

18–19 February 2026, Salzburg

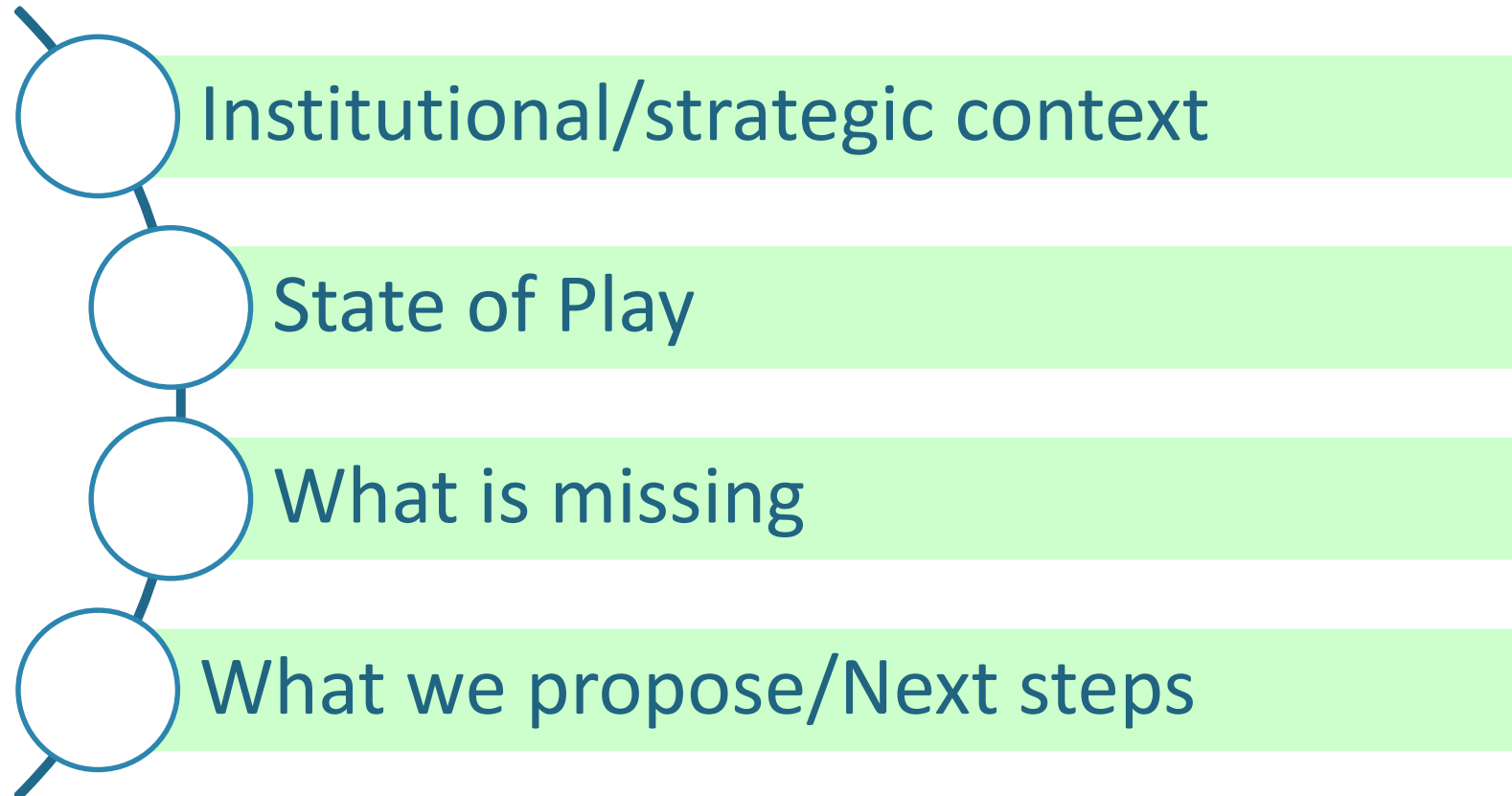
Enhancing Inclusive Culture and Counselling and Guidance Services in Greek Higher Education: State of Play and Future Perspectives

