

NO STUDENT LEFT OUT

The do's & don'ts of student participation in higher education decision-making



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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IMPRINT

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Brussels, March 2011
by European Students' Union.

ISBN 978-94-91256-10-3

This publication is part of the project
»Enhancing students' contribution into
Bologna Implementation« (ESCBI),
funded with support from the European
Commission.

This publication reflects the views only
of the authors, and the Commission
cannot be held responsible for any use
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PRODUCTION

Linus Rowedda
Printing by Laserline, Berlin
on 100% recycling paper



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1 FOREWORD

Dear reader,

»No student left out« should be the motto of the entire student movement. It can be understood in many different ways. No student should indeed be left out of higher education, both in terms of access and progress towards completion in higher education but also in terms of representation in governance structures at all levels.



Leaving no student out is also a challenge for student unions in the sense of openness, democracy and representativeness, three pillars which the student movement ESU promotes. A strong student union is a union that can be inclusive for all students in a democratic way and that can represent and defend the rights of all students.

With this handbook we hope to provide you with an overview of how a student union can successfully represent students in an inclusive way and how student participation in governance on all levels has grown throughout history. This handbook should not collect dust on your bookshelves, dear reader, it should rather become a reference in your daily work and a source of ideas from the best practices from all over Europe that are shared here. In that way I also hope this handbook will help you to promote the ESU Students' Rights Charter and obtain political support for our rights as students.

Before I let you indulge in a mix of history, *petites histoires* and best practice sharing on student participation in governance, I would like to thank a number of actors involved in the creation of this book.

First of all the authors: students, student representatives, stakeholders in the Bologna Process and Higher Education, policy experts. They have all contributed to making

this a high quality handbook and fit for purpose. Based on the author's input, the hard working editors, proofreaders and graphic designers have made this book an attractive and well-tailored handbook. Of course I would also like to thank the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Union as without their support this handbook and the entire »Enhancing the Students' Contribution to the Bologna Process Implementation« project would not have been possible. Last but not least. I want to thank Karina Ufert, who has led the redaction of this handbook in a professional, enthusiastic and ambitious way.

I hope you will enjoy reading and using »No student left out« and that it will contribute to a stronger and united European, national, regional, local and institutional student movement!



Bert Vandenkendelaere
Chairperson ESU 2010-2011



2 REVEALING THE CONCEPT OF STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION

BUDAPEST DECLARATION

Adopted at 21st European students' convention, 14–17th February, 2011
Budapest, Hungary

Students are the main actors in higher education, and recent protests across Europe are a clear indication that students wish to maintain the role of higher education (HE) as a public good and public responsibility in order to guarantee equal access and success. Despite historical evidence and current developments demonstrating students are willing to mobilise across Europe to protect higher education, students are listened to less and less. ESU strongly believes that student participation is the key for fair higher education, which is the only way to secure social development and sustainable economic growth. Student involvement in governance is essential in preparing students to be active citizens in democratic societies, and the view of students as consumers, as opposed to members and active participants, will have severe impacts on HE systems as well as greater society.

European Ministers of Education stated, »students are full partners in higher education governance« in the Berlin Communiqué (2003). Now it is time for the students of Europe to claim this statement. Students are not consumers of higher education, but significant components within it. Consumers are not involved in management of processes, but students are co-responsible of higher education management, as higher education is developed for students. Students are the main beneficiaries of increasing the quality of HE. Students should have more impact in decision-making and governance of higher education, which must be a community of students and professors who are equally responsible for its quality.

Unfortunately students are increasingly being viewed as passive customers, while the ongoing inclusion of new external stakeholders (the >new managerialism<) and

the pursuit of international competitiveness have resulted in changes in governance structures that lead to the dilution of student representation in higher education institutions. The European Students' Union is strongly opposed to the suppression of the student voice in governance, as this would have a negative impact on the institutional development and higher education in general.



There are four stages during which students should take part in governance but the first step is accessibility to information, involving open and free access to all documents related to institutional policies and decision-making structures. Additionally, full access is the key for a transparent educational system. The next stage, consultation, is where participation begins, with the canvassing of student opinions, views and feedback, but without any guarantee they will be taken into consideration. Dialogue is the next stage, however full influence to affect final outcomes is still not guaranteed at this stage, although dialogue between students and decision-making bodies is vital. The final stage, partnership and decision-making, is the highest form of participation, with students involved at every stage of governance, from agenda setting, to voting and implementation. Partnership is the stage where common ownership and shared responsibilities exist. At this level, respecting the independence of student representation is crucial. It is vital that this stage exists not only in theory, but also in practice.

The European Students' Union is convinced that students' participation as active partners will only be ensured once all four stages have been reached.

Student participation exists at three levels: local, national and European, all of which are important and interdependent. Regardless of the level, student representation should uphold the principles of openness, representativeness, democracy, independence, accountability and accessibility to all students, as described in the Ljubljana Declaration (2008). Student participation should not be limited solely to certain areas of HE governance such as academic issues, it should include aspects such as institutional financing and recruitment of academic staff that undertake teaching responsibilities as well as having a say on who should be the leaders of their institutions. In order to ensure student centred learning, student participation at local level is the first step that must be taken. All matters regarding HE issues have a direct impact on students; therefore students must be involved on all consultative and decision-making bodies. At a national level, other relevant stakeholders should be recognized if they are respecting the principles of independence, democracy and transparency. The student voice is fundamental in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), supporting the positive development of higher education on the international level.

The European Students' Union believes student participation cannot be a tokenistic form of legitimizing policies and decisions. Furthermore, participation should not be limited by any criteria such as academic performance, age, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. Additionally, student representation must not have any negative consequences for representatives, such as on educational performance.

The European Students' Union strongly believes that being a student is more than just learning and collecting knowledge; it is about personal and collective development, creating a better society and a better future.

INTRODUCTION ENHANCING THE STUDENTS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

*By Allan Päll, ESU Vice-chairperson (2009-11)
and Karina Ufert, ESU Executive Committee member (2010-11)*

One can merely doubt—student participation in higher education decision-making is the primarily task and responsibility of a students' union. Strengthening unions means to enhance their capacity to represent students' academic, social and cultural rights, make the voice of students actually heard and aim for a change. Inadvertently, the handbook is a final passage of ESU project »Enhancing students' contribution to the Bologna Process Implementation (ESCB1)« in which we see genuine student participation as a key element for the successful implementation of Bologna reforms and creation of an inclusive European Higher Education Area.

Furthermore, this handbook is one of the elements of the ESU training strategy for member unions and is to a large extent build up on the outcomes of 21st European Students' Convention in Budapest, that was held from 14th to 17th of February 2011 and where the Budapest declaration was adopted (see the text elsewhere in this publication). Alarming signals from our member unions on students being gradually excluded from decision-making, but also increased diversification in ESU membership regarding different experience and understanding of democracy and good governance—conclusions that we withdrew from the mapping exercise on the students' participation, gave a strong impetus to (what some would call) going back to basics.

The handbook is thus structured by first setting the context, in which students' participation is actually happening and bringing in the historical perspective—recalling the purpose of the creation of a European students' organisation and assessing the progress that we have done so far. One shouldn't diminish the sense of learning about our past, especially now, when ESU is entering to the process of vision building. It is not only entertaining to read about geo-politics and student unionism—it gives us an opportunity to know more about the cultural differences among the student unions and therefore lays a ground for facilitating intercultural understanding and trust and for respecting diversity.

Continuing from there, we also need to understand the current macro level policy context while developing a sense of what participation in decision-making really is. Is it about having certain number of votes in the governing bodies of institutions, or is it about pro-actively engaging on behalf of the student interest. It is thus crucial to look

into changing notion and role of higher education as such for student unions to be able to develop beyond the reactive approach. Thus the handbook continues into looking how to break down the policy from the international level to what is happening on the ground, while addressing the uncomfortable view of seeing students as being »consumers« and countering it by standing for their rights.

But finally, as one of the conclusions from Budapest, an element that is lacking proper attention now is peer learning—meaning to invite members to communicate their best practice and thus there is attention to this in the handbook. With this exchange it will be easier for all member unions to get better at what they do and that eventually trickles down to issues like improving the student contribution also in political processes like the Bologna.

FROM PRAGUE TO BUDAPEST—PROCESS THAT STANDS STILL?

Since its inception, the Bologna Process has always been centred on the governments. It was a reform agenda of higher education started by Ministers as a reaction to grand challenges—just to name a few like globalisation, expansion in numbers of students, changing economic context, increased cross border mobility but also further consolidation of the European Union. Thus the Bologna Process aimed to align different educational systems to foster movement of students, teachers and ultimately, knowledge. The aim was thus with this to support also the economic development of the continent as there was increasing perception of being left behind of the great American universities. Bologna Process was to lay a ground for the creation of a meaningful European Higher Education Area—something that some say, is still yet to emerge.

But students (and other natural stakeholders) were not included in this construction at first and they needed to defend their inclusion with which they succeeded in 2001 in Prague when Ministers accepted in Prague that »students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions«. Since then, the commitment in words of the Ministers grew

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Since then, the European Students Union (formerly ESU) has been sitting around the Bologna table and in that circle we are confident of our inclusion while

this does not reflect the situation on the national level any more. This is also an indication of the weakness of the Bologna Process—a policy reform agenda of harmonisation that is voluntary and in which the final authority rests within governments be it

national or regional. That means that the Bologna roundtable is sometimes rather a »*coffee table discussion club*« of civil servants who prepare the Ministerial meetings. But once back at their desks from the coffee break, the exhilarating fumes of discussion and notion of agreement often seems to have evaporated, leading governments to implement the Bologna agenda in the way that quite often undervalues and even conflicts the agreed »*coffee table principles*«.

Among the most crucial Bologna Process action lines are the establishment of comparable systems and tools through a common credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS), setting up of national qualification frameworks, setting up of cycle based degrees (bachelor, master, doctoral), facilitating recognition of qualifications and credits between systems, encouraging trustworthy quality assurance systems. Making the systems comparable through these tools is all about fostering cross-border mobility of students and staff, encouraging better links with lifelong learning and ensuring employability. And these indeed are policy goals that student unions have signed up for.

But in order for this to be a successful agenda the basic tools should have been in place already. But in 2010 which was set to be the original deadline and by which the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was supposed to be established, we needed to realise that most of even the basic things had not been yet reached implementation on the national level. Or even if governments had changed legislation, it provoked heavy challenges to students and the academic community. The ESU has ever since carried the message of going through fully with the reforms and doing so based on the agreed principles, but since governments endorse the loose nature of the process, progress has at times been damaging to students.

More peculiar examples of this are that although one of the original goals of the Bologna Process was to support student mobility and the tools mentioned above were supposed to contribute to this, then in many cases, the reforms have been so narrow-minded that it has resulted in less flexibility for students. In one famous case, previous four year degrees were simply compressed into less credits for three years, but the amount of studying that the students actually needed to do was not being decreased.

IS IT ONLY ABOUT THE BOLOGNA PROCESS?

But it is not only the Bologna Process that has its subtle impact on the national level. One of the actors in Europe is also that we have Europe of several modes of integration. Namely the main executive body of the European Union, the European Commission, is pushing for its own views on higher education policy. Though some of their policy goals counteract the Bologna Process. One such initiative is the modernisation agenda of universities, adopted in 2006, which promotes a whole different mindset,

relating more to economic and financial effectiveness and efficiency and the role of higher education in that.

The European Commission argues for bringing down (legal) barriers between higher education systems further and faster and they have more leverage simply because they are almost a supranational body, even though education is in the remit of governments. But unlike the Bologna Process, the European Commission can throw around some cash as well for incentive—much of it which has been put to good use though through also supporting the Bologna agenda, but most notably with student mobility grants such as Erasmus.

But as identified by ESU, one challenging aspect in the modernisation agenda is about promoting greater involvement of external stakeholders in higher education governance. This in itself is not something bad, but the way that this often results in diminishing the voice of students, but also teachers, could be seen as potentially limiting as less student involvement can actually lead to less efficiency in the long term. That is especially true in issues concerning implementing reforms like the Bologna on the institutional level.

Combination of agreements of the Bologna with messages of the European Commission tends to blur the picture overall and thus also offers one explanation into why the Bologna Process is not in good favour everywhere. Bad or lack of proper implementation and replacing the content of the Bologna reforms with another agenda leads naturally to aggravation. Thus no wonder students in a number of countries have been protesting against the Bologna Process itself while not knowing that it might simply be their own government not respecting the Bologna agreements.

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The ESU has always advocated for the ideals of the Bologna which rather sees efficiency and effectiveness in higher education management that is inclusive of the academic community, the process that advocated student-centred learning, something that cannot happen if students are put to the position of mere consumers of a prefabricated educational product as some are promoting.

ENHANCING THE STUDENT CONTRIBUTION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

Thus, the ESU has been internally very focused on making sure that the national unions of students would advocate on the national level that the »*coffee table agreements*« should be taken as seriously as governments would take legislation in a policy area where there is supranational power influencing it. ESU has thus been training and informing its membership and through that producing public reports on the implementation of the Bologna Process as to keep the governments accountable to their own agreements and promises.

The project »Enhancing Students' Contribution to the Bologna Process Implementation« (ESCBI) is thus coming to an end after a series of trainings, publishing of »Bologna With Student Eyes 2009« and »Bologna at the Finish Line« reports. Several seminars and events have also been held, among them the last event in Budapest.

ESCBI project has affirmed that student participation should not only be seen as a crucial priority for the European students' movement, but to the entire higher education community since the student, around whom the learning process should be built and that any reform plans can only be successful with their inclusion in the process and decision-making.

Thus the ESU priority is to ensure strong student input and strong and competent student unions that represent the vision of the students but also address their actual concerns. By offering good practice examples, training, doing research, informing student unions, ESU is making its contribution towards moving to the finishing line of the Bologna Process implementation and thus start making new steps towards the future.

