



## **Conference on the Social Dimension in Higher Education Sofia 8-9<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

**ESU Board meeting 61  
Sofia 10-12<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

## **2nd EQUNet Project conference Hosted by**

**National Assembly of Student Council of the Republic of Bulgaria (NASC)  
Union of Bulgarian Students (UBS)**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Welcome words</b>	
<b>Sergey Modev, Chairperson of UBS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Petar Chaushev Chairperson of NASC.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Allan Päll Chairperson of European Students'Union (ESU).....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Information on the EQUnet project Seminar on the future of social dimension in Higher Education</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Agenda of the Seminar.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Information on the workshops.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Useful reading.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>EQUnet partner organisations.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>A brief history of student councils in Bulgaria.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Practical information.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The city.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Accomodation and Venue.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Arrival, how to get there?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Emergency phone numbers.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Currency.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>What to do in your free time?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Dictionary.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>ESU briefing notes: master suppression techniques.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Ethical guidelines.....</b>	<b>35</b>

# WELCOME WORDS

Dear participant,



On behalf of UBS and NASC it is our great pleasure to welcome you all at the conference on the „Future of Social Dimension in Higher Education” and the 61<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting of the European Student Union.

Following the discussions on the structure changes and the vision building processes of ESU, this Board Meeting will be a milestone in the



history of our organisation, finishing the process of transformation of ESU from an information Bureau into an all European Students Union. Our mutual goals and vision for the future were what have always united us despite the various backgrounds we have. Therefore we really hope that the outcome of this Board Meeting will make us even more united and stronger representatives of the voice of our students on European level. We are looking forward to exciting discussions to reflect ESU's political strategies and directions for the future.

We wish you a pleasant and interesting stay in Sofia.

**Sergey Modev**

*Chairperson of UBS*



**Petar Chaushev**

*Chairperson of NASC*



**Dear participant,**

I am happy to welcome you to Bulgaria for our conference on social dimension that we are holding with our project partners from EQUNet. Social dimension has become a core policy issue in the higher education community in several ways. It rose to prominence after being defined by ministers in 2007 in London as social dimension meaning the reflection of the diversity of the society in higher education. This could naturally lead to many interpretations and strategies when considering implementation. Latter has been the weak point.

Countries were to tackle the issue through setting up national strategies and defining underrepresented groups whom policy should thus then have addressed. That was a spectacular failure – most strategies were more of descriptions of afterthoughts in which policies already in place were depicted as something new. But mostly, this approach did not lead to establishing of targets and benchmarks, nor too much strategic deliberation on this key issue at all.



Later on, the European Union has defined reaching higher education attainment rates of 40% within the young age group as the key policy target underlying societal and economic success of Europe. This strategy expects widening participation significantly in many countries, but also that a few countries have been more ambitious in their own goals.

At this conference, I am thus inviting you to debate on the issue of how to make social dimension a real policy in countries within the emerging European Higher Education Area. But perhaps more importantly, how to achieve demonstrable results in bringing in more equality, not just equality of opportunity, to higher education.

There is almost universal agreement that more higher education will benefit the societies in unimaginable ways. But to reach that, investment and hard work is needed. Higher education is changing before our eyes with institutions becoming more open than ever before. In relation to that I think one key issue for student unions to realise is our own inclusiveness.

Think about the grand challenge of making Europe sustainable in the context of declining populations and increasing immigration that brings more challenges before educational policy. In this context, we can't remain the same. We can't remain young. And we can't remain homogeneous. Student unions are to play key role and they have a challenge to meet to attract these diverse populations to become active in shaping the university life. Are we up to the challenge? No good conference should pass us by without self-critical reflections!

My immediate reaction would be that a lot remains to be done on the institutional level. That is why we have also included this to the ESU agenda in the area of social dimension for instance through our work on popularising science with children through structured approach of children universities.

Before concluding, I would like to thank our hosts in Bulgaria, national unions NASC and UBS and their representatives and volunteers and to thank our project partners in the EQUNet project which is one of the few projects around that has potential for such great policy input. Finally, my appreciation goes to all contributors, speakers and ESU elected representatives who have prepared the conference for us.

Welcome to the debate about the future of social dimension!

**Allan Päll**  
Chairperson, European Students' Union (ESU)

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Allan Päll".

# An EQUNet Conference on the Social Dimension in Higher Education

## Sofia 8-9th of November 2011

### The Future of Social Dimension in Higher Education

#### EQUNet project

EQUNet is a 3-year project aiming at increasing access to Higher Education for all marginalized and non-traditional groups based on a principle of equity. The best and worst practices will be highlighted in the project, together with the focus on understanding the barriers to entry to Higher Education, and the incorporation of stakeholders to help propose solutions. Based on this research, the project aims to give implementable recommendations as to how to improve accessibility to Higher Education.

The EQUNet Consortium is made up of 8 associations, 4 umbrella organisations bringing together stakeholder groups from across Europe, and 4 research institutes specialising in research into education & training. The 4 umbrella organizations include ESU, EURASHE, MENON and EDEN. The 4 research institutes are HIS, SCIENTER, ZSI and CEPS. Together, they are working towards bringing an evidence-based approach to policy making on equity in higher education in Europe.

The EQUNET project was conceived as an independent research and networking initiative, with an aim to increase access to Higher Education for all marginalised and non-traditional groups based on a principle of equity. With the help of European Commission funding under the Lifelong Learning Programme, the project has brought together a consortium of renowned research organisations and stakeholder representatives to work on the project, ensuring a sound methodological base for the research presented here, and a wide audience to which to distribute the recommendations.

As originally conceived, the network has committed to research barriers arising as a result of:

- Educational background (issues revolving around recognition of non-formal and informal education, or non-traditional types of formal learning such as access for young persons who have been schooled at home, and distance learners)
- Socioeconomic conditions (issues revolving around access for people in employment, with family commitments, coming from divergent income groups, by level of dependency upon parents etc.)
- Structural problems in Higher Education (dealing with issues such as curricula, governance structures, admissions standards, funding policies etc.).

The project initially set out to analyse the degree and nature of these barriers for individuals from five target groups, namely

- ‘traditional’ students (i.e. 18-22 year olds)
- Migrants
- Continuing learners (professionals building upon a degree)
- Adult learners (without a degree or changing profession)
- Post-Professionals, i.e. those at the end of the lifelong learning curve
- 

In terms of its networking activities, the EQUNET consortium believes that in order to have an impact on equity in Higher Education, as on any complex and multifaceted societal theme, it is fundamental to involve all possible categories of stakeholders and to mobilize all the existing advocacy and decision making

energies and dynamics that lay around the theme. Given the specificity of the theme addressed, EQUNET does not intend to create a “new” network nor a “network of networks”, but rather to represent a thematic hub where institutions and individuals working on Higher Education and peers working on equity-assurance can meet, exchange knowledge, and shape a more equitable future for European universities.

In line with this reasoning, EQUNET is aiming at building an evidence-based advocacy network aiming at raising awareness on the issue of equity in Higher Education. The network deals with:

- Policy advocacy, by contributing to shaping EU and if possible national policies in its field. Its main concern is to shape agendas by influencing legislation and guaranteeing the representation of interests at the European level (and at a national or regional level);
- Dissemination and cross fertilisation, by promoting the EQUNET research findings and by fostering the exchange of best HE equity practices among relevant stakeholders and communities. As a European dissemination network it acts as a platform for mainstreaming and benchmarking of good practices at the Member states level;
- Resources documentation, by supporting the creation of an open archive for equity-related documents and resources.

## What is a Social Dimension?

### Social Dimension in a nutshell

The social dimension of the envisaged European Higher Education Area aims at: **equality of opportunities in higher education**, in terms of: access, participation and successful completion of studies; studying and living conditions; guidance and counselling; financial support, and student participation in higher education governance. This implies also equal opportunities in mobility, when it comes to portability of financial support, removing barriers, and providing incentives.

### The Social Dimension of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area

The Social Dimension is one of the overarching Bologna Process themes, appearing for the first time in the **Prague Communiqué (2001)** where “*...Ministers reaffirmed the need, recalled by students to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process...*”. At the following ministerial conferences, the social dimension was described as an integral part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA (**Bergen Communiqué, 2005**).

With the **London Communiqué of May 2007**, ministers responsible for higher education agreed on a common definition for the objective of the social dimension: “*We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations*”. Further on, ministers concurred in setting national strategies and policies, including action plans and reports on their progress at the next ministerial meeting. It was recommended also to work towards defining comparable data and indicators for the social dimension of higher education.

When addressing the social dimension of higher education, ministers agreed to include measures to widen participation and reduce drop-out rates, provide adequate student services and create more flexible learning pathways into and within higher education. Some countries have taken steps towards enhancing equality of opportunities of underrepresented groups into higher education, but very few countries have set specific targets to improve their participation rates. Less has been done in ensuring a monitoring of the participation of underrepresented groups in higher education. (Eurydice 2009)

In Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve, ministers committed further on to "...set measureable targets to widen participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade..." (**Leuven/Louvain-La-Neuve communiqué, 2009**).

Source: <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=12>

## European Observatory on the Social Dimension of Higher Education

The basic idea is setting up a central observing institution for the whole EHEA which would ensure data collection as well as sharing it and support countries in developing and implementing policies and practice regarding Social Dimension. So far the Observatory has been discussed mainly within the BFUG WG on Social Dimension and the idea would be to apply for funding in 2012. ESU has been a supporter of this since the beginning.

