

## Plan of Work 2023–2024

### 1. Overarching political priorities

#### 1.1 Publication of the Bologna with Student Eyes 2024

By the end of the year, within the Bologna with Stakeholders Eyes project, ESU will publish its flagship publication, 'Bologna with Student Eyes', after 20 years from the first edition, to feed into the monitoring of the Bologna Process and for the Tirana 2024 Communiqué. To reach a wide set of audiences, ESU will broadly disseminate the publication and organise promotion events.

#### 1.2 Ensuring a strong student voice for the Ministerial Communiqué and the new Work Plan of Bologna

As co-chairs of the Drafting Committee and in close consultation with Bologna Process Consultative members, ESU will work on the finalisation of the documents of several Working Groups for the Ministerial Conference and promote concrete priorities for an impactful development and monitoring of the Bologna Process. This will be done according to emerging needs and challenges with the European Higher Education Area, as highlighted in ESU policy documents. A special focus would be given to structural and governance issues of the Bologna Process. ESU will organise a Student Summit during the Ministerial Conference.

#### 1.3 European Parliament elections 2024

ESU will organise a multi-level and public advocacy campaign on supporting student priorities for the 2024 European elections, actively engaging with European political parties and Parliament political groups to influence electoral manifestos and their priorities for the setting up of the new Commission.

ESU will establish a Task Force to actively involve the NUSs in the campaign for the European elections, with the aim of mainstreaming the student priorities outlined in the resolution adopted during BM83.

#### 1.4 Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers

ESU will work on ensuring a strong student presence during the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Education Ministers, especially paying attention to the Education Strategy of the Council of Europe, and maintaining its current democratic, inclusive, and student-centred focus, while adding more concrete commitments and timeframes. ESU will promote additional funding for the education sector in Council of Europe and for developing value-based legal instruments, recommendations, and platforms on issues such as digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence, or education in emergencies, apart from our flagship initiative on the Students' Rights Charter.

## **2. Social Dimension (SD)**

### **Policy**

#### **2.1 Revision of Social Dimension Policy Paper**

Considering the Standing Orders, the Hacks will propose a revised version of the Social Dimension Policy Paper for the BM85 in Tallinn.

#### **2.2 Representation within the Bologna Follow-up Group Working Group on Social Dimension**

ESU will continue the work as co-chairs of the Bologna Follow-up Group Working Group on Social Dimension by advocating the approval of the already drafted indicators for the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines on Social Dimension, but also through the creation of the European monitoring system of the Principles and Guidelines, with the aim to create a holistic policy framework of social dimension in the European Higher Education Area and incentivise reforms.

### **Advocacy**

#### **2.3 Promoting the Student Rights' Charter**

ESU will promote the Student Rights' Charter among decision-makers at European and global level, as well as organise outreach activities among our target audiences. Special attention will be paid to the work within the Council of Europe, where ESU would advocate for ensuring that the adoption of a Student Rights' Charter at Council of Europe level remains a flagship initiative of the Education Strategy 2024-2030. After the adoption of the Strategy, ESU will aim to lead the work on the implementation level.

#### **2.4 Student health**

ESU is committed to promoting the overall health and well-being of students. To achieve this, it will continue to provide support to NUSes in their efforts to address all health issues among students and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences on the subject. The data collected from these efforts will be used for advocacy work aimed at improving overall healthcare, as well as mental health services for students.

Additionally, ESU aims to ensure that data is collected from all over Europe on the health and well-being of students. This will help in developing a more comprehensive approach towards addressing the health needs of students.

ESU will follow up the comprehensive approach to mental health and a European mental health strategy as part of a wider student health and wellbeing strategy and call for a European year of mental health.

## **2.5 Promoting access to student support services**

In line with the proposal within the 2024 European elections manifesto, ESU will promote the proposal of adopting a Council Recommendation on student support services, including through gaining support from other stakeholders.

## **2.6 Lobby for a social dimension of the European Education Area**

ESU will work on the development of the inclusivity framework of the EEA and lobby for mainstreaming the social dimension of HE in the EU. To avoid duplication and ensure a broad perspective, ESU will lobby for taking the Principles and Guidelines and the indicators worked within the Working Group on Social Dimension as the framework to be taken up and supported by the Commission. More specifically, ESU will ask for the revision of the [2013 Council Recommendation on the Social dimension of Higher Education](#)

## **2.7 Gender Based Violence**

ESU will ensure that students rights are included in laws and policies developed to prevent and combat gender-based violence in higher education.