2.2 ESU—FROM INFORMATION BUREAU TO POLITICAL ANIMAL

*By Olav Øye, Studying at the Université Libre de Bruxelles,
former ESU Executive Committee member (2008-09)*

Are student unions just talking shops without real impact on student life? This article argues that they are not. The author explains why student unions need to debate the same issues as they did 30 years ago, and how ESU tries to capture the essence of the student concerns that are most pressing today.

INTRODUCTION

In the course of its short history, the European Students' Union has grown both in size and influence. Representing more than 11 million students, ESU is the officially recognised student partner in the Bologna Process to reform European higher education. The organisation is also a regular speaker at events organised by UNESCO, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Union, and the Council of Europe, as well as conferences far beyond Europe's borders.

ESU started out as the West European Student Information Bureau (WESIB) in 1982. A rather modest title, but that was also the purpose. The student unions of North-Western Europe wanted to avoid potentially divisive political topics that could paralyse the student movement (see also Julie Ness's article elsewhere in this publication). As WESIB's first secretary general Björn Sundström wrote in ESU's 25th anniversary publication (2007): WESIB was first a forum for information-exchange between like-minded national unions of students.

But even in the founding agreement (1982) of the Bureau, the first point in the list of WESIB's objectives reads as follows: »To provide and maintain the Educational, Social, Cultural and general interest of students«. Today, ESU has clear policies on topics such as the purpose of higher education (to prepare active citizens and not only efficient employees), financing (a public responsibility), governance (students should co-decide in both university budgets and other governance issues), and pedagogics (students do not accept to be passive recipients of old wisdom).

HOW ESU MAKES POLICY

ESU is not always about consensus, and all of ESU's detailed policies (check out www.esu-online.org) are not necessarily agreed by all members. ESU members decide the

KEY (W)ESIB-ESU MOMENTS

1982	Founded in Stockholm as the West European Student Information Bureau.	students, to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process«
1990-92	The W is dropped, and the number of members increases from 16 to 30.	2003 The first Bologna With Student Eyes report is published.
2001	Becomes official observer in the Bologna Process, and students are recognised by education ministers as »full members of the higher education community«. At the same time, the same ministers »reaffirmed the need, recalled by	2007 The name changes to the European Students' Union (ESU).
		2009 European education ministers agree that »In 2020, at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad.«

policies by majority voting, and those policies' principles and details are derived from the national and local situations and discussions.

The individual students who represent ESU are elected by the general assembly for one-year terms, and are expected to know education policy and reality beyond their own country. When mandated by ESU to represent the organisation, ESU representatives have to say what they perceive to be the representative opinion of most students, or they have to base their statements on agreed policy (if relevant). Good policies as well as internal discussions about interpretations of these are necessary in order to promote a message that resonates with students while presenting a consistent message to outsiders.

DEMOCRACY IN STUDENT EUROPE

Being consistent over the years is often challenging for a student union, in particular because the representatives change frequently. If you do not know the history of your struggle and there is no one around who knows what the debates were about three years ago, how can you avoid mistakes that were made before your time?

Prolonged procedural debates can be a source of occasional frustration, but there is an upside. Sjur Bergan, who writes elsewhere in this publication, has explained the difference between democracy and riding a bike, saying that »Practising democracy is more like learning a language: you have to keep practising it. If you don't, you'll forget how to do it.« (ESU 2009)

»Practising democracy is more like learning a language: you have to keep practising it. If you don't, you'll forget how to do it.« Sjur Bergan

This view of democracy illustrates in part why (democratic) student unions seem to repeatedly debate the same issues, and this is why they should not always be ridiculed for spending hours debating their internal structures and culture. Without a decent internal democracy, a student union can quickly turn into a self-perpetuating circle of friends who forget to talk with the students they are supposed to represent. (And in all fairness: it is also true that some student union procedural debates are far from the conversations you will find at the average student party or study group.)

In order to capture the essence of European students' struggles today, ESU has to set requirements and standards for itself as well as for its member unions. Not in the sense that ESU tells its members what to do (it cannot and does not), but in the sense that new members have to meet criteria set by the existing members. Any new member must fulfil the four main criteria of internal democracy; representativeness; independence; and finally, that they are run and controlled by students. ESU's board meeting (general assembly consisting of member representatives) decides whether applicant organisations fulfil these criteria.

FROM QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS TO HUMAN RIGHTS

For all the hours spent and speeches given about European structures and reforms, ESU still pays a lot of attention to the individual developments of national higher education. As overall higher education laws and budgets are decided most often at the national level, it is the national unions of students that by far have the most important task in influencing governments and parliaments. And their members, be they individual students or local student unions, are ideally the actors with the best possibilities to shape their own education. What makes the European student movement just that—European—is the combination of information exchange, policy development and lobby work at the local, national and European level.

What makes the European student movement just that—European—is the combination of information exchange, policy development and lobby work at the local, national and European level.

At the same time, basic student and civil rights continue to be a priority, even 20 years after the fall of European communism. The emphasis on Belarusian students' fight is one of the persisting themes in recent times. The most well-known individual example is perhaps the reactions from students and other parts of the higher education community after the expulsion of student representative Tatsiana Khoma from her Belarusian university in 2005. Numerous national student unions as well as ESU itself protested against the arrests of student demonstrators in the Belarus presidential elections in 2010. The hardships of Iranian students criticizing their gov-

ernment is another example of an issue that has not been forgotten in the middle of EU budget proposals, Green Papers, recommendations, ministerial declarations and other documents from various European meetings.

WHY ORGANISE?

Student organisations, whether they represent almost all or a certain part of the students at a university or in a country, decide their own goals and working methods. But regardless of the chosen issues: inter-institutional, national and international student cooperation has contributed greatly to the improvement of students' education and lives.

What is more, ESU and other student unions also provide a better description of the student reality towards policy- and decision-makers at all levels. Those who have read ESU's Bologna With Student Eyes reports, a survey on student unions' perception of the Bologna Process, might have noticed that these accounts are far less positive than the national education ministries' reports on the countries' implementation of the reform.

Thirdly, and in the words of the Finnish Universities Act of 2009: »The student union shall participate in the performance of the educational mission of the university (...) by preparing students for an active, cognizant and critical citizenship«.

CONCLUSION

The topic of the first WESIB board meeting seminar was »Student participation in decision-making bodies of higher education«: About 29 years later, more than 100 student representatives from 35 countries met in Budapest for ESU's 21st student convention. The topic: student participation.

So when the issues on the top of the student agenda are the same after almost a generation, is this a sign that student unions have little impact? No, quite the contrary. Firstly, student unions define themselves as organisations and the challenges they are facing according to the realities of their time. These realities may change, even if the overarching topic does not. Secondly, this persistence is a testament to the student movement's ability to be true to its ambitions, and to push for changes whose letter and spirit may only take effect after long-term efforts.

2.3 GEO-POLITICS AND STUDENT UNIONISM. A HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANISATION.

By Julie Ness

International officer at NSO, co-chair International Cooperation Working Group

The purpose of this article is present a short summary of an international student organisation and some lessons, which can be learnt from this practice. The article is more of a history than anything else, from the early beginning in 1919 to what work is being conducted by ESU today on the international level.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORGANISATION.

One of the best kept »secrets« in student politics is our history. This is due a lot of factors, such as a general high turnover of elected representatives as well as poor financial conditions to support a secretariat to keep the organisational memory. Another contributing factor is the archiving skills of students, which is I would say is tagger poor. This leaves arbitrary archives at random libraries and NUS (national unions of students) offices as well as some personal recollections. But put this aside, there are still some records that tell an intriguing tale of the student organisation and representation. When it comes to the international student organisations there is always a couple of questions that you need to get an answer to: »who is really financing this?« and »why?«. Furthermore, it is always good to remember that student politics reflect the society they operate within.

When it comes to the international student organisations there is always a couple of questions that you need to get an answer to: »who is really financing this?« and »why?«. Furthermore, it is always good to remember that student politics reflect the society they operate within.

MEETING OF THE ALLIED STUDENTS

In the wake of the First World War, the first international student organisation came to life. This was a time of post-conflict and separation in Europe. The alliances from the first world war were still strong, and the world was seen in allied, neutral and central powers. In this setting the League of Nations was established, as the first international organisation with the aim of ensuring world peace. In 1919, in the same post-war context, UNEF—the National Union of Students in France—invited students from neutral and allied countries to Strasbourg to celebrate the liberation of that city. Student unions from allied countries accepted the invitation, whereas some unions from

the neutral countries were a bit more reluctant. The celebrations were grandiose and attended by amongst other high profile guests from the French government. During the event UNEF revealed their idea to establish an international student organisation. The celebrations of UNEF were later named *La Réunion des Etudiantes Alliés* (Meeting of the Allied Students)¹. They put down a committee to prepare for the establishment of an international student organisation, and in 1924 *Confédération Internationale des Étudiants* (CIE) was established.

But as I mentioned in the introduction, what was the rationale and where did the financing come from? It was quite clear early on, that this organisation was heavily supported from especially the French government, but also the national delegations received financial support from their governments. But why would the governments support this organisation? There are several reasons and explanations for the establishment of CIE, some more likely than others. Networking is an obvious candidate, as in this time the ruling elite (politicians, high level civil servants and businessmen) attended the same universities, thus creating personal networks early on. This might explain the interest of students to participate, but does not explain why governments would fund it. Another more plausible explanation for the government support was that during the first world war, the French were baffled when they saw the support German intellectuals receive from other intellectuals in neutral countries. The Germans have had realized that low level individuals would eventually rise in ranks by giving an access to education, so the Germans had been very good at networking from a low level. A fun fact that supports this is where the students got their funding from, more often it was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs than Ministry of Higher Education, which proves the point of a foreign affairs agenda.

So what was the CIE? CIE remained firmly non-political throughout its life, and was devoted to the concept of »students« as such. One hot topic in CIE was membership issues (!), and the big political fissure was over German membership. NUS UK only wanted to be part of CIE if membership was open to all student organisations regardless of which country they were from. Compromise was reached to restrict membership to one NUS per country, where the country was member of the League of Nations. This did not solve the issue, as the German student union was a pan-German union and Germany was not part of the League of Nations. But the problem solved itself in the 30s when the German union turned Nazi and lost interest in joining the CIE either way. With the onset of the 2nd World War, almost all international student activity

¹ Meeting of the Allied Students and the establishment of CIE was in its time one of the catalysts for establishing national unions of students, i.e. SYL Finland, NSU Norway UNES Switzerland and NUS UK. In countries such as Norway and Finland, unions consisted of only two members and the sole purpose were to represent their countries at international meetings.

ceased² and in 1940 CIE's office in Central Brussels was ransacked by German troops, and all records lost.

The death of CIE, was the beginning of a new era of international student organisation. European students, that had fled due to German occupation, met in London in 1941 and founded the International Council of Students, to keep up communications and prepare for a post-war international student organisation. And in the autumn of 1945 there were two international gatherings of students, first in London and then second in Prague. The first meeting in London brought together 150 student representatives from 38 countries from all over the world (with the limits of colonialism at that time) and a second in Prague, where 600 student representatives from 51 countries. Conclusions of these two meetings later was to found one student organisation. An International Preparatory Committee was elected to organise the next meeting and draft a constitution for the International Union of Students (IUS).

COLD WAR, COLD STUDENT POLITICS

On August 18th, 1946, the International Union of Students (IUS) held its first World Student congress, and the international student organisation became a reality. 300 delegates from over 38 countries took part in the meeting. The organisation was built on the same principle as the CIE, with one member from each country. By 1947, IUS was recognised as the international student voice, with offices in Prague. But remained politically polarized, as students were by their time: there was a division between communist and non-communist unions. This was a challenge they managed to overcome during the first meeting, as they met in the spirit of »peace and anti-fascism«, but the time they lived in caught up with the union before long.

There was a clear division between regional groupings, on how much policies and politics should be the focus of the international organisation. A very central question was whether policies adopted in IUS should be binding for the NUSS. This created quite some tensions, where the Scandinavian, North European and North American Unions were sceptical towards a very political role, while the eastern/communist NUSS wanted a more political union and have had the majority of the votes. A contributing factor, why IUS adopted communist friendly policies was the location of its office in Prague and main financial income from the Russian and Czechoslovakian NUSS, which in their turn were financed by their governments.

² The lasting project of CIE is the Student Universiade, a student Olympics, organised every second year.

In 1948, with the *coup d'état* in Prague, Europe saw major political changes, which inevitably affected the IUS. During the Executive Committee session in 1948, neutral and non-Communist groups wanted to condemn Soviet military oppression and the brutal and obviously undemocratic overthrow of the Czech government. The neutral and non-communist NUSS were a minority, and were outvoted, which in turn left to a lot of neutral and non-communist NUSS leaving IUS. After this IUS became openly communist and after a while it became clear, that IUS acted on orders from Kremlin. The Yugoslav NUS was expelled at the same time, when Moscow broke off all its diplomatic ties with Yugoslavia and at this point it was obvious that IUS had been turned into just another Kremlin-ruled organisations and within short time all Western unions have had left IUS.

In 1950, the Second World Student Congress of IUS was organised. Most Western NUSS attended as observers to see, if it was meaningful to re-enter IUS. Olof Palme, International secretary of SFS Sweden (on photo, page 23) wrote in his report: »the

»the first speaker was the delegate from North Korea. He entered wearing camouflage uniform and a bazooka on his back, and began a rant against the fascist west. This set the tone of the entire congress.« Olof Palme

first speaker was the delegate from North Korea. He entered wearing camouflage uniform and a bazooka on his back, and began a rant against the fascist west. This set the tone of the entire congress.«

As a direct consequence of the 2nd IUS Congress, SFS Sweden together with other Scandinavian NUSS as well as NUS UK called a meeting in Stockholm in 1950,

where they decided to establish a Western international student organisation—the International Student Conference (ISC). By the 2nd International Student Conference in 1952 the organisation was set up with a constitution and a secretariat in Leiden, The Netherlands.

