institute for the
Development of Education

Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA

Nino S. Schmidt

Co-Chair of the BFUG Advisory Group for Social Dimension 2018-2020

Institute for the Development of Education (IDE), Executive Director

Zagreb, Croatia

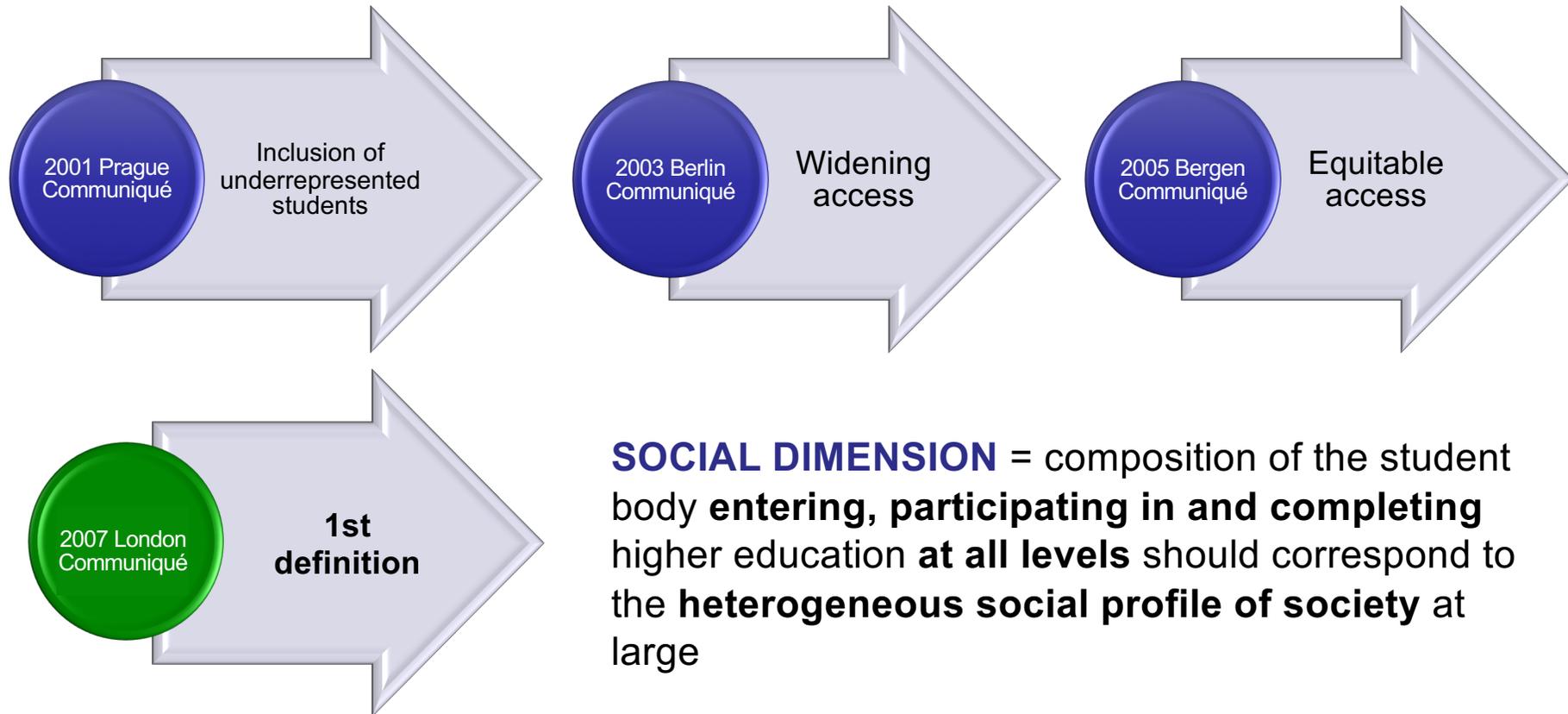
SIHO Webinar 1, 10 December 2020 - 15.30 - 17.00 CET: Current state of play in relation to the implementation of inclusion and universal design strategies in higher education across Europe and beyond