The main idea behind the creation of a Social Dimension Observatory is the creation of a structure that has the main purpose of monitoring and conducting research on social dimension related topics in higher education across Europe. The Bologna Social Dimension Coordination Group (2007-2009) concluded in its analysis of strategies and practices coming from efforts to improve the social dimension in European higher education that more work was necessary in order to properly assess country strategies and practices in this area. It was this knowledge that led the current Bologna Working Group on the Social Dimension (2009-2012) to set in its terms of reference the exploration of the possibility of creating a European Observatory on Social Dimension of Higher Education.

Following discussions based on a first sketch for a European Observatory on the Social Dimension of Higher Education (EOSDHE) on 11 July in Berlin, the Working Group now proposes to establish the EOSDHE as a pilot to run between 2012 and 2014. It would have the overarching purpose of supporting structured and systematic peer learning between countries and institutions in order to lead to measurable improvements in the social dimension of higher education across the European Higher Education Area.

In accordance with the tasks already formulated in the Working Group's terms of reference, an Observatory should fulfil the following objectives in a structured and transparent way:

1. Monitor relevant aspects of the social dimension implementation across EHEA (i.e. national targets and national action plans on social dimension).
2. Examine how EHEA countries collect and analyse data on the social dimension of higher education.
3. Collect good practices and successful examples of "what works" at national, regional and institutional level (i.e. exchange good practice on how to increase participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, access routes, flexibility of studies).
4. Provide the facility for the evaluation of national practices in the area of the social dimension of higher education by international peers on request.

To see the full draft of the European Observatory on Social Dimension in Higher Education (EOSDHE) as of 13.9.2011:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a94blgEG7oZY59BSB2lROsbm-hzPKTw\\_bZgRmGE6f0Q/edit?hl=en\\_US](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a94blgEG7oZY59BSB2lROsbm-hzPKTw_bZgRmGE6f0Q/edit?hl=en_US)

## ESU on the Social Dimension Observatory

Proactive approach: In the long run the Observatory should develop into a more active body, which doesn't only give its expertise upon request or function as an information sharing point but takes a proactive approach in for example creating policy suggestions, whether in cooperation with other networks or stakeholders or on its own.

When it comes to the monitoring of the relevant aspects of the social dimension, it would make sense for the Observatory to engage in giving recommendations to member states on improvement points whether a peer review is requested or not, as this would be a natural continuation on the work as the Observatory would already be examining how countries collect and analyze their own data on inequalities of participation in higher education.

Role of students: Students should be included in the coordination of the Observatory, as students are the key players when we talk about social dimension. If country peer reviews are done, students should be a part of the review team.

Cooperation with stakeholders: ESU would like to see closer cooperation with other stakeholders and those in favour of the Observatory to promote the idea further in a systematic and planned way. In order to show the validity of the Observatory to a wider audience, it is necessary to develop the reasoning for the Observatory further.

Reasoning for the Observatory: In ESU's opinion it is not enough to refer to the aims of the different Communiqués and the Council Conclusions only. Clarifying the benefits the Observatory for different stakeholders would promote the Observatory in a systematic manner as the different political institutions and stakeholders would recognize what they would gain from such a body and why is it relevant.

Financing: In the current proposal the Observatory would be funded through project funding from the Commission, if approved. Finding a financing structure both for short term as well as for long term to show it could be self-sustaining and to ensure the continuation of the Observatory.

## AGENDA

### **Day 1, Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November**

#### **9:00-10.00    Opening, welcome words**

Yordanka Fandakova, Mayor of Sofia;  
Prof. Sergey Ignatov, Minister of Education, Youth and Science;  
Allan Päll, Chairperson of ESU;  
Fabio Nascimbeni, Representative of MENON;  
Petar Chaushev President of NASC;  
Sergey Modev, President of UBS

#### **10:00- 10:30 Presentation: The meaning of Social Dimension in the European Higher Education Area, Klemen Miklavič, CEPS**

How did the concept Social Dimension come to be? What does Social Dimension mean in the European Higher Education Area?

#### **10.30-11.00 The EQUNet Project, Anthony F. Camilieri, SCIENTER**

EQUNET is a 3-year project aiming at increasing access to Higher Education for all marginalized and non-traditional groups based on a principle of equity. What are the main aims, purpose and achievements of the project? What messages does the report “Evolving diversity in HE” bring forth?

#### **11:00-11:30 Coffee Break**

#### **11:30-13.00 Panel discussion: Targets and tools to strengthen focus on social dimension in education.**

Chair: Per Nyborg (CEPS) Respondents: Jens Vraa-Jensen (HERSC) Lene Oftedal (EC), Andreas Bohonek (ZSI), Mary Tupan-Wenno (EAN), Allan Päll (ESU)

What are the different Social Dimension initiatives and policies at European level? Participants will have an understanding of the scope of the Social Dimension Observatory, the Right to Quality Education initiative and what the objectives of EU2020 and modernization agenda in relation to equity in HE.

#### **13:00-14:30 Lunch**

#### **14:30-16:00 Panel session: Ethnic origin and access to Higher Education: what stands in the way and what can we do about it.**

Galina Kostadinova (MRGI), Dorit Griga (University of Bern), Ethnic Minorities and Immigration WG of ESU

What is being done on European level to widen the access to education for ethnic minorities and immigrants? Galina Kostadinova from Minority Rights International will explain the definitions of ethnic minorities and immigrants. Dorit Griga will shed light on the migration and equity in Europe after which the working group on ethnic minorities and immigrants will share the results of the survey conducted to NUSes and share best practices.

## **16.00-16.30 Coffee break**

Campaign Poster Exhibition of NUS campaigns on equality and social affairs at the coffee venue to benchmark best practices and exchange ideas on successful campaigns; Distribution of the essay, winner of EQUNet competition is announced.

## **16:30-18:00 What does YouTube show us?**

*Interactive session on stereotypes in social media and everyday life and their impact on forming attitudes.*  
Virginija Prasmickaite, IGLYO, GECC

What are stereotypes? Is there a link between YouTube and other medias to our daily behaviour? This interactive session will be chaired by IGLYO with a different perspective on stereotypes.

## **19:00-20:00 Dinner (at the Conference venue)**

## **Day 2, Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November**

### **09:30-11:00 Synergies and future actions of stakeholders for widening access to HE**

*Parallel workshops on how stakeholders and NUSes can promote social dimension towards 2012 and beyond*

What are the different perspectives and approached towards widening access to higher education shared among different stakeholders? How could NUSes be involved in this? In the workshops the possibilities of how NUSes can be involved in promoting social dimension in practice will be explored and have the opportunity to gain more insight and give feedback on the topics of the workshops.

*See workshop description at the end of the agenda*

## **11:00-11:30 Coffee Break**

Ongoing Campaign Poster Exhibition on equality and social affairs at the coffee venue.

## **11:30-13:00 Debate Club: Social Dimension from the perspective of young leaders.**

The method of the session is called 'debate club', where participants can express their opinion on current, heated statements by moving along a line from 'agree to disagree' and engage in debate on the topics. Aim is to show the pros and cons to the statements and gather new arguments for future work.

## **13:00-14:30 Lunch**

## **14:30-16:00 Presentation of the outcomes of parallel sessions, Conclusions of the seminar and key messages to policy makers**

## **Workshops:** Synergies and future actions of stakeholders for widening access to Higher Education

### **WS1 An Observatory for Social Dimension, a powerful tool for the future? (Allan Päll, Florian Kaiser, ESU)**

The aim of the workshop is to discuss the possibility of a Social Dimension Observatory, what the benefits of it would be and what is still needed before such a body can be formed.

### **WS2 Supportive students' environment - students with disabilities and their participation in HE and mobility (Eva Reina, Sofia Ribeiro, UNICA)**

How can the participation and access to mobility and to HE of students with disabilities be increased? UNICA is running a project called ExchangeAbility, that aims at encouraging an increase in the number of students with special needs taking part in exchange programmes by stimulating their mobility through the organisation of site visits connected with different activities.

### **WS3 Accessibility through early involvement- Students and their integration in Children Universities (Tricia Jenkins, SisCatalyst Project)**

How can participation and accessibility to HE be increased through early involvement and how can NUSes take part in the project?

An international network of children universities leads the project and it is aiming to address issues that concern access to higher education by introducing children and adolescents of various ages and backgrounds, and especially those of underrepresented groups, to science and higher education environment. The aim is to increase the chances of entering higher education for those that would normally not be incentivised or encouraged by their surrounding environment.

### **WS4 Social Dimension in Mobility, (Emanuel Alfranseder, ESN)**

What does Social Dimension in mobility means? What are the biggest problems and what can be done to improve the situation of mobile students? Erasmus Student Network works for the creation of a more mobile and flexible education environment by supporting and developing the student exchange from different levels, and providing an intercultural experience also to those students who cannot access a period abroad.

### **WS5 Diversity in Social Dimension, (Virginija Prasmickaite, Euan Platt, IGLYO)**

What does diversity mean in Social Dimension? How can we widen the access and take increasingly diverse student population into account?

### **WS6 A popular initiative for student grants- a Swiss model (VSS-UNES-USU)**

With a popular initiative started in 2010 VSS-UNES-USU wants that all students have equal chances for receiving a grant of the same amount. The aim of the workshop is to share about the process of such an initiative, the role of democracy, how students can affect the political systems, learn from each other and see how ESU could learn from such action.