So, by the mid-50s there were two competing international student organisations, with practically the same activities. Both organisations held regional capacity building events, student festivals³ and were engaged with media (published magazines). »World Student News« was IUSS publication, whereas »The Student« was published by ISC. With magazines, trainings and bi-annual meetings you've got to wonder where the money came from. Especially when considering the financial stress on all NUSS, as well as regional student organisations in the present time.

One should keep in mind the time, in which these two organisations were active and the political situation, which was constantly changing (when is it not?). During the late

³ These were massive events with approximately 20–30.000 participants from all over the world. For an impression of how big event these were check out <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=78660>



40s and 50s, there were two great superpowers, which influenced the organisations. As a communist organisation, no dissent was allowed and if anyone tried the NUS in question, the union would be expelled. But with the Sino-Soviet split⁴ IUS changed, as the Chinese communist had control over the Secretariat and Executive Committee. This opened IUS up for more political diversity, and in 1962 the *Zengakuren* (Japanese NUS) opposed Soviet nuclear testing. When they did not reach a majority, they took to the streets and organised the first anti-government demonstration in Leningrad since the Russian revolution in 1918, and this did not lead to expulsion from IUS.

But there was also political change in other parts of the world. During the Second World War, Europe's political power was weakened, but during the 60s Europe got stronger (especially the French). This shifted the power balance in Europe. Furthermore, from the end of the Second World War up until the 70s the major wave of liberation struggles made Africa a free continent. The political implications of this was a bigger potential member base. ISC gathered most organisations from former colonies, although they were not very enthusiastic on the basis of »its European-oriented program and lack of militancy«. A fun fact to note is that the African unions were members of both IUS and ISC at the same time. There has been speculations that the motivation was »cheap traveling« to Europe.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA) AND US NATIONAL STUDENT ASSOCIATION (NSA)

As mentioned previously, IUS got most of its financing from the Soviet government and various Eastern European governments, which might be one of the reasons why the Sino-Soviet split did not have a bigger impact in IUS. On the other side, where did ISC get its money from? It was widely known that ISC depended heavily on financing from private foundations in the US and Great Britain, and this brings us to the inner circles of NSA and a journalist at Ramparts.

A bit of history. In 1946, a delegation of 24 American students attended the first World Student Congress. Amongst them are many war-veterans, representing various youth and student organisations and 10 universities. Returning to the US after the meeting

4 The Sino-Soviet split was the worsening of relations between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War (1945-91). Since 1956, the countries had (secretly) been diverging ideologically, and, beginning in 1961, the Chinese Communists formally denounced »The Revisionist Traitor Group of Soviet Leadership.« In the mid-1960s, the Sino-Soviet split was an international relations fact that imbalanced the (original) bipolar Russo-American configuration with which the Cold War had begun in 1945, because the People's Republic of China openly competed against the USSR for the leadership of the international Communist movement; the Cold War had become tripolar.

they agree, that it is immanent to establish a national union of students to have proper representation at the international level. In 1947 NSA adopted its Constitutional Convention and by this time IUS had become more openly communist. But just after the *Coup d'état* in 1948 NSA broke with IUS and they attended the constitutional meeting of ISC in Stockholm in 1950.

NSA have had its peak years in 1960s, with more than 400 schools as members, but little revenue was collected through membership fees. The budget and staff grew every year and NSA picked up more and more financing from private foundations and most went directly to its overseas operations in ISC. Despite formal democracy in NSA, there was not so stable relationship between national and international affairs. It has been claimed that NSA always had two faces, the domestic and the international. Domestically, NSA representatives were open and spontaneous whereas internationally NSA representatives seemed more like professional diplomats than students. There was something tough and secretive about them.

In 1967 a Ramparts journalist started digging into private foundations that CIA was channeling finances through and at a later stage was contacted by Michael Wood, NSAs director of development, who revealed the whole story about CIA infiltration in NSA. NSA had practically been infiltrated by CIA since early 50s, and CIA had complete control over the international division of NSA. CIA recruited staffers and elected representatives to work for them in exchange of almost limitless flow of money through private foundations.

It is practically impossible to get an overview of the financial means, that were transferred from CIA through private foundations to NSA. But to give you a picture, between 1962 and 1965 NSA received \$256,483 (value today equals \$1,854,967) for its international activities. In addition to this ISC got \$1,825,000 from the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs of New York City (FYSA) and San Jacinto Foundation over time period 1962–64 (this equals to \$13,198,984.48). It has been calculated, that finances from CIA to NSA and ISC averaged approximately \$400,000. Not even the NSA Congress ever saw the complete financial statements and hence it is very difficult to get a complete overview.

In addition to direct funding to NSA and ISC, NSA had another department—Independent Research Service (IRS) which received \$180,000 (\$1,301,817) to recruit delegations of hundreds of American students to raise mayhem at international pro-communist meetings. CIA was only interested in NSAs international operations, therefore only few NSA officers working on national issues were aware of CIA funding. From time to time CIA treated NSA as an extended arm of US Foreign Policy. This became apparent when NSA president Phil Sherburne asked for a meeting with Soviet student

union, in Moscow, as he was attending a meeting in Istanbul on the way. This trip was discouraged from CIA as KGB could see this as a change in CIA foreign policy.

THE DEATH OF ISC—THE RISE OF SOMETHING NEW!

The Ramparts journalist published his story in March 1967 and when the magazine hit the streets, it came breaking news news and the revelation struck like a bomb in the US as well as in ISC. Only a small circle of people in NSA and ISC had known about the CIA involvement. When the news hit the masses, it was received with fury by NUSS which in turn left ISC. Most NUSS, such as NSA later joined IUS. In the end, ISC was dissolved without any formalities, as there wasn't enough funding to finance a final congress.

The Latin American NUSS had been dissatisfied with both IUS and ISC, so in 1966 they established a regional platform OCLAE (Organización continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes). With the dissolution more regional platforms emerged and soon AASU (All African Students Union) and ASA (Asian Student Association) and the General Union of Arab Students (GUAS) followed suit. It took a bit longer for European students to unite again after ISC, but in 1982 a familiar structure was created, WESIB (Western European Student Information Bureau).

FAST FORWARD ON DEVELOPMENTS IN EUROPE

WESIB was founded by seven NUSS: DSF Denmark, NSU Norway, NUS UK, SFS Sweden, UNEF I.D. France and SHÍ Iceland. The founding agreement of WESIB is stating very clear, what WESIB should not be in line with the historical roots of the founding unions. As mentioned before, the Nordic unions and some Central European unions were keen on keeping the focus on »students as such and students' rights« and this focus was kept in the founding agreement of WESIB.

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WESIB changed in tune with political changes in Europe and the rest of the world. With the dissolution of the Soviet union, WESIB opened up to unions from all over Europe, and soon changed it's name to the European Student Information Bureau (ESIB). This name was kept for over a decade, but with the changing political focus on higher education policy in Europe, through the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna process, ESIB changed as well. ESIB got more formalised with staff and elected representatives and

in 2000 moved its office to Brussels⁵. With the bigger and more formalised organisation the name »Information Bureau« was not deemed appropriate any more, and in 2005 during BM 48 in Bergen the first debate regarding changing the name, started. After a fierce debate lasting all night, the delegates decided that they would not be able to come to an agreement and decided to postpone deciding on the issue. Next time it came up, was in 2007, during the BM 52 in London. Here all delegates successfully agreed on naming the new union as »The European Students Union«.

THE IRON CURTAIN FALLS

From the late 60s, IUS was the only international student organisation and with the cold war loosing temperature, so did IUS and also loosen up on the communist agenda. With most NUSs participating in IUS the organisation was active and organised meetings, seminars and conferences as well as student festivals and regional trainings throughout the 70s and 80s. Even though the activities was heavily sponsored by Moscow, IUS was all in all working as an international student organisation.

The next revolt in international student organisation came with the biggest political change in recent years, the collapse of the Soviet Union. With the collapse, IUSs income suddenly came to an abrupt halt and within years it was in financial distress. Problems started to pile up from the early 90s, which has left an organisation with a broken back.

Since then, during most of its existence, IUS relied heavily on few income sources: financial support from Eastern European member unions (which in turn were financed by their governments), as well as income generated from the International Student Travel Bureau (ISTB) and the International Student Identity Card (ISIC⁶). However, In a year or so, IUS has faced bigger challenges. The Eastern European unions ceased to exist and with them the membership fees and government sponsoring. The Travel Bureau faced major challenges, as many of its clients created their own travel bureaus, so income generated from ISTB declined, and by 1992 IUS lost money on ISTB, and ISTB closed down permanently in 1993. ISIC revenue was withheld from the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC). But there was also other problems, such as the

5 From the beginning, WESIB and then ESIB had an office that moved all over Europe. From 1982–87 the WESIB office was hosted by SFS Sweden and financed by the Swedish Government. When the grants ran low, NUS UK hosted the office until 1988 before it moved to ÖH where it remained until 2000 (and where some bureaucratic challenges still remains).

6 During the congress in 1946 NSS Norway was put in charge of creating an International Student Identity Card, which would be valid in the whole world. This later became ISIC, which was owned by IUS and NUSs. Today the ownership is more complicated, as i.e. Kilroy Travels has the legal rights to the card in Scandinavia (in Norway Kilroy Travels used to be a part of ISTB, and owned partially by NSU Norway).

Czech Government adopting an eviction order for all Communist front organisations to leave the Czech Republic. At this moment IUS owned a seven store office building in Prague. Because of declining income, IUS was in severe debts and by 1995 IUS did not even have money to pay off bills on heating, electricity and water, which made it all the more difficult to lease out the offices.

In 2000, IUS organised the last successful Congress. With failed attempts in 1994 and 1996, eventually a congress was called in 2000, in Libya. With limited archives as with the limited number of student unions—I have not been successful in getting my hands on any records or minutes of this meeting, and hence what we know about this meeting is only rumours and hear-say. The seriousness of this Congress is clearly stated in the Report of the Executive Secretariat (ES), as IUS was in financial ruins and all measures and ideas to better the situation had failed. Even the Congress would not have been a reality without the financial support of the Libyan student organisation. From the ES Report to the Congress, it is clear that the financial situation was what occupied the ES and for the Congress they had proposed a number of changes to the constitution to reduce cost of running the organisation. Unfortunately, the IUS Congress never managed to do more than discuss the proposed amendments as IUS never reached the required $\frac{2}{3}$ of member unions to approve changes to the constitution.

At the moment, IUS is engaged in several lawsuits in the Czech republic due to the ownership of the office building and is on the verge of bankruptcy. The office in Prague has been vacated and from what we know, the Treasurer of IUS is a staff member of Canadian Student Federation (CSFs). The activities of IUS have been reduced to next to nothing since the turn of the millennium, with some formal representation and co-organising of events are the main activities at the moment. In 2003, IUS organised it's to this date latest council meeting in Montreal in 2003, attended by AASU, ASA, ESIB, GUAS and OCLAE. They agreed on a statement for the WCHE+5, which was part of the follow-up from the World Conference on Higher Education, organised by UNESCO in 1998. In addition all unions agreed to organise a joint week of action globally in defense of public higher education, at the same time as the 5th Ministerial meeting in World Trade Organisation (WTO).

EUROPEAN EFFORTS TO REVITALIZE IUS

After digging in archives, it is clear that several unions of ESIB as well as ESIB tried for several years to revitalize IUS and several working groups have been mandated to investigate into the opportunity to do so. A lot of effort was put into this before the WCHE in 1998, as well as for the Congress in 2000 and in the follow-up of the outcome of WCHE, but so far they have been unsuccessful.

In the period before, during and after the WCHE, ESIB was especially active on the international level. Through the framework of UNESCO, and follow-up of the conference ESIB was provided with several meeting places with other regional organisations as well as IUS and the EC reported regularly to the board on international activities. In addition ESIB had established an International Working Group (IWG) with responsibility of follow-up the international work of ESIB. As it seems from BM reports, the IWG met challenges in the main tasks which were international cooperation and follow up of UNESCO and started to grasp over topics such as commodification and solidarity issues.

Furthermore, it has to be stated that several NUSS were also active in international students' politics on their own during this period. A lot of effort has been put in by fzs Germany, in particular into regional coordination of European and North American Affairs to solve both the issue of offices (with proposals to move it to Geneva and Paris) as well as several proposals to resolve the financial issues, unfortunately these efforts were unsuccessful.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ICWG

Within the UN community, UNESCO has overall responsibility for higher education, but other international agencies such as OECD, the World Bank and WTO have started to show an increased interest in higher education. In my opinion, there has been a shift in the perception of higher education from being viewed as a human right, to where higher education now is more seen in an instrumental manner and as a tool to

As more and more international organisation were paying increased attention to the higher education, it became imminent to make students' voice heard on the global level.

achieve economic growth. The different international organisations has different approaches to higher education. Most see higher education as a mean to achieve economic growth, whereas the rationale of WTO is to liberalize trade to the biggest extent in all sectors. Trade liberalization is seen as an important tool to achieve economic growth, prosperity and

wealth, without in my opinion, any analysis of i.e. what factors is needed to achieve high quality education. But enough of commodification and trade liberalisation of higher education, as this is a bigger issue and deserves special attention. As more and more international organisation were paying increased attention to the higher education, it became imminent to make students' voice heard on the global level.

For agencies such as WTO, the World Bank and UNESCO there is no obvious stakeholder to consult when it regards students issues and sometimes there is not even a consideration to consult students, which is the case with WTO. As stated above, IUS is down with a broken back, but is still barely alive. In the UN system they hold a ECOSOC

NGO status, so they are consulted and invited in whenever an issue of higher education is discussed. But recent events may point to others seeing the need to revitalize the international student representation.

