

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

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Resolution against the student loans scheme proposed by the Romanian Government

Proposed by: ANOSR

Seconded by: fzs, UDU, ÖH, PSRP, CREUP, FEF, LSS, DSF, NASC, HÖOK, MFS, SOS, SRVS, LIS, NUSUK, USI, FAIRe, NSO, VSS-UNES-USU, FAGE, CSC, SKONUS, ISO

The European Students' Union (ESU) stands with ANOSR in their demand towards the Romanian Government to drop their proposed student loan scheme.

Within the „Support for Romania” package, the Government of Romania announced the launching of a student loans programme, without any consultation with the student representatives, despite the fact that students should be, theoretically, its direct beneficiaries.

The proposal is an eternal return to other failed attempts to introduce national student loan schemes in Romania, put on the public agenda without any analysis. The loan scheme does not solve the current problems of the students, as the Government is trying to suggest, nor is it effective.

Romania is on the penultimate place at EU level from the perspective of public spending/student; it has the lowest percentage of higher education graduates from EU, the penultimate GDP allocation for education while almost one of two students drop out. Moreover, 38% of the Romanian students have at least moderate financial problems, well above the European average.

In this context, the adequate solution is to increase grants and subsidies. Instead of implementing the promises included in the Governments' Manifesto, which includes raising the public grants in order to cover the minimum costs of living, and raising the governmental accommodation subsidy, the Romanian Government wants to "help" students by providing loan that aim to cover exactly what the government promised to cover through grants.

During the proceedings, the students were not involved, although they are presented as the beneficiaries of this measure. However, on a closer inspection, the students represent just a transmission channel, the beneficiaries being, in fact, the universities (which collect the amounts of money that students borrow) and the commercial banks that will benefit from the interest (paid by the students or the Government).

In this way, student loans seem to be the Government's mechanism to cover the funding gap for universities, through the private contribution of students and their families in one of the most inequitable higher education systems in Europe, which can only aggravate these circumstances.