## Useful reading on social dimension

1. ESU policies and statements: <http://www.esu-online.org/documents/policy/>
2. Policy Paper “Equal Opportunities” <http://www.esu-online.org/news/article/6064/103/>
3. Policy Paper “A social dimension to Higher Education” <http://www.esu-online.org/news/article/6064/91/>
4. The Social Dimension in European Higher Education Area: <http://www.ehea.info/article-details.aspx?ArticleId=12>
5. EQUNet project: <http://www.equnet.info/>
6. EQUNet publication: Evolving diversity: An overview of equitable access to HE in Europe <http://www.equnet.info/files/2011/09/Evolving-Diversity.pdf>
7. OECD indicators Education at a Glance 2011: [www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011](http://www.oecd.org/edu/eag2011)
8. Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Funding and Social Dimension 2011: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP%2F11%2F1037&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>
9. EuroStudent Report: Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe 2008-2011: [http://www.eurostudent.eu/download\\_files/documents/EIV\\_Synopsis\\_of\\_Indicators.pdf](http://www.eurostudent.eu/download_files/documents/EIV_Synopsis_of_Indicators.pdf)
10. Council Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Higher Education: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:135:0002:0007:EN:PDF>

## EQUNet partner organizations

MENON is a European research and innovation network, working since 10 years to foster and smoothen innovation processes in areas such as education and lifelong learning, international S&T cooperation, knowledge society, social inclusion. We do so by facilitating the understanding of the processes of change happening in society, by engaging stakeholders in dialogue processes at different levels, and by offering evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice, at local, national, EU and international level. <http://www.menon.org/>

SCIENTER is a non-profit organisation, specialising in educational research & innovation. It has extensive experience in running multi-national consultancy, networking activities, research and piloting activities. SCIENTER is interested in innovation of training systems, with main reference to the field of open and distance learning and organisational learning. <http://www.scienter.org/>

HIS (Hochschul-Informations-System GmbH) is a service organisation for higher education. It is organized into 3 divisions: div. I develops administrative software for higher education institutions, div. II is concerned with research on higher education and div. III acts as a consultant to higher education institutions on organisational and structural matters. HIS has long-term expertise in a range of subject areas relevant to this proposal including university entrance, access to higher education & social selectivity, study conditions & quality, steering & financing, graduates & alumni, labour market entry, accreditation of prior learning, and lifelong learning. HIS has been the international coordinator of EUROSTUDENT since its inception in 1996. <http://www.his.de>

ZSI (Zentrum für Soziale Innovation) The unit “Technology and Knowledge (T&W)” conducts scientific research on social conditions and results of the practical use of technology. The core competencies of the unit “Technology and Knowledge” include social scientific research on technology and innovation systems, participative technology assessment, knowledge transfer on collaborative eLearning in theory and practice, internet databases, virtual networks and policy advice on application and use of information and communication technology. <http://www.zsi.at>

CEPS (Centre for Educational Policy Studies) Centre for Educational Policy Studies is a R&D unit within the Faculty specialised in education policy. CEPS closely cooperates with other University departments from the broad field of social sciences. Faculty of Education provides higher education and research in the area of education sciences and teacher education. Faculty of Education provides undergraduate, Master and Doctoral studies in teacher education and education sciences. <http://ceps.pef.uni-lj.si/eng.htm>

EURASHE is the international Association of European Higher Education Institutions – polytechnics, colleges, university colleges etc. – devoted to professional higher education within the Bachelor-Master structure, especially through its active involvement, as a consultative member, in the Bologna Follow-up Group. In this capacity, EURASHE has always upheld its support for quality assurance in HE, within the broader concept of LLL. <http://www.eurashe.eu>

European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) is the most comprehensive European association in the field of open, flexible, distance and e-learning. Its aim is to foster developments in distance and eLearning through the provision of a platform for collaboration between a wide range of institutions, networks and individuals concerned with ODL and e-learning in Europe. <http://www.eden-online.org>

## Participating Organizations

The European Access Network (EAN) encourages wider access to higher education for those who are currently under-represented, whether for reasons of gender, ethnic origin, nationality, age, disability, family background, vocational training, geographic location, or earlier educational disadvantage. The EAN is the only European-wide, non-governmental organisation for widening participation in higher education. <http://www.ean-edu.org/>

The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) is an EU-wide network of more than 700 organisations working to combat racism in all the EU member states and acts as the voice of the anti-racist movement in Europe. ENAR is determined to fight racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, to promote equality of treatment between European Union citizens and third country nationals, and to link local/regional/national initiatives with European Union initiatives. <http://www.enar-eu.org/>

Minority Rights Group International (MRGI) campaigns worldwide with around 130 partners in over 60 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard. Through training and education, legal cases, publications and the media, we support minority and indigenous people as they strive to maintain their rights to the land they live on, the languages they speak, to equal opportunities in education and employment, and to full participation in public life. <http://www.minorityrights.org/>

UNICA is a network of 43 universities from the capital cities of Europe, representing about 1,500,000 students and 120,000 staff members. Its role is to promote academic excellence, integration and co-operation between member universities throughout Europe. It seeks also to be a driving force in the development of the Bologna process and to facilitate the integration of universities from Central and Eastern Europe into the European higher education area. <http://www.unica-network.eu/>

Erasmus Student Network (ESN) works for the creation of a more mobile and flexible education environment by supporting and developing the student exchange from different levels, and providing an intercultural experience also to those students who cannot access a period abroad ("internationalisation at home"). ESN is present in 374 Higher Education Institutions from 35 countries. <http://www.esn.org/>

IGLYO is the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Youth and Student Organization. IGLYO is a membership-based umbrella organisation that aims to empower its Members in better representation of LGBTQ youth and student issues. It was created in 1984 as a reaction to the need for better co-operation among local, regional and national LGBTQ youth and student organizations. Today the IGLYO network is an important meeting point for LGBTQ youth in the European region, having member organizations in almost every European country and beyond. [www.iglyo.com](http://www.iglyo.com)

# **A Brief History of the National Assembly of Student Councils in the Republic of Bulgaria**

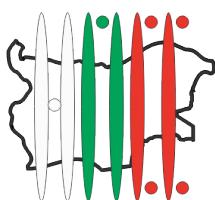
The idea of establishing an official national organization fighting for the rights and interests of students in Bulgaria was conceived in 1999 in the town of Gabrovo where at an informal meeting six University student councils met and debated on the need of such an organization in the Republic of Bulgaria. At that same meeting it was decided that a Constituent Assembly would be composed.

In March 2000 in Svishtov, students representing the 44 Student Councils of all accredited Universities & Colleges in Bulgaria sat down at the Constituent Assembly for straight 38 hours without interruption in order to establish the first Bulgarian National Assembly of the Student Councils.

A statute and a standing order of the new organization were adopted in compliance to Article 73 of the Law on Higher Education in the Republic of Bulgaria. Nowadays NASC (НПСС) is the only national statutory authority protecting the rights and interests of students and doctoral candidates across the country and consists of chairs, presidents or delegated representatives of all the Student Councils from all the accredited universities & colleges in Bulgaria.

The aims of NASC:

- Actively leading of student policies
- Changes in Law of Higher Education
- Dialogue with governmental institutions
- Supporting different activities of its members
- Fighting for the rights and interests of its members
- Continuing a lot of traditional initiatives, which are organized every year (Science conferences, Seminars, National Summer and Winter Games, Student Mobility Campaigns, Student Funding Campaigns, National Forums and Debates about the relation between the Higher Education and Business in Bulgaria, Student of the year.)



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
OF STUDENTS' COUNCILS  
OF REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

[www.npss.bg](http://www.npss.bg)

## A Brief History of The Union Of Bulgarian Students

Union of Bulgarian Students is a national students' organization, which unites students from all Bulgarian universities and colleges and whose main goal is to stand up for the academic and social rights of the students. UBS was established on 1 December 1990. Immediately after its establishment UBS became main partner of the universities' administrations, The President of the Republic of Bulgaria, The Ministry of Education, The Parliamentary Commission for Youth and Sport, The Parliamentary Commission for Education and Science, the Ministry of Youth and sport etc. Since 1993 UBS has been associated member and since 1995 has been full member of the European Students Union –ESIB. Since March 2000 UBS has been a full member of the International Students Union and has had a representative in the Executive Committee.

UBS is the only student organization co-founder of the National Students Council of Bulgaria.

UBS participates actively in the preparations and discussions of The Law of Higher Education and its amendments and in the creation of a bill, concerning preferential loans for students and doctors of science.

We participate in the discussion of bills of enactments, proposed by the Ministry of Education like the Decree of the Council of Ministers, concerning students' scholarships, setting of educational fees, regulations of use of student dormitories and dormitory canteens, decree of the Council of Ministers, concerning preferences for students, that use public and interurban transport etc.

Representatives of UBS participate in the management of the student dormitory and dormitory canteens, students' sport, tourism and recreation centers and National Students House as well.

In the moment we have representatives in the academic and faculty senates and in the commissions on students' social issues.

Since its Establishment till now UBS has realized many projects and initiatives in the sphere of Higher Education, student social problems, free time activities, professional realization etc. Such initiatives are:

- Assistance for students, starting their first job and publishing of a reference book with the graduated students from the technical and technological universities in cooperation with the National Scientific- Technical unions /NTS/
- Organizing of permanent reception rooms, working in the sphere of social and academic interests of the students in cooperation with The Ministry of Education, in the academic cities;
- The establishment of a National Centre for social projects with the support of The National Students House;
- The establishment of a Disabled Students Centre with the support of The Children, Youth, Sport and Tourism Commission in the Sofia Municipal Council;
- Launching a national campaign for the popularization of the program Socrates and its opportunities for academic exchange;
- Organizing of professional programs and internships for students in The EU, Unite Kingdom and USA.
- Exchange of experience and launching discussions with other students' organizations from the EU, concerning the synchronization of the Bulgarian educational system with the European Credit Transfer System;
- Organization and support of seminars, conferences
- As a result of UBS's suggestion, for second time, after the political changes in the country in 1989, Bulgaria was a host of European Students Union Board Meeting. Board Meeting 55th took place in November 2008, in Sofia.



## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### 1. The City

Sofia is the capital city, industrial, financial and cultural centre of Bulgaria. It is situated in the west part of the country, closed to Vitosha Mountain. According to official estimates, nowadays Sofia has a population of 1,3 Mil people.

Sofia's motto states "It Grows, But Does Not Age". Even though at present it is a modern city Sofia is more than 2 millenniums old. It is a city build on rich and ancient history.

The founders of the capital were a Thracian tribe called Serdi. The settlement was named Serdica. It grew gradually and was first conquered by Philip of Macedon and was later ruled by his son Alexander the Great. Around 29 BC the Romans conquered the city. The Roman rule was a period of prosperity. The city expanded with new official buildings, protective walls, public baths, theaters, etc. It became an important administrative and trade center on the Balkans.

Later Serdica became a part of the Byzantine Empire, but was just as important. It was destroyed by the Huns in 447<sup>th</sup> AD but was rebuilt by emperor Justinian and renamed Triadica.

The city first became part of Bulgaria in 809 during Khan Krum's reign and was named Sredetz. In the years that followed the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria constantly exchanged the rule over the city until 1128 when it became part of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom under Tsar Asen I. Later it was named Sofia, the current name of the city.

However, with the fall of the Bulgarian Kingdome under the reign of the Ottoman Empire came hard times for the city and its inhabitants. Sofia was once again free in 1878 after the Russo – Turkish war. After that it was officially named as the capital of the new Bulgaria.

The city grew and prospered until The Second World War when it was bombed because the Bulgarian king at that time refused to turn over the Jewish population of Bulgaria to the Nazis.



## **2. Accommodation and Venue**

*PARK hotel MOSKVA \*\*\**

<http://www.parkhotelmoskva.net/indexEN.htm>



Park-hotel Moskva is situated in the greenest and the most beautiful part of Sofia - the Boris garden. Snug from the bustle of the city centre and yet in the heart of the events, the hotel offers a peaceful place for important business meetings and conferences, as well as a comfortable place to stay. It is easily accessible from all main transport terminals – it lays 15 minutes away from Sofia's airport and 30 minutes away from the central bus and the railway stations. The new subway station next to the hotel and the train line which passes through the green park of the Boris garden, gives quick, additional access to the centre of the capital.



The room-service, the dry cleaning, the sauna and the open-air parking (up to 80 cars) are only a part of the services that the hotel offers to ensure our guests' pleasant and comfortable stay. The hotel is also fully equipped with all kind of facilities for disabled guests.

Park-hotel Moskva offers wide variety of rooms most of which are with stylish furnishing and incredible view toward the city and the park. All rooms have individually controlled air-conditioning, local heating, cable TV, an automated telephone service, free high-speed internet, free mini-bar (as a compliment to our guests), room-service, hairdryer and a luxury bathroom.

The hotel has also two completely equipped rooms for disabled guests, for smokers and non-smokers, and tourist rooms with 3 and more beds, which are very appropriate and comfortable for sport teams and groups of students.



All rooms offer:

- Bed type “King size” / in single room /or two separate beds /in double room/
  - Individually controlled air-conditioning
  - Free mini-bar /a compliment from the hotel/
  - Cable TV; - Room service
  - Direct telephone line; - Telephone in the bathroom
  - Free high-speed internet; - Bathroom with a bath-tub

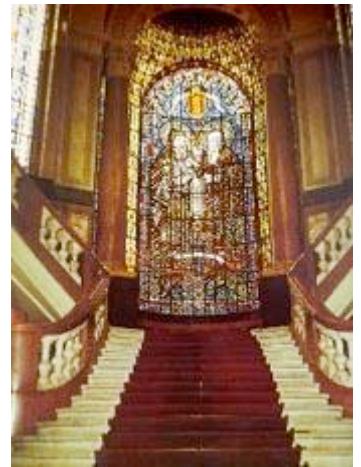
Park-hotel Moskva is famous for its great variety of restaurants. The unique restaurant “Panorama” with its amazing view (100 seats), the romantic restaurant “Winter Garden” (80 seats) and the fancy spacious restaurant Moskva (350 seats), offer lavish assortment of delicious specialties of Bulgarian and International cuisine. They are splendid choice for all sorts of business events, celebrations weddings and cocktails.



## Venue

The seminar sessions will take place in the hotel. Hall “Kiev” and 4 other small halls will be provided for the days of the seminar.

The Board Meeting will take place at Sofia University in the oldest student hall in the country. The easiest way to reach the Sofia University is to get the subway from Juliet Curie station to Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridki station.



## 3. Arrival

Please inform us about your exact arrival time at [international@npss.bg](mailto:international@npss.bg). We will provide some of our assistants to welcome you at Sofia airport or at the Central Bus or Train Station.

### From the Airport

#### By Taxi

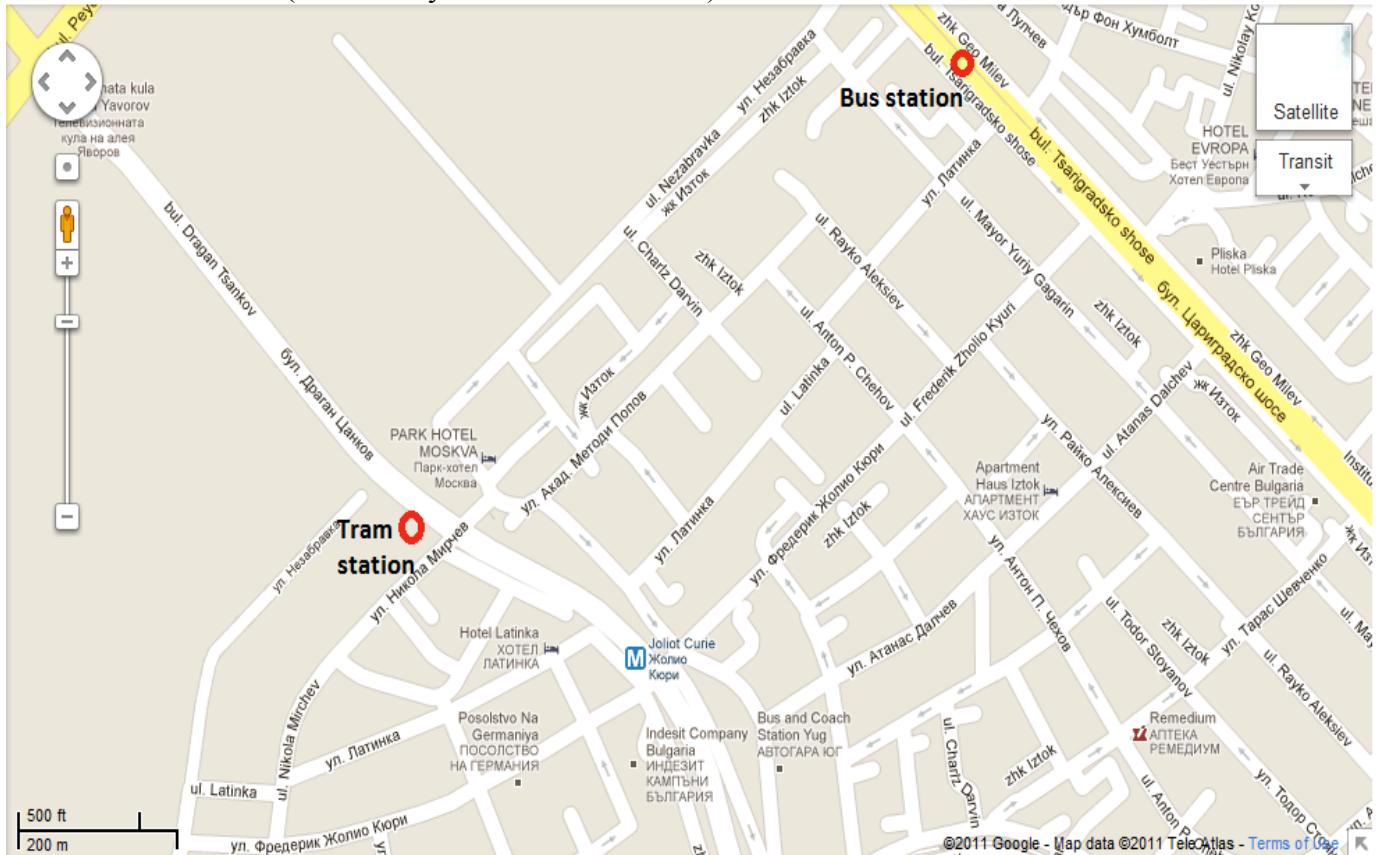
We recommend you to use this kind of transport to the hotel, because it is not so expensive (about 10BGN (leva) – 5euro) and it is faster and more comfortable than the public transport. We do not recommend you to take a random taxi from outside the airport due to the risk of overcharging.