Content

1. **Historical background** for social dimension
2. **Challenges** for social dimension
3. **Solution**
4. **New definition** for social dimension
5. **Principles and Guidelines** for social dimension
6. Next steps

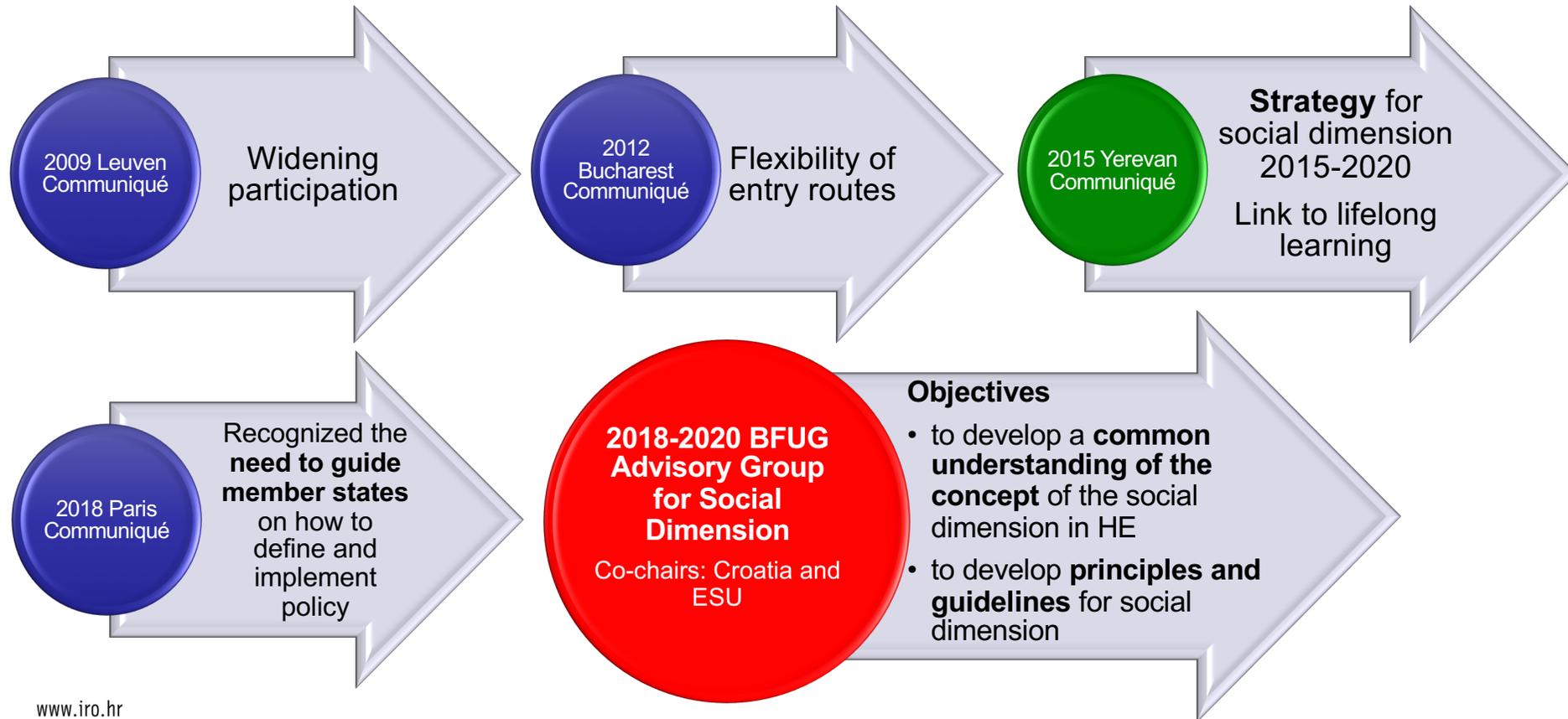


Historical background





Historical background



Challenges

1. **Recognized importance for the social dimension** in HE in all key EHEA policy papers. In many EHEA countries, there are **already measures in place** to address the underrepresentation of particular societal groups in HE
 - But, these measures often create **a set of isolated interventions** and are **not a part of a coherent national strategy** for the social dimension enhancement.
 - **Very few countries have developed national** strategies or plans for fostering social dimension systematically.

