



Resolution on Societal Service in the Netherlands

The European Students' Union, representing almost 20 million students through 45 National Unions of Students opposes the voluntary Societal Service "Maatschappelijke Diensttijd" which the Dutch Government is attempting to implement. Societal Service erroneously creates the impression that young people do not participate in social action, while in reality 50% of Dutch young people participate in volunteering projects. Young people do not see any benefits related to the "Maatschappelijke Diensttijd" proposal.

Nowadays young people are already under a lot of pressure to perform, not only within higher education, but also when it comes to extracurricular activities. Giving students the impression that they could have a disadvantage by not participating in this "Maatschappelijke diensttijd", could cause stress or makes them less focused on their studies.

People who participate will be granted recognition through a certificate, which according to the government plans should give them an advantage in the labour market, especially for positions within the government. This will increase inequality in the Dutch society. As there is hardly any compensation for this Service and therefore a lot of students would not be able to participate.

This scheme is a waste of public funding, as it will cost up to €100 million per year, while the government are continuously making cuts to education. Therefore, this scheme should be abolished, and these funds should be allocated to the education budget. If the Dutch government actually wants to increase the use of the skills of students to contribute more to society as a whole, the solution is not to invest in these programs, but to invest in equal access of quality education.

Proposed by: ISO & LSVb

Seconded by: VVS