The Taxi Company, which will be used during the Conference and Board Meeting, is “CV radio taxi”. If you want to use it, contact somebody of our assistant team or just call them: (00)359291263;

In case that you are arriving after the official arrival day and there is no reception desk at the airport another option is to order a taxi from the O’Key Supertrans or “Taxi 91280” company kiosks, which are situated in the arrival hall of the Sofia Airport. Immediately after you leave the luggage belt hall you will enter the "arrivals" hall of the airport and there exactly in front of you, you will see some kiosks. One of them belongs to O’Key Supertrans (OK супертранс) and the other one next to it- to “Taxi 91280”, which are reliable taxi companies.

## By Public Transport

You should take a bus line 84 to station st. Al. Zhendov (1819). You should buy 2 tickets (1 for you and 1 for your luggage) – the price of the ticket is 1BGN – 0.50EUR. The ticket could be bought from the driver. When you reach the station, you should get out and walk to the hotel (Park hotel Moscow), which is located on st. Nezabrvaka 25 (800m away from the bus station).

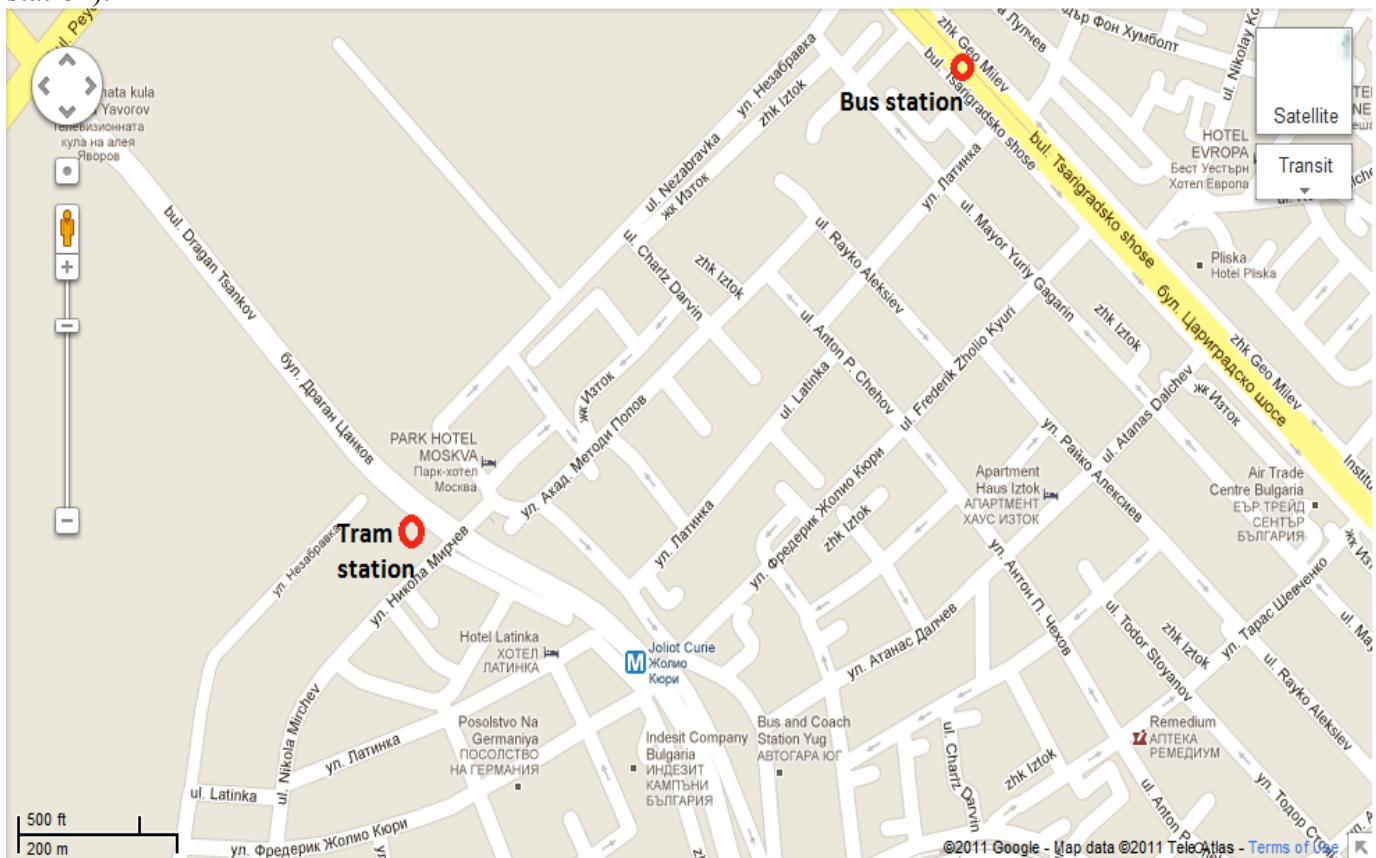


## From the Bus Station and the Central Train Station

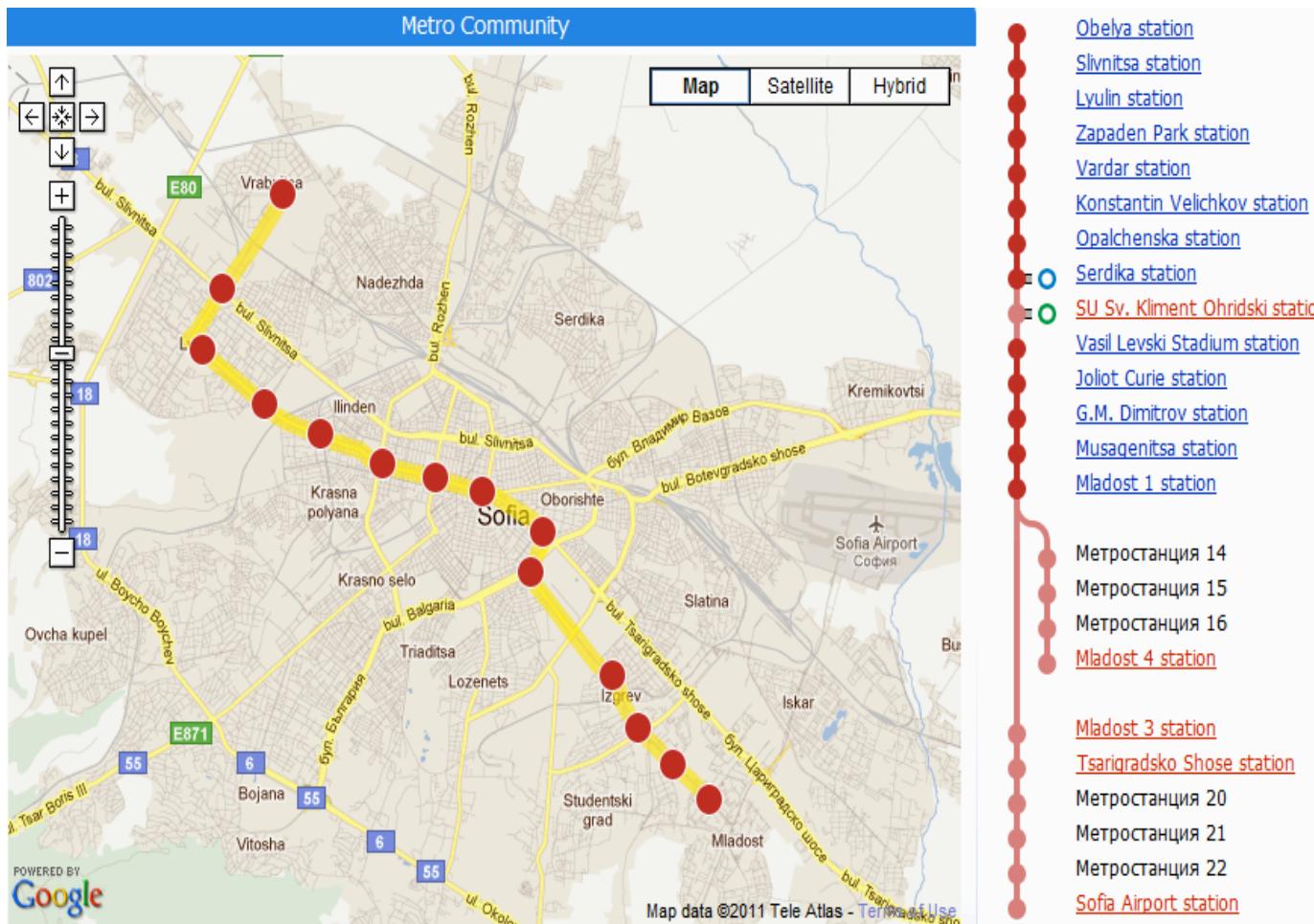
The International Bus Station and the Central Train Station of Sofia are situated in the heart of the city. You can easily reach the accommodation by tram No.18. The tram stop is next to the bus station. Park Hotel Moscow is the last stop of the tram.

## Bus stops:

Take a tram line 18 from Central Train Station Square (next to the Central Bus station) to the Russian embassy. You must buy 2 tickets (1 for you and 1 for your luggage) – the price of the ticket is 1BGN – 0.50EUR. The ticket could be bought from the driver. When you reach the station, you should get out and walk to the hotel (Park hotel Moscow), which is located on st. Nezabrvaka 25 (200m away from the tram station).



## Underground map



## Metro station:

The closest metro station is Joliot Curie station (200 away from the hotel).

## Sofia Public Transport – Good to know

1. A ticket costs 1 lv. (which is roughly 55 euro cents). Tickets are bought from special places or newspaper shops on the bus stop. When there isn't such you can buy them from the driver. You CAN NOT pay in Euro.
2. There are perforators in the bus, please use them to validate your tickets.
3. There are regular checks from state authorities if passengers have bought and perforated their tickets. Show your tickets to them.

