



## **BM72 - MALTA**

### **Resolution: Resolution regarding PhD grants in Estonia**

The European Students' Union and the Federation of Estonian Student Unions (EÜL) urge the Government to find extra funding for doubling the PhD grants by January 1 of 2018 as promised.

The current form of PhD grants in Estonia was introduced in 2004. The amount was 6000 kroons per month (383.47€) which amounted to 80% of the average salary at that time. The goal of the grant was to help PhD students to focus on their studies without worrying about their income.

Over the last 13 years, the average salary in Estonia has almost tripled. At the same time, the PhD grant has only been raised once in 2015, and still amounts to only 36.8% of the national average salary at 422€. The low grant leaves students with less time to focus on their studies. This results in longer study periods and higher dropout rates. In 2014, a special report claimed that the main reasons for low graduation rates in Estonia are socio-economical.

In the end of 2016, the government promised to double doctoral allowance to 844€ from January 1, 2018. On April 27, the Government revealed the budget strategy for 2018-2021. According to the new budget strategy, the doctoral allowance will only be raised 1.5 times, to 633€ per month which is not a big enough raise to restore the grant enough to fulfill its real goals.

ESU and EÜL believe that raising the PhD grant only to 633€ per month does not enable PhD students to focus only on their studies and therefore will not have the effect needed to help support PhD students. PhD students are often at an age where they are starting their own families and such a low doctoral allowance is not enough to cover their monthly expenses. The government not keeping their promise to bring the grant up to a livable level can affect the motivation to start PhD studies and also result in postponing or not finishing the PhD studies altogether.

ESU supports Estonian students in their struggle toward sufficient PhD grants. If the Estonian Government does not raise the PhD grant to a sufficient level, the country will face the danger of losing talented people and the shortage of innovators, teachers and scientists in the future. This, in turn, will hinder both the cultural and socio-economic development of Estonia. EÜL urges the government to find extra funding for doubling the doctoral allowance and keep their promise to the Estonian students.

**Proposed by:** EÜL

**Seconded by:** LÍS, SAMOK, SYL, DSF, NSO, SFS, FEF, SKRVS, UNEW, ANOSR

The European Students' Union (ESU) is being used to refer to "ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe" Belgian asbl BE0890.019.936, due to the fact that both legal entities are going through a merging process. Likewise the visual identity of ESU is being used instead of the one from ESIB.