2. The majority of countries have some **targets related to widening access and participation** in HE
 - However, most of these targets are about widening overall participation, **without making reference to specific underrepresented groups.**

- ✓ Key output of the BFUG Advisory Group for Social Dimension 2018-2020:
a **NEW forward-looking strategic document** for the period 2020-2030

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New definition: social dimension

- **Definition:** composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should correspond to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large
- Policy levers for identifying and improving the prospects of **underrepresented, disadvantaged and vulnerable students**
- Embraces a **social justice agenda**

Starting point:
definition in the
2007 London
Communique

New:
fosters
equity

- **New: enlarged definition** that goes beyond the London definition - by stressing that the social dimension encompasses the **creation of an inclusive environment** in higher education that fosters equity and diversity and is responsive to the needs of local communities.

- **New:** moving beyond widening accessibility clauses and **focusing on public good agenda** by integrating principles in core HE mission and governance

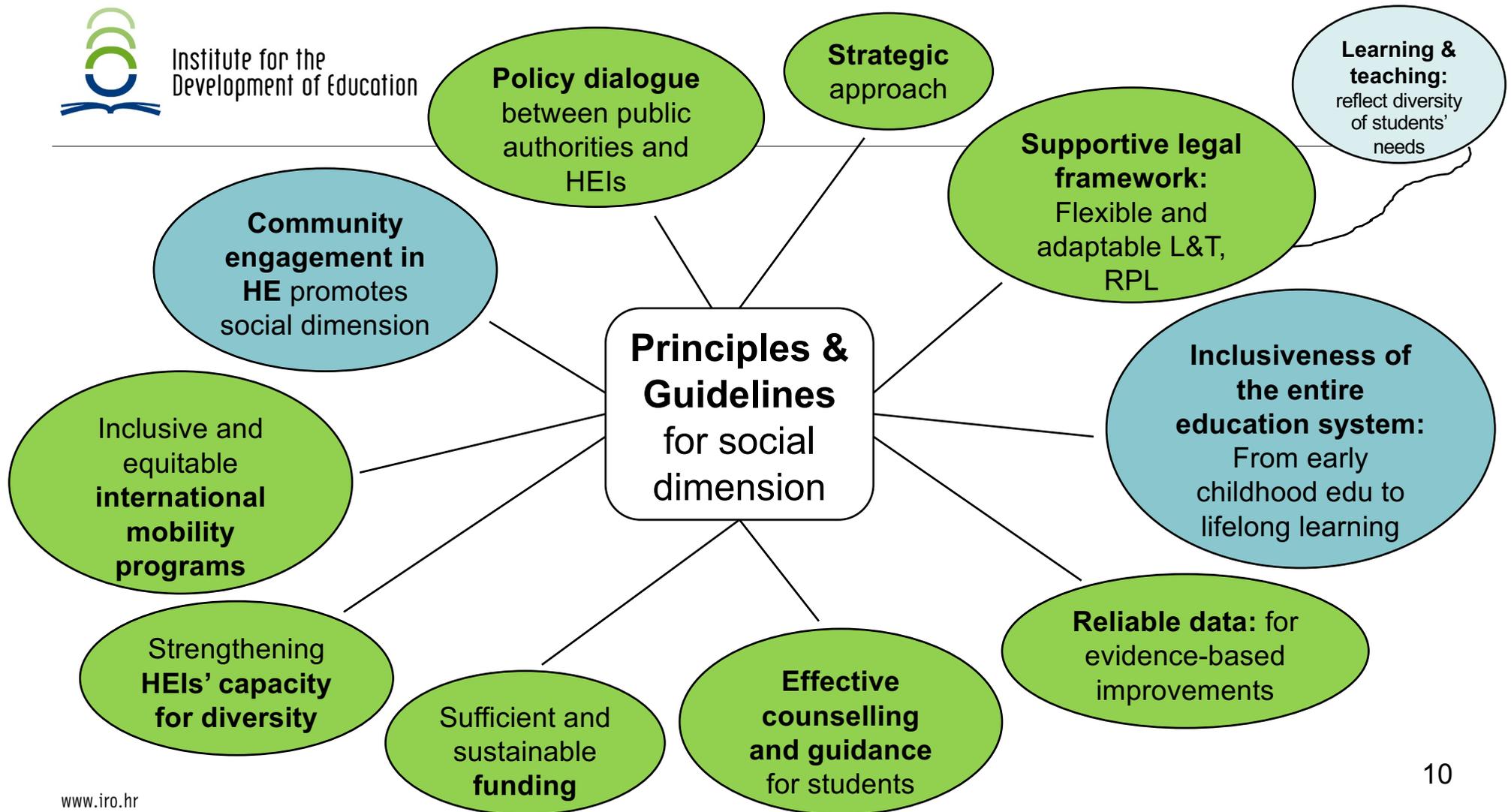
New:
responsive to
the needs of
local
communities