UNESCO, as mentioned above, is the UN agency that is occupied with higher education and in that respect they organised the first World Congress on Higher Education (WCHE) in 1998. At this event IUS represented the students' voice and was still considered as legitimate student organisation. But when UNESCO was preparing for the follow up of the WCHE (WCHE+10, July 2009), they approached ESU with an effort to get representative unions on board. UNESCO did put in the money and at the BM54 in Brusno the International Cooperation Working Group was established, with VSS-UNES-USU Switzerland as chair and NSU Norway later joined as co-chair of the ICWG. With the new-found interest of UNESCO to fund the international student organisation, things started to move quickly and had it's first meeting after almost a decade, in January 2009. With the new money and new initiative, there was also some fundamental changes. Previously, membership was based on NUSS, but since now the regional organisations were the basis of cooperation, as well as some thematic/sectoral organisations (with UNESCO-relations) and some of the biggest NUSS⁷. Another difference was funding, as the funding was transparent and project based, but not predictable. As for IUS, the financing keeps popping up as a recurrent problem.

During the first meeting the students agreed on several priorities for the WCHE+10, such as equal access, quality education, students' rights and students as a partner in higher education. These are general principles in higher education, but agreeing on it is not always easy. But the motivation to develop policy and to continue working on the international level was very strong.

In July 2009, the WCHE+10 was organised and the students' voice was relatively strong as most student representatives have had a meeting before in Paris. This made it easier to cooperate as set a basis for sharing ideas and building trust. With targeted effort and well-coordinated students' presence at the conference, we managed to influence and change the conference Communique and one thing we managed to get into the communique was follow-up from UNESCO's part of the Global Student Movement. Directly after the conference, the students met once more and decided upon the Action Plan for the Global Student Movement (GSM), which is a roadmap to make the GSM more robust. It contains a division of responsibilities and plans for future follow-up on common goals as well as a commitment for future cooperation.

7 For more elaborate information on which organisations participated at the meeting, see the Global Student Statement to WCHE+10

In October 2009, UNESCO approached ESU yet again, this time with some leftover funding in the budget. UNESCO wanted to know if ESU was willing to organise another meeting of the GSM, which ESU gladly accepted. This shows how important it was to get the GSM included in the conference communique and as a part of the follow-up of the conference. ICWG organised, what is to this date, the last meeting of the GSM in January 2010. This was an unusually productive meeting and by comparing the statement from the first meeting with the Global Student Declaration, there is proof on how meeting regularly and building up trust over longer periods of time can work miracles on policy making.

The GSM meeting in January 2010 decided upon two main priorities for future cooperation, as well as task division. The first priority was privatisation and commodification of higher education, as this issue is very important at the international level. A lot of policy is developed on the international level, that has consequences in especially the developing countries. Here, I'm off course talking about policy development and implementation in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Commodification is a hot topic internationally as well, as most countries have signed free trade agreements that include the higher education sector. The consequences of this policy is yet to be seen, as trans-national higher education institutions is not that common in Europe.

The second priority is students rights. There have been several episodes recently, that proves how important it is to continue monitoring the situation students are in. The report *Education under Attack*, published by UNESCO in 2010 shows how attacks on education, students and professors has increased in recent years. This is very worrisome as students usually are the progressive forces in development of societies. In societies that are not fully democratic, students are sometimes the only ones on the barricades. The fear of student mobilisation is a real fear with governments, as history has shown that students may have great impact and be the root-cause of government change. But this does not justify attacks on student rights.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm and commitment from meetings has proved difficult to follow up between meetings. This combined with the lack of an immanent threat of a 3rd World War or any conflict of that sort, the funding continues to be the main challenge. This is not only true for the GSM but also many student unions.

2.4 WHY EDUCATION AND WHY STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION?

by *Sjur Bergan, Head of the Department of Higher Education and History Teaching of the Council of Europe*

Even if European debate can give the impression that higher education is only about preparing for the labour market, this is only one of several important purposes. The ultimate purpose of education is to help prepare the kind of society in which we would like to live and student participation is essential in reaching this goal. This article tries to explain why.

THE MULTIPLE PURPOSES OF (HIGHER) EDUCATION⁸

Whoever observes Europe's education debate from afar could get the impression that education has a single purpose—preparation for the labour market—and that a good university or *Fachhochschule* is one that gets its students through their studies and into jobs as quickly as possible.

This is not entirely false but it is also not entirely true. My purpose is not to contest the importance of higher education in improving preparation for employment—»employability« seems to be the preferred term in international English⁹—or in furthering economic development. My concern is to raise awareness of the fact that economic development, however important, is not the *only* purpose of education. That is a seemingly simple statement, short enough to fit into a sound bite, but making it heard and understood in public debate has nevertheless proven to be quite a challenge.

Exactly what purposes education should serve may be subject to debate but, I hope, not the basic premise that we are talking about purposes in the plural rather than in the singular. The Council of Europe offers the view that higher education has four major purposes, all of equal importance:

- ▷ preparation for the labour market;
- ▷ preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies;

⁸ To a considerable extent, this article builds on presentations given at the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the International Students' Day in Bruxelles in November 2009 and at the European Student Convention in Budapest in February 2011.

⁹ A language which, like Latin, has no native speakers alive today but, unlike Latin, also has none who was alive yesterday.

- personal development;
- the development and maintenance of a broad and active knowledge base (Bergan 2005; Council of Europe 2007).

While the reference is to higher education, I suggest that these four purposes are applicable to education more generally. Advanced knowledge will often be developed through research but may also be found in non-academic fields such as vocational education. Many primary and secondary school teachers also have advanced knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning methodologies even if we can all think of teachers from our own school days who did not.

EDUCATING FOR THE KIND OF SOCIETIES WE WANT

Education is essential to developing the kind of societies in which we would like to live (Tironi 2005). These are likely to be societies in which people are meaningfully employed with reasonable incomes but they are unlikely to be societies in which people do nothing but work or in which all decisions are economic in nature. They are also unlikely to be societies in which people remain cloistered in their respective individual spheres without showing concern for the common good of society. On the other hand, they are also unlikely to be societies in which there is little room for private spheres. Such societies exist and they are mostly societies from which people seek to escape rather than one to which people try to immigrate (see e.g. Demick 2010). Not least, the kind of societies in which we would want to live are unlikely to be ones in which people only seek to associate or interact with others who are more or less like themselves (Bergan and van't Land 2010) or which are unable to see beyond the immediate future and plan for their longer term well being, even beyond the likely life cycle of its current citizens.

Education is fundamental to developing not only competences needed for employment but also those needed for democracy to thrive.

Education is not the answer to all ills from which our societies may be suffering, but at the same time it is difficult to imagine that societies may address their more fundamental issues without also seeking to develop education systems and provisions suited to meeting those challenges. Education is fundamental to developing not only competences needed for employment but also those needed for democracy to thrive. As Walter Lippmann put it: »No amount of charters, direct primaries, or short ballots will make a democracy out of an illiterate people« (Lippmann 1914).

VARIED COMPETENCES

The TUNING project made the distinction between subject specific and generic competences (González and Wagenaar 2005; Bergan 2007). The former are intuitively comprehensible—they are for example what a chemist needs to know, understand and be able to do in chemistry or a historian in history. Transversal competences are those that higher education graduates should have, regardless of their academic specialization. Trying to make a complete list of transversal competences would most likely be a futile exercise but they would include:

- ◊ analytical ability,
- ◊ the ability to present an issue clearly,
- ◊ the ability to identify alternatives,
- ◊ the ability to see an issue from different angles,
- ◊ the ability to step outside one's own frame of reference,
- ◊ the ability to solve and preferably to prevent conflicts,
- ◊ the ability to debate, but also to draw conclusions and put them into practice,
- ◊ maybe even the ability to read between the lines—to read the unstated as well as the stated.

Higher education graduates should have both kinds of competences at advanced level. As societies, we need graduates with highly developed competences in specific academic fields but we also need people with the ability to put their subject specific competences into their proper context, to cooperate with those whose competences lie in other fields, to ask critical questions and to find answers to those questions. The Germanic languages have a pungent term for those who possess only subject specific competences, illustrated by the German *Fachidioten*, which literally means »subject idiots« but which sounds less harsh in the original than in the literal English translation. English may have the best term for those who believe one can get by on generic competences alone, and I suggest that term may be »management consultant«. As societies, we need our graduates to be both *Fachidioten* and »management consultants«, but in a healthy balance between the two. Maybe it boils down to this: we probably train more subject specialists to a higher level of proficiency in their chosen

disciplines than ever before but I am less convinced we educate the intellectuals we need, and by intellectuals I mean those who are able to put their subject specific competences into proper perspective.

THE CASE FOR STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Democracy as an ideal probably has a stronger position today than ever before. Competing political systems have largely disappeared as alternatives attracting large followings—at least for the time being, for democracy is not like riding a bike: once you have learned it, you never forget it even if it may take you a day or two to get back on track if you do not practice it for a long time. Democracy is more like language fluency: it can be lost unless practiced.

At the same time, our idea of democracy is often too simplistic. One cannot imagine a democratic society without democratic institutions but democratic institutions alone are not enough. When the Berlin Wall fell, many were naïve in their belief that once we had elections and democratic institutions, we would have democracy. Our education system probably did its share: how many civics courses and textbooks have not been

Democracy means, among other things, that decisions are made by deliberation and that conflicts are solved by peaceful means.

long on institutions and procedures and short on values and content? Democracy means, among other things, that decisions are made by deliberation and that conflicts are solved by peaceful means.

Democratic institutions are essential but not sufficient. For democracy to be real, citizens must be convinced that they have a stake in the well being of their societies and that their contribution to democracy should be more than a vote every two or four years. Citizens must commit to the idea that public space is our common good and that it is more than the sum of our individual private spaces.

Democratic institutions must rely on democratic culture, which is developed in many contexts but few are as important as education. Democratic culture needs theoretical knowledge and understanding but it cannot be developed in classrooms alone, especially not in the kind of classrooms into which teachers go to lecture and students to take notes. Democratic culture must be developed through practice. Students should participate in the lives and governance of their institutions because they have a perspective on education that no other stakeholders have and without which higher education institutions will be poorer. Societies would also be ill advised to expect its citizens to be fully fledged active citizens once they leave education if they have had no practice in democratic participation throughout their schooling.

The governance of higher education institutions in Europe has been based on a specific view of the balance between representativity and competence as well as a specific view of what kind of competence is needed to govern an institution. This is why academic staff, which does not make up a majority of the members of the academic community but is considered to have the highest competence in the core missions of higher education—teaching and research—have traditionally held a majority of seats on institutional governance bodies while students, who make up a majority of the members of the academic community and have somewhat less developed competences in teaching and research—although perhaps not in learning—has stronger representation than technical and administrative staff. With the advent of external members of governing bodies, however, the view of what kind of competences are needed to govern higher education institutions is shifting from an emphasis on competence in teaching and learning to broader political and societal competence. In this set up, no group will have the majority of members of governing bodies but students will continue to play an important role and many student representatives will have an unusual balance of competence in the core mission of higher education and broader political and societal competence.

The legitimacy of student representation, however, also depends on the support they enjoy in the student body and here there is reason for concern. In general, the quality of student representatives in European higher education is high but their electoral base is weak. This is perhaps a reflection of the difficulty our societies face more broadly in engaging citizens in the public sphere. We can think of situations in which citizens have been strongly mobilized and we can think of situations in which students have been strongly mobilized either on their own behalf—perhaps in the middle of an institutional crisis—or on behalf of other students. From my own career as a student representative and then a university administrator, the example I remember best is perhaps the mobilization in support of Chinese students in the wake of *Tien Anmen*. Facing crises requires courage but the alternatives are clear. In our everyday life, heroic courage is less of a requirement but the alternatives and the importance of each individual's participation are less clear cut. In our busy daily lives, it is easy to believe that democratic participation can safely be left to others. However, what everyone leaves for others to do will never get done.

CLIENTS OR STUDENTS?

In my view, one of the most important challenges student unions face is to mobilize the proverbial average student to engage in the lives of their institutions. In public debate, one often hears about students as clients. The assumption seems to be that clients who pay for a service have stronger rights to complain about a service paid for and not quite delivered.

Firstly, it is difficult to accept that clients have stronger rights to express criticism than members of a community. The point of democracy is precisely the opposite: the weight of your vote and the strength of your voice are independent of the size of your purse.

Secondly, however, what seems like an innocent semantic shift betrays fundamentally different realities. Clients are interested only in the end product that they buy, and this may be consistent with the »outcomes orientation« or »results based budgeting« dear to the by now not so New Public Management. Clients have no interest in the internal workings of providers. If a provider delivers what clients want at a reasonable price, they will stay. If not, they will move elsewhere. If students are clients, why should they care about our higher education systems and institutions?

This leads to two questions that should by now be easy to answer: Do we want our higher education institutions to be populated by clients who shop around or by students who care enough about our higher education to help improve it? Which of the two are the better guarantee for the quality that all governments and all serious institutions want to assure and improve?

If students are students, however, things are very different. If students are members of the academic community, they have an inherent stake in the well being of their community. This does not mean they will always be happy with their community—blind patriotism is as dangerous within the academic community as it is in other communities. But it does mean that when students see things that need to be improved they will work to improve them and not simply walk away. Clients move on easily, but members

Education, n.
That which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding.
Ambrose Bierce

of a community stay to build their community and emigrate only when there seems to be little hope of repair and much reason to despair. »*Education, n.* That which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding« (Bierce 1983: 105).

In some ways, therefore, the success of European higher education depends on the success of student representation and on the success of student unions as well as of institutional leaders in mobilizing students around a vision of higher education that sees democratic participation as a virtue rather than a chore, that sees it as important not only that students take their exams on time but also that their experience of higher education between entry and exit develop a broad range of competences, build character and develop a commitment to working toward the common good. Perhaps the success of our higher education will also depend on students, institutions and governments alike developing a vision of education akin to the definition given by Ambrose Bierce.