## **Projects**

### **2.8 PLAR-U-PAGs**

ESU will promote the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines on Social Dimension through peer learning activities, surveys and reports, contribution to a website with opportunities for scholarship.

## **2.9 SMILE**

ESU will promote the policy recommendations on inclusive learning environments and dissemination of project results through external events.

## **2.10 PROFFORMANCE+**

ESU will contribute to the revision and promotion of the Teacher self-assessment tool and work in the development of the four continuous professional development and assessment courses for teachers, especially on social dimension.

## **2.11 InclusiPHE**

ESU will contribute to the development of the self-assessment tool for inclusive student participation in professional higher education institutions and will prepare the necessary materials for the online course for student representatives.

## **2.12 WISE – Wellbeing Innovations for Students in Europe**

ESU will prepare the guidebook of recommendations on student well-being based on the analysis conducted during the project, targeting local, national and European level public authorities to implement policies related to student well-being.

# **3. European Education Area (EEA)**

## **Policy**

### **3.1 Structural involvement of the European Universities alliances' student bodies in the work of ESU**

3.1.1 ESU will work on the establishment of the Conference of the student bodies of the European alliances of Higher education Institutions and promote democratic student representation within the alliances' governance within and outside the Conference.

3.1.2 Up until BM85, the Task Force on student involvement in the alliances will focus on mapping the current situation of student involvement within the alliances by help of the Conference, collecting best practice examples of democratic student representation in the alliances and summarising them for a handout to the Conference.

### **3.2 European Quality Assurance and Recognition system**

ESU will provide input to the planned consultation for 2023 on improving the Quality Assurance system in the European Education Area, based mainly on the tools developed in the European Higher Education Area. ESU will look both into general Quality Assurance issues, as well as specific debates such as the Quality Assurance of European university alliances, micro credentials, and joint degrees.

### **3.3 Legal Statute and European Degree**

ESU will monitor the results of the pilot projects on legal statute and European degree and work to ensure implementation of our positions, based on our resolution on the matter.

## **Advocacy**

### **3.4 Higher Education Observatory**

ESU will give its input on the development of the European Union Higher Education Observatory, with the aim to make it the main public, descriptive, easy-to-use aggregator of data on Higher Education in Europe.

### **3.5 Governance of the European Education Area**

ESU will advocate for a systematic involvement of the organisation in the EEA governance framework, namely in the High-Level Group on Education and Training as well as in Interalliance Fora.

### **3.6 Financing of the European Universities**

ESU will work on the issue of the proposed 'investment pathway' for the European Universities. ESU will advocate for funding that does not undermine current mobility opportunities or pose danger to free, accessible, and public higher education.

### **3.7 Mid-term review of the European Universities project and the European Education Area**

ESU will work on the mid-term review of the European Universities project and the European Education Area to ensure implementation of our positions.

## **4. Quality of Education (Q)**

## **Policy**

### **4.1 Contribution to the Digital Education Action Plan mid-term review**

ESU will advocate for our priorities in digitalisation, according to the Quality of Education Policy Paper and Statement on Digitalisation, in the mid-term review of the Digital Education Action Plan, especially for promoting equitable access to digital infrastructure, interoperability of systems, increasing trust in digital education, supporting wellbeing in digital fora and innovative solutions to use digital tools in supporting student-centred learning. Along this way, ESU will also work on ensuring that our contribution to the two upcoming Council Conclusions on digital skills and factors for enabling digital success, to be adopted in autumn, will be taken on board.

#### **4.2 Developing the Quality Assurance Student Experts' Pool**

Based on the Plan of Work approved by the Steering Committee for 2023, ESU will offer valuable training and spaces for discussions for QA Pool members, through online and in person training and QA Talks. ESU will look into cooperating with NUSes to identify and promote good practices for training student experts in QA.

#### **4.3 Chairing the European Quality Assurance Forum Programme Committee and contribution to EQAF**

ESU will chair the EQAF Programme Committee for the 2023 edition of EQAF and will promote the opportunity to participate and contribute with articles among the NUSes. The QA Pool Steering Committee will also be encouraged to send an article to the EQAF and promote the QA Pool among QA agencies.

#### **4.4 International dimension of Quality Assurance**

ESU will work on the international dimension of quality assurance, collecting input from NUSes and practices for building up a perspective on cross-border quality assurance, quality assurance of transnational (including digital) education, QA of European Alliances.

#### **4.5 Monitoring the developments of microcredentials in Europe**

Considering that Member states of the EU are invited to report on their progress on implementing the Council Recommendation on microcredentials by December 2023, ESU will coordinate with NUSes to promote students' perspective in terms of good and bad practices of developing microcredentials at national level, ensuring their quality assurance, engaging stakeholders, and integrating microcredentials in HE frameworks. ESU will also monitor the integration of microcredentials and non-HE providers in the Database of External QA Results.

#### **4.6 Statement on Artificial Intelligence in education**

Considering the everlasting impact Artificial Intelligence would have on education, the current discussions about the advantages and risks of AI in education and measures already initiated by higher education institutions in terms of promoting, regulating or limiting AI in higher education, ESU will work on developing a cross-cluster statement on AI in education, looking into the impact on learning and teaching and academic integrity.

## Advocacy

### **4.7 Revision of the European Standards and Guidelines in QA**

Within the cooperation with E4 (ENQA, ESU, EUA, EURASHE) and the European Quality Assurance Register, ESU will advocate for the revision of the European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance (ESGs) also aiming that the Tirana Communique will mandate the revision and ask for expanding the areas within the ESGs with topics such as social dimension and fundamental values, as well as boosting the relevance and impact of the ESGs.

### **4.8 Promoting student-centred learning**

Within the BFUG Working Group on Learning and Teaching, ESU will continue the work on promoting student-centred learning through peer-learning activities, developing the indicators created to assess the implementation of student-centred learning and other activities.

### **4.9 Implementation of key commitments**

ESU will contribute to the ongoing work of the mid-term evaluation of the European Qualifications Framework within the EQF Advisory Group, promoting the usage of learning outcomes and proper implementation of ECTS. Based on the results of the Bologna Process Implementation Report and Bologna with Student Eyes, ESU will propose ways to speed up the full implementation of the key commitments.

### **4.10 European Year of Skills – quality assured flexible learning pathways for students**

ESU will monitor and get engaged in the activities of the European Commission and stakeholders under the European Year of Skills, advocating that higher education has an important role in upskilling and reskilling policies, the Year promotes a holistic lifelong learning perspective and meaningful actions are promoted to support flexible learning paths in consultation with stakeholders.

### **4.11 Multifaceted automatic recognition**

ESU will work on the promotion of automatic recognition, as well as the Global Recognition Convention. The work will include the next steps on Automatic Recognition in EU, through the revision of the Council Recommendation on a QA and Recognition System, as well as work within the Council on Europe on promoting provisions on Automatic Recognition, in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. ESU will strive to support recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning as a priority within the policy area of recognition.

## Projects

### 4.12 QA FIT

ESU will work on a common paper with E4 + EQAR about the future of Quality assurance in Europe and the European Standards and Guidelines on QA and will organise focus groups with stakeholders on the state of play of ESGs and desired changes.

### 4.13 Bologna Hub Peer Support II

ESU will promote the implementation of Bologna Key Commitments at institutional level (Qualification frameworks, learning outcomes, ECTS, Quality assurance, recognition and new themes such as digitalisation), cooperating with a pool of experts to support Higher education institutions and student unions.

### 4.14 LRC-CoRE

ESU will contribute to the work of the project on recognition of alternative pathways, qualifications held by refugees, optimising the potential of digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement.

### 4.15 European degree projects EDLAB and FOCI

ESU will support as associate partner the pilot projects on the European degree EDLAB and FOCI according to ESU resolution on legal statute and European degree.

## 5. Public Responsibility, Governance and Financing of Higher Education (PR)

## Policy

### 5.1 Refugee Students and at risk students



ESU will develop a policy document on the access of Higher Education in Europe for refugees and for students in danger in third countries. The work of NUSes regarding refugee students will be collected to create an encompassing document.

## Advocacy

### 5.2 EU macroeconomic governance and investment tools

ESU will work on the macroeconomic governance and investment tools, including the European Semester and the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, in order to support the inclusion of education investments and stakeholders involvement. ESU will advocate that investment tools work in synergy at EU level to support higher education objectives.

### 5.3 Refugee students

ESU will actively advocate and raise awareness for a more inclusive Higher Education System in Europe for refugee-students and fairer student visa policies in conflict zones considering the lack of scholarships and the other barriers they face.

### 5.4 Sustainability in Higher Education

5.4.1 ESU will advocate towards relevant European and global policy-makers and stakeholders for implementation of more sustainable practices in higher education by encouraging higher education institutions to change educational frameworks, and advocate for the inclusion of climate and broader environmental aspects in education in curricula, introducing sustainable practices in the everyday operations of the institutions.

5.4.2 ESU will enhance its internal and external sustainability work by working with organisations such as Generation Climate Europe (GCE), Climate Student movement, SOS International, and UNESCO.

### 5.5 Fundamental values in Higher Education

5.5.1 ESU will continue its work in promoting the student perspective for the EHEA fundamental values within the BFUG and in other higher education fora and in supporting NUSes in the defence and awareness raising about them.

5.5.2 ESU will promote student participation and a Learning and Teaching approach to Academic Integrity, especially in its relations with the Council of Europe.

### 5.6 Human rights in Higher Education

5.6.1. ESU will work on shaping a mechanism to address human rights related issues in Europe but also worldwide and work with Human Rights defender organisations and member organisations on developing policies and showing solidarity.

5.6.2. ESU will continue its support and advocacy work for the students and student organisations in Belarus, demonstrating for academic freedom and democracy, as well as supporting the diaspora of Belarusian student activists in exile due to the regime repression.

5.6.3. ESU will continue its support to students in Ukraine and to those who fled the country, in guaranteeing their equal access to higher education in Ukraine and in Europe, as well as support the reconstruction and the modernisation of the Higher Education sector in the country. Special attention will be given to international students studying in Ukraine, and to Ukrainian students regularly enrolled in higher education in Europe.

## **5.7 Students at Risk program**

ESU will support and help lobby for its member unions in their advocacy work for Student at Risk programmes at both national and European levels.

## **Projects**

### **5.8 UNICOMM**

ESU will organise an event as well as a podcast to enhance skills and competencies of participating students and work on the publication of the results of the UNICOMM survey.

### **5.9 OSF project on Academic Freedom**

5.9.1. Within the framework of our OSF project on Academic Freedom, ESU will organise two calls for seed funding on the creation of national campaigns for Students at Risk schemes, and of projects to raise awareness on Academic Freedom.

5.9.2. ESU will organise a moment of exchange between the NUSes and the student ombudspersons to exchange perspectives, visions and best practices.

5.9.3. Within the launch event of the Bologna with Student Eyes publication and the Student Summit for the Ministerial Conference, ESU will organise a session on Academic Freedom and Fundamental Values.

### **5.10 Funding of Higher Education**

ESU will create a project proposal to study the impact that different types of HE funding have on ensuring inclusive, student-centred, quality education.

## 6. Internationalisation and mobility (IM)

### Policy

#### 6.1. Contribution to the Learning Mobility Framework

ESU will advocate for our priorities in learning mobility, according to the Internationalisation and Mobility Policy Paper, in the Public consultation on the Learning mobility framework organised by the European Commission, especially promoting financing of the Erasmus+ program, accessibility of the program for the students coming from marginalised groups, sustainability of mobility programs, complementary role of virtual and blended activities related to international experience, removing bureaucracy for the administration process, as well as key stakeholder involvement in the governance of the program.

#### 6.2. Contribution to the Erasmus+ 2021–2027 interim evaluation and Erasmus+ 2014–2020 final evaluation

ESU will provide feedback to the public consultation process for evaluation of the current Erasmus+ program, as well as for the final evaluation of the Erasmus+ 2014–2020 program. The interim evaluation will be based on the first year review of the program that was carried out with the partner organisations, emphasising stable and adequate funding, access to the program, as well as review of the different activities and necessity for improvements.

### Advocacy

#### 6.3. European Student Card initiative

##### 6.3.1. Erasmus Without Paper (EWP)

ESU will continue to advocate for the digitalisation of the Erasmus+ administration, removing bureaucratic barriers and improving efficiency of the application and nomination process and information exchange between home and host institutions. ESU will emphasise the necessity to fully implement EWP to assure the benefits not only for the IRO's but also for the students in process.

##### 6.3.2. European Student Card

ESU will continue to advocate for the implementation of the European Student Card in accordance with the needs of students and country-specific contexts, to

recognize student status abroad, provide access to student services at the host institution, ensure efficient information exchange between institutions, and store student data safely, while also meeting country-specific requirements for data safety. The needs of students will be mapped through the ESC Academy PRO project.

## **6.4. Erasmus+ and mobility**

### **6.4.1. Financing of the mobility**

ESU will advocate towards the EU institutions and other relevant stakeholders and social partners for the reformulation of the Erasmus+ grant calculations, assuring the financial support is sufficient and fit for purpose, can support student expenses during mobility period and is paid out in adequate time.

### **6.4.2. Virtual exchange and blended mobility**

ESU will advocate for quality implementation of virtual exchange and blended mobility programs, assuring they are a complementary tool to foster internationalisation at home and not replace physical mobility as main form of international exchange, sufficient and separate funding streams will also be advocated towards.

### **6.4.3. Sustainable mobility**

ESU will advocate for more sustainable mobility, especially within Erasmus+ program by increasing the green top-up offered by the program, as well as work with other social partners in developing solutions for making blended mobility programs more sustainable.

### **6.4.4. Accessibility to Erasmus+ program for countries in Region 14**

ESU will support Switzerland, the Faroe Islands and the UK to lobby for fair mobility programmes with Europe and continue to advocate towards making the Erasmus+ programme more accessible to all groups of learners in Europe.

## **6.5. Global engagement and solidarity**

ESU will strengthen global partnerships and look to expand its network further. It will foster the current cooperation and collaboration with international student organisations and work towards engagement within the UN and its agencies.

## **Projects**

## **6.6. ESC Academy PRO**

As coordinator of the project, ESU will oversee the implementation of different work packages with project partners. ESU will prepare a policy brief based on the data collected in the surveys disseminated to students, higher education institutions and student card providers, and the capacity building events carried out by the project partners. The policy brief will then be used in advocacy for implementation of the European Student Card initiative.

## **6.7. Erasmus4All**

Together with project partners, ESU will work towards reformulating the grant calculations for Erasmus+ program, based on literature study and information provided by the European Commission on the de-facto living expenses of students during mobility periods. ESU will use the outcomes of the project to advocate for a more inclusive grant scheme.

# **7. Organisational development and Capacity building (ODCB)**

## **Policy**

### **7.1. Enhancing institutional memory**

#### **7.1.1. Welcome pack for Board Members**

ESU will prepare a 'welcome pack' to be sent to the new Board members, which would present a brief introduction to ESU, its policies and documents, and to the basic concepts of the European Higher Education Area and the European Education Area.

#### **7.1.2. Making ESU archive open access**

ESU will work to digitalise and to store in public archives ESU 40-year long archives. All this will contribute to the scholarly research on the history of the student movement in Europe.

### **7.2. Pool of Trainers and capacity building**

#### **7.2.1. Sustainability of the Pool of Trainers**

ESU will continue strengthening the Pool of Trainers and seek opportunities for externally funded projects to support the activities of the Pool to ensure accessibility of the capacity-building opportunities for the member unions and ESU representatives as well as organise a training for trainers.

## **7.2.2. Training sessions at ESU events**

External trainers will be invited to provide sessions to the benefit of the participants of the events, with the aim to disseminate those practices at the national level among ESU's membership.

## **7.3. Organisational structures**

### **7.3.1. Inclusive organisational structures**

ESU will explore changes within ESU's organisational structures to make it more inclusive, including the options for a non-binary election system.

### **7.3.2. ESU alumni network**

ESU will explore the options for formalised alumni structures assuring the continuity of the institutional memory, as well as strengthening the network of alumni working within the higher education sector.

## **7.4. Responding to memberships needs**

7.4.1 ESU will collect data in a questionnaire on the needs of its members and through the reassessment reports from full member unions to build on shaping the transparency and support work towards the member unions. ESU will continue to strengthen the relationship with the associate organisations.

7.4.2 ESU will review the recommendations from the Task Force on reshaping statutory events and take action to implement the findings, for example on the inclusivity and accessibility of ESU's internal events.

## **Advocacy**

### **7.1. Sustainable funding for European non-governmental organisations**

ESU will advocate towards relevant stakeholders and through partner organisations within Erasmus+ Coalition to ensure that European non-governmental organisations benefit from sufficient, sustainable funding that can assure autonomous and democratic running of the administrative and advocacy operations that are less reliant on project funding.