

*HERE Seminar*

**Students in focus:**

**Student as partners in higher  
education governance and quality  
assurance**

5-6 April 2017  
Narxoz University  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

# This seminar

- Topic of transversal interest
  - *How is student participation/engagement implemented in institutions and systems?*
- Building on previous HERE events
  - Talinn Study Visit: Student Centred Learning
  - Lviv Seminar: ESG in practice
  - Barcelona Annual Conference: Matrix for HE policy reform
- Looking at the role of students around three axes:  
*Institutional governance, QA and national reform processes*
- HERE students reps: Ma'ayan (Israel), Meri (Armenia), Nicolai (Moldova), Sarah (Jordan), Darya (Belarus), Guldastan (Kyrgyzstan) , Meriem (Georgia)....
- Speakers from ESU, SPARQS, Finland, Irish Student Engagement Survey

# Desired Learning Outcomes

- Analyse different approaches towards student participation in university governance and QA, and their specific national and regional contexts.
- Understand the pro's and con's of student participation as well as the implications regarding legal framework, institutional autonomy and organisational and financial implications, but also regarding the general institutional culture, and its learning and teaching approach.

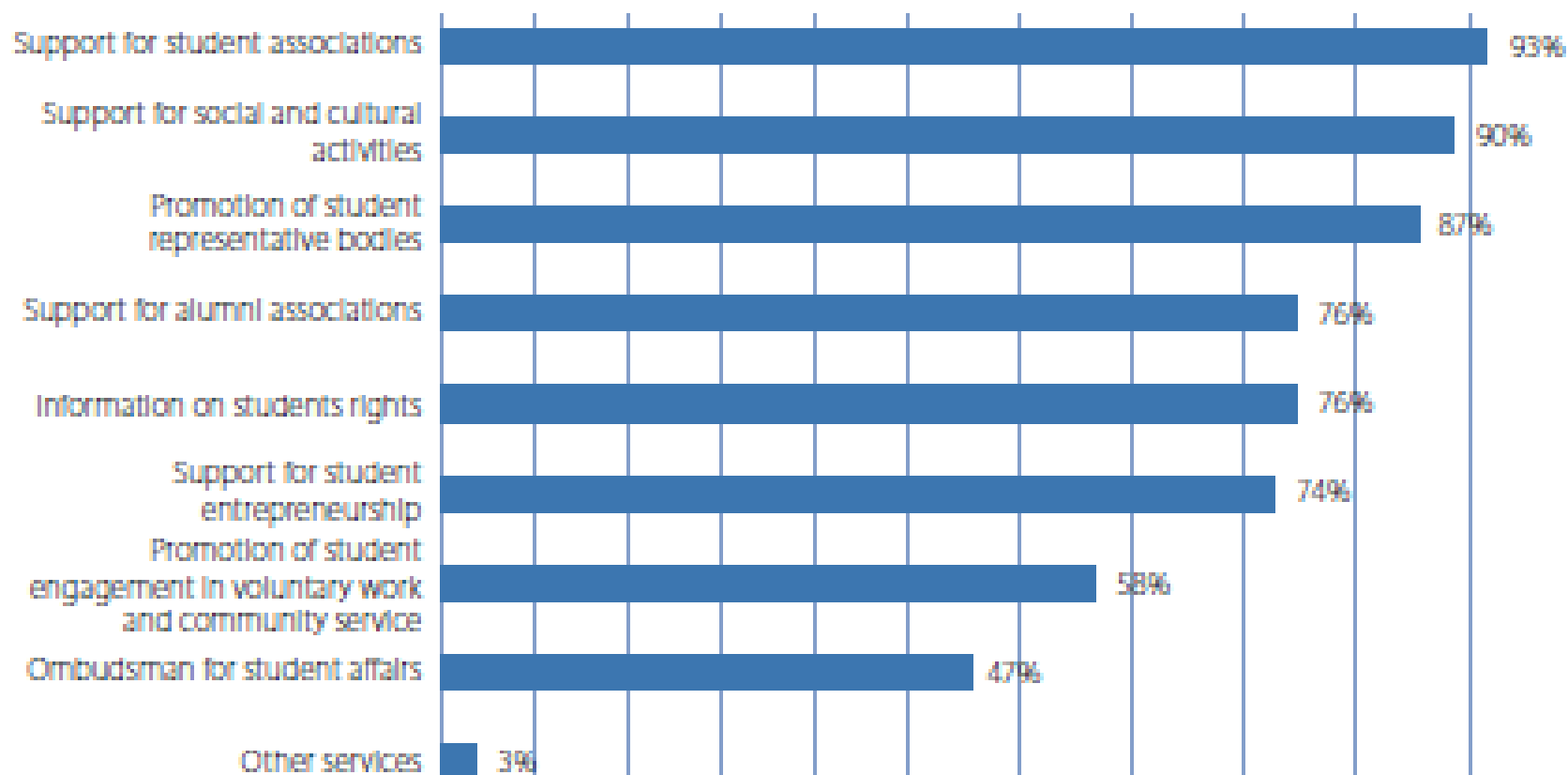
# Desired Learning Outcomes

- Reflect on the situation of student participation in your own institution/ system, regarding achievements and challenges and the potential for enhancement.
- Relate student participation to the broader context of higher education reform, with regards to good governance at system and institutional level, enhancement of internal and external QA, enhancement of education and promoting democratic society and citizenship.