Dr. Nikoletta CHARDALIA

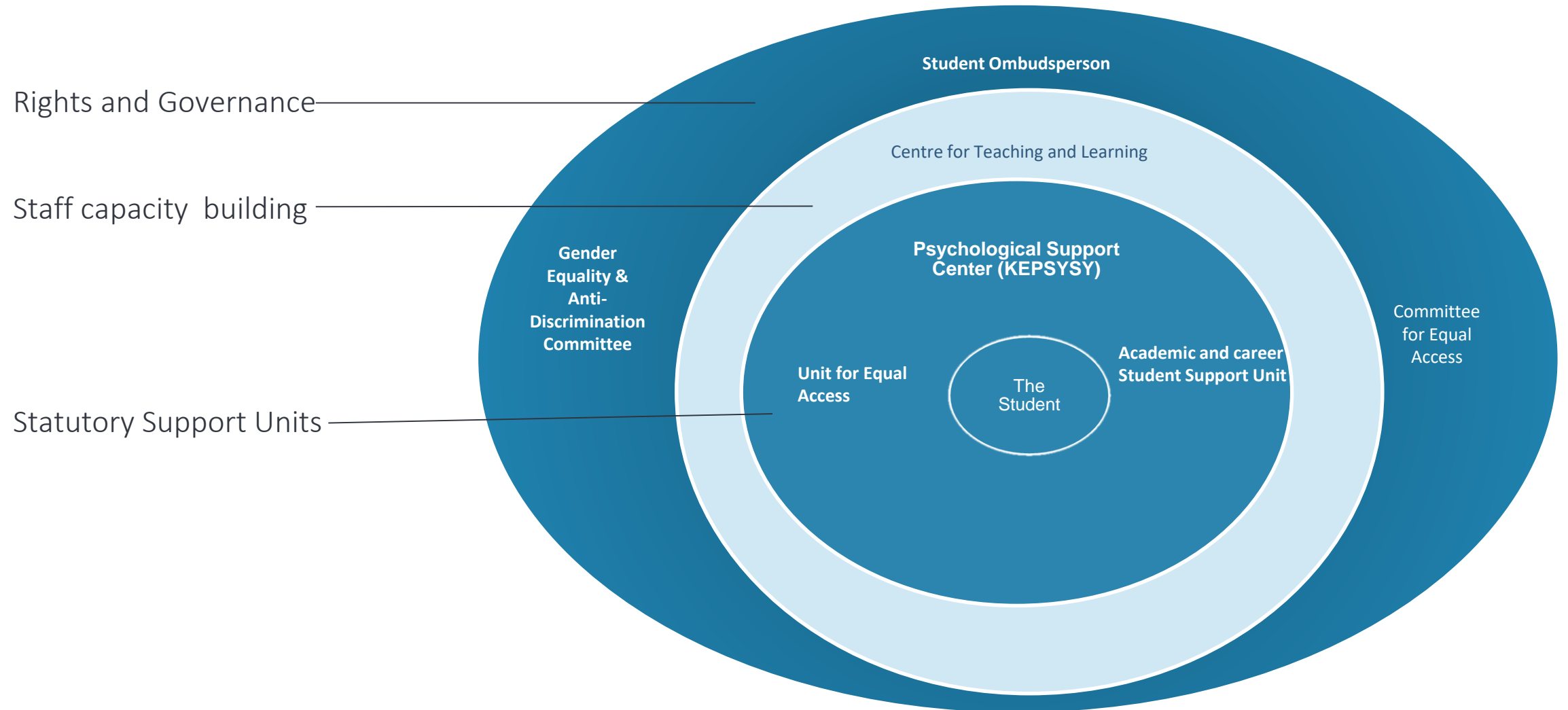
4th meeting of the Thematic Peer Group D on Social Dimension

