

European Students' Union (ESU)
Fighting for students' rights since 1982

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Resolution on Persecutions in Belarusian Academia and Deficiencies of Student Support Programs for Exiled

Recognising the research done by Belarusian civil society organisations in collecting statistics of repressions against members of academia in Belarus and concluding it, BSA states with deep turbulence that political persecutions in Belarus are acquiring new means and scopes by the number of political prisoners increasing day by day. According to the Honest People initiative¹, at least 261 students in Belarus were expelled from universities for political reasons, 858 students faced psychological pressure for their political views. At least 463 students were reprimanded and 133 students were deprived of their scholarship and rooms in the dormitories. 37 students were recognised as political prisoners. Furthermore, the persecuted activists in the 'Student Case' were sentenced to 2.5 years of detention, while one student who had pleaded guilty received 2 years of detention. According to Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee² and Belarusian Student Support Association, 177 professors of Belarusian universities and the National Academy of Sciences faced pressure from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. At least 133 professors

¹ <https://univer.honest-people.by/>

² <http://bolognaby.org/index.php/en/141-news-and-events-en/843-ts-sk-na-akadem-yu-2>

lost their jobs, 1 professor was recognised as a political prisoner. Moreover, 3 rectors and 1 vice-rector were added to the sanction list of the EU³.

In December 2020 the European Commission announced an assistance program⁴ for Belarusian civil society “EU4Belarus: solidarity with the people of Belarus”, including support for youth and young professionals fleeing political persecutions. Following the EU, the Romanian Ministry of Education announced the “100 for Belarus” program and the German Service of Academic Exchange introduced the Hilde-Domin-scholarship program. BSA expresses its gratitude for solidarity with repressed members of Belarusian academia, however, it is crucial to mention the lack of transparency and student participation in decision making bodies of the aforementioned support systems. Furthermore, according to data received from applicants and approved by BSA, there have been certain inconsistencies between repression cases’ urgency and quality of communication with stakeholders involved in selection. To our deep regret, the cases of sudden changes in deadlines, ignoring deadlines for results, critical delays in payments, consequently, the dramatic financial situation of students not being able to cover their basic needs and due to which, inability to perform to the fullest of their motivation and possibilities are some of the issues BSA has been witnessing since the beginning of the scholarship announcements.

Considering all aforementioned facts and bearing in mind the urgency of student support systems being life-saving for the many fleeing political persecutions, ESU calls upon:

1. BFUG, NUSs and respective European universities, to adopt the “Black Book of Academia”⁵ concept introduced by Belarusian Independent Bologna Committee;
2. BFUG, to deter Belarus from co-chairmanship within the institution;

³<https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-57555158>

⁴https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2309

⁵ <http://bolognaby.org/index.php/en/141-news-and-events-en/856-black-book-of-academy>

3. the European Commission, to increase the amount of student support systems for those who are fleeing persecutions,
4. as well as to increase the transparency of selection processes within the established and to be established support programs, e.g. selection criteria,
5. to include the national student unions into the decision making processes regarding student support systems.