2.5 INTERNATIONALIZATION, DIVERSIFICATION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENTS' GOVERNANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

By Manja Klemenčič, independent researcher in Slovenia, visiting scholar at the Boston College Center for International Higher Education (2010-11)

Globalisation of HE, i.e. the increased global competition for students, faculty and resources, has led to reconsideration of HE governance models and to their reforms in the direction of >new managerialism< (Scott 1995). As Luescher (2010) argues, such governance regimes tend to develop a distinct organisational culture which conceives students as >customers< or >clients< and solicits student participation for the purposes of feedback for improved quality performance. The underlying model of student representation tends to be characterised by a de-politicised student government which concentrates on providing student services that complement the institutional quality agenda. Such models of student participation are common in private, for-profit HEIs. With new managerialism in HE governance they may be entering also the public sector.

Further incentives for the new managerialism come from the increasing and ever more precise demands on HEI's from the >knowledge economy< and society at large. HEIs are facing an explosion in the number of external stakeholders and in the variety of their demands. This raises the question of the interface between higher education and its stakeholders—both the external and the internal constituencies (Jongbloed 2007, p.55): »In particular, how does the university prioritise its different functions and stakeholders and their demands/expectations? What are the functional and structural additions to handle the growing complexity of stakeholders?« Relevant to the present investigation is the specific question: how do these changes affect student participation as such, and students' influence in respect to other stakeholders?

Next, the massification of HE has not only expanded the student body, but also led to an increasingly diverse constituency of student representative organisations. The growing importance of adult and continuing education has increased the share of mature students within the student body. These come with distinct interests and expectations quite different to those of the typical student cohort of 18–24 year olds. The increasing popularity of the web-based programmes too has increased student numbers with virtual students—again a group with distinct expectations and study styles. A diverse student body is welcoming and enriching to the HE community in many ways. In view of student representation, however, diversity poses a challenge: a more fragmented student body with weaker common bonds has more difficulties to come

to consensus on common interests and speak with a united voice. Non-traditional students not only have major obligations outside the academic environment (i.e. work and family), but also tend to have a stronger vocational orientation. Thus, larger share of these students potentially adds to the de-politicisation of the student body and its representative organisations.

Given these trends and underlying reforms in European HE, a quest for further reflection on student participation as ‘an aspect of the broader area of university governance’ (Bergan 2004, p. 27) is needed as much by academics—for the purpose of improving our understanding of the much neglected area of student unionism—as it is by student unions themselves for purposes of strengthening the student movement. The proposed contribution thus discusses what are the implications of these global trends on student unionism and raise questions as to how student unions could/should respond to these challenges in terms of their policies and practices.

Full article can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/site/studentgovernanceineurope/>




3 STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN ACTION: CASE STUDIES

3.1 POLICY MAKING AND POLICY WORK IN THE STUDENT UNION

For student unions to represent stakeholders on any level (from the institution to the international level) it is paramount to have policies supporting the argumentation and campaigns of the student union. Policies are usually built up out of research and dialogue and aim at capturing the opinion of the students that the union is representing in a consensual document. These documents can be used for informing and advocacy purposes, and serve as a solid basis for student representation.

FINLAND—SUOMEN YLIOPIPPILASKUNTIEN LIITTO (SYL)

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 The National Union of the University Students in Finland (later SYL) reforms its policy paper every four years, about a year and a half before the elections for the Finnish parliament. The paper is approved at the Board Meeting but before that goes under many phases of evaluation. The Executive Committee in SYL makes the first draft and the Student Unions can comment on it. After the first evaluation tour EC makes its second version which will be to the Student Unions. The second draft is under discussion at the BM, and the delegates can make changes of it. The policy paper can be changed at every BM if it's needed, but it's rather minor changes we make to it during the four year period.

The BM approves a plan of work for the coming year. It's done quite the same way as the policy paper but it's more detailed and gives the EC the framework for the coming year.



The EC makes a more concrete version of it in the beginning of their year and defines there the real actions they're going to do in order to achieve the goals the BM has given to the EC. The EC reports about the projects to the Student Unions 2 to 4 times a year officially and present their work also at the meetings etc. they have with the Student Unions during the year. Both the policy paper and the plan of work are also linked to SYL's websites so everyone can find them there. Although the process of making these documents is rather important both to the Student Unions and SYL, the most concrete benefit is that they reform a framework to the actual work we do in SYL. A plan of work is only a *plan*—most of the work in achieving our goals is made after the documents are approved by the BM.

3.2 RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING

The key benefit of evidence-based policymaking is that the policies of the students' union truly reflect the context in which they are used and the causes on which they are built. Evidence-based policy making stands opposed to quick, shallow and volatile policy-writing, without research, evidence gathering or consultation. Grounding the policy paper with concrete data can also help for the advocacy work and the credibility of the argumentation when the policies are being defended in a later stage.

FINLAND—SUOMEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULUOPISELIJAKUNTIEN LIITTO (SAMOK)

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For SAMOK, research and evidence based policy making is an essential tool for supporting the policy and advocacy work on the interests of students and students in Universities of Applied Sciences in particular. For this purpose, SAMOK has two options at its disposal: to use the services provided by Otus, the research foundation of student unions in Finland, or to conduct the study by itself.

Otus is a private foundation established in 1989. It employs 4 researches and an executive director of the foundation. The board of Otus consists of representatives from four national student organisations. Represented organisations are National Union of University Students in Finland (SYL), Finlands svenska skolundomsförbund (FSS), Suomen Kauppaopiskelijain Liitto Ry (SKOL) and Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (SAMOK). The board decides on the research projects to be conducted, however with significant contribution from the executive director.

The research provides information on different topical questions on higher education and on the students' economical, cultural and social status and their way of life. Otus provides independent, professional research in co-operation with national student organisations and other partners. The student unions propose study projects on topical themes for Otus to explore. Otus projects are partly funded by the student unions and Otus also receives project assistance from the Ministry of Education and Culture.

A currently published study conducted by Otus is *Students' University of Applied Sciences* (2011). The study addresses specific questions on the UAS sector and topical themes such as the period between secondary and higher education, recognition of

prior learning, study skills, among others. The study aimed at producing information that would pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of UASS from the viewpoint of the students. The application of this study is still underway—it is, however, clear that the study will provide important feedback for the policy making of SAMOK.

In addition, SAMOK conducts research on its own occasionally. The funding for these is, by and large, provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the form of project assistance. An example of such a study by SAMOK is from 2007. SAMOK conducted a study looking into the status of international degree students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. The purpose of the study was to provide SAMOK and its local unions concrete tools for promoting and advancing the interests of international degree students in Finland. The study explores, among others, experiences of the international degree students and their life in Finland, as well as their reasons for choosing Finland as a destination for their studies.

The study was conducted as a survey research project under the title >Internationalized Student Union< over the years 2006 and 2007. The goal of the study was to explore how the international students felt about their studies in Universities of Applied Sciences and their life in Finland in general. The questions posed addressed such questions as:

- ◊ What did the international degree students think about the program they are currently enrolled in and about the quality of education?
- ◊ What did international degree students expect from the Universities of Applied Sciences and from the local student unions?
- ◊ How did they students feel about possible tuition fees?

The practical goal of the research was to introduce effective methods to SAMOK and the local student unions in order to help improve the international degree students' status and integration in the higher education institutions and higher education community. Another goal of the research was to encourage the international degree students to take an active part in the advocacy work and the activities of the student unions.


The study was published in print. The publication event of the study was combined with a seminar on the same topic and it included high prestige speakers such as the Minister of Migration and European Affairs and Director General for the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO). Due to the high profile speakers, the publication received fair media exposure. The study was distributed to the different stakeholders

when meeting with them, and the study was also mailed to all members of the parliament.

The results of the study were used actively in SAMOK advocacy work. The study revealed, for example, that international students chose Finland as a study destination not only because the quality of education was felt to be good but in great deal because the education was tuition free. For instance, while campaigning for tuition free education, having factual, research-backed information on the international degree students' attitudes towards tuition fees provided excellent back-up to the demands of the student unions to keep tuition fees at bay. Most of the students taking part in the study felt that finding a job in Finland after graduation was tough due to lack of Finnish skills. As a result, SAMOK has increased its efforts in lobbying for more Finnish language tuition in English degree programs to ensure an easier job market access for graduating international students. While the study itself mostly re-confirmed the gut instincts that SAMOK already had on the life and challenges of the international students in Finland, it has proved to be a convincing and working tool in advocacy work.

FINLAND—SUOMEN YLIOPIPPILASKUNTIEN LIITTO (SYL)

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 Evidence-based policy making: SYL continuously monitors new research, statistics or other data concerning students and higher education. Monitoring is mainly based on media sources and the massive amount of meetings that SYL board and secretariat members attend. For example, SYL secretaries are members of numerous governmental bodies, both temporary and permanent ones, that are great places to meet people and gather information about new relevant data. SYL also uses its alumni, friendly experts and/or partners to collect current data to support its operations.

SYL often uses citations or reference to existing research in its public statements. But it's a good way to get attention to student facts by making new, fresh conclusions of data that has previously been collected by someone else. A good case example of this was the publication of Student Research 2010, that was conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. SYL published a way more aggressive fact sheet than the Ministry, and not surprisingly, it was SYL's statement »A student has less than 13 euros per day« that headlined next day's news, not the ministry's.

Research: We have a good situation in Finland as we have a private foundation Otus that is dedicated mainly to research concerning students' issues. Otus was established in 1989 by Ylioppilaspalvelu which was a daughter organisation of SYL. There is a representation of four national student organisations in the board of Otus. Representing organisations are SYL, Finlands svenska skolundomsförbund (FSS), Suomen Kauppaopiskelijain Liitto Ry (SKOL) and Union of Students in Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences—SAMOK.

The purpose of Otus is to practice, promote and support research and publication concerning higher education and the students' economical, cultural and social status and their way of life. Otus pursues independent research in co-operation with national student organisations, the Finnish ministry of education and other partners. Otus' purpose is to represent and study the student point of view in the higher education and student research. Otus also admits small grants to doctors' and masters' thesis concerning higher education, studying and students in general. Besides partnership with Otus, SYL does some minor research projects (surveys etc.) through the local student unions, whenever needed.

- ◉ Training and capacity building in the student union
- ◉ Attractiveness and visibility of the students' union and recruitment of members

National union of university students in Finland (SYL) maintains close relationships to all Finnish student unions. SYL organises a number of meetings with the student union representatives. Usually the meetings are divided into sectoral meetings during the year. In those meetings SYL reports what has been going on in the National union and introduces new topics to the discussions in different sectors.

The main sectors such as the academic affairs, social affairs, development cooperation and international affairs hold at least two meetings per year. There's also from two to four meetings organised just for the Chairs of the boards of the student unions. Usually there is also at least one meeting for the smaller sectors such as cultural affairs, PR & communications and financial affairs. The main reasons for organising these meetings are to keep student unions updated on what's going on in SYL and keep all the student unions informed. One of the reasons is also just to get people together and get to know everyone. This way the student unions can build their own network of representatives who can contact each other and exchange information without SYL. These meetings also provide information for SYL. It's very important for SYL to be up-to-date with the topics student unions in Finland are working with.

Meetings are usually open not just for the members or chairs of the boards, but also for the chairs of the subcommittees. This way SYL introduces its organisation and people to a larger number of student union representatives.

Members of the board in SYL also work as a godfather or a godmother for one or more student unions. This means that a member of the board is responsible to keep contact with his own »god-student unions« and meets them several times during the year. This can mean an official meeting or some kind of leisure activity.

ESTONIA—EESTI ÜLIÕPILASKONDADE LIIT (EÜL)

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In order to make and develop any kind of student-related policies on any levels one must have a comprehensive overview about students and student-life. When Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit (EÜL) was created in 1991, Estonia had just regained its independence and policy-making in higher education (HE) was only making its first baby-steps. As time went by more and more people started talking about evidence-based policy making and the need for research in order to develop or re-evaluate the current structures. But even in the beginning of 2000s politicians were not interested in collecting any data about student-life, instead students themselves were the ones that felt the urging need for research and in 2003 EÜL developed and carried out its first survey on the socio-economic conditions of student-life in Estonia. Funding was applied and provided by different programs and even from the Ministry of Education and Research itself and the data was gathered and analysed with the knowledge of EÜLs workers and members. The main topics of this study dealt with access to higher education, family background, financial situation, working alongside studies, choosing HE institutions (HEI) and study field, study process, living situation, satisfaction with the infrastructure of HEIs and the future plans of students.

Following the success of this study and having more knowledge and competence in doing good quality research, another survey was done in 2005 and this time EÜL managed to make it a part of a huge HE project in Estonia funded by ESF. The survey was carried out with the help and input of different experts and stakeholders and the results were exploited and disseminated on a much broader scale than before. At the same time an international comparative study on socio-economic conditions of student life called EUROSTUDENT was carried out on the European level and our ministry was not interested in participating in it. But as EÜL understood the importance of tak-

ing part in that survey—to have the data about Estonian student-life put next to the data from different countries and to compare how different HE systems effect students and their conditions—EÜL made the initiative to become an official partner of EUROSTUDENT and sent all the data collected to be analysed and compared by the experts of this project. As that kind of initiative was unique on the European level (usually ministries of education collect data and participate in EUROSTUDENT)—the project team asked EÜL to become a member of the consortium—a body responsible for managing and carrying out the whole project. As other members of this were highly recognized research institutions—it was and still is a great honour and acknowledgment to EÜL being credited for its active participation in research in order to push for more evidence-based policy making in the Estonian HE area.