Presentation to the PLA “We make a change’: Making
institutional cultures in higher education more inclusive”

Outline: Progress on Principles 5 & 7



L. 4957/2022 Holistic Student Support Framework



Alignment with EU and National Inclusion Strategies

Strategic Context EU, especially:

- 2020 *Rome Ministerial Communiqué*, 19 November 2020, Annex II
- 2024 *Tirana Ministerial Conference*
- *Work by the Thematic Peer Group on the Social Dimension (TPG D)*

Horizontal National Strategies/Action Plans regarding:

- Gender Equality (2021-2025)
- LGBTQI+ Equality (2021)
- Protection of Children against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (2022-2027)
- Prevention of Violence and Combatting of Juvenile Delinquency (2025-2030)
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2024-2030)

Strategic Funding Framework: “Incentivizing” Inclusion

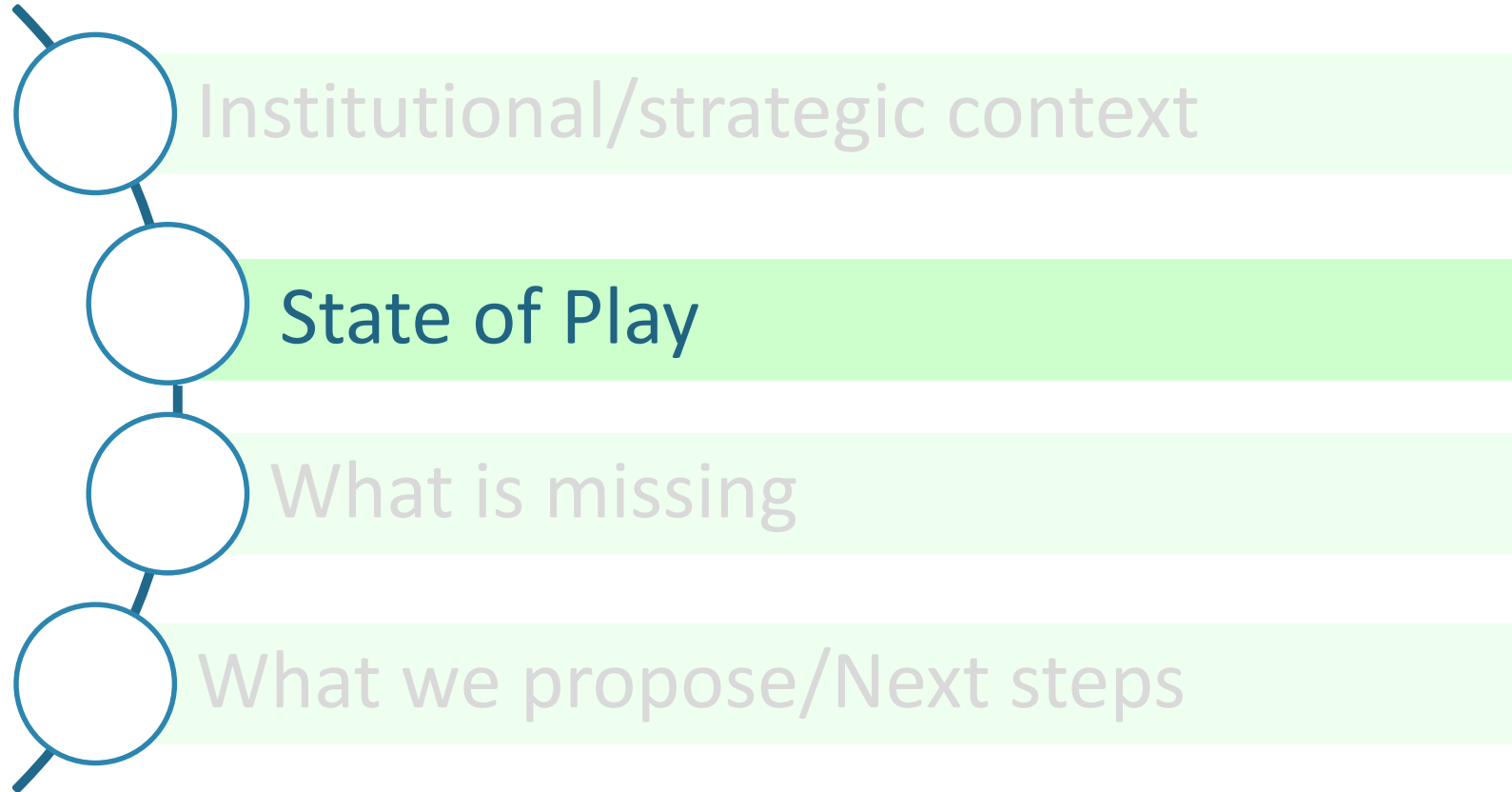
Annual state funding: **70%** based on objective criteria and **30%** on specific performance indicators (based on the Annual assessment of HEIs by the accreditation agency Hellenic Authority for Higher Education /HAHE):

Section E: Quality of the University Environment focuses on institutional inclusivity through seven key metrics:

- Administrative Staff Ratio in the Career Office
- Student psychological support
- Scientific Staffing for Psychological Support Units (ratio per 1,000 students).
- Academic Staff Gender Ratio
- Direct budget allocation for disability support
- Accessible classrooms Percentage
- Teaching Support Office Operation

To date, the adoption of this set of criteria remains at the discretion of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); there is no mandatory requirement.

- 9 HEIs out of 23 selected Section E in 2025 and 10 HEIs out of 23 in 2026



Counselling and Psychological Support Centers (KEPSYSY) - Activities 2025

Main responsibilities: psychological and counselling support services and prevention of mental health disorders

Staffing: psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers

Key findings :

- ✓ Establishment and operation of KEPSYSY across all HE Institutions
- ✓ Full operational deployment, clear procedures and services.
- ✓ Many KEPSYSYs rely on Partnership Agreements (NSRF/ESPA) funding for contractual staff, while some report understaffing and wait to scale up through NSRF **funding** for 2025-2026
- ✓ not only individual counseling services but also specialized protocols for specific groups
- ✓ fully activate their role to raise mental health awareness and reduce stigma through educational activities, campaigns, open discussions, etc.
- ✓ KEPSYSYs seem fully integrated in the inclusive landscape of the HEIs collaborating systematically with all internal university units (such as Career Support Units) and with external organizations such as local Prevention Centers, health structures, NGOs, ect

Evidence-based good practice

University of the Aegean: Holistic + Adapted to the special context approach

- Holistic approach: networking and cooperation of the totality of the support services and with social stakeholders + Approach adapted to the specific local conditions due to the archipelagic character of the Institution
- Decentralized units per campus : Psychological Support Units in six islands
- Remote counseling and digital application systems to overcome barriers due to the insular isolation.

ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ | ΣΥΜΒΟΥΛΕΥΤΙΚΟΙ ΣΤΑΘΜΟΙ

ΑΡΧΙΚΗ | ΕΝΑΡΞΗ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΑΣ | ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ ΑΝΑ ΝΗΣΙ

ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ / ΑΝΑ ΝΗΣΙ

ΡΟΔΟΣ

Συμβουλευτικός Σταθμός Ρόδου

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Καθηγήτρια Παν. Αιγ. με γν. αντικείμενο «Κλινική Ψυχολογία»
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Ψυχολόγοι:
Βασιλική Μαρτσουδή, Ψυχολόγος: άρες επισκέπτονται κάθε Παρασκευή 09:00-11:15 στο Νοσοκομείο Σύρου (τηλ. επικοινωνίας 22813-60526)

Σοφία Μπαχαράκη, Παιδοψυχίατρος: μετά από ραντεβού στα εξωτερικά ιατρεία (τηλ. ραντεβού 22813-60523)

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Committees and Units for Equal Access - Activities (2025)

L. 4957/2022: HEIs are mandated to operate in compliance with the **principle of Universal Access** in every field of their competence or activity

Committees: nine-member advisory body: five faculty members, the Head of the Unit for Equal Access, the Head of the Technical Service, a student representative, and the Head of the Teaching and Learning Support Center

Units: Main responsibilities: Support for the achievement of physical, digital, educational/research accessibility of Students with Disabilities (SwD) and Special Education Needs, Transportation/campus navigation services for students with mobility impairments

Staffing: Scientific staff with expertise/training in accessibility issues

Key findings:

- All universities have established Committees (strategic/institutional level) and Units (operational level) for Equal Access. The vast majority were set up from 2023 onwards, with the exception of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), which has operated a corresponding service since 2006.
- Early stage towards Universal Design/uneven implementation across institutions -Uneven implementation across institutions
- Transportation/campus navigation services for students with mobility impairments only in some Institutions.
- Some Institutions have set up Structured volunteer teams to assist SwD with note-taking and campus navigation.
- Personalized Support Plans are reported by some Institutions

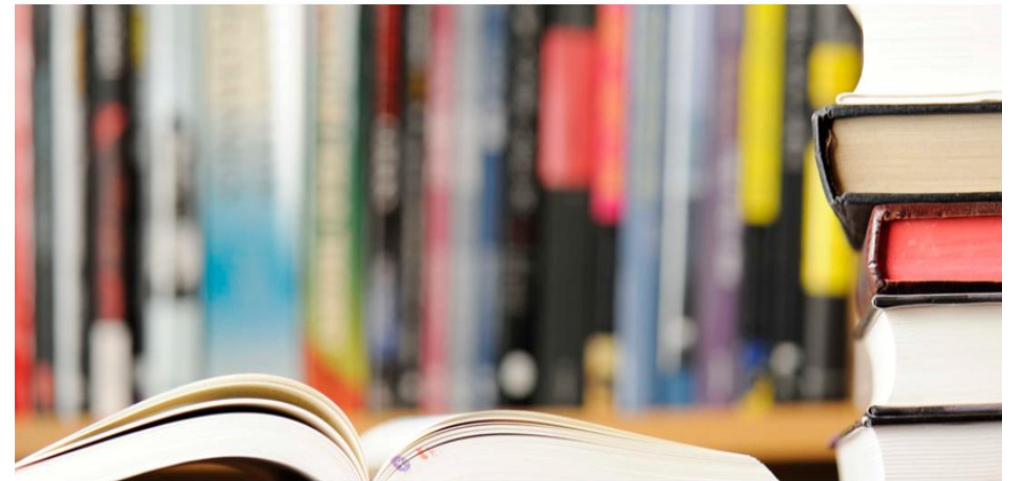
Evidence-based good practice

- [AMELib](#) – a collaborative project+a successful sustainable service
- What is it: A multimodal library for accessible textbooks.
- Collaborative Network: consisting of all Greek Academic Libraries.
- Target Audience: print-disabled students.
- Initially a funded "action" it has successfully transitioned to a permanent, sustainable service

AMELib

Login Register 🔍 Book search Contact Ελληνικά

AMELib: Accessible Multi-modal Electronic Library



AMELib: Accessible Multi-modal Electronic Library

The Student Ombudsperson- Activities 2024-26

Main responsibilities: Investigates cases ex officio or following a student complaint and mediates with the competent bodies for their resolution; coordinates awareness-raising and training activities; participates in the formulation of internal transparency and integrity policies; prepares an annual report

Eligibility: A member of the Teaching and Research Staff (TRS) at the rank of Professor, or an Emeritus Professor of the HEI.

Term of Office: One (1) year, renewable for a further three (3) years.

Key findings

- The institution of the University Ombudsperson is operational in all HEIs , with the exception of two (in one of which it is currently under establishment).
- **Evidence of growing trust & impact of** the institution within the academic community reflected by **rising case volume and high resolution rate**
- Cases handled range from **administrative and academic disputes, Student Welfare and Protection**, to reports of **harassment and fraud**.

Teaching and Learning Support Centers: Inclusion Activities (2025)

Based on evidence from 13 HEIs

Key findings

- Most HEIs are in a **transition phase**: from setting up structures to pedagogical mainstreaming of inclusion.
- Inclusion-related actions: training programs, digital depositories, inclusive teaching guides

Focus primarily on:

- training of academic staff,
- inclusive & student-centred teaching,
- Topics: disability, learning difficulties, gender equality

Implementation remains uneven across institutions:

- several HEIs with systematic, recurring actions,
- others still at an early or planning stage,
- few HEIs report no targeted actions so far.

Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Committees –Activities 2025

Composition: nine-member committee consisting of six faculty members, one representative the laboratory teaching staff, one administrative employee, and one student

Key duties include **drafting action plans**, preparing **annual reports**, and **recommending measures**. There is no requirement for the establishment of a support office.

Key Findings (2025)

All HEIs have established Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Committees (GEAC) and formalized the first wave of Action Plans (from 2022 onwards)

- The committees have successfully shifted from foundational policy drafting to active dissemination, networking, and incident management.
- Major focus in 2025 in many HEIs: the formalization of harassment and verbal violence reporting and mediation mechanisms
- Need for establishment of support offices to the Committees (planned in many HEIs through Partnership Agreements/NSRF funding for 2025-2026)
- Need for systematic collection gender-disaggregated data for strategic planning and evaluation

Evidence-based good practice

Sexual Violence Response and Cooperation Mechanism

Inter-agency Cooperation Protocol between seven major Greek Universities, with other Governmental Bodies and specialized NGOs.

- The Protocol establishes a **Response and Cooperation Mechanism** to address incidents of sexual violence within the academic environment, including:
- **Structured Referrals**
- **Holistic Care.**
- **Inter-institutional Synergy**



InSupport
— Enhancing Interagency Support for Victims of Sexual Violence

Info

The InSupport project is dedicated to enhance the protection and assistance provided for victims and survivors of sexual violence in Greece.

The project's targeted approach will promote interagency cooperation on supporting victims of sexual violence, through:

- The establishment of an interagency mechanism involving relevant stakeholders
- The enhancement of the victim response and support procedures of law-enforcement and frontline services
- The strengthening of the skills of law-enforcement and frontline professionals on rape / sexual violence issues and gender-sensitive victim support

The project will enhance the access of victims and survivors of sexual violence to specialist support tailored to their needs.

 Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.
[Project Number: 101195372 — InSupport — CERV-2024-DAPHNE]

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Financial tools

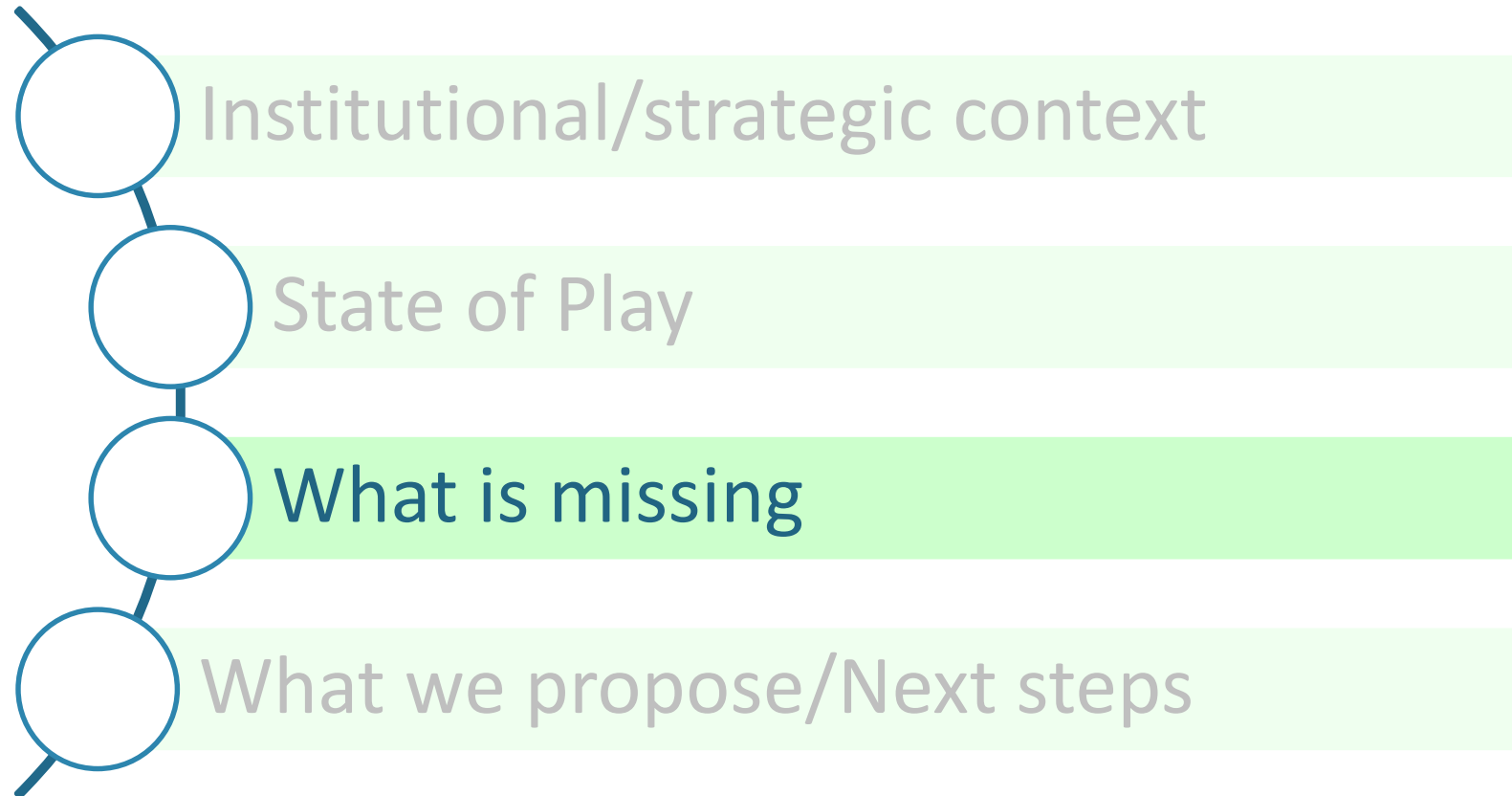
a) Seed funding (initial setup of structures) of HEIs through Partnership Agreements (NSRF/ESPA)

3 Main ongoing projects:

- Promotion of equal access for Persons with Disabilities and other special educational needs
- Gender Equality promotion and support for Psychological and Counseling Support Centers/KEPSYSYs
- Support of Student Career Offices, Quality Assurance and Strategic Planning Units

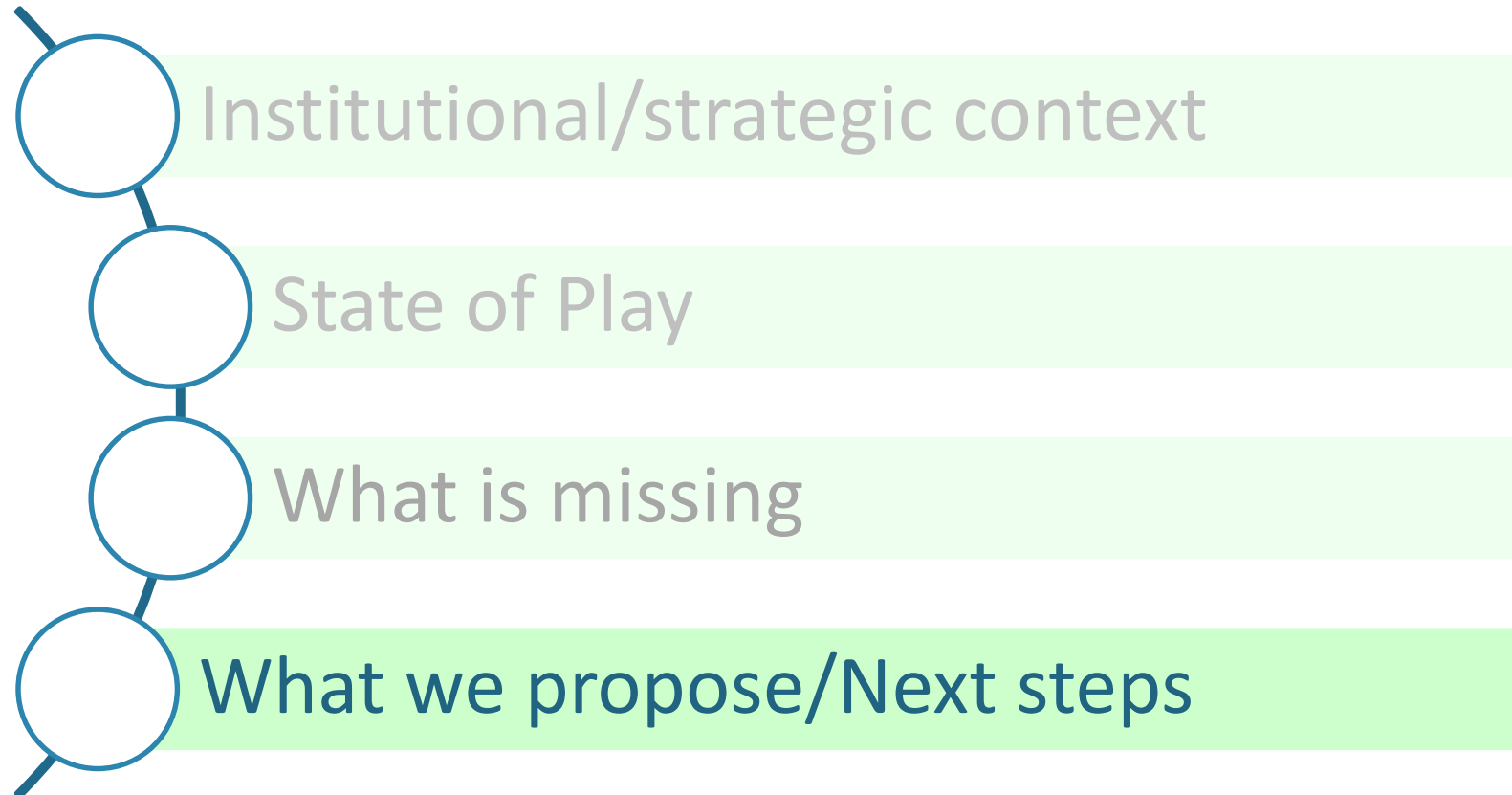
(Total Budget : EUR 9,506,800)

b) Broader context : 70%-30% state funding



What is still missing

- Structures Uniformity according to the law
- Mainstreaming inclusivity
- System's Maturity
- Systematic Collection of Disaggregated Data



What we propose: Towards a National Strategy for the Social Dimension of HE

Drawing on the experience of this framework, we plan to:

➤ Developing a National Strategy for Universal Access to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Current state: Setting up of a Committee with specific time span +deliverables

▪ Incremental approach: a first step towards a National Strategy for the Social Dimension of HE

➤ we hope to profit from the support of TPG D

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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