

ESU report to the BFUG 84, 11th-12th May 2023, Stockholm

Highlights of EHEA-relevant ESU activities since BFUG 82

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the organisation representing 20 million students through our 45 National Unions of Students (NUSes) in 40 countries. ESU participates in most of the BFUG working structures: most notably, it **co-chairs the Working Group on Social Dimension, and the Drafting Committee for the 2024 EHEA Ministerial Communiqué.**

Bologna With Student Eyes

The project **Bologna with Stakeholders Eyes for an Innovative, Inclusive and Interconnected EHEA by 2030** ([BWSE FOR2030](#)) has worked into two main lines of action: the Peer Learning Activities and the restructuring and launch of the Bologna With Student Eyes Survey. 2 of the 3 of the PLAs foreseen in the project have been held since BFUG82, namely '[Towards an inclusive EHEA by 2030](#)' on the 16th and 17th February 2023 in the Hague, the Netherlands, and '[Towards an innovative EHEA by 2030](#)', on the 20th and 21st April 2023 in Zagreb, Croatia. For what regards the BWSE survey, ESU's team, in collaboration with three Focus Groups gathering the BWSEFOR2030 project partners, national student union representatives and Eurydice, completely restructured the survey and the questions, adapting them to the new developments in the EHEA since 2020. The current survey, consists of 9 parts: Student Participation in Higher Education Governance; Academic Freedom, Academic Integrity, Institutional Autonomy; Social Dimension; Quality Assurance; Mobility & Internationalisation; Key commitments; Learning and Teaching; Public Responsibility and Financing of Higher Education; General questions about the Bologna Process. **The survey was launched in early March and it is now open for ESU's National Unions of Students for filling.** The data gathered will be shared with Eurydice for the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2024.

Social Dimension

ESU has continued **co-chairing the BFUG Working Group of Social Dimension**, which worked on the revision of the draft indicators based on the received feedback, as well as on the European monitoring system. The work of the WG is supported by the [PLAR-U-PAGs](#) project, of which ESU is a partner, whose aim is to support the national authorities and higher education institutions in the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines (PAGs). Its [second PLA](#) was held in Ghent on 9th and 10th February 2023 on the principles 2 (Social Dimension and Legal Regulations), 4 (Social Dimension and Data Collection) and 5 (Students' Mental Health).

Within the context of our campaign '**Education is Freezing**' on the issue of student poverty, we launched together with ESN a survey on the housing situation of the Erasmus+ students. The survey received more than eight thousand respondents, and a report is in the writing phase.

Quality of education, key commitments and recognition

Our work on the reflection about the future of the **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESGs)** has continued within the **QA-FIT project**. The data collection for the survey towards the National Unions of Students and the members of ESU QA student experts pool has been finalised, through which a draft report on the student view for the future of the ESGs has been written. We are also working on the common report of the overall answers to the QA-FIT survey, together with the rest of the E4 and EQAR. Linked to the TPG C on QA, we have participated in several activities of the **IMINQA** project, where we tackled issues like microcredentials and QA for the European Universities

On the side of the **key commitments**, we participated in the kick-off meeting in Bonn, Germany (2nd-3rd February 2023) of the [Bologna Hub Peer Support II](#) (BHPS II) project, which aims at fostering the implementation of the Bologna key commitments and the application of the Bologna tools at higher education institutions throughout the EHEA. We presented the BHPS II during ESU 45th European Student Convention, held in Lund and Malmö on 6th-10th March 2023.

In the field of **recognition**, as members of the TPG B, we helped design a survey that aims to assess the recognition quality in different countries and will participate in the analysis of the survey results. We attended the ENIC-NARIC Board meeting to present ESU's work on recognition.

Internationalisation and Mobility

Much of the work on the topic of Internationalisation and Mobility is being done within the framework of the **Erasmus+** programme. In the framework of the [Erasmus4All](#) project, ESU has been working on proposals for restructuring the grant calculations to assure they cover the basic expenses students are facing when engaging in credit mobility: the direction of the work has been towards increasing the base grant and adjusting the top ups based on the living costs in destination city, complemented by green top-up that is sufficient to cover the price difference between air travel and more sustainable ways of transportation. Together with the European University Foundation and the Erasmus Student Network, ESU presented its joint [Erasmus+ Review 2021-2022](#) through an event at the European Parliament on 23rd March 2023.

ESU published a [statement](#) together with our Swiss union VSS-UNES-USU urging the Swiss government and the European Commission to constructively work on a common solution for the **reassociation of Switzerland to Erasmus+**.

Fundamental Values

ESU has been working on inquiring students' views on academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic integrity. With this goal, as part of a project on academic freedom funded by the Open Society Foundations, we launched a survey which reached 645 students from 30 countries. The preliminary results on institutional autonomy and academic integrity were presented at the PLA of the NewFAV project, held in Bucharest on 5th December 2022. The [full report](#) was published in January 2023. In the framework of the OSF project, a second seminar called the '[Academic Freedom Ideathon](#)' was held on 16th-20th January in Brussels, with the involvement of around 40 participants from over 15 different countries to develop project proposals to raise awareness on academic freedom. The three winning projects have been awarded seed grants and [presented their projects](#) at the ESC45.

Within the framework of the **NewFAV project**, we participated at the PLAs on institutional autonomy of Bucharest, and on academic freedom and academic integrity in Berlin, on 15th March 2023. We also participated in the Focus Groups giving feedback on the indicators and sources mapping exercise for all the fundamental values. We are **drafting the EHEA statement on Academic Integrity**,

whose subsequent drafts have been presented at the WG on Fundamental Values meetings in Bucharest (6th–7th December 2022) and Berlin (16th–17th March 2023). An ESU Executive Committee member has been elected in the the bureau of the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED).

We continue supporting our Belarusian members, under repression or in exile, both in their efforts to call for the release of the students detained by Belarusian authorities as political prisoners, as well as in their advocacy to continue their studies in Europe. On these two subjects, ESU member union BSA published the report '[State of Belarusian Academia 2022](#)', which we helped disseminate.

Ukraine

We continued to raise awareness on the **issue of the Ukrainian male students regularly enrolled in higher education abroad and denied, since September, the possibility to leave the country and join their colleagues**, as well as on the situation of the **international students studying in Ukraine** and their right to continue education in Europe.