



## BM76 - Sofia

# Resolution: Increase of the registration fees of higher education in France (Part 2)

On 21 April 2019, the French Government decided to officialise their attractive strategy called "Bienvenue en France", following the announcement of 19 November 2018.

In September 2019, university fees for students coming from a non-EU country, coming from outside the European Economic Area or the Swiss Confederation, or not fiscally domiciled in France will have to pay 2.770 euros per year for bachelor degrees and 3.770 euros per year for master degrees, which is more than 15 times the prize a student pays today.

The French Government explains this choice by saying that there is a need to make french higher education more attractive while putting forward that the number of international students decreased by 8.5% between 2011 and 2016.

From the beginning, la FAGE and UNEF are strongly opposed to this, and we are convinced that is not by increasing tuition fees that we will make our universities attractive.

For us the reasons behind this decrease are issues connected to difficulties with obtaining a visa, the housing situation, getting a bank account and a genuine lack of accompaniment, but most certainly not the price of the study programme. Moreover, the process of registration for non-European students applications presents already inequalities: higher standards in selection, application fees or long and difficult visa procedures, for instance.

The French government delegates the 'power of exemption' in each university. Which means that every university has the possibility to exempt non-European students from paying 'extra fees', using their own criteria with their own budget. In the end, every university will, in their own way, discriminate and choose to exempt or not non-European students.

However, many universities decided to give partial exemptions to bring back non-European tuition fees; some of the Universities are doing it for all non-European students, some other with specific criteria based on geographic areas. At least for the first year since the application of the reform, students should benefit from this exemption, but some will not. Moreover, these students have no guarantee to still be exempted of paying higher fees for the following years. Indeed the percentage of students benefiting of the exemption is fixed at 10% maximum per university. In a few years, universities will not be able to grant exemptions to all students because they don't have resources to do this or because they welcome more than 10% of non-European students. In addition to this, some universities just don't want to implement any exemption policy at all.

In parallel, some public engineering schools announced their will to also increase the tuitions fees for

non-European students to be on the same level that universities; this is also against our principles and what we are fighting against.

In this case, La FAGE and UNEF demand the withdrawal of this measure and call for reflection on the tuition fees system in higher education in France.

The European Students' Union defends the right to public and open education, accessible for everyone. The implementation of tuition fees, even just for one specific group of students is not acceptable. ESU wants to remind that education is an investment for the future and not solely an expense for a country. The strategy, the way is proposed, would reinforce social exclusion by preventing most international students – particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds – to come to France and pursue their education. As an example, the foreign students' applications for registration in the French HEIs are decreasing and reach 87% in some HEIs compare to the past year.

The student movement and the Higher Education community in France are strongly opposing the implementation of tuition fees for international students. The whole Higher Education community is also opposed to this reform and the National Council for Higher Education and Research voted against those texts with a 92% majority, so as the President University Conference asked for a withdrawn of the measure. ESU supports the non-violent mobilisation of La FAGE, UNEF and other French organisations, which will take place against this measure and repeats its demand for free and accessible Higher Education.

**Proposed by:** FAGE, UNEF

**Seconded by:** CREUP, NUIS, KSU, NSO, ÖH, fzs, UDU, FEF