New:
fosters
diversity

- **New:** Public authorities and higher education institutions need to **integrate the principles into the core higher education mission:** learning and teaching, research, innovation, knowledge exchange and outreach, institutional governance and management, policies for empowering students and staff.

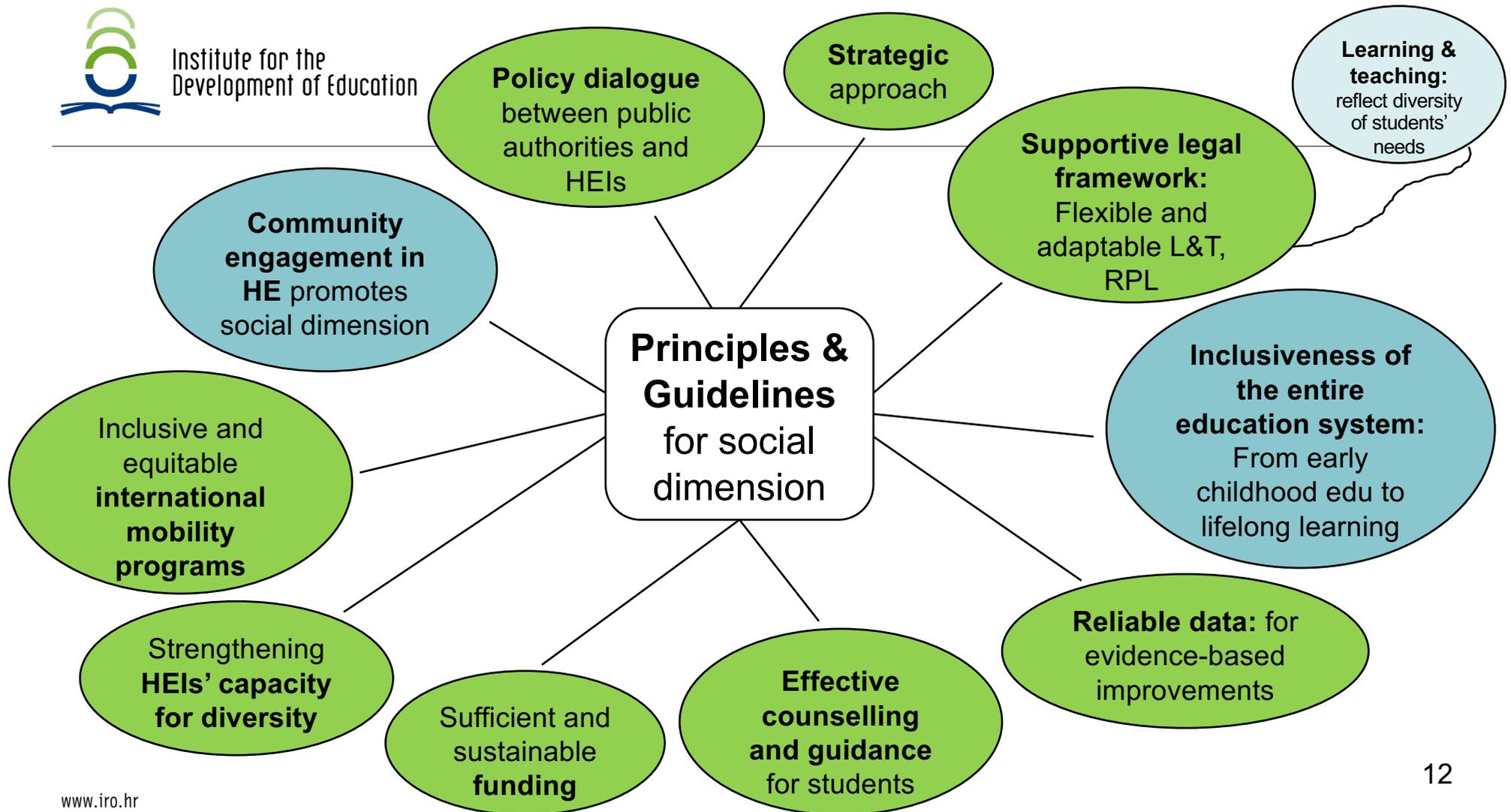
10 principles for the social dimension for the upcoming decade:

