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**Abstract**

Portuguese higher education institutions (both universities and polytechnics) have been facing, over the last decade, particularly in recent years with the adoption of austerity brought by the intervention of the Troika (European Central Bank, European Commission, International Monetary Fund), a policy of cuts in public funding. In consequence the financing for social support programs (scholarships, support for meals and lodging) has decreased. Therefore, demand to access higher education has been decreasing since 2010/2011 and so is the number of students enrolled for the first time in the 1st year. This is especially significant in the private higher education subsystem. This article presents the evolution of higher education in Portugal, seeking to show the impact of cost-sharing policies in budgetary resources of higher education institutions and accessibility and social support for students in the last decade, particularly in recent years. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)