# Some context

**Figure 27: Which of the following does your institution provide to students? (Q28)**

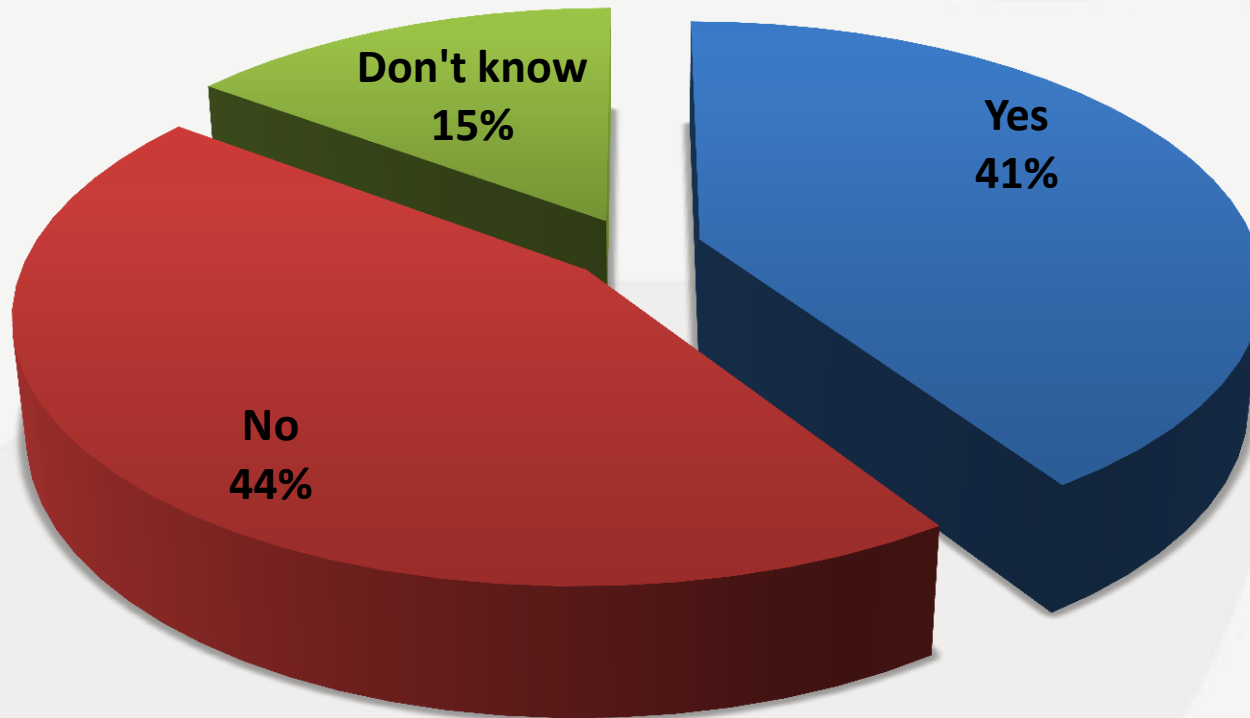
## Support to student-led activities and promotion of student's rights



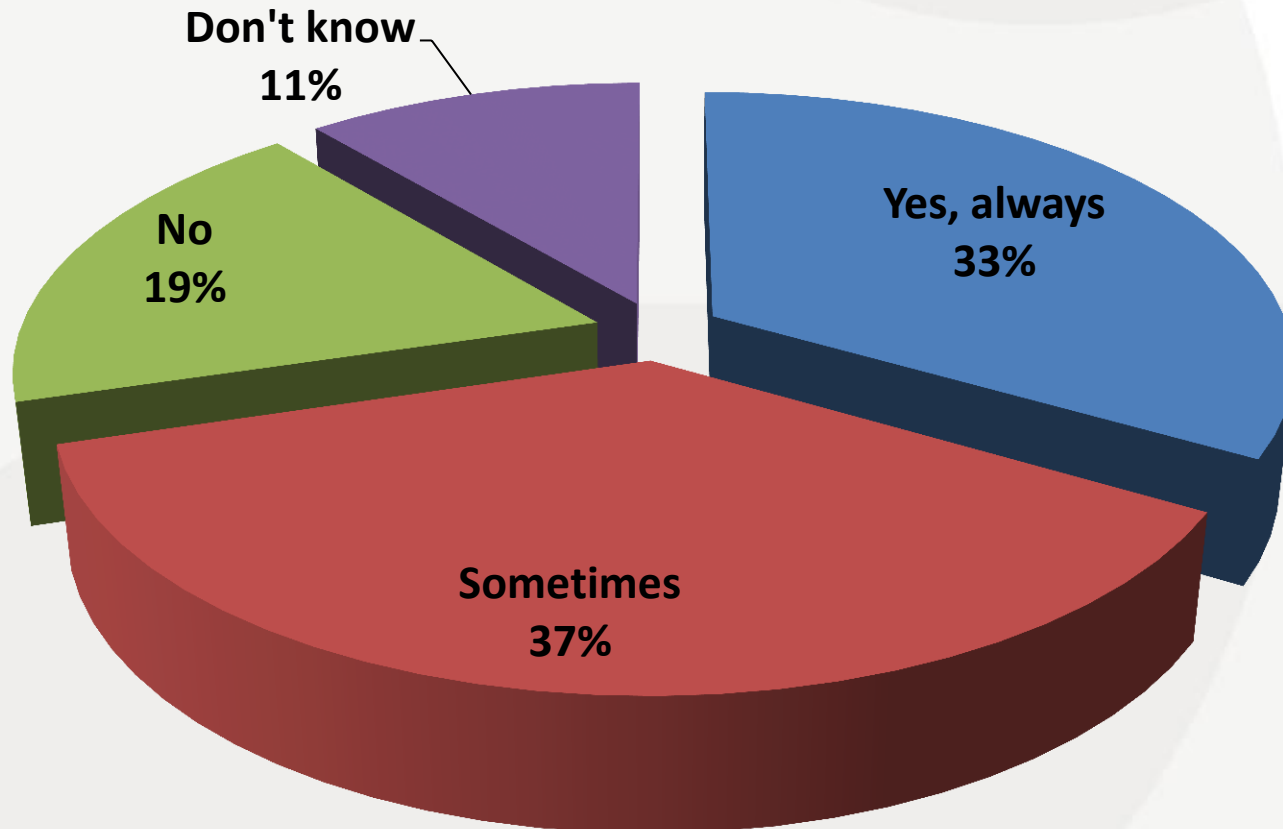
## **Lviv HERE Seminar: Pre-survey results**