A third survey was carried out in 2008 and this time we wanted to move things even more forward—so in cooperation with one research company we applied for a project to use the data we had in a research about equitable access to HE in Estonia—to define underrepresented groups and find out if our student body reflected the diversity of our populations. It is a unique initiative as there was no data collected about the social dimension of HE in Estonia before.

The research is a big success as the results of it are highly accepted and used by the ministry, HEIS, politicians, students, researchers, other stakeholders and media. The research also included policy recommendations and principles of collecting and monitoring indicators about access to HE in Estonia—so far these have been well accepted by the stakeholders.

In 2010, after years of successful work and lobby in this field by EÜL, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research finally recognized the need for collecting data about social and economic conditions of student life and taking part in international comparative studies.

So in 2010 they carried out (with the input from EÜL) and official national survey and we are excited to see the results of this study in the summer of 2011.

3.3 EQUITY POLICY MAINSTREAMING IN STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION

The level of inclusiveness of the union becomes even more crucial, when knowing that the student body is diversifying more and more because of internationalisation, widening participation and lifelong learning strategies. In order for students' union to become more responsive to actual needs, to act as a catalyst for social change in society, equity policies should be developed and mainstreamed.

SERBIA—STUDENSKA UNIJA SRBIJE (SUS)

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As an important and influential participant in decision-making process of a country, student's union mirrors the society which produces it, sharing the same weaknesses and strengths. Underrepresented groups in the society, particularly in higher education, appear to be underrepresented in student's union at the same time. Raising awareness of equity and equality within the union itself leads to recognition of the potential problems within the society, initiating analyses and research based campaigns. To gain and maintain credibility in its work on equity and equality issues, student's union preliminarily has to be sure that its own structures are open and non-discriminatory. Discrimination can be obvious and visible in the organisational structures, but it also can be invisible, more referring to the behaviour of people than to the structure itself. In a fight against discrimination, different steps should be taken, considering analyses of structures, creation of policy and attentiveness to overall behaviour within the organisation.

In 2004, Students' union of Serbia (Studentska unija Srbije, sus) conducted a project on gender equality, with an ambition of strengthening already loose participation of females in the students' movement. According to the research results of various institutions and non-governmental organisations, high percentage of women were not treated equally within the society. This tradition and patriarchy system based challenge of the society was reflecting students' groups as well, showing no gender balance in the academic community. The main goal of the project, strengthening female participation in the students' movements hence in the whole society, was reached by variety of methods such as trainings, workshops and campaigns on raising women's participation and influence in decision-making processes.



The expected and reached outcome was creation of a female students leaders' team within the structures of SUS, that would have all necessary skills and competences for further work in the equality issues and policy making.

The project was divided into two main parts. The first part consisted of one workshop, two trainings and a round-table event. The five-day workshop on basics of gender equality and two skill trainings educated and strengthened a group of twenty female student activists. Core participants in the educational part of the project, organised in January, February and March 2004 were 20 female student activists from Niš, Novi Sad, Kragujevac and Belgrade Universities. The second part was a campaign for promotion of gender equality and active female participation. As a part of the campaign preparations a mini survey of students' opinions and attitudes was conducted.

The gender equality team was active during the year of 2005. Campaign was echoing and aimed strengthening of the female participation was successfully increasing. It even resulted in making a model of the Law on gender equality in 2006. Unfortunately, due to the political situation in the country, procrastination of the law passing was happening in the next three years, and the Law was passed only in 2009.

As the equity and gender equality within SUS were being successfully established and assured by regulations, the implementation artefacts of the policy statement, discrimination of underrepresented groups in the higher education society was occurring.

Recognizing challenges and defining sensitive groups, SUS was taking the first steps in the new project »Equally important«. Project is referring to the equal accessibility to higher education for students with disabilities, roma students and ethnic minority students. Project consists of three phases. Under the name of »Are we familiar with each others' needs?«, the first phase of the project will be happening in the first half of the year 2011. A group of 20 students from the mapped groups, together with members of SUS, will be having a set of discussions followed by the round table. In addition, after getting familiar with each other, students will be attending language courses together, beginning in May 2011. This will be neutral area, from their own fields of studying, in order to, at the most efficient way, get awareness of studying under the same circumstances. This model, in the form of a survey, will be used for a campaign at all universities in Serbia, in the last steps of the project. After inclusive language courses are finished, a working group for conducting a research will be formed. The working group will be equally consisted of representatives from all above mentioned groups. The second phase »Are we indeed equally important?« will be conducted in autumn 2011. The research will result in a survey, which will be published and distributed to all universities in Serbia. The third phase »Sustainable equity and equality« will bring out new policy paper and a strategy for equal assessment to higher education in Serbia, and in student participation as well. Under the frame of the last phase, a national conference will be conducted at the end of the year 2011. Expected outcomes are raised participation of sensitive groups in higher education, as well as in the student movement, and creation of the committee within SUS, that will include student representatives from the mapped underrepresented groups.

SUS puts high expectations on the project »Equally important« and hopes for the non-discriminatory and more tolerant academia.

3.4 ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNING IN THE STUDENT UNION

Representation and safeguarding of students' rights are the core missions of a student union. However, the means to fulfill it can differ, depending on the situation, the desired impact and the desire of the students the union is representing. Different approaches that member unions use in order to make the students' voice heard are to be uncovered in this part.

BULGARIA—UNION OF BULGARIAN STUDENTS (UBS)

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Advocacy of the students' rights is not only the most important duty of the students union within every democratically organised education system but a driver of positive change in the entire society. It can be elaborated a lot on the importance that advocacy and campaigning have in our work, respectively in the work of every students' union. However we consider that for the purpose of being more concrete, it will be far more useful to be given a practical example for our working methods' outcome.

One of the most successful campaigns of UBS was the one against a change in a decree of the Council of Ministers that proposed decrease in the subsidy for public transportation for the students.

This would have brought to 70%-increase of the transportation costs of the students.

Therefore UBS organised a campaign that had two main phases. The first phase was the popularization of the measure and the second one was- organisation of protests and negotiations with the Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Finances and the Ministry of transport. Negotiations with the local authorities were launched as well.

During the first phase of the campaign the campaign was popularized through the local committees of UBS with releasing of a statement, information brochures, lecture shouts and meetings with the students.

The protest took place in all of the biggest university cities of Bulgaria—Sofia, Varna and Plovdiv. Peaceful protesting marches and blocking of main crossroads were organised.

For the purpose of visibility we started to use actively all our media channels from the very beginning. We managed to involve all of the main national media to cover the campaign.

Of course the interest in UBS's actions raised after the active protest actions took place in the second phase of the campaign.

As a result from the protest actions, it was meet an agreement with the Ministry of Finances for a minimum increase of the price of the transportation cards. This brought to only 10% increase in the total transportation costs of the students per month. This campaign took place in 2001 and it is the most recent example for students' protests in Bulgaria. Since then there has not been any attempts for changes of the above mentioned decree of the Council of Ministers. Therefore we consider it's a good example for the long lasting (10 years so far, in this particular case) effect one well-organised campaign can have.

3.5 PROMOTING MOBILITY AND INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Mobility has been a driving force for the creation of the EHEA and one can hardly question the added value. During the past years intercultural communication has gained importance: how to learn from students that went to study abroad, and how to receive international students in the institution and in the organisation. This part seeks to explore the ways how student unions can promote learning mobility and create an inclusive environment for incoming students.

BELGIUM—VLAAMSE VERENIGING VAN STUDENTEN (VVS)

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In the academic year of 2010–11 the national union of students from Flanders (Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten—vvs) organised a series of activities for the promotion of international student mobility.

By doing these initiatives vvs tried to actively contribute to the issues involving international student mobility and to raise awareness around problems and policy. These actions were done in the background of the Flemish Mobility Plan that was written at the same time by the Flemish minister of Education. The mobility awards were part of an integrated project that consisted of 2 parts:

The website »Student in Europe«

This website (<http://www.studentineuropa.eu>) was an initiative with several goals. Firstly to promote international mobility and to inform students about experiences with international mobility. Secondly the website served as a gathering place for actual facts and news concerning international student mobility. Different scholarships, bursaries and types of international mobility were added as an additional chapter. Most importantly, international experiences from students of different institutions were presented in a story format, with real experiences, both good and bad. Special dedication went to gathering experiences outside the traditional ERASMUS network, but not excluding this kind of mobility. And finally a complaint box was installed for students to ventilate frustrations or about the international mobility.

For this project, vvs received grateful financial support from the Department of Education and Training of the Flemish Community. With it, the development of the website and maintenance was carried out by project employees. Important was that these extra employees could actively search for stories and improve the website, so the

project could be done complementary to the regular activities of vvs. Of course, the website was launched with an appropriate press release and promotion towards the different international offices of the higher education institutions. We received a lot of positive feedback for this initiative and received good support from the institutions.

The mobility awards

On the 24th of February 2011 the Mobility Awards were organised. These awards were meant to award people who have committed themselves greatly for international student mobility. Another goal of the event was to raise awareness for the student mobility issues and the work that still has to be put into the international student mobility.

The mobility awards were given to 4 categories: students, organisations, teachers and higher education institutions. A lifetime achievement award was also handed out. Guests on the evening included representatives from different institutions, rectors, representatives from the Department of Education and of course a lot of students.

The people who were given these awards, highly appreciated the award and considered it a reward for their hard work. Afterwards, several higher education institutions expressed the will for a next edition with an even larger scope and promotion, so we believe we are set for a fantastic new tradition.

SLOVENIA—STUDENSKA ORGANIZACIJA SLOVENIJE (SSU)

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Recently made survey by International Office (IO), shows that international mobility among Slovenian students is pointing to not promising results with reaching no more than just 5% of all students.

Greater percentage of student which were internationally active (international study exchanges, internships, other international formal and informal events) were noted at social science studies. Opposite results (quite smaller percentage of international mobility) were noted at students of engineering sciences.

Difference in mobility between those two groups of students shows a informational gap, which is leading to international student inactivity. There could be several reasons for current situation, from indifference of Erasmus student coordinator at faculty, to student's disinterest.

Bright spot of students international mobility was for sure shown by international students organisations, gathered under umbrella organisation KOMISP (association of 22 student international organisations in Ljubljana). Each year KOMISP with its international mobility program activates and provides more than 1200 people which is yearly exceeding total amount of all study exchanges (Erasmus study exchange program) at University of Ljubljana. Currently, KOMISP is successfully cooperating with IFISO (Informal Forum of International Student Organizations) which have identical purpose and roll on different international areas.

With intention to meet and satisfied goals of European guidelines in international mobility program (20-20-20) we decided to give a big push to projects, that would encourage Slovenian students to go abroad and improve today's mobility. The substantive projects inside IO are driving force among whole crew, which is manifested among different international areas and spheres. Important roll does not have only IO team, but also as mentioned association KOMISP with its 22 International Students Organizations (such as AEGEE, AIESEC, BEST, EESTEC, IAESTE, etc) which are contributing with their experiences at different international activities to successful projects implementation. Some of the notable projects which were organised during last years are further detailed described.

Tempted To Go Abroad?

Project's purpose is promotion of international mobility among Slovenian students to encourage them at activism and participation at international educational area. Organized educational fair was offering information about numerous international (European and World-wide) programs and student organisations via bilateral agreements, Erasmus study exchange, Erasmus Mundus program, Erasmus Internships, Erasmus Life Learning Program, Leonardo da Vinci internship program or any other programs powered by local international students associations such as AIESEC, IAESTE, BEST, EESTEC, AEGEE, etc.

Month of International Ideas (MMI)

At first, project was connecting foreign and local students with events like International dinners where traditional drinks, food and habits were presented. Also International parties and Impro league were organised as a part of a project. Last year's Month of International Ideas was much more substantive oriented. We were promoting international mobility and resistance against discrimination trough culture, exhibitions, sports, international dinners and thematic parties with more than 30 events organised.



Study visits:

Together with many Universities and active student organisations, Study visits were organised with purpose to expand and enrich international student educational sphere of our guests. Many colleagues were coming from South Eastern Europe with wish to obtain theoretical and practical knowledge at creating or restructuring their local student organisation.

During past years we were hosting colleagues from Student Union of Macedonia—Skopje, Student Union of city of Belgrade, Novi Sad and many more.

Student rector conference of South Eastern Europe (2010)

Project was organised in April 2010 with more than 100 international participants from 7 countries of South Eastern Europe. Main conference topic was promotion of mobility, quality of European high educational area, social and informal position of students and student rights in South Eastern Europe

Conference Western Balkans Meet EU: Getting EUropean Identity (2009)

Conference was organised between 7.5.–12.5.2009, with more than 50 participants from Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and other countries of former Yugoslavia. Main topics of event were presentations of European Union and options which are available to students at the process of convergence and second one, international

youth cooperation. Participants were actively participating even before the event with writing essays about EU and presentations of their home countries.

Public call for financing international student associations (public tender):

Twice per year a public call (tender) is organised for support of international student organisations in Ljubljana region. First call provides financial resources for projects and as well for legislative expenses (congresses), while second call provides resources for projects only. Every year there are more than 60 projects approved with more than 100.000€ divided among international organisations.

Besides regular projects, also bigger events were supported, like International World Congress of students of IPSF, architecture and politology. All public call documentation and contracts are kept in archive of Student Organisation of University of Ljubljana.

International students rights activism

Activism at supporting student colleagues in Graz and Zagreb for preservation of their student rights.

SCOTLAND—NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS SCOTLAND (NUS)

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The Student Mobility aspect of the Students Without Borders project focused on increasing opportunities for students and academics to gain overseas experience. The project employs a varied approach including international festivals, creation and distribution of promotional materials, study visits, trips and job shadowing.

Festivals

In partnership with the Scottish European Education Trust events have been held to promote student mobility in terms of working and studying in Europe. The festivals have included sessions from employers and talks by fellow students as well as fun quizzes and networking lunches for home and international students.

