



## Board Meeting 65

Document

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## EUROPEAN STUDENTS' UNION PLAN OF WORK FOR YEAR 2014

### 1. Strategic priority areas

#### A. Access and support

In the area of access and support, ESU will in 2014 focus on the following priorities and actions:

#### Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning Working Group of BFUG (SD LLL WG)

- Work actively to ensure that the work in the SD LLL WG is politically relevant and as active as possible. This includes, but is not limited to, planning and organising two working group meetings in Austria and Italy and actively engage in the thematic work being done between the meetings;
- Ensure that the Social Dimension is not a debated but a given area at the Ministerial conference in Yerevan;
- Work towards a clear definition and allocation of responsibility for Lifelong Learning, to be included in the Yerevan Communiqué;
- Ensure that quantifiable measurements are agreed by the ministers at the meeting in Yerevan, towards promotion of, and progress in, the Social Dimension across the European Higher Education Area;
- ESU actively ensures that LLL concepts are not purely driven by economical reasons and ensures a holistic debate in this field.

#### Student centred learning

- Make sure that the social dimension perspective is fully integrated in the work on student centred learning policy being done at a EU level. This will include, but is not limited to, integrating relevant social dimension issues into ESU's PASCL project and promoting the connection between the social dimension and SCL at relevant external events.

#### Underrepresented groups

- Apply for a project on students with disabilities, so we can build up European best practices based on the work that has already been done by ESU's member unions;

- Become a more relevant partner to organisations already working with the concerns of underrepresented groups outside of higher education.

### **Human rights in higher education**

- Strengthen ESU's partnership with organisations and networks working on human rights in higher education;
- Create a referral mechanism for ESU, which will create guidelines, strategies and follow-up procedures for ESU, NUSes and external stakeholders to deal with human rights violations that individual students face and request ESU's assistance. ESU will work to spread the importance of human rights, especially freedom of opinion, the right to access education on each level, LGBTQ rights and other rights inside Europe as well as on the global level.

### **Equality**

- Continue to proactively promote gender mainstreaming in all areas of ESU's internal and external work, becoming a role model and sectorial leader in gender equality;
- ESU develops measurements to broaden the binary concept of gender. This includes the evaluation of the current election quotas as they are discriminative towards any third gender;
- Build a strong network of allies and activists within education to promote and foster the participation of persons of an ethnic minority or migrant background in higher education. Specifically we will become active partners in the SIRIUS network of experts on the education of people with a migrant background;
- Share best practise, train, mobilise ourselves towards more effectively representing students with disabilities in all areas of higher education and higher education governance.

## **B. Public responsibility for education**

In the area of public responsibility for education, ESU will in 2014 focus on the following priorities and actions:

### **Public responsibility for higher education and multiple purposes of higher education:**

- Continue bringing the discussion on education as a public good and public responsibility into the discussion with stakeholders on different processes;
- Build capacity among member unions on the issues of public responsibility for higher education and multiple purposes of higher education, with an inclusive approach through task forces;
- Build capacity among member unions on the issues of employability and multiple purposes of higher education, through the SAGE Handbook, Employability With Student Eyes and the EU2020 Student Review;
- Support member unions in the national implementation of the European Youth Guarantee;
- Develop a policy on the Youth Guarantee in consultation with NUSes;

- 72 • Lobby at a European level on this policy and put forward the views of the relevant NUSes  
73 on effective implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

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75 **Financing of higher education**

- 76 • Continue working on gathering and improving quality and accessibility of data on the  
77 impact of different funding systems on access and quality in higher education;  
78 • Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the financial crisis and austerity measures on  
79 education budgets and students' experience, influencing the debate on the European level  
80 on the importance of increasing public funds for higher education.

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82 **Governance of higher education and student participation**

- 83 • Raise awareness of the importance of students as partners and advocate for the equal  
84 participation of student representatives in decision-making bodies and higher education  
85 processes at the national and the European level.

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87 **European Parliament Elections 2014**

- 88 • Raise educational issues as a topic for the European Parliament elections in 2014;  
89 • Reach out to candidates running for the European Parliament elections and get them to  
90 sign ESU's manifesto built around the topic "Higher education as a public good";  
91 • Raising awareness about the European Parliament elections among students in all EU  
92 countries and to encourage them to vote;  
93 • Support the NUSes in their European Parliament election work to get the best visibility for  
94 the goals set by students;  
95 • Create a long term cooperation with the new MEPs to get support in ESU's policy work and  
96 to get the students' voice heard in the parliament.

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**C. Quality and transparency**

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99 In the area of quality and transparency, ESU will in 2014 focus on the following priorities and  
100 actions:

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102 **Learning and teaching**

- 103 • Produce a research study, which should provide an overview of the recent developments,  
104 policies and strategies for implementation of student-centred learning approach. The  
105 outcomes of this study will be distributed to the NUSes and key stakeholders.  
106 • Develop a set of criteria and guidelines for the assessment of student-centred learning  
107 approaches and develop trainings for experts to conduct peer assessments according to  
108 the mentioned criteria.  
109 • Continue to work on the paradigm shift in the ECTS implementation, from teacher-centred  
110 to the student-centred learning.

