**BM70 – BERGEN
Resolution**

An equitable grant system for all students

ESU stands up for a socially equitable and inclusive higher education system. It is crucial that everyone who is striving for a higher education also has the financial possibility to achieve this goal, regardless of their individual financial situation. Therefore, we are against financial cuts in education, especially if they concern the student grant system. Student grants are the only structure providing the ability to afford studies to everyone, which implies the providing of accommodation, food and university material.

Up until now, the student grant systems in most European countries are not fulfilling the criteria of a fair system. Two of these problematic cases can be found in Luxembourg and Denmark, which will in the following be used to point out the issue.

According to statistics of Statista, Luxembourg is within the OECD countries the one which spends the lowest percentage (3,7%) of its GDP on education. This is a clear sign that the government should spend more money on education, especially on students of higher education as they have the highest expenses. Luxembourg has a student grant system, which has been reformed in 2014. The expenses for the new system amount to a sum which is 20 million € below the original government estimate, although the results of the study carried out by TNS ILRES show that there are still marginalised groups and students in disadvantageous situations are being discriminated against by the system. Especially children coming from large families, the children of regular cross-border commuters and children of wealthy, yet unsupportive parents are harmed by the inequality of the current system. The government should therefore use the full extent of their budget and invest this money on behalf of the favoured students.

Denmark has a government grant system to which every student above 18 years is eligible. The grant's original purpose is to ensure no student drops out of education because of lacking economic resources and no student is forced to work part time during their studies. However, in recent years the grant system has been victim of a continuous change for the worse. The grant has not been adjusted to the price of living in Denmark and is not sufficient for a student to live. Since 2008, the average student income has fallen by 30 %. Furthermore, the grant is being used as a punishment for students who extent the time of their studies, have to pause their studies or are looking to enrol in a master's program. This has pushed many students into a financial limbo where they are forced to loan money or drop their studies due to loss of income.

In our opinion, the government is obliged to collaborate with all stakeholders in education, especially with the student movement. It is not acceptable that decision makers arbitrarily choose to approach only certain stakeholders, carry out sham proceeding and then pretend that the views of all those concerned have been considered. We harshly condemn such undemocratic procedures with the purpose of saving money at the expense of students.

A sufficient government grant ensures students do not have to compromise their studies because of financial issues. It should be flexible and reduce the financial risk of students in education. It should be universal and provide every student with the ability to finance their studies independently from their social background, economic inheritance, gender, health, education, merit and other factors of discrimination.

The reduction and changing of the government grant comes in addition to the austerity politics in Denmark, Luxembourg and the rest of Europe are facing. It is the responsibility of the governments to ensure equal opportunity to get an education. Students should be supported through their whole education by an equitable grant system. Therefore, ESU strongly supports UNEL's and DSF's strive for an equitable student grant system in Luxembourg and Denmark.

Proposed by: UNEL, DSF

Seconded by: fzs