Inverness College will see the very first festivals promoting study and work abroad opportunities at a college as part of the project. This will give NUS Scotland, SEET and Inverness College Students' Association an opportunity to learn how international learning is promoted and supported in colleges in Scotland.

Promotion of Study Abroad

In addition to a re-print of the popular *Wish You Were There* booklet, NUS Scotland has also produced a range of postcards for use by student unions to promote study abroad. These have been distributed at freshers' fairs beginning promotion of study abroad at an earlier stage in the student experience. They have also been used for a Study Abroad event organised by the International Office of Glasgow Caledonian University in cooperation with their ERASMUS society, and for a >Make the Most of Your Time at University< event run by Strathclyde Student Union.

Study Visits and Trips

Throughout the last year NUS Scotland has supported and promoted opportunities for Scottish student representatives to attend ESU events and international conferences. Over the last year representatives attended Equalities training in Lithuania, Student Centered Learning training in Bratislava, ESU Quality Pool training in Strasbourg, ESU Board Meetings in Leuven and Tel Aviv, Launch of the European Higher Education Area in Budapest and Vienna; Quality Enhancement Conference in Australia; Congress of FAGE (one of the French National Student Unions) and the DAAD Conference on Types of Student Mobility.

Attendance at these events allowed students to develop their confidence and interest in international study and to develop international networks. It also allowed the constructive dissemination of the information at these events to a greater number of Scottish Students' Associations than in any previous years.

Job shadowing visits for four student officers to Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands and Finland are due to take place over the coming year. Funding for this trip has been secured through the MEPS discretionary fund.

Students Without Borders work and international student issues are now included in the core work of NUS Scotland. When events, promotion or training is delivered, workshops on international student issues and student mobility are included and promotional material is distributed.

3.6 TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE STUDENT UNION

Achieving a formal recognition as an equal stakeholder in higher education is not enough. It is inherent to student representation that student unions have a high turnover and need to train the future student representatives over and over again, while continuing to build the capacity of the student union in the longer run. Creating an inclusive, need-based training system, which empowers better policy development and advocacy is to be further discussed here.

SCOTLAND—STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY SCOTLAND (SPARQS)

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This is a joint project between NUS Scotland and Sparqs (Student Participation in Quality Scotland) to develop a training and support package on international student issues for Students’ Associations that would give them the skills, knowledge and resources to improve services and increase engagement.

The topics, skills and knowledge required for the training pack were identified through a development day held with staff and international student officers from Scottish Students’ Associations. Though a series of workshop based activities we identified the issues, prioritised those which had the most impact on international students and then identified the skills and knowledge that the training package would have to deliver.

Due to the broad nature of the topic and limited resources and time of officers and staff it was decided to create a modular training package of four two hour sessions. This would allow the training to be delivered in one day or over a series of separate occasions. Each module focuses on the identified priority areas and all are designed so that they can be delivered as stand alone modules.

Module 1: Introduction and General Information

This module can be tailored to each institution giving an overview of their international student population and responsible staff members. It provides an understanding of the wider international context of social mobility and the Bologna process. It identifies the broad issues that have an impact on international students.

Module 2: The Student Lifecycle

This places issues for international students in context exploring the student lifecycle from pre-entry to exit. Case studies identify issues arising at each point in the journey and highlight cultural, social and academic issues. The module ends with a planning exercise focussing on joint working between association and institution.

Module 3: Plagiarism

This module focuses on one of the most prominent issues for international students, plagiarism. It discusses why this is the case and what can be done to support international students who may experience claims of plagiarism.

Module 4: Engaging International Students in Quality Processes

This module provides a context for the valuable role of international students if they are effectively involved in quality enhancement processes. It explores this at an institutional, national and international level.

Staff and Student Officers are to be trained in how to deliver these modules within their own association and/or institution and each Students' Association will receive a training pack and supporting materials. The training pack will form part of the Supporting International Students Toolkit due to be released late 2011.

NETHERLANDS—LANDELIJKE STUDENTEN VAKBOND (LSVB)

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Within the LSVb (the Dutch national union of students) training had always been organised on an ad hoc basis. As time progressed and the LSVb matured certain members of its organisation became increasingly knowledgeable about certain topics and gained invaluable experience on the day to day practice of managing student union affairs. Many of these older members eventually even became professionally involved in subjects as education policy, quality assurance, media in the public sector, universities and law practice.

This knowledge and experience was called upon on an ad hoc basis whenever a local union or student council perceived a lack of knowledge or skill. However since this knowledge was often concentrated with a relatively small number of people, they soon became overburdened with requests to provide training or give a presentation. Furthermore the strong decentralization meant not everybody that could benefit from such training actually knew how to find these experienced members within the organisation.

At the increasing popularity of these trainings made the informal construction became increasingly untenable.

This strategy proved highly successful and in 2009 the pool had grown into a professional organisation of its own. It was given the name »Trainingen op Maat« (after this: TOM), which translates as »made to measure training«. A website was built soon after and brochures were designed to improve external communication.

In 2007 a small group of LSVb members decided to solve these problems and conceived a training pool to share the workload. The members soon after started to draft an inventory of the skills and knowledge that were available amongst its trainers and supply this to affiliate organisations.

Organizing training

What distinguishes TOM is the demand oriented approach. Like other training bureau's it lists general areas of competence relevant to student union operations. However TOM does not standardize trainings on these areas of competence. Instead whenever a request is made from an affiliate organisation this request is processed centrally by the TOM training coordinator. The coordinator matches the request with a trainer knowledgeable on the topic. The demanding party files a short questionnaire with the trainer.

The trainer proceeds to assess the needs of the organisation and specifically asks for problems and questions regarding the subject of the training. Then the level of knowledge and/or skill currently in place at the organisation is evaluated and prepares and schedules »made to measure« training.

The benefits of this system are clear. The LSVb and TOM in essence have an almost infinite variety of trainings available to its members, ranging in level of knowledge or skill and subject matter. This flexibility is coupled with a formalized process for requesting trainings ensures trainers are allocated efficiently as well as effectively.

To prevent excessive demand and cover most of the operating expenses TOM asks its participants for a contribution. However to ensure access this contribution varies with the budget of the participating organisation and is determined bona fide. This is called >Betaling op Maat< or the pay to measure system. The LSVb is financially responsible the TOM budget, however TOM breaks even on a year to year basis and is budget neutral for the LSVb aside from the salary of the coordinator.

Cultivating knowledge

As people get older they leave TOM to pursue other things in life. This turnover needs to be managed in order to prevent valuable information flowing out of the organisation. TOM puts out vacancies each year to keep the number of trainers at a certain level (about thirty). The LSVb is fortunate to have an extensive applicant pool of alumni and experienced members to draw its trainers from. The organisational culture is such that they realize the importance of sharing knowledge to ensure continuity of the LSVb. It is important to mention that trainers provide their services without financial compensation, aside the occasional token of appreciation of course.

Although there is a formal selection process in place, in practice all applicants are well known in the organisation for their experience and generally speaking all applicants are accepted into TOM. The new trainers follow a »Train-the-Trainer« program. In it the trainers are taught didactically skills and learn about their responsibilities and the organisation. Only after completion the applicants can start providing trainings to external organisations, usually teamed up with an experienced trainer.

Internally trainers are stimulated to work on their knowledge and skills together with more experienced trainers. These courses take place on a one-on-one basis and can last for up to four months. TOM also organises several internal training days during the course of the year. In these sessions TOM trainers delve deeper into a specific topic so that trainers become competent in more than one area. It is vital to provide ample opportunity for trainers with different fields of expertise to share in order to widen their knowledge and keep it up to date. The inflow of external knowledge is equally important and that is why these sessions for trainers are taught by professionals outside the organisation itself.

Trainers are given continuous feedback on their performance by senior trainers as well as the participants of the trainings they have provided themselves.

Through development of its trainers TOM and the LSVb provide quality education to affiliate organisations as well as provide an incentive to would-be education pundits to join.

The importance of capacity building

During the course of setting up TOM and providing a flexible, but formal, training regime the LSVB has become much more aware of the importance of capacity building. The work student organisations do consists of skills and knowledge that are neither self-evident nor available by definition. These capacities need to be built so that new people are not forced to reinvent the wheel over and over.

Without these capacities people are excluded from participating and expressing a well informed opinion. Skills and knowledge need to be build and taught within an organisation to retain it within an organisation, rather than relying on the accidental interests of individuals. As in education people need to be taught in order to participate and gain confidence about themselves and the subject they care about. One cannot simply assume that people will become physicists, teachers or engineers on their own. Obviously this applies equally to student representation.

BELGIUM—VLAAMSE VERENIGING VAN STUDENTEN (VVS)

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The Landelijke Studenten Vakbond (LSVB) has shown how a great system of capacity building can work in a national union of students (NUS). However, most student unions probably know how they would want a pool of trainers, but going from theory to practice, is often very difficult.

This story shows in practice how a NUS can start up a capacity building system from scratch.

Right now, we have, on average, 3 trainings per month. Those trainings are passively promoted amongst the local students' union. They are made to measure and given by board members or the staff responsible for training, that way they can be kept free of charge. The content of training varies, some are on an ad hoc basis—mainly the content-related issues—and some are ready made, such as motivational training.

For VVS, the national union of students from Flanders, it is important to make the distinction between the training system as it already exists and the training system we are working to create.

vvs is currently on its way to the second stage of training. This process started in 2009, when a half full time equivalent employee was hired with certain specific tasks. The goals of this employee were to enhance student participation of our member unions and also »exploring new ground« for potential participation of unions. On the more practical side, it was necessary to organise and give training sessions after working out different trainings.

To further advance things, vvs made a study visit to the colleagues of LSVb in the beginning of October 2010. One of the goals was to explore the »Trainingen op Maat« or TOM-system, both how it works and how it was started up. It was especially important to know what means were necessary for LSVb to manage so much in so little time. This study visit was very valuable for sharing good practices, and ever since there has been a frequent exchange of information.

vvs decided that, in order to create their own training system, two things were most important. Firstly it was necessary to create demand by promoting the training system and organising more trainings. Because form follows function, vvs also decided to focus on having more trainers. By offering volunteers background knowledge and actually »training the trainers«, more people would be able to give trainings than just the staff and the board members.

To ensure the practical feasibility, vvs started by addressing, on an ad hoc basis, »high potentials«, asking them to become trainers under the lead of the responsible Board Member and the earlier mentioned staff member. In april 2011, vvs will organise its first »training for trainers«. A professional trainer will provide training for the potential trainers on this day, giving important background on trainings and providing hands on experience. Also a session is organised where the focus will lie on sharing good practices and giving a quick overview of experiences with the previous trainings vvs has organised. For example what techniques worked to open up a difficult group of people on a training. There will also be room for a more practical approach, where potential trainers discuss what part vvs can play in the support of these trainers and what should be expected of these trainers. vvs fully intends to have more of these »trainings for trainers«, to ensure the continuity of the training program. A second benefit is to ensure the quality of the trainings. By making these trainings obligatory and certifying the new trainers, vvs hopes to make sure that only the motivated people attend these trainings. Trainers will also be evaluated after giving a training with the help of the staff, both on an individual basis and team based (intervisions as done by LSVb).

In order to create a »market« for these trainings, vvs has prepared a promotional brochure aimed at the higher education institutions, the student-coaches and the student

unions, both on institutional and faculty level. This brochure will also be integrated into the website. When this is done, vvs will organise a promotion campaign, to further familiarize the Flemish students (representatives) with the training program. The idea would be to keep these trainings very low cost at first, and then later evaluate the price according to costs and possible abuse.

vvs estimates that the total cost for the training, version two, will consist of the part time staff member, the brochure and the website, the organised training days and the promotion of the training system. This gives a minimum cost in setting up a self-sustaining system .

3.7 STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

ROMANIA—QUALITY ASSURANCE EXPERTS' POOL (ANOSR)

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ANOSR's journey in QA along 5 years.



It's probably not a surprise to say that the Romanian Higher Education system has undergone a series of wide changes on all levels in the last decade. One of the spheres of Higher Education that has been given a lot of attention is Quality Assurance.

Since the establishment of ARACIS—the national Quality Assurance body—in 2005, ANOSR has seized the moment and continuously engaged into policy making and acting in the field of quality assurance, both at national level and institutional level.

Through constant negotiation with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and the Ministry of Education, ANOSR has managed to impose the students' well deserved position as partners in Higher Education. Regarding legislation, with focus on QA, the new National Education Law no. 18/10.1.2011 clearly states under article 194, alignment (4), chapter IX regarding Quality Assurance, that students are partners with full rights in quality assurance. Having legal legitimacy is definitely one of the milestones for student engagement in quality assurance, and so, we consider that this should be of primary concern for all the NUSES that want to consolidate their standing point at national level.

A firm relationship with the QAA based on mutual trust and respect is a key element in order to pose students as partners in QA. Thus, constant cooperation with ARACIS is a part of ANOSR policy with regard to QA and hence active involvement in the QAAS' activities (inclusion in the ARACIS Council, constant feedback and initiatives regarding QA policies etc.) is regarded as a must.

Investment and efforts directed in forming student experts is again of great importance. 2007 was the year of establishment of a national pool of student experts. ANOSR is responsible for preparing content and conducting training for students that want to engage in QA. Having full ownership of its student pool, ANOSR is responsible for nominating students for the different reviews carried out by ARACIS.

Since we believe that the interest and enthusiasm for QA needs to be fostered, ANOSR involves its student experts in various trainings and scientific events on QA. For instance, ANOSR has conducted a study among the QA pool with regard to students performance, experience and feedback of their experiences as members of review panels. Not only that we used this as a feedback instrument in order to improve our work with the Pool, but also we disseminated the results in different events, like the Institutional Strategic Quality Management Conference organised by ARACIS. Engaging students in scientific writing (student experts have published several paper in some national publications regarding QA) is also a very good mechanism for boosting student engagement and expertise in QA.