- **Principles** = should be understood as high-level statements that serve as a **basis for the conceptualization of different policies** for social dimension enhancement.
- **Guidelines** = recommendations intended to advise policy makers on how the principles should be implemented in practice.
- **Glossary of Terms and Definitions:**
 - Underrepresented students
 - Disadvantaged students
 - Vulnerable students



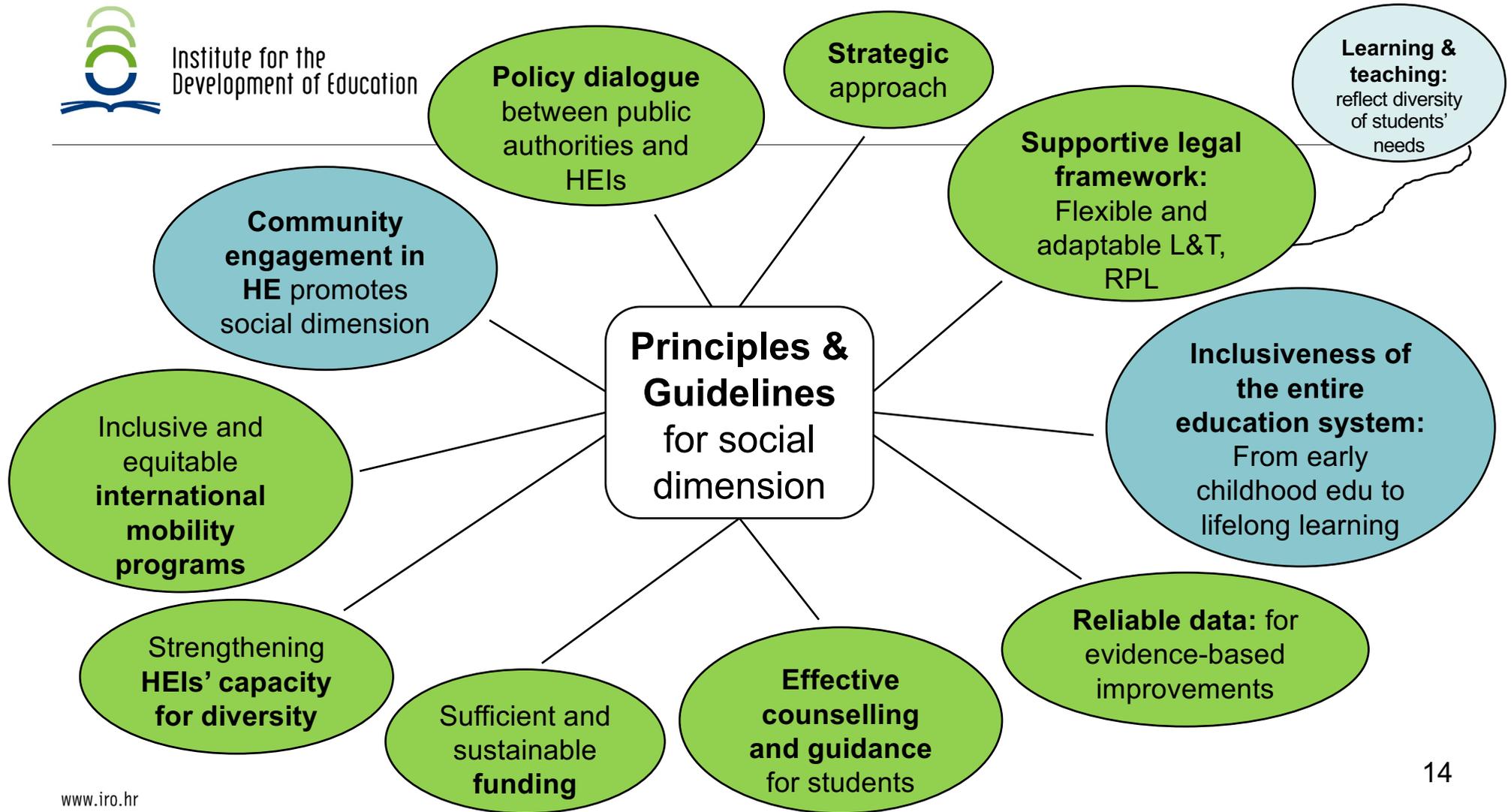
Highlights:

- Legal regulations and administrative rules should allow sufficient **flexibility in the design, organization and delivery of study programs** to reflect the diversity of students' needs.
 - Higher education institutions should be enabled to organize **full-time and part-time studies, flexible study modes, blended and distance learning** as well as to **recognize prior learning (RPL)**.
- It is important to ensure a **holistic approach** to the social dimension aiming to create **coherent policies from early childhood education**, through schooling to higher education and throughout lifelong learning.
 - This requires **more connectivity** between the work of those responsible for higher education and other ministries and sectors, which can bring about **change only in a joint effort**.



Highlights:

- Higher education institutions should ensure that **community engagement in higher education promotes diversity, equity and inclusion.**
 - Such engagement provides a **holistic basis** on which universities can **address a broad range of societal needs**, including those of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, while enriching their teaching, research and other core functions.



Conclusion:

- Principles and Guidelines are not to be seen as a checklist, but as an instrument for **developing fit-for purpose national and institutional strategies and policies** for social dimension enhancement
 - Enabling concrete and tangible progress over the next decade

Favourable moment:

- Principles and Guidelines **adopted by the 48 EHEA ministers** at the **EHEA Rome Ministerial Conference** on 19 November 2020
 - Principles and Guidelines are an **integral part of the 2020 Rome Ministerial Communiqué** - ministers have **politically committed** to its implementation.



Next steps:

- **Public authorities** should support the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines by **offering a legal, financial, administrative and informative framework** that can initiate process of implementation at the national level
- **Public authorities** should engage in a **policy dialogue** with **HEIs and other stakeholders** to develop fit-for purpose policy measures > will enable progress towards diversity, equity, inclusion in higher education

Thank you for your attention!

Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt

Co-Chair of the BFUG Advisory Group for Social Dimension 2018-2020

Institute for the Development of Education (IDE)

Zagreb, Croatia

nscukanec@iro.hr

www.iro.hr

BFUG Advisory Group 1 for Social Dimension:

<http://www.ehea.info/page-Advisory-Group-1>

EHEA Ministerial Conference Rome 2020 – 19 November 2020 (9-17h):

<http://www.ehea.info/index.php>

<https://ehea2020rome.it/>