Student participation in Eur0pe

Students in focus - HERE Seminar
Almaty, 5 April 2017

Fernando M Galán Palomares (President 2015-2016)
The European Students' Union (ESU) is an umbrella organisation of 45 National Unions of Students from 38 different countries & 13 European student associations. Through its members, ESU represents over 15 million students in Europe.

The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.

**Vision:** Equal educational and social opportunities in an open and democratic Europe where students shape a sustainable future.
West European Student Information Bureau

Minutes of the Board Meeting held in Stockholm, 18th October, 1982

Present: Members

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Observers

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(Sweden)
(United Kingdom)
(Norway)
(France)
(Iceland)
(Switzerland)
(Finland)
(Austria)
Long (hi)story short

• 17th October 1982: WESIB is founded in Stockholm

• 1989: Wall falls and WESIB becomes ESIB

• 1999: The Bologna Process starts and ESIB creates content committees – From information exchange to more advocacy

• 2001: ESIB as stakeholder organization in the Bologna Process

• 2003: ESIB moves from Vienna to Brussels

• 2007: ESIB is renamed into ESU

• 2017: 35th anniversary of WESIB/ESIB/ESU
The European Students’ Union

• ESU works to bring together, **resource, train and inform** national student representatives on policy developments in higher education at the European level.

• ESU's work centers around conducting **European-wide research, partnership projects and campaigns**, providing **information services** and producing a variety of **publications**. for both students, policy-makers and higher education professionals.

*Since decisions concerning higher education are increasingly taken at the European level, ESU's role as the only European-wide student platform is similarly growing.*
ESU’s core policy areas

1. Overarching chapter (purposes of HE & int. policy initiatives)

   1. Access and support (Social Dimension)
   2. Public responsibility for education (Governance & funding)

3. Quality and transparency (Structural reforms, academic affairs, Student Centred-Learning)

4. Mobility and internationalisation
Members

The voice of students in Europe
How does ESU work?
BM approves the ESU’s Budget, Plan of Work and Policies
ESU structures (I)

General Assembly (known internally as Board Meeting - BM)

- Legislative Body: Board Meeting (BM)
- The highest decision making body in ESU

- Each country has 2 votes which are held by the respective National Union(s) of Students (NUS)
- Associate members have same rights as NUS, but not voting-rights

- It approves the ESU’s Budget, Plan of Work and Policies
ESU structures (II)

Executive Committee (EC) (1 P, 2 VP + 7 members)

- The Executive Committee is responsible for the execution of the decisions of the Board Meeting, political affairs and the overall finances of ESU.
- Elected by the Board Meeting for the term of one year, re-elections are possible
- Chairperson, two Vice-chairpersons, seven regular EC-members

Coordinators (3)

- Appointed by the Executive Committee for max. 2 years.
- Equality, Human Rights and Membership.
ESU structures (III)

Secretariat
- Employed personnel. 5 full-time equivalent
- Presidency based in Brussels

Commission for Internal Audit (CIA)
- Controlling body for financial issues. 3 members elected at the BM.

Working Groups
Task Forces
Experts Pools
What ESU does?
The European Students’ Union

- Representation & advocacy
- Research & concept development
- Capacity-building & Information exchange
ESU representatives and ESU members at the EHEA Ministerial Conference
Research & concept development

- **LLP projects** (ESU as lead partner)
  - FINST – funding
  - QUEST – quality concept and quality assurance
  - SAGE – employability
  - PASCL – Student-Centred Learning

- **TEMPUS projects** (ESU as lead partner)
  - ESPAQ - Armenia
Publications (a few examples)

- **Handbooks**
  - Quality Assurance
  - Student-Centred Learning
  - Equality

- **Research & monitoring reports**
  - Bologna With Student Eyes (‘05, ‘07, ’09, ’12, ’15)
  - Quality Assurance – QUEST
  - FINST compendium

Find out more at: www.esu-online.org
Capacity building

• ESU’s pools
  – Quality Assurance
  – Pool of Trainers
  – SCL

• Trainings & Seminars
  – Trainings: CoE Study Sessions
  – European Students’ Convention (ESC)
  – BM Seminars
International Students’ Day

FREEDOM to STUDY

FREEDOM of MOVEMENT

#free2learn
#free2move
20TH OF JUNE
WORLD REFUGEE DAY

AROUND 20 MILLIONS REFUGEES
50% UNDER 18 YEARS OLD.

EACH OF THESE REFUGEES ARE PERSONS,
WHO HAVE DREAMS AND AMBITIONS,
WE NEED TO MAKE THEM JOIN ALL HUMAN
RIGHTS, INCLUDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION.

Speak up for LGBTQ+ rights!
-IDAHOT 2015-
Student participation
What is the purpose of a University?
How should the University work?
Students as partners vs clients
Values of Student participation

Students as full members of the academic community, in autonomous HEIs.

- representative (legitimate & autonomous) and diverse student representatives,
- training and support,
- inclusive and accessible systems

**Basic freedoms**
- Right to organize and mobilized
- Freedom of speech
- Democratic participation systems
- Rule of law
Student participation

• Many countries have legislation on student involvement
  – However, in practice the limitations vary and have a powerful impact

• 15 unions indicating students make up more than 20% of decision making bodies in HEIs.

• 10 unions believe the Bologna Process has had a significant effect on student participation

• Different ways to organize and participate.
How is student input treated at the institutional level?
How do students perceive the way their input is considered?
Student mobilisation
Student movement

EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD

NELSON MANDELA
Thank you!

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