- **If your external QA system complies with the ESG, what are the difficulties?**
  - *Involving students in QA systematically* - 15
  - Building capacity of institutions to implement their own QA processes - 14
  - Developing or creating an independent QA agency - 11
  - Linking QA to the development of LO based approaches - 10

## Are students involved in external quality assurance panels in your country?



# Are students involved in institutional quality assurance?





# Ice-breaker: pre and post seminar survey

- In order to enhance student participation, what has to change at:
  - national level (organisation & legislation)
  - institutional level (organisation & general attitudes)
  - at the level of individual staff
  - students and their formal organisation

# Lviv seminar observations:

## Student involvement

- Student satisfaction surveys versus participation in working bodies and committees
  - How to innovate?
- Student representative bodies: independence, representative legitimacy, outreach and communications
- How to generate student interest in QA?
  - UEF example of QMS course for credit, participating in audits linked to professional development
- Student participation in evaluation panels – How to introduce? Delicate political and cultural climate? Possibilities through international projects?
  - UEF example of students in management review meetings

# HERE Website and Virtual Community

- Priming discussion threads for events
  - Publications cross-posted; please share further references you may have
  - Event ‘discussants’ (?)
  - Generally little take-up.....
- Student discussion group!!
- New call for country pages
- HERE newsletter pilot: Contributions welcome

# Other SPHERE developments to watch

- Barcelona conference publication
  - Country case studies still welcome
- First regional TAMs- a possible model for the future?
- Upcoming events: Call soon to be launched for
  - Study Visit: University of Milan – 30-31 May  
**“Research based teaching/ Universities, Entrepreneurship and the Knowledge Triangle”**
  - Seminar: University of Nicosia, Cyprus and CARDET – 13- 14 June: **“Universities and social engagement”**

# Some conclusions: Transversal

- Students as clients or partners?
- Clarity of language: What do we mean by student engagement?
  - National versus institutional level
  - Student Engagement Framework of SPARQS
  - Differentiating governance structures from teaching and learning feedback/enhancement
  - Representativeness versus the role of all students in engaging
- Creating the culture of student engagement: Not just on paper or via formal student representation
  - Sensitising students and staff, building trust
- **‘Bottom – up’** (projects on student engagement, individual university approaches and practices) versus **‘top – down’** (legislative prescription on student quotas in governance structures, ESG and national QA processes)
- Role of university leadership (in prioritising/ promoting)

# Some conclusions

- Students in QA
  - Selection (in absence of national student union or partner)
    - Transparency
    - De-politicising
  - Training
  - Incentivising students
  - 'Cultural' dynamics and trust regarding students in QA panels
  - Professionalising/optimising feedback

# Some conclusions

- Students and governance
  - Formal versus informal participation
    - Need to systematise and institutionalise
  - Nationalised/standardised versus decentralised
  - Real versus nominal power
    - *Potential discrepancy between*
      - Opportunity – to attend meetings and events
      - Attendance – students take up those opportunities
      - Engagement – attend but also contribute effectively
  - Selection/election/nomination of students for governance structures
  - Elephant in the room: Autonomy.....

# Some conclusions

- Students as national policy reform partners
  - Defining purpose: common platform for university councils, partner in external QA, role in national policy committees
  - Independence of national associations, structure, accountability and funding
  - Need to create or reinforce them in many countries/ need to be organic but supported
    - Importance of international projects
  - Role of student HEREs
    - In the HