

Speaker is well received at NESET seminar for EU Commission staff in Brussels

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Professor Stephen Gorard was recently invited to speak at a NESET seminar for EU Commission staff in Brussels on 16 December 2012. His talk was on the **Inequalities and Barriers in Higher Education in the EU**.

While the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds has increased, lower socio-economic parts of the population and disadvantaged social groups continue to be seriously under-represented in both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. In addition, many more students from these groups drop-out before finishing their studies. Significant differences can be found across Member States.

Questions which were debated included:

- Which measures do tertiary education institutions in the EU currently apply to increase the participation and success of under-represented, disadvantaged and non-traditional learners?
- How do HE institutions design their study programmes to cater for a diversified student body?
- How does the diversification of funding sources affect students from poorer backgrounds?
- How does the crisis affect the participation and success of under-represented, disadvantaged and non-traditional learners in tertiary education?
- How to raise participation in HE and at the same time promote equity?

The talk was well received. The commission staff were keen to stay and ask Stephen further questions following the session and he has been asked to return next year.