- 111 • Gather and develop expertise on these issues among ESU's and member unions'  
112 representatives. Establish a strong student voice in the debates on e-learning, open  
113 educational resources (OER), and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

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#### 115 **Qualifications frameworks**

- 116 • Promote the development and implementation of the use of the learning outcomes  
117 approach to qualifications frameworks. In doing so, ESU should look forward to extending  
118 possibilities of smooth recognition processes, access to higher education and transition  
119 between sectors and cycles;
- 120 • Explore possibilities for strengthening the link between post-secondary, vocational  
121 education and higher education;
- 122 • Continue to work towards the increased inclusion of students in the design, self-  
123 certification, referencing and implementation of national qualifications frameworks.

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#### 125 **Recognition**

- 126 • Promoting fair, clear and transparent recognition procedures, enabling students to get  
127 their prior learning recognised, independently of how it was achieved, even if they do not  
128 hold a formal certification of the acquired qualifications;
- 129 • Develop and explore an initiative towards automatic recognition within countries of the  
130 European Higher Education Area that could be implemented in a short-term. The outcomes  
131 of this work should be the basis for a concrete proposal to be included in the Yerevan  
132 Communiqué.

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#### 134 **Quality assurance**

- 135 • Continue working in the revision process of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG),  
136 advocating for a student-centred learning approach throughout the document and making  
137 sure that the ESG will be applicable to any kind of higher education provision;
- 138 • Develop an adequate lobby strategy towards the BFUG, getting its approval to the new ESG  
139 as soon as possible and aiming at an agreement to put in force the new version of the ESG  
140 even before the Yerevan Ministerial Conference, where they could be ratified;
- 141 • Make use of all outcomes of the former ESU project called QUEST, proposing updates to  
142 ESU's policy paper on quality of higher education, promoting a student quality concept and  
143 encouraging an effective quality assurance which drives change;
- 144 • Promote the principles and values of trust, participation and ownership of students over  
145 the quality of higher education, as well as quality assurance/enhancement procedures. For  
146 doing so, ESU will continue promoting student participation in quality assurance,  
147 organising trainings for students and sharing knowledge and experience.

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#### 149 **Transparency and information provision**

- 150 • Demand and boost a student-centred approach in existing European transparency and  
151 information provision initiatives;
- 152 • Promote easily accessible and fair transparency and information provision tools, which  
153 offer reliable information about students' needs for information. ESU will work on raising  
154 students' understanding and awareness about the limitations of those tools.

#### **D. Mobility and internationalisation in Higher education**

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157 In the area of mobility and internationalisation, ESU will in 2014 focus on the following priorities  
158 and actions:

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- 160 • A continued emphasis on the implementation of full portability of loans and grants in all  
161 relevant platforms, such as the Bologna Follow-up Group, European Union processes etc.;
- 162 • Push for clear targets on increasing representation amongst mobile students and bettering  
163 access to mobility programmes for underrepresented groups.

#### **Balanced mobility**

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- 166 • Continue deliberations on balancing mobility by considering different models in relation to  
167 areas such as where to live, where to study and where to work afterwards.

#### **Global cooperation**

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- 170 • Define a long-term strategy together with other international student organisations of how  
171 to maintain a globally organised student movement;
- 172 • Continue to build relationships with relevant actors that can provide long-term funding  
173 opportunities for meetings of the global student movement.

## **2. Internal development**

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177 In 2014, ESU will:

- 178 • Aim to improve the working environment for its staff, this is including, but not limited to, a  
179 move to more professional offices;
- 180 • Continue with the diversification of funding sources and establishing sound management  
181 structures for the services that ESU is and will be providing;
- 182 • Ensure more capacity for capacity building and support to member unions through the  
183 development of the Pool of Trainers;
- 184 • Continue to improve its own democratic structures, information sharing and leadership  
185 skills. This includes continuing to improve all of ESU's handovers;
- 186 • Continue developing ways of involving the Board in the work of ESU through task forces  
187 and other voluntary structures;

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- Continue to improve how it works when it comes to political strategising. This includes updating the communication plan and having clearly defined lobby strategies in all areas where this would be beneficial;
  - Aim to improve the cultural work being done in relation to the ESU’s board, so as to increase understanding and communication between regions;
  - Continue to promote and excel in the field of gender equality in all its internal and external work;
  - Improve how we handle deadlines, prioritise tasks, manage stress and the working environment of elected and selected representatives;
  - Formulate s proposal of what changes in ESU would have to be made if ESU would be in a situation where larger financial cuts would become necessary.