

## **Recent European Updates** (collated by NZTE Hamburg for Education New Zealand)

### **Europe**

Education ministers of 27 European countries have finalised and fully adopted the European Qualification Framework (EQF) on February 14, 2008. The EQF enables a uniform assessment of educational qualifications. The framework has been put in place to encourage employees' mobility and lifelong learning in Europe.

### **Germany**

Recent statistics revealed that every third German upper secondary school student (*Gymnasium*) is studying Latin. The old language has experienced an increase of students by 30% during the last 6 years. It is very important for German school students to continue studying Latin when doing a school period abroad.

According to a recent study, 61% of all German secondary school students fancy a school exchange or school stay abroad during secondary schooling. The study was carried out with 15 and 16 year old students throughout Germany. The results revealed that girls are more attracted (70%) to schooling abroad than boys. The majority of interested students (68%) are studying at upper secondary schools (*Gymnasium*). 64% students at mainstream schools (*Realschule*) are interested in stays abroad after graduating from secondary school. Most of them go back to upper secondary school to achieve university entrance in Germany. This clientele should be of rising interest for NZ schools as career specific courses or the NCEA level 3 qualifications can be offered at a much shorter time in NZ.

New changes to the student grant system were published by government. New changes include an increase of the maximum amount of monthly grants. The new system also enables German secondary students to receive subsidy of travel costs of up to 2,000 EURO and tertiary students of up to 1,000 EURO when studying overseas for at least 6 months. The new grant system will be effective as of August 2008.

Education experts have called again on the German government to provide student grants for full tertiary education programmes overseas in order to ease pressure on German universities. Due to demographic trends and changes within German compulsory education, analysts expect a 30% increase of student enrolment in Germany in 2011. The German education system is currently unable to cater for the increase completely.

More than 430,000 German upper secondary students have gained the German university entrance qualification in 2007. In the first of the 16 federal states that have introduced a reduction of compulsory schooling time from 13 to 12 years, a double outtake of graduates has occurred and caused a first run on universities.

The first of those States who had pressed ahead with tertiary tuition fees are now easing the policy again. Hamburg has announced to scrap tuition fees during tertiary education. The city-state is responding to a rising pressure from students opposing to pay tuition fees during tertiary studies. The new model will have effect as of October 2008. Instead of students having to pay tuition fees during academic studies, the new scheme allows Hamburg to charge monthly fees once students earn above 30,000 Euro annually after graduation. The state Hessen has announced to introduce a similar scheme this year.

### **UK**

Student enrolments are on an all-time high in British universities. Top subject choices are law, pre-clinical medicine, psychology, English and management studies.

The British Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills identified priorities for higher education which included an increase of approx. 60,000 British students entering tertiary education for the first time by 2011.

### **Spain**

For the second year in a row the Spanish Ministry of Education is offering more than 50,000 scholarships to Spanish 18 to 30 year olds who have received government grants before to improve their English language skills abroad. NZ as a destination is eligible.

### **Czech Republic**

From 2009, Czech tertiary students will be able to apply for government loans which include study periods abroad.