

ESU's Plan of Work 2024-2025

1. Overarching political priorities

1.1. ESU Strategic Political Priorities 2025-2027

The EC, with the support of the ad-hoc task force, will propose new Strategic Political Priorities for the organisation for the 2025-2027 period, taking into account the implementation of the current Strategic Political Priorities, new political developments and structural needs of ESU.

1.2. Student Rights Charter

ESU will co-chair the working group of the Council of Europe dedicated to elaborating a legal instrument (Committee of Ministers Recommendation) on a Council of Europe Student Rights' Charter and advocate for the rights included in the revised ESU Student Rights' Charter.

1.3. Follow-up to the European Elections

ESU will contribute to the new Strategy of the European Commission and the management plan of DG EAC in the aftermath of the European Elections, establishing working relationships with the political leadership working on education in the European Commission and the European Parliament with special emphasis on MEPs in relevant committees and parliamentary group leaderships. This will also include initial proposals for the new Multiannual financial framework and EU funding programmes and stakeholder participation at European and national levels in investing programmes.

1.4. Engagement in the new Bologna cycle

After the Tirana Ministerial Conference, ESU will shape the new Work Plan of the Bologna Follow-Up group, including on deliverables and working structures, and apply for relevant funding proposals in the dedicated Bologna call for the implementation of EHEA priorities in 2024-2027.

2. Social Dimension (SD)

Policy

2.1. Statement on Disabled students

The Executive Committee will put forward to the Board a statement on Disabled students and enhance cooperation with organisations working for Disabled people.

Advocacy

2.2. Promotion of social dimension in the Bologna Process

ESU will advocate for the continuation of the Working Group on Social Dimension in the BFUG, maintaining the topic as a priority within the Bologna Process and focusing on improved data collection, monitoring and impact assessment, transversal measures to support inclusive policies and mechanisms to streamline social dimension at European level.

2.3. Promoting student health

ESU will promote the inclusion of the student dimension in the European approach to mental health, including through the promotion of ESU Mental Health Charter. ESU also recognizes access barriers to education for menstruating individuals and will therefore work on increasing awareness and conversations surrounding menstrual equity and promote fighting period poverty.

2.4. Advancing social dimension of EEA

2.4.1. Based on the commitment of the European Commission to integrate the Principles and Guidelines on Social Dimension in EEA through the inclusivity framework, ESU will follow-up on its advocacy towards the establishment of the framework, including through the revision of the 2013 Council Conclusions on the social dimension of higher education.

2.4.2. ESU will elaborate and advocate for a proposal of a Council Recommendation on student support services in EEA as a building step for achieving the European Education Area.

2.4.3. ESU will promote initiatives to support the social dimension within the European University Alliances, including through cooperation with the Conference of student bodies and project applications to map the inclusivity policies of Alliances.

2.5. Combating gender-based violence

ESU will liaise with the European Parliament and other European stakeholders to promote the measures proposed in the recent statement on gender-based violence and evidenced by data collected through UniSAFE or Eurostudent.

2.6. Advocacy on new 'LGBTIQ(A+) strategy' of EU for strong education component

ESU will be engaged in the elaboration of the new EU's LGBTIQ(A+) strategy, advocating for a strong component related to student rights in higher education.

2.7. Advocacy for the adoption of the revised Council recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships

In light of the Commission's proposed directive on internships and revision of the Council Recommendation on a Quality Framework for Traineeships, ESU will continue its advocacy efforts to include student (curricular) internships in both legislative proposals and advance the priorities from ESU's policy on internships in order to promote paid and quality traineeships.

Projects

2.8. Apply for peer learning assessments on social dimension

ESU will apply for the continuation of the PL4SD project, supporting EHEA member states with in-depth peer learning assessments to improve their social dimension policies and foster a collaborative network of experts supporting reform in social dimension in EHEA.

2.9. Exploring possibilities to apply for projects offering micro-granting for unions in the area of social dimension

ESU will seek opportunities, for example through CERV grants, to apply for a project that offers micro-grants to national and/or local unions of students for projects in the area of social dimension, for example for LGBTQIA+ students, similar to the framework of the Together Moving Forward project.

3. European Education Area (EEA)

Policy

3. Development of the Conference

3.1.1 - Effort to have more members

ESU will maintain communication with student councils that are not Conference members in an effort to inform them about the initiative and incentivise their membership. ESU will present a training proposal to the NUSes and their members, providing an overview of the Conference and the organization's past endeavours. This should also be linked with data collection on student participation in Alliances in order to have a better understanding of the mechanisms of student participation in place.

3.1.2 - Continuous evaluation of the Conference

ESU should maintain the Conference's evaluation procedure so that it can be modified to accommodate future developments and requirements.

Advocacy

3.2. Legal Statute

ESU will maintain oversight of the ongoing efforts pertaining to the legal statute following the conclusion of the pilot projects and provide briefings about these matters to the NUSes.

3.3. Future of the Alliances

ESU sustains the advocacy efforts and actively lobbies pertaining to the monitoring framework and investment pathway, as well as all other Alliance-related initiatives that the Commission may initiate, with a particular focus on the advancement of the inclusivity framework. ESU will strongly and actively advocate for democratic student representation in the alliances.

3.4. Community of Practice

ESU intends to actively participate in the forthcoming Community of Practice of Alliances. ESU, in its capacity as a member of the Advisory Board of the FOR-EU-4-ALL

project (representing the FOR-EU networks), shall explore potential avenues for proposing certain subjects.

3.5. Higher Education Observatory

ESU will contribute to the initial phases of the Higher Education Observatory's development and operation, including the gathering of student-side data.

3.6. 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

Projects

3.7. INST.ALL

The project will be initiated by ESU in its capacity as coordinator, contingent upon the Commission's approval of the project application.

4. Quality of Education (Q)

Policy

4.1. Contribution to the Digital Education Action Plan 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, quality digital education and use of digital technologies, interoperability of systems, supporting wellbeing in digital fora and student-centred learning, including through investments via Digital Europe programme.

4.2. Strengthening the QA Pool

4.2.1 The QA Pool Steering Committee will implement the plan of work for 2024 and develop the new strategy of the QA Pool. The Pool will offer valuable training and spaces for discussions for QA Pool members, through online and in person training and QA Talks, and prepare contributions for the European Quality Assurance Forum.

4.2.2 ESU will look into cooperating with NUSes to identify and promote good practices for training student experts in QA.

4.2.3 While continuing to identify opportunities for increasing the number of partner Quality assurance agencies, the pool will look into developing partnerships for the (external) quality assurance of European University Alliances.

4.2.4 The Executive Committee will work on international (global) cooperation on student participation in quality assurance, through partnerships with GSF, AASU (within the HAQAA initiative) or INQAAHE.

4.3. Increasing capacity on Recognition of Prior Learning

ESU will collect data on recognition of prior learning practices and prepare a resolution on advancing recognition of prior non-formal and informal learning, including possible adjustments dedicated to higher education to the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. ESU will collaborate with the European RPL network in this regard.

4.4. Developing up-to-date ESU policy on ECTS

In preparation for the revision of the ECTS Users Guide within the Bologna Process, ESU will collaborate with NUSes in identifying pitfalls in the current ECTS system and its implementation and suggestions for improvements of the ECTS Users Guide and the overall system of using ECTS for accumulation and transfer of credits.

4.5. Assessing developments in the field of Microcredentials

In consideration of the monitoring process of the implementation of the 2022 Council Recommendation on an European approach to microcredentials, ESU will work with NUSes to determine the students' perspective on the rollout of microcredentials, especially the degree to which they are accessible, student-centred and quality-assured.

4.6. ESU position on VET

ESU will prepare a statement on Vocational Education and Training, to be adopted by the Board, outlining the specific challenges that students in applied, professional-

oriented or vocational education study programmes are facing, as well as putting forward recommendations. The statement will take into account the specific reference tools created at European level for VET.

Advocacy

4.7. ESU's advocacy related to the Commission's HE package

ESU will advocate for the key proposals outlined in our contribution to the public consultation on the European Degree and the Council Recommendation on Quality Assurance and Recognition. The EC will liaise with the Education Committee, the Hungarian and Polish presidencies of the EU Council and other stakeholders to advance student priorities in relation to the HE package.

4.8. Revision of the ESGs

Based on the mandate received through ESU policy and data stemming from BWSE and QA FIT, ESU will actively engage in the core writing group of the new Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESGs) and in the revision of the European Approach for Joint Programmes.

4.9. Analysing the impact of the AI regulation

The EC will monitor developments in international and European fora related to regulating AI in education and use of AI in higher education and inform the Board on relevant developments. ESU will support the NUSes with guidance in relation to the implementation of the provisions of the EU's AI regulations related to education in national legislation and policy.

4.10. (Automatic) recognition

ESU will continue the work in the Council of Europe and EHEA to promote automatic mutual recognition of qualifications, including a possible subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The EC will continue sharing knowledge with the ENIC-NARIC Bureau/Advisory Committee and follow developments related to the implementation of the action plan of the Global Recognition Convention Conference.

4.11. Learning and teaching

ESU will work on the follow-up of the commitments related to learning and teaching in the Tirana Communiqué, including on operationalising the concept of student-centred learning in light of new trends in higher education. ESU will seek to establish wider collaborations for promoting and assessing innovative learning and teaching methods in order to inform its policy.

ESU will work on increasing the understanding of the challenges of students in teacher training programmes and capacity to advocate for them.

4.12. Emerging procedures for the quality assurance of Alliances

The EC will collect evidence, including through the NUSes, QA Pool and ESU Conference of student bodies of alliances, on the developments related to internal quality assurance policies and mechanisms of the European University Alliances. The work will inform the creation of an ESU position that will contribute to the creation of an external QA framework for the European University Alliances by the European Commission.

4.13. Quality Assurance of transnational education

ESU will cooperate with ENQA and other interested parties in analysing developments related to the QA of transnational education, including online courses and branch campuses, and contribute to the review of the OECD-UNESCO Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education and revision of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee Code of good practice in the provision of transnational education.

Projects

4.14. QA FIT

ESU will finalise the work in the QA FIT project through autumn 2024 through our contribution to the final report, key policy messages and final conference of the project.

4.15. Applied QA

Depending on the evaluation of the project application, ESU will work on increasing student participation in the quality assurance of universities of applied sciences together with EURASHE.

5. Fundamental values and solidarity (PR)

Policy

5.1. Revision policy paper

Considering the Standing Orders, the Hacks will propose a revised version of the cluster-related Policy Paper for the BM87 in Oslo.

5.2. Sustainability of Higher Education

ESU will write and propose a statement on our view on sustainability of Higher Education.

Advocacy

5.3. Refugee students and at-risk students

5.3.1. ESU will continue to establish a network of NUSs and other stakeholders regarding at-risk students. ESU will continue to support NUSs in their work on the topic.

5.3.2. ESU will resume a more active role in advocating for refugee student rights in collaboration with partners such as UNHCR (EARIN network).

5.4. Fundamental values in higher education

5.4.1. ESU will follow the testing phase of the monitoring framework on fundamental values and feed into the development of the technical monitoring framework.

5.4.2. ESU will continue to promote student participation and a learning and teaching approach to academic integrity, especially with the Council of Europe. ESU will follow the developments of the Council of Europe regarding the Observatory Preventing and Countering Education Fraud (ETINED) and artificial intelligence regulation. ESU will continue to work with CIMEA within the FRAUDS+ project.

5.5. Common values and citizenship education in higher education

ESU will follow the various initiatives and explore ways to get more active in the Council of Europe regarding common values in the “Learners First” 2030 strategy, including advocacy regarding the establishment of the European Space of Citizenship Education; the democratic mission of higher education; working groups regarding the RFCDC; the topic of academic history teaching; the topic of multilingualism.

5.6. EU macroeconomic governance and investment tools

ESU will continue to monitor developments on the EU’s macroeconomic governance and investment tools, including the European Semester and the National Recovery and Resilience Plans, especially against the background of the new EU macroeconomic and budgetary framework. ESU will strengthen its efforts to advocate for the inclusion of education in investments and as an exception to debt rules in social taxonomy, and stakeholder involvement in the governance.

5.7. Human rights, Global engagement and Solidarity

5.7.1. ESU will continue its work in GSF, 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.

5.7.2. ESU will work on the situation of students from Roma, Sinti and Travellers communities.

5.7.3. 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.

5.7.4. 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.

5.7.5. ESU will support NUSes from EU candidate countries to engage the civil society’s involvement in the enlargement process and the reform of the higher education sector

Projects

5.8 UNICOMM

ESU will develop the podcast series for the UNICOMM project and attend the summer school including the organisation of a workshop.

5.9. Common values and citizenship education

ESU will explore the possibility of a project relating to the arising topic of common values and citizenship education.

5.10. Refugee and at-risk students

ESU will explore the possibility of a project relating to students at risk and refugee students.

5.11. Sustainability

ESU will explore the possibility of a project on the role of Higher Education for sustainability and fight against climate change.

6. Internationalisation and mobility (IM)

Policy

6.1. 'Europe on the move'

ESU will maintain a watchful eye on the progress associated with the Council's recommendation on "Europe on the Move," with a particular focus on the formation and participation of student representatives in the formulation of national plans.

Advocacy

6.2. Financing of mobility

ESU will persist in its efforts to promote greater accessibility of the Erasmus+ programme for all cohorts of students in Europe, particularly in light of the

commencement of the deliberations associated with the ERASMUS+ programme's forthcoming multi-annual budget negotiations.

6.3. European Student Card initiative

ESU shall persist in monitoring the most recent developments pertaining to the European Student Card initiative as a whole, with the intention of developing a practical solution for students that is not profit-seeking.

6.4. International students

ESU will fight against all measures that impede the equitable and equal access of international students to higher education. A particular focus will be put on the most recent policies, especially in relation to the raising of tuition fees or their introduction, not forgetting the limits that are being introduced for international students with regard to the social dimension of HE, such as access to the health care system and reforms of study grants.

6.5. Accessibility to Erasmus+ program for countries in Region 14

ESU will continue to advocate for the inclusion of the Faroe Islands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom as members of the Erasmus+ program.

Projects

6.6. ESC ACADEMY PRO

As coordinator of the project, ESU will oversee the implementation of different work packages with project partners. As we will come closer to the end of the project, ESU will ensure all deliverables are submitted and we'll make sure that the project accounts are in order. ESU will prepare the final conference of the project.

6.7. ERASMUS 4 ALL

Together with project partners, ESU will work on the finalisation of WP4 of the project and on the organisation of the final conference, as the project comes to an end. Overall, ESU will use the outcomes of the project to advocate for a more inclusive grant scheme.

6.8. AUREA

The project will be initiated by ESU in its capacity as coordinator, contingent upon the Commission's approval of the project application.

7. Organisational development and Capacity building (ODCB)

Policy

7.1. Enhancing ESUs institutional memory

7.1.1. Archiving ESU

ESU will sort through its archives in Brussels to determine which documents are to be kept, given to an archive and/or digitalised before being handed over to an archive. ESU will sign a contractual agreement with an archive (possibly the archive in Florence, Italy).

7.1.2. Handover documents for coordinators

ESU will develop handover documents for coordinators.

7.1.3. Handover documents for the presidency

ESU will develop handover documents for the Presidency.

7.2. Pool of trainers

7.2.1. ESU together with the Steering Committee of the Pool of Trainers will further consolidate the Pool, including through the further development of the website; the exploration of initial webinars; creating a bank of materials; and broadening the members to enhance the diversity and topical width of the Pool.

7.2.2. ESU under support of NUSs hosting ESCs and BMs will invite trainers to events to provide sessions, with the aim to disseminate those practices and to promote the Pool at the national level among ESUs memberships.

7.3. Institutional structures

7.3.1. ESU alumni network

ESU will continue to gather alumni in the Brussels bubble. ESU will develop a systematic way of keeping in touch with alumni (e.g., alumni email list, alumni newsletter, alumni tracking, etc.).

7.3.2. Inclusive organisational structures

ESU will develop under broad inclusion of the Board (a) proposal(s) for a more gender-inclusive electoral system and propose this at the BM87 in Oslo.

Advocacy

7.4. Defending civil space on European level

ESU will continue its work to advocate for NGOs on European level, encompassing participatory democratic values in the EU, funding issues and organisational initiatives such as the ECBAs. ESU will continue its work in the Liaison Group of Civil Society Organisations of the EESC.

Projects

7.5. Pool of Trainers and capacity building for student activists

ESU will explore the possibility of a project with the aim to foster capacity building for student activists in cooperation with the Pool of Trainers.