

Social competences within the context of higher education can be defined as the ability of an individual to evaluate and understand the capacity and boundaries of their individual knowledge, skills and attitudes in the cognitive, attitude and behaviour-activity dimension to other individuals, groups and societies.

## Methods

Data collection methods:

- document analysis
- focus group discussions
- structured interviews
- surveys

The research base including pilot study consists of 279 respondents from 5 selected HEIs:

- 230 respondents of online questionnaires (10 administrative staff, 84 teachers and 136 students)
- 28 participants in focus group discussions (8 administrative staff and/or teachers and 20 students)
- 21 structured interviews with administrative staff and/or teachers

## Conclusions

- There is a lack of common understanding about the concept of social competences themselves
- The evaluation process only takes into account the specific subject-specific knowledge and skills, as social competences are highly subjective and difficult to be objectively assessed
- It is not fully possible to define regulations for developing social competences in a certain volume, level, thematic area
- The targeted development of social competences in study process requires both the methodological support of institutional policy-making and the positioning and implementation of pedagogical approaches
- There is a lack of common setting for the priority of emphasising social competences in the objectives of the Bologna process

## Recommendations

- To develop teaching guidelines for study programme directors and teachers
- To reduce student-teacher ratios in order to implement a more individual approach
- To review the courses of study programmes by allocating part of the structured study process to social competences which are directly expressed in credit points
- HE sector of Latvia should agree on a common understanding of the concept of social competences and its interpretation in HEIs
- More attention should be paid to the topic of social competences in the continuing education activities for teachers
- Strengthening the priority of developing social competences in the objectives of the Bologna process should be emphasised

### Rīga Stradiņš University

- established in 1950
- around 9100 students
- closely integrated within the health care system

### BA School of Business and Finance

- established in 1992
- around 1490 students
- main focus on finance and business studies

### University of Latvia

- established in 1919
- around 17 000 students
- one of the largest leading research universities in the Baltic States

### Riga Technical University

- established in 1862
- around 14 000 students
- offers education not only in engineering, but also in social sciences and humanities

### Transport and Telecommunication Institute

- established in 1999
- around 2750 students
- main focus on IT, management and logistics