**Important:** If you wish, we are able to provide you with a 5 day card that you could use on all lines of the public transport in exchange for 15 levs (roughly 8 euros)!

You can see the basic map for all the public transport routes here:

<http://www.sofiatraffic.bg/en/transport/121/marshrutna-mreza>

## **Emergency phone numbers:**

**Delyana Marinova** - +359 884 47 47 93; +359 896 641 621;  
**Zornitsa Taneva** - +359 882 97 10 05;  
**Liliya Ivanova** - +359 885 142 728;  
**Sergey Modev** - +359 878 55 77 38

## **4. Currency**

*The official currency in Republic of Bulgaria is : “LEV”  
for example: “1 lv”*

*We recommend using the money exchange services at the airport in a bank office of “Postbank” or “United Bulgarian bank” from 8:30a.m.- 4:30p.m. The exchange rate of EUR in Bulgaria is fixed: 1EUR=1.9558BGN. Our organization team will be able to change a small amount of money for you at the airport after 4:30 p.m.*

*You can also use the ATM in the arrival hall of Sofia Airport for currency withdrawal.*

*For your own benefit it is better to use only bank’s financial services. Next to the hotel, there is a bank office of “Postbank” in the building of Interpret World Trade Centre, the address is: 2a Konstantin Kisimov Str.*

## **5. How to spend your free time?**

The host unions NASC & UBS will organize some party nights for you:

7<sup>th</sup> Nov – Mon – Welcome party – dance club

8<sup>th</sup> Nov – Tue – Karaoke party

9<sup>th</sup> Nov – Wed – Balkan party

12<sup>th</sup> Nov – Sat – Final disco night

More information about the exact location of the clubs and how to reach them will be provided from our organization team.

If you want to get some more information about other nightclubs in Sofia, please ask our organization team.

Every day from 11a.m. or 6p.m you have the opportunity to make a **Free City Walk Tour** in the centre of the capital with an English speaking guide.

## MUSEUMS

### National History Museum

16, Vitoshko Lale 1618 Sofia, Bulgaria  
Tel: (+359 2) 955 42 80; 955 42 90 ; 955 76 04  
Fax: (+359 2) 955 76 02  
Working time: 09.30 - 18.30; No day off

Director: Assoc.Prof. Bozhidar Dimitrov, PhD  
E-Mail: [info@historymuseum.org](mailto:info@historymuseum.org)  
URL: <http://www.historymuseum.org>

*Founded in 1973. Since 1979 Museum is located in the building of the Courts of Justice. Since 2000 Museum is located in the building of Residence "Bojana", Bojana village of Sofia. About 22.000 exhibits are displayed in 32 halls, arranged in an area of ca. 10.000 sq.m. National History Museum posseses over 600.000 cultural artifacts of over one fifth of all registered artefacts in Bulgaria.*



### National Natural History Museum

Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. 1, 1000 Sofia, Bulgaria;

Tel (+359 2) 987 41 95; 988 51 15 ext. operator;  
**Director:** Assoc. Prof. Peter Beron, PhD;  
Working time: 10.00 - 18.00; No day off; except 1 January, 3 March and 25 December

E-mail: [beron@nmnh.bas.bg](mailto:beron@nmnh.bas.bg)  
URL: <http://www.mnhs.com/>

*The museum was founded in 1889 and opened to visitors in 1907. Nowadays the museum has three major sections: Geology, Zoology and Botany. A part of several meteorites, the 'Earth and Space' exhibition features unique lunar samples and an impressive dinosaur skeleton. A special exhibition shows live pythons, crocodiles, and iguanas.*



### Ethnographic Museum

6A, Moskovska St.

Tel: (+359 2) 987 4191;  
Fax: (+359 2) 980 1162  
Working time: 10.30h - 17.30h; Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

E-Mail: [ethno@ibn.bg](mailto:ethno@ibn.bg)



**URL:**<http://hs41.iccs.bas.bg/etb/et1.htm>

*The museum displays folk costumes, fabrics, jewelry, wood cuttings, hammered ironwork, etc. A small craft shop sells crafts, costumes and musical instruments from all over Bulgaria.*

## HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SITES

### Alexander Nevsky Cathedral

The St.Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a Bulgarian Orthodox cathedral in Sofia. It is built in Neo-Byzantine style, it serves as the cathedral church of the Patriarch of Bulgaria and is one of the largest Eastern Orthodox cathedrals in the world, as well as one of Sofia's symbols and primary tourist attractions. The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia occupies an area of 3,170 square metres (34,100 sq ft) and can hold 10,000 people inside. It is the second biggest cathedral located on the Balkan Peninsula.



### Boris Garden

Boris Garden was designed in 1882 by a Swiss landscape gardener and later remodelled at the request of King Ferdinand I (1887-1918). Today, this vast park, famous for its rose garden, is one of the favourite haunts of the inhabitants of Sofia. It features fine shaded alleyways, an artificial lake, several stadiums (including the famous Vasil Levski Stadion, the home ground of the national football team), a large swimming pool and a few monuments. The most spectacular of these (41m high) pays tribute to the heroes of the struggle against facism.



### Boyana Church

The Boyana Church is a medieval Bulgarian Orthodox church situated on the outskirts of Sofia, in the Boyana quarter. The east wing of the two-storey church was originally constructed in the late 10th or early 11th century, then the central wing was added in the 13th century under the Second Bulgarian Empire, the whole building being finished with a further expansion to the west in the middle of the 19th century. The church owes its world fame mainly to its frescoes from 1259. They form a second layer over the paintings from earlier centuries and represent one of the most complete and well-preserved monuments of Eastern European mediaeval art. A total of 89 scenes with 240 human images are depicted on the walls of the church. The name of the painter is recently discovered during restoration. The inscription reads: "zograph Vassilii from the village Subonosha, Sersko and his apprentice Dimitar".



## Ivan Vazov National Theatre

The theater was built in 1906-07 in Baroque style with Greek mythological figures. The triangular frieze above the front stairs presents Apollo and twin towers on either side of the building depict in a chariot. The interior was restored in 1929, destroyed it six years earlier. The stage curtain Panagyurishte carpet weavers and depicts the bird) from the Stravinsky's ballet stretching out in front of the theatre is usually playing chess if the weather is good. The fountain and its reflecting pool were built in 1976, and have recently been restored to working order, but they only operate from spring to autumn.



and is brimmed white and gold the Muses, and the Goddess Nike after a fire had was created by Tsar Ptitsa (king The fountain area full of men

## Russian Church

The Russian Church, officially known as the Church of St Nicholas the Miracle-Maker is a Russian Orthodox church in central Sofia. The church was designed by the Russian architect Mikhail Preobrazhenski in the Russian Revival Style, with decoration inspired by the Muscovite Russian churches of the 17th century. The construction was supervised by the architect A. Smirnov, who was building the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. The exterior decoration of multicolored tiles was done by G. Kislichev, and the interior murals were painted by a team of artists led by Vasily Perminov, who also painted those in Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. The five domes are coated with gold. The bells were donated by Emperor Nicholas II.



## Monument of Vasil Levski

The Monument to Vasil Levski is one of the first monuments to be built in the then newly-liberated Principality of Bulgaria. It commemorates the hanging of Bulgarian national hero and major revolutionary figure Vasil Levski in the city on 18 February 1873.

The monument is 13 m high, made of grey Balkan granite and designed by Czech architect Antonín Kolář. The bronze bas-relief of the head of Levski, part of the monument, was created by Josef Strachovský (or, according to other sources, Austrian sculptor Rudolf Weyr), whereas Italian Abramo Peruchelli did the stonemasonry work. It was inaugurated on 22 October 1895, but was planned and worked on ever since the Liberation of Bulgaria in 1878, the construction being hindered by a chronic lack of funds and negligence, and taking a whole 17 years. This ignited a wave of indignation among the Bulgarian intellectuals of the time, with the poet Konstantin Velichkov even branding this carelessness in a 1881 poem.



## Sofia Zoo

Sofia Zoo was founded by royal decree on 1 May 1888, and is the oldest and the largest zoological garden in Bulgaria. It covers 36 hectares (89 acres) and, as of March 2006, housed 1,113 animals representing 244 species.

## SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library

The library has a collection of more than 1,500 Slavonic texts, manuscripts and scriptures. Majority of the works date from the 11th to the 15th century. There are also foreign language scriptures dating from the 9th to the 19th centuries. There are also 200 monuments. The library has 150 Persian, 500 Ottoman and 3,100 Arabic codices.

Visitors will also see archives of Persian, Arabic and Ottoman documents. These are filed under Collection of Oriental Archives and the Newer Turkish Archives. These documents are arranged by geographical data. This collection has more than half a million units, 168 sidjals and 714 registers.



The Bulgarian Historical Archive has 700 archives with over 500 million documents. These archives cover public personalities, economic and cultural events.

Many of the documents focus on events from the 18th to the 20th century. There are also sections on the struggle for independence. Just outside of the building is a square with statues of the saints.

## Vitosha

Vitosha is a mountain massif, on the outskirts of Sofia. Vitosha is one of the tourists symbols of Sofia and the closest site for hiking, alpinism and skiing. Convenient bus lines and rope ways render the mountain easily accessible. Vitosha has the outlines of an enormous dome. The territory of the mountain includes Vitosha national park that encompasses the best known and most frequently visited parts. The foothills of Vitosha shelter resort quarters of Sofia; Knyazhevo quarter has mineral springs. Vitosha is the oldest national park in the Balkans.

Vitosha is separated into four main parts whose main ridges gather at a crown known as *Cherni Vrah* ("Black Peak"). This is the highest point of the mountain at 2290 m and is one of 10 peaks of Vitosha over 2000 m in height.

A meteorological station was built at the top in 1935, and is still operating. The station also serves as a rest shelter for hikers and is the headquarters for the mountain rescue team. Historical documents show that several centuries ago Vitosha mountain was still covered by the remains of the inaccessible "Great Bulgarian Forest" (*Magna Silva Bulgarica*). Today, the natural coniferous forests of Vitosha remain only in the reserve Bistrishko Branishte and around Zlatnite Mostove (The Golden



Bridges). The Golden Bridges is an amazing phenomenon known as *The Stone River* and consists of a ribbon of huge boulders running down the mountainside. This scenic spot is located along the Vladayska River in an area of mixed deciduous and evergreen forest. However, this is only one of the stone rivers found in Vitosha and they were once the moraines of ancient glaciers. Their further formation occurred due to the spherical erosion of the sienite rocks and their gradual movement to down stream valleys by the forces of gravity and moving water.

## MALLS & SHOPPING

### Vitosha Boulevard

Vitosha Boulevard (often called just "Витошка", *Vitoshka*) is the main commercial street in the centre of Sofia, which is abundant in many posh stores, restaurants and bars. It extends from the St Nedelya Square to the Southern Park. Many high-end fashion labels have outlets on Vitosha boulevard and the neighbouring streets: Versace, Escada, Bulgari, D&G, La Perla, Lacoste, Van Laak, Ermengildo Zegna, Tru Trussardi, Moreschi, Marella, Max Mara, Gianfranco Ferré, Emporio Armani, Tommy Hilfiger, Boss, Baldinini. Among the notable buildings, located on the boulevard are: The National Palace of Culture, The Palace of the Courts, the house where the famous Bulgarian poet Peyo Yavorov lived and died.



The boulevard is named after Vitosha, the mountain just next to Sofia. It was an unadjusted street during the Ottoman rule of Bulgaria and acquired the name *Vitoshka ulitsa* ("Vitosha Street") after the Liberation, in 1883. The street was initially built up with low one-storey houses, but turned into an imposing trade street in the Interwar period as massive public buildings were constructed, changing Vitoshka's appearance completely.

### Mall of Sofia

The complex was constructed after a project by MooreSpeakman International and boasts 130 stores, a supermarket, pharmacies, a beauty salon, an Internet café and DVD and video rentals, among others. Mall of Sofia also offers a number of restaurants and cafés (such as McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut), as well as Cinema City, a 12-screen multiplex cinema also featuring the first 3-D IMAX theatre in Southeastern Europe, M-Tel IMAX.



Website: <http://mallofsofia.bg/en/>

## The Mall, Sofia

**The Mall, Sofia**, is the largest shopping mall in the Balkans. The Mall has a total built area of 65,000 square metres (700,000 sq ft) on six stories, three of which are underground. It contains 185 shops, restaurants, recreation centres, bars, cafeterias and parking capacity for more than 2,800 vehicles. Bulgaria's largest Carrefour hypermarket at 9,000 square metres (97,000 sq ft) is within the Mall. The Mall can be found at 115 Tsarigradsko Chaussee.



Website: <http://www.themall.bg/eng/Default.aspx>

## Serdika Center Sofia

**Serdika Center Sofia** opened in the spring of 2010 and has more than 210 stores. Serdika Center Sofia is located on Sitnyakovo Boulevard, more specifically at the corner of Sitnyakovo Boulevard and Oborishte street, in the municipality of Oborishte. The shopping mall is only 5 minutes drive from Sofia's main motorway Trakiya, 10 minutes from Sofia Airport and 10 minutes from the central part of Sofia.



Website: <http://serdikacenter.bg/en/>

## **Dictionary**

**Some words and phrases, which will be useful for you during your stay in Bulgaria :)**

1. Good morning - Dobro utro /Добро утро/
2. Good evening - Dobar vecher /Добър вечер/
3. Good night - Leka nosht /Лека нош/
4. I'm lost - Zagubih se /Загубих се/
5. Hallo – Dobar den /Добър ден/
2. Hi – Zdravei /Здравей/
3. Yes/No - Da/Ne /Да/Не/
4. How are you? – Kak si? /Как си?/
5. I am fine. – Dobre sam. /Добре съм./
6. Thank you! – Blagodarya! /Благодаря!/
7. Where is...? – Kade e...? /Къде е...?/
8. Where am I? – Kade sam? /Къде съм?/
9. Hotel – Hotel /хотел/
10. Airport – Letishte /летище/
11. Station – Spirka /спирка/
12. Bus – Avtobus /автобус/
13. Tram – Tramvay /трамвай/
14. What is the time? – Kolko e chasa? / Колко е часа?/
15. Breakfast – zakuska /закуска/
16. Lunch – obyad /обяд/
17. Dinner – vecherya /вечеря/
18. Many/ Much/ Very/ A lot of – Mnogo /много/
19. A bit/ small – Malko /малко/
20. How much? – Kolko? /Колко?/
21. How? – Kak? /Как?/
22. One beer, please. - Edna bira, molya. /Една бира, моля/
23. Menu - menu /меню/
24. Wine - Vino /вино/
25. Cheers - nazdrave /наздраве/
26. Rakia - strong Bulgarian drink
27. Yogurt - Kiselo mliako /кисело мляко/
28. What's your name? - Kak se kazvash /Как се казваш/
29. What's your telephone number? - Kakav e telefonniat ti nomer?/Какъв е телефонният ти номер/
30. You have beautiful eyes. - Imash krasivi ochi. /Имаш красиви очи./

Interesting information : You might get confused with Bulgarians and their head shake for “yes” or “no”. There is a big chance that we are using the opposite signs.

## **ESU BRIEFING NOTE: MASTER SUPPRESSION TECHNIQUES**

The first female party leader in Norway; the professor and former minister Berit Ås found out that she during meetings wasn't treated in the same way as men. When she was talking, men acted in another way than if another man was talking and her suggestions weren't taken care of in the same sense as men's. Her analysis resulted in a mapping of five different methods men used in order to gain power over women, and thereby diminishing them. She called them Master suppression techniques, also known as domination techniques. Even though these techniques were a way of showing how men suppressed women, it should also be cleared out that women also uses these techniques in order to suppress other women and men, as well as men also can use them towards other men. It's also obvious that these, in a discriminative way, also can be observed between people of different backgrounds, including for example social status and ethnicity. Before describing the methods, it should also be stated that they're often used unconsciously, since they are ways of expressing prejudices and generalizations (which often are unconscious). Berit Ås' mapping was a way of making them conscious. Through showing they exist, the work on eliminating them can start, in order to create a more including climate where everybody gets respected and listened to.

Following are descriptions of the five techniques, as well as strategies on how to act when you feel you're being exposed to them (counter strategies) as well as techniques of confirmation; how to act when discovering that someone else gets exposed to them. Since the five master suppression techniques were labelled, others have been identified. Some of them will also be exemplified in the end.

### **1. Making invisible**

Among many different ways of making another person invisible, are to whisper, look through papers and similar ways of showing lack of interest while someone is speaking. Other ways of neglecting people are to totally ignore someone's contribution and to repeat what someone just said without referring to that person or showing the suggestion really came from someone else, and then taking all the credit. Another way is when a chairperson at a meeting "forgets" about suggestions, or when a question at a meeting gets left unanswered.

#### Counter strategy: demand your place

Demand others to listen to you! You are always as important as everybody else, as well as no one is more important than anyone else. If someone is interrupting you and talking while you already are talking, then continue talking until the other stops. Claim the right of your suggestions, but avoid becoming a victim by keeping calm and self-confident. Formulate the response as a question rather than as an accusation.

#### Technique of confirmation: make visible

Show people you put interest in them. If you like a proposal someone's put forward, remember to show that it wasn't your proposal from the start. If you dislike someone's suggestion, don't ignore it just because you dislike it, rather explain why you dislike it (of course in a positive manner).

Refer to others, especially to the one who was first putting forward the suggestion, not the one who's hijacking it. Don't be afraid to tell if someone's interrupting someone else. By listening to others and give constructive feedback you make others visible, as well as you also make yourself visible to others.

## **2. Ridiculing**

To make someone look ridicule can both happen behind someone's back as well as in front of a person. To make fun of proposals or to diminishing people by saying "don't you have any humour?" are other ways of ridiculing as well as to reduce someone to being sexual object, or less important because (s)he is "only a student", rather than an intellectual person.

### Counter strategy: questioning

Don't laugh with the others. Show and tell the others that the ridiculing jokes aren't funny. Turn down irrelevant compliments or for example arguments based on you being younger and therefore less intellectual. Don't get stuck in a feeling of diminishing, but act out of a definition as you being someone with self-confidence and who doesn't deserve such a treatment.

### Technique of confirmation: respect

Never participate when someone's been made fun of and state what you think of such behaviour. Don't spread rumours around about others; rather help the ones being exposed to ridiculing by confronting the person(s) spreading the rumours. Respect others, treat them serious and make people feel important, especially those being ridiculed about.

## **3. Withholding of information**

To being able to participate in a decision, it's really important that everybody gets access to the same information. Ways of withholding information can be when a group of people already before the actual decision-making have decided together upon what to vote for, as well as not making sure that everybody understands a specific decision or what's going on. Formal and informal premeetings, where everybody involved in the decision-making isn't invited, are other examples.

People without the right contacts or possibility to join are then left far behind. In Swedish this is referred to as sauna-meetings; a physical place where not everybody's included merely depending upon their sex. As politics are about building alliances, this is a difficult technique to tackle. Though, this shouldn't be an argument in order for the withholding to continue.

### Counter strategy: demand the cards on the table

If people are discussing things as if the things are obvious, and you don't understand why - demand information. You should rather postpone a decision if someone hasn't had the possibility to look into the background information, than claiming it's a really important decision that has to be taken right now. Remember that if the decision is that important, there should be time for people to really understand what it's all about.

### Techniques of confirmation: inform

Include everyone in discussions before the decisions are supposed to be taken. Pass on information in time for others to look into it. If you're in informal networks (in the sauna, for example) you have a larger responsibility to make sure the one's who weren't invited/present have the same information.

#### **4. Double punishment; damn if you don't and damned if you do**

Whatever you do is wrong! For example if you're quiet during a meeting, you're seen as not interested in what's going on, and if you're talkative you're seen as taking over. If women don't grab power they're portrayed as wimps, but when they grab power they're regarded as not feminine. Men can also be accused for not participating in working on increased gender equality, and if they do, they're ridiculed by female members, as not knowing enough.

##### Counter strategy: set your own priorities

Ask how the accuser thinks you act and/or should set your priorities. Set clear boundaries and explain why you prioritize in a certain way. "I know why I do what I do, and I know what's important for me!"

##### Techniques of confirmation: double rewarding

Support the person who feels double punished by questioning the one(s) who punishes someone else. Be aware of your own expectations, and that they might not be the same as someone else's. Suppose everybody's doing their best, out of their own prerequisites.

#### **5. Heaping blame and putting to shame**

When saying to someone that they have to blame themselves for something that has happened, this person obviously gets diminished. For example telling a rape victim that it was her own fault by wearing provocative clothes or acting in a certain way is an extreme way of explaining the technique. This works in other areas as well; sexual harassments towards a woman can as well be seen as her own fault, since she's so pretty. Not to take someone for serious by judging of the clothes is another way of expressing this technique.

##### Counter strategy: intellectualize

Be yourself! Ask the person what (s)he's implying and why, since most people won't stand up for their implications. Understand that your negative feelings are being imposed by someone else. Try to put words on your feelings. Intellectualize the situation where you were ashamed by asking yourself why you felt in that certain way. Look at situations in their context; if there are patterns in the negative behaviour there's obviously something wrong in the culture, and then you can also be sure that others have felt the same as you do right now.

##### Techniques of confirmation: confirm

Confirm yourself as well as others. Be aware not to judge people of for example their looks. Talk to the exposed, trying to make her/him understanding that it isn't her/his fault. Make sure to speak

up when you hear for example irrelevant gender-based comments or irrelevant comments based upon someone's sexual orientation.

#### **Newly identified master suppression techniques**

Berit Ås herself has been talking about two "new" techniques; violence/threats of violence and objectifying. Others are talking about for example stereotyping, precedence of interpretation and accommodating resistance. Sexual harassment is another technique some refers to as a master suppression technique. And

there are probably even more labels and ways in which you can classify a systematic (un)conscious discrimination with the goal of diminishing others.

Learning to recognize the (five) techniques, though, will help the exposed (woman):

- Realizing (s)he's not actually the one who's boring, stupid and ridiculous – even though (s)he feels like it,
- Understanding that the techniques can and should be combated, and
- Getting the discussion going.

Identifying and labeling the techniques renders them harmless.

## **References and recommendation on further reading**

“A gender equality handbook – how to work with gender in your student club”, Social Democratic Students, Sweden

“Bekräftartekniker och motstrategier – sätt att bemöta maktstrukturer och förändra sociala klimat”, Ditte Jonasson, Diana Amnéus, Ulrika Flock, Pernilla Rosell Steuer, Gunnel Testad, Empowerment Nätverket vid Stockholms Universitet (ENSU)

“Domination techniques: what they are and how to combat them”, The Centre for Gender Equality, Norway

“Master Suppression Techniques”; KILDEN (the Norwegian Information and Documentation Centre for Women’s Studies and Gender Research), Norway

[www.women2top.net](http://www.women2top.net)

## **ETHICAL GUIDELINES**

### **Introduction**

The Ethical Guidelines consist of a full set of the basic standards expected of the European Students’ Union (ESU) which are to be respected by all the elected representatives and members, during any event ESU organizes, co-organizes, supports or otherwise lends its name to. This code also applies to internal ESU events as well as social events during the said events.

Basic principles ESU adheres to are: Equality, Accessibility and Respect. We believe that ESU must be an arena open to all students in Europe, a safe space where argumentation and debates are carried out with all participants both being actively engaged in discussions and being able to comfortably express opinions and challenge ideas. Being a European wide organization, ESU is the arena of different cultures, religions, political stands, backgrounds, beliefs and contexts. To make the best out of our differences and diversity, promote cultural understanding and intercultural dialogue certain standards need to be respected.

An underlying thought of these guidelines is that every participant in ESU’s events is aware and responsible towards the principles mentioned. As students’ representatives, we have the responsibility to act towards them.

We believe it is essential to include the guidelines as lines of principles of each individual's behaviour as much as the lines of principles which will guide us towards creating an encouraging and welcoming atmosphere of our organization.

## **Equality**

ESU is continuously at the forefront of improving equal opportunities and nurtures equality within itself, as strongly as it is advocating for equality for all within the Higher Education Area.

## **Accessibility**

ESU is a transparent and open organization and thus demands that all events it organizes, co-organizes or supports, and its members should adhere to the highest possible standards in this regard with emphasis on the principle of accessibility while paying particular respect to the needs of people with reduced physical mobility and socio economic background. Accessibility is not only an issue of physical barriers, but also psychological ones and openness and welcoming atmosphere. Behaviour of individuals is essential for creating an accessible organization.

## **Respect**

Consideration for each other and appreciating the diversity of the students of Europe is the foundation of the organization. Everyone must be treated with respect in ESU. Therefore, argumentation must be based on facts, opinions and emotions free of disrespect.

## **Environmental Sustainability**

ESU considers behaviour towards the natural environment as important as social behaviour. Students have a moral and practical obligation to develop a society which is environmentally stable, while reducing the warming of the earth. Concretely, this means that ESU strives to organise environmentally stable conference, have a low carbon travel policy and use as many recycled materials as it can.

## **Promotion of healthy behaviour**

One of the main problems of students is abusing of alcoholic drinks and light drugs. ESU has to assume its role as educator of the segment of society it represents and to ensure for the events it organizes or co-organizes a healthy alternative for social events for the above mentioned problems.

## **Code of Conduct**

Based on the principles of equality, accessibility and respect, ESU representatives and participants on internal and external events are expected to adhere to the following points:

1. Treat everyone equally irrespective of socio economic background, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, political views, reduced mobility, gender expression, disabilities or any other basis of discrimination, abstaining from any direct or indirect discrimination as well from any form of harassment.
2. Not make any inappropriate jokes or remarks, based on any discriminative grounds that cause people to feel uncomfortable or discriminated against.
3. Behave and react towards their colleagues with respect.

4. Actively engage in the organized activities during seminars, panel sessions and discussions as well attending all the organized sessions, meetings, discussions and debates.
5. Respect the different multicultural backgrounds of their colleagues.
6. Proactively create an inclusive welcoming atmosphere for all of the participants, during both formal and informal parts of the event.
7. Not use demeaning or abusive language towards other participants.
8. Respect the timeframes given by the organizers of the event.
9. Respect the event's facilities and any rules associated with such use.
10. Respect the environment and take care about their surroundings.

We are emphasizing herein that this list is not exhaustive and that the violations of the Ethical Guidelines might happen outside of the frames given by this Code of Conduct.

### **Rules of Procedure**

Depending on the gravity of the behaviour, the EC and organizers reserve the right to address the issue in the best way they see fit by applying one or more of the measures listed below through the set procedure.

#### **Active Legitimacy**

Any of the participants witnessing the breach or the victim her/himself may report the matter to a person specifically entrusted to that role for that particular event.

The person informed will immediately forward the information to the ESU Executive Committee.

#### **The Acting Procedure**

Upon receiving the report, the EC has to set up an independent ad hoc committee of three persons within 24 hours.

The ad hoc committee is chosen by the EC including one representative of the EC, one representative of the respective organizers and one representative from a member union. At least one member of the ad hoc committee will be of a different gender.

The ad hoc committee will immediately look into the report, consult the acting parties and bring a decision whether there has been a breach of the Code or not.

If the ad hoc committee decides, there has been a breach of the Code, it will immediately decide upon enacting one of the below proposed measures, on their free estimation of the most appropriate reaction to the breach. The decision making process within the committee needs to be unanimous.

The decision of the ad hoc committee will be read before the beginning of the next session of the event.

### **Measures**

- Spoken warning to the perpetrator in question

- Written warning to the perpetrator read before the beginning of the next session of the event in question
- Removal of the perpetrator from the session/event in question
- Official ESU letter to the sending organization of the perpetrator
- Restriction of participation in future ESU events of the individual breaching the code.
- Any other measure not mentioned here, in agreement with the Executive Committee.

### **Right to Appeal**

Any person, including the perpetrator in question, or NUS who feels that the EC decision is wrongly based, whether on fact or principle, must address their objection in writing to the EC within 14 days of the measure being taken and then will be afforded the opportunity to bring up their side of the argument at the next BM session. The board will then be asked to decide by simple majority whether to uphold the decision or not or propose an alternative sanction.