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European Students' Union (ESU)

Fighting for students' rights since 1982

www.esu-online.org

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Update from the European Students' Union (ESU)

European Students' Union Seminar 'Combating Challenges in Higher Education' and 75th Board Meeting

The 75th European Students' Union (ESU) Board Meeting and Seminar were held from the 26th of November to the 1st of December 2018 for the very first time in Budva, Montenegro. The theme was "Combating challenges in Higher Education" and the event was organised by ESU together with the Students' Parliament of the University of Montenegro (SPUM).

The Board Meeting is the highest governing body of ESU, where all the 45 member unions are represented taking place every half a year in order to shape ESU's policies and work.

During the seminar and the Board Meeting, student representatives discussed many political issues together and voted on different key documents that will guide ESU's strategy and next actions: a Statement regarding the European Parliament Elections 2019, a Statement for quality and fair Internships, an Anti-discrimination Statement as well as amendments to the ESU's Standing Orders.

Moreover, other relevant topics for the student movement have been tackled during the Seminar sessions: Gender good practices, Bologna process, the European Student Card initiative, and participants have learnt about the challenges faced by the Montenegrin Higher Education system.

The political scene is constantly changing and is crucial to ensure ESU's participation in the dialogue with a strong political message to the European politicians.

37th European Student Convention in Timisoara (ESC37)

During our [37th European Student Convention in Timisoara](#) (ESC37), taking place between 14-17 March 2019, student representatives from across Europe gathered to discuss the role of students in shaping future higher education policies at both national and international levels, especially in the context of the forthcoming 20th anniversary of the Bologna Process and the future of European Union's higher education policies. The event was organized by the Romanian Student Union ([ANOSR](#)) in collaboration with the European Students' Union (ESU).

The topic chosen for this ESC was "Shaping the future through policies".

"As we approach the end of another decade, many policy-makers are trying to finalise things and close another chapter of their work and therefore it is crucial for ESU to discuss what has been achieved and more importantly, what still needs to be done and in which direction we should be steering the future," says Adam Gajek ESU President.

EU Elections 2019: Student representatives state their demands to future MEPs

The European Students' Union released a Statement unifying the students' priorities for both the upcoming elections as well as the future work of the Members of the European Parliament.

During the European Students' Union 75th Board Meeting, student representatives from 39 countries from all across Europe decided on the key issues they want to stress ahead of the European Parliament elections taking place in May 2019.

The result was a statement outlining the following topics as vital for both, the upcoming elections as well as the mandate following it:

- Inclusive higher education
- Access to EP-funded projects for marginalised groups
- Access to education for migrants of both refugee and non-refugee backgrounds
- Academic and press freedom
- High quality and sustainably funded higher education

Starting from January, ESU is launching a campaign to raise awareness of the students' concerns which are tackled on their [Statement Regarding European Elections 2019](#) and calling for a massive turnout among students.

Together, Moving Forward - Capacity building event - Refugee integration

Between 7-10 February 2019, in Brussels, as part of the Together Moving Forward (TMF) programme, the European Students' Union (ESU) organised a Capacity Building Seminar, with the aim to share ideas, concerns and experiences on the topic of inclusion of newcomers in European society and access to education.

During 3 days, and through non-formal learning methods, the 21 participants from 15 different countries developed skills and knowledge on how to design and implement a meaningful project at the local, national or European level. A clear focus was given on newcomers' effective participation from the beginning of the project -and not only as a consultative body or as participants. The trainers also presented clear and concrete project management tools to support the group through the application process.

The Seminar was part of the [Together, Moving Forward programme](#), funded by Open Society Foundations, based on the experience acquired during the previous and current editions of the programme. This project gives opportunities to students and newcomers to build positive refugee-host interactions and initiatives across Europe. Since 2017, ESU has supported more than 28 projects, at a local and national level. And now we are in the process to select new ones!

Find more information about the ongoing TMF projects: [here](#).

Mental Health Seminar in Riga

The European Students' Union with the support of the [European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe](#) and the collaboration of the [Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions \(OBESSU\)](#) and [the Student Union of Latvia](#), organised a training about Mental Health in Riga, Latvia.

During the 3-days Seminar called "Civic Participation to respond to Mental Health across European Student Population", more than 30 participants learnt about peer-learning resources to create and deliver youth-led campaigns on Mental Health issues.

Through non-formal learning methods, the different sessions were focused on providing tools to the participants on how to develop a Mental health campaign on the local, national and international levels. The topics tackled during the training included general concepts of Mental health, the legal framework for the protection of persons facing Mental Health issues, political recommendations and practical tips, among others.

ESU co-chairing the first meeting of BFUG Advisory Group on Social Dimension

The first meeting of the BFUG (Bologna Follow-Up Group) Advisory Group on Social Dimension took place in late February in Zagreb, Croatia. As agreed in the BFUG Meeting in September, the European Students' Union (ESU), represented by Vice-President Robert Napier, co-chaired the meeting together with a representative of the Croatian Ministry of Education.

Both co-chairs were extremely satisfied with the outcomes of the meeting, particularly due to the fact that a clear timeline has been established for the mandate of this Group, that will primarily see the creation of a set of principles and guidelines for the social dimension by the next Ministerial Conference in 2020. The minutes of the meeting are available on [EHEA website](#).

'I am extremely happy with the outcomes, and with the fruitful discussions that we had at the very first meeting. I am positive that if we keep up the current momentum and level of discussion, we will be presenting a very thorough set of principles and guidelines and will be delivering on all the other objectives laid out in the terms of reference in a very efficient manner. Let's make use of this opportunity to truly bring about tangible change in the social dimension of higher education', said Napier.

The European Students' Union reacts to Students strike for Action on Climate Change

The European Students' Union (ESU) strongly believes that education and sustainability go hand in hand, and therefore ESU's policy is aligned with the focus of these strikes. As stated in our latest resolution on climate change (read [full version here](#)), European decision-makers need to strive to build a more sustainable society. ESU is terrified to see that instead of standing by the deadline of 2030 set by the Paris Declaration, the EU seems to have unambitiously postponed reaching their goals to 2050. We are also disappointed, that within the areas the EU has highlighted as essential to achieving a climate-neutral economy, education is not mentioned at all. Education is both a catalyst for research and innovation, as

well as a precondition of access to social rights and fairness. Both furthering climate change awareness and empowering citizens to stand together against climate change can be achieved through formal, non-formal and informal education.

ESU is glad to see students standing up for democracy and the environment. Students represent both the present and the future generations, and therefore it is crucial that we act as catalysts for change, particularly on these topics, in times when the decision-making authorities seem to be postponing their importance and urgency.

#MindOurEducation: Students draw attention to Mental Health issues

On 17 November 2018, recognised all around the world as the International Students' Day, the European Students' Union (ESU) launched together with the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) the campaign #MindOurEducation.

This year, the campaign focused on the Mental Health of students under the title "Mind Our Education". One of ESU's strategic political priorities for the period 2018-2020 is to advocate for better specific support for students with health issues including mental health.

Our demands, together with OBESSU, were focused on all students to be guaranteed a healthy environment in order to fully access education. The call has been signed by 52 organisations from all over the world, with messages of support still being received days after the call was closed.

You can find more information about other projects ESU is involved in [here](#).

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