

The European Students' Union – ESU
Formerly known as ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe

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The European Students' Union (ESU) update to the Bologna Follow-up Group

New team 2013/14 has started the work on 1st of July 2013

A new political leadership of the European Students' Union (ESU) started its mandate on 1st of July. Rok Primozic, new Chairperson, will be participating in the BFUG meetings, together with Vice-Chairperson Elisabeth Gehrke, who is co-chairing the Social Dimension and Lifelong Learning Working Group of the BFUG and Vice-Chairperson Fernando Miguel Galán Palomares, who is a member of the Steering Committee of the ESG revision. The seven Executive Committee members from 1st of July on are Erin Nordal, Elin Blomqvist, Maksim Milto, Maros Korman, Michael Tolentino Frederiksen, Blazhe Todorovski and Nevena Vuksanovic.

Contact information can be found here: <http://esu-online.org/structures/electedrepresentatives/>.

Financing the Students' Future (FINST)

ESU has been trying to outline the negative consequences of austerity measures and cuts in public funding of higher education through different channels. We have been following the situation in different European countries, raising the awareness of the problematic reforms and advocating for public responsibility for higher education. In the end of October 2013, ESU has decided to support an initiative group from Greece, which has launched a European Citizens' Initiative with the goal of excluding the spending of education from the deficit of the national budgets. Initiative can be found on <http://invest-in-education.eu/>.

In the first half of 2013, ESU has published the FINST compendium on financing of higher education, which is the first publication on financing of higher education on the European level from the perspective of students and with the aim of increasing the knowledge on some of the effects that different financing systems in Europe have on students. The compendium contains the research findings, analysis of 4 hypotheses on the effects of funding on student participation, research articles

ESU – The European Students' Union - is the umbrella organisation of 47 national unions of students from 39 countries representing over 115million students. The aim of ESU is to articulate and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at a European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow-Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.

on specific issues such as commodification and social dimension, three future funding scenarios and overall FINST conclusions and considerations for the future. The compendium is available both in electronic and paper form, and can be found online on <http://www.esu-online.org/news/article/6068/Compendium-on-Financing-of-Higher-Education/>.

QUEST For Quality for Students - the project has finished, the quest remains

ESU launched the QUEST project in 2010 and delivered its final results in October 2013. The project aimed at defining a concept of quality that gives a better answer to the learner-centred high quality model of higher education students in Europe. In the duration of the project, ESU has carried out a research on the perceptions and expectations of quality higher education, knowledge about Quality Assurance systems and information needs among students. One of the interesting features of the research work is a pan-European survey addressing directly students. Moreover, through the project ESU has organised several trainings for students on QA, establishing a pool of students who are able to multiply this knowledge at the national level and also to participate in international reviews.

ESU has also developed a handbook and a website with information about the Quality Assurance systems in Europe and student participation in processes on European, national and local level, and it contains several materials for organising and supporting trainings for students. These deliverables are useful to both students that are already engaged in student reviews and beginners. They describe the core basics of quality assurance and enhancement of higher education and lead the reader through the process from the start till the end, explaining how they can themselves become involved in or train others in such activities. Additionally, the benefits of including students in quality related activities are explained and are therefore not only useful to the students themselves, but also to staff members of institutions and other stakeholders in higher education.

Even though the research part of the project has come to an end, ESU will use the findings and the policy recommendations to promote these results to decision-makers and stakeholders in higher education, as well as in our own policy-making processes. The website is an important part of that outreach and will be continuously updated.

All research publications, the handbook and updates can be found at <http://www.quest.esu-online.org>.

Student Advancement of Graduates Employability (SAGE) continues

ESU organised the European training on employability from 23rd until 25th of April in Budapest, Hungary. The event gathered more than 100 representatives from Europe and discussed issues of

employability. Prominent stakeholders, the European Commission, EURASHE, Education International, BFUG members and SAGE Consortium have expressed their views on the topic and gave the food for thought for further discussions.

ESU has finished a study on the different aspects of employability as seen by students; i.e. implementation of Bologna tools (LOs, NQFs), students' expectations for education, best practices and strategies on supporting graduate employment, as one of the purposes of HE. So far, the survey results have been analysed and the next steps include drafting of the chapters and presenting them to the Advisory Board for comments. It is expected that the Employability With Student Eyes study will be launched in the last week of November 2013.

ESU has launched a review of the EU2020 strategy, which will present student views on the implementation of the Modernisation agenda in different national contexts within the European Union. The main objective of the publication is to look into issues that hinder the higher education reform and propose possible solutions. The material for the publication has been gathered through the desk research, paper contributions and interviews with student representatives. The publication will be launched in the last week of November 2013.

ESU organised European Students' Convention 26: Internationalisation of Higher Education in Europe: Policies and Practices for Strengthening EU Neighbourhood Policy

On 20th-22nd September 2013, ESU together with Lithuanian National Union of Students (LSS) organised European Students' Convention 26 in Kaunas, Lithuania, entitled Internationalisation of the European Higher Education Area. The event was included into the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union agenda and provided participants with a space for discussing current trends in internationalization and mobility within higher education in Europe, its impact on quality assurance, emerging Open Educational Resources (e.g. MOOCs) and impact of the internationalisation of higher education on student activism in Eastern Partnership countries. In addition recent Communication of the European Commission "European Higher Education in the World" was explored.

A new project has started: Peer Assessment of Student Centred Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Europe - PASCL

ESU will, in cooperation with 4 other organisations, implement a project on student-centred learning. The project aims at conducting peer assessments with both student and academic experts based on a set of student-centred criteria. Institutions that fulfil the defined criteria will be awarded a student-centred learning label. The first stage of the project has begun with conducting desk research on the

current state of affairs in policy-making on student-centred learning, which will result in a publication to be shared with ESU's member unions, key stakeholder groups and HEIs in order to promote the project and gain interest for further involvement.

ESU participated in the World Congress on Access to Postsecondary Education, organised by European Access Network (EAN)

ESU as part of the European Access Network helped organise and participated in the first World Congress on Access for Postsecondary Education. The Congress was the first chance for leaders in the access movement from across the globe to together discuss the challenges they face and share the real experience and knowledge of how they work. Students and student representatives were an active part throughout the congress that was organised in Montreal between the 7th and 10th of October.

Main upcoming events:

8th European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)

ESU co-organises, together with ENQA, EURASHE and EUA, the European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF) since 2006. This year edition is entitled “Working together to take quality forward” and will take place at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) on 21st-23rd November. The main purpose of the Forum is to foster a dialogue on QA that bridges national boundaries and leads to a truly European discussion on QA in higher education, and to create a common European understanding of QA through discussions and networking among different stakeholder groups.

ESU Seminar on public responsibility and commodification of Higher Education

ESU will organise a seminar on public responsibility and commodification of Higher Education that will take place on 27th and 28th of November in Zagreb, Croatia. The aim of the seminar is to discuss the different dimensions of commodification, how it is seen in different countries and how the international processes and agreements have affected further commodification of higher education.

ESU Board Meeting 65

The representatives of all ESU members unions will meet for a Board meeting in Zagreb, Croatia, that will take place from 29th of November to 1st of December to discuss policies on European policy-making processes, actions for the European Parliament elections 2014, plan of work for the upcoming year, statutory documents etc.