On the institutional level, ANOSR sends students to especially designed trainings for internal QA experts and also we offer an online discussion context for the students that are involved in QA at their local level.

Constant efforts need to be put in developing and especially maintaining a functional National Student Experts' Pool, as well as engaging in QA at national level, therefore a coherent internal QA policy needs to be acknowledged by the NUSES.

3.8 PUTTING STUDENTS' RIGHTS CHARTER IN PRACTICE

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»We, the students of Europe, hold these rights to be self-evident.«
Students' rights charter, ESU (2008)

 Students' rights must be respected and ensured to all. As modern higher education is built on democratic values, it is necessary to respect these. According to the European Students' Union students' rights fall into the spectrum of human rights and should therefore be guaranteed by every country and every higher education institution. In reality those rights are however violated and therefore students' rights are a core aspect of student activism because students' rights ensure personal and academic achievement in higher education.

To safeguard these rights, ESU therefore adopted the Students' Rights, with the aim of establishing a collection of students' rights and promoting them on a national level. ESU's vision is that students' rights must be comprehensive and must cover every aspect of the student life. The five parts that try to address all of this are »access to higher education«, »student involvement«, »social aspects of studies«, »academic aspects of studies«, and »right to privacy and access to knowledge and information«. The situation in Europe today shows that there is a real need to strengthen students' rights and to standardize them among the different countries. In fact, no country fully ensures students' rights, whether in their national legislation or in practice. In fact, most countries only ensure students' rights regarding access to education and student involvement. However, even when rights are ensured by the different national legislations on higher education, they are not correctly put into practice.

The Students' Rights Charter has to be seen as a tool for student activism towards a national implementation of respect of students' rights, be it in legislation or in practice.

It is a tool to strengthen students' rights by raising awareness and lobbying, to homogenize regulations at the European level, and to build the capacity of

existing and especially of emerging student movements. To reach more effective use of the tool, ESU has developed explanatory notes to the 35 points of the Charter, but also best and worse practice examples of student's rights implementation from NUSES. The explanatory notes mainly allow every one to have the same understanding on students' rights defended by the Student's Rights Charter. Best and worse practice examples are then again helpful as they give ideas on how to actually implement the rights.

At the same time, bad practice examples justify the need to continue student activism for students' rights in European countries.

Students' rights and the Students' rights charter were on the agenda of the 21st European Student Convention in Budapest in February 2011. A strategy for the follow up process on implementing the Students' Rights Charter has been defined. The National Unions of Students agreed that the best way to implement the charter and communicate on it, is to let each NUS define their strategy to achieve that goal due to their divergent priorities, environments, capacities and needs. Regarding actions that every NUS can take, participants said that translating the Student's Rights Charter and publishing it on NUSes websites are important actions that need to be taken to officially promote it. Finally, the most important recommendation made about the Students' Rights Charter was to share more good and bad practice examples. This will be done via ESU's website where an interactive platform has been created for NUSes to share these examples.

Student's rights are unfortunately still a daily concern. Today, violations persist and student's rights are not fully ensured, let alone integrated or translated into national regulations. The Students' Rights Charter aims to ensure Students' Rights for all students and will hopefully continue to be a strong tool for student activism.

AZERBAIJAN STUDENTS' UNION (ASU)—PROPAGANDA OF STUDENTS' RIGHTS IN AZERBAIJAN

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Generally, there is no legislation protecting students' rights in Azerbaijan. Each higher education institution (HEI) has its own charter for regulating all internal issues. Students' rights and duties are described in the internal Charters. But sometimes students are not aware of their rights or they don't know how to defend them. In case of violation of rights (e.g. expelling students without communicating the reason), the main responsibility for action lies on students' organisations, student unions and human rights' NGOs. We need to mention that students' rights which are indicated in the HEI Charters sound very simple and practical. For example, there is an article stating that all students can appeal to the authority when they have some problems.

ESU's Students Rights Charter (SRC) can give us an opportunity from one side for improving awareness about the issue among students, NGOs, international organisa-

tions and state bodies and later involving all the sides for making >students'-friendly< legislation, which can be applicable to all HEIs in Azerbaijan. Namely, considering all these issues ASU began to work actively from its establishment in 2008. The first and simple actions were taken to know more about ESU and SRC and establish contacts with ESU members to foster sharing best-practices on implementation of SRC. When it came to dissemination of SRC on the national level (keeping in mind limited financial resources), we decided to develop an action plan. Firstly, we identified a need to hold open discussions, seminars, meetings for making it simple, what students' rights are about, linking it to the legal notion of human rights. During the meetings the main topics were purpose of rights-based approach and idea of having SRC provisions adopted legally. After receiving feedback from students and NGOs we prepared initial project proposal on promotion of students' rights. We implemented the project with the support of Open Society Institute Assistance Fund.

The project was called »Propaganda of students' rights in Azerbaijan«. The main objective of the project was translation and publishing SRC in Azeri language and further dissemination to all the stakeholders in higher education and students. It helped to instigate discussion about defence mechanisms for students' rights (also from the legal perspective). We also kept informing decision-makers with on the outcomes of the discussion process, gaps in current legislation and made it visible in the media and broader public (mainly, students). ASU activists organised »Role-model students' organisation« training courses in various HEIs, aiming to enhance students' participation and raise awareness on the SRC as a tool.

When implementing project on »Propaganda of students' rights in Azerbaijan« we gave proper attention to the international experience. In particular, experiences from Eastern European countries were more helpful for us, since the practice and legal arrangements are more similar to ours. What is more, best-practice from Hungary was very helpful and encouraged us to evaluate our previous actions and revise our strategy. One of the main common conclusions was the importance to translate SRC to the native languages of countries, while promoting the Charter and trying to outreach local level, but also member of Parliament, HEI authorities. It also makes it much more attractive to media. Also, for recognition of SRC and adopting it as a legal charter, one should aim to bring as many unions on board, as then it becomes possible to spread the idea (even via »email-attack) and stress it's importance to all stakeholders

STUDENTS' RIGHTS BASED APPROACH IN V4 COUNTRIES

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The students' unions of Czech Republic (SKRVs), Hungary (HÖOK), Poland (PSRP) and Slovakia (SRVS) has formed the V4 cooperation, in order to develop the relationship and the exchange of experience among students' organisations in the Central European Region. The aim of this platform was also to make the students' voice of the region stronger at the European Students' Union (ESU). These organisations have meetings three times a year in a rotating system of the hosting unions.

Last time students' representatives from the V4 countries and their partner unions gathered together in Visegrád (Hungary) between 21st and 23rd October 2010 in order to discuss the the status of students' rights. The topic was chosen because of the higher education reforms in several countries and introduction of the new legislation, which contained numerous critical points concerning decreased in students' participation on national and institutional level. During the event participants were filling in the questionnaire about students' rights focusing on student participation in decision-making bodies, scholarship systems, quality assurance and representation right of each student. The participants agreed that the higher education systems should be financed merely without tuition fees as they have been operating for years in these countries. They also talked about that in such an important field concerning students as the scholarships systems. Students should have strong operating and control right.

In order for the points of Students' Rights Charter has to lie down into the national legislation and institutional regulation of the universities. What is more, the continuous exchange of experience and collection of best practices regarding implementation of SRC are necessary. The question of students' rights is a continuously relevant topic in Europe, when the evaluation of Bologna process is ongoing and new educational laws are being prepared.

On the last day the leaders of the student delegations signed the Visegrad Declaration where we can read: »we strongly oppose any curbing of the student rights in the European Higher Education Area and we are ready to give further support to those in need by all necessary means.«

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WESIB founding agreement (17 October, 1982)

5 STUDENTS' RIGHTS CHARTER

PREAMBLE

We, the students of Europe, hold these rights to be self-evident.

We believe that education is a right not a privilege; that students are equal partners in education; and that education has a societal, personal, cultural and an economic objective. Every student is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Charter without regard to their field, mode of study or methods of programme delivery.

»Every student is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Charter, free from any form of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of political conviction, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic standing or any disability they may have.«

The rights laid down in this Charter stem from the fundamental human right for education.

In this document, >students< refers to all those working towards a qualification in higher education.

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

- 1 Everyone has the right to an inclusive, high quality education free of charge.
- 2 Everyone has the right to access correct information, in a transparent manner, on the content, outcome and requirements of an educational programme.
- 3 Everyone has the right to free access to adequate means of support in order to take up, progress through and complete their educational programme.

- 4 All students have the right to an education that is inclusive
- 5 All students have the right to have their backgrounds and experiences recognised as an important part of educational quality and to be able to make use of them.
- 6 All students have the right to an education imbued with different equality perspectives that improve the quality of education.
- 7 All students have the right to progress between cycles.
- 8 Everyone has the right to adequate counselling about their options before they choose a study programme.
- 9 All students have the right to apply to any institution without administrative, financial or physical restrictions.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- 10 All students have the right to organise themselves freely in legally recognised entities. Students must not suffer academic, financial or legal consequences stemming from such involvement.
- 11 All students have the right to co-governance in all decision making bodies and fora relevant to their education directly or through democratic representation.
- 12 Students have the right to be informed about all higher education affairs in a transparent manner.
- 13 All students have the right to have their opinion considered as that of a stakeholder on equal footing in higher education.
- 14 All students have the right to freely express themselves and this should not be limited to academic matters.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF STUDIES

- 15 All students have the right to adequate counselling and support on their well-being; on how to successfully complete their education; and on how to prepare themselves for integration into the labour market.

- 16 All students have the right to adequate social support that meets their needs on an individual basis.
- 17 All students have the right to financial independence.
- 18 All students have the right to a free and fair appeal against any act which they feel to be discriminatory.
- 19 All students have the right to a space for social interaction.
- 20 All students have the right to specific social support related to their educational mobility.

ACADEMIC ASPECTS OF STUDIES

- 21 All students have the right to be evaluated or graded solely on their academic performance including extra-curricular activities as being considered as part of their academic programme.
- 22 All students have the right to a free and fair appeal against any decision related to their studies.
- 23 All students have the right to a flexible study program.
- 24 All students have the right to teaching and learning environments that support and encourage the development of autonomous learning, critical thinking and personal growth.
- 25 All students have the right to teaching and evaluation methods suitable to their mode of education.
- 26 All students have the right to academic freedom of thought; and the freedom to challenge the knowledge that exists today.
- 27 All students have the right to fair recognition of comparable qualifications.
- 28 All students have the right to a continuously reviewed and up-to-date programme.
- 29 All students have the right to participate as equal partners in the continuous assessment and improvement of their educational programmes.

- 30 All students have the right to free access to comprehensive and objective information on the quality of the programme and institution in which they wish to study or are already studying.
- 31 All students have the right to have the grading of their academic work challenged by an external examiner.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

- 32 All students have the right to be recognised for their academic work.
- 33 All students have the right to privacy and the right to protection against misuse of personal information.
- 34 All students have the right to freely access and share knowledge with society as a whole.
- 35 All students have the right to teaching techniques and technologies based on the principle of open source.

5.1 ESU MEMBERS

Austria Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft (ÖH) **Azerbaijan** Azerbaijan Students Union (ASU) **Belarus** Belarus Student Association (BSA) **Belgium** Fédération Des Etudiants Francophones (FEF), Vlaamse Vereniging van Studenten (VVS) **Bulgaria** Barski Studentski (UBS), Nacionalno Predstavitelstvo na Studentskite Saveti v Republika Balaria (NASC) **Bosnia & Herzegovina** Studentska Unija Republika Srpska (SURS) **Croatia** Hrvatski Studentski Zbor (CSC) **Cyprus** Pagkypria Omospondia Foititikon Enoseon (POFEN) **Czech Republic** Studentská Komora Rady (SKRVS) **Denmark** Danske Studerendes Fællesråd (DSF) **Finland** Suomen ammattikorkeakouluopiskelijakuntien liitto (SAMOK), Suomen Ylioppilaskuntien Liitto (SYL) **Estonia** Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit (EÜL) **France** Fédération des Associations Générales D'Etudiants (FAGE), Union Nationale des Etudiants de France (UNEF) **Georgia** Students Organizations League of Georgia (SOLG) **Germany** Freie Zusammenschluss von StudentInnenschaften (FZS) **Hungary** Hallgatói Önkörmányzatok Országos Konferenciája (HÖÖK) **Iceland** Studentarad Haskola Islands (SHI) **Ireland** Union of Students in Ireland (USI) **Israel** National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS) **Italy** Unione degli Universitari (UdU) **Latvia** Latvijas Studentu Apvieniba (LSA) **Lithuania** Lietuvos Studentu Sajunga (LSS), Lietuvos Studentu Atstovybiu Sajunga (LSAS) **Luxembourg** Union Nationale des Etudiant(e)s du Luxembourg (UNEL), Luxembourg University Students (LUS) **Macedonia** National Union of Students of Macedonia (NUSM) **Malta** Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (KSU) **Netherlands** Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg (ISO), Landelijke Studenten Vakbond (LSVb) **Norway** Norsk studentorganisasjon (NSO) **Poland** Parlament Studentów Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (PSRP) **Portugal** Fórum Académico para a Informação e Representação External (FAIRe) **Romania** Alianta Nationala a Organizatiilor Studentesti din Roma (ANOSR) **Serbia** Studentska Unija Srbije (SUS) **Slovakia** Študentská Rada Vysokých škôl (SRVS) **Slovenia** Studenska Organizacija Slovenije (SSU) **Spain** Coordinadora de Representantes de Estudiantes de Universidades Pcas (CREUP) **Sweden** Sveriges Förenade Studentkårer (SFS) **Switzerland** Verband der Schweizerischen StudentInnenschaften, (VSS-UNES-USU) **Ukraine** Ukrainian Association of Student Self-government (UASS) **UK** National Union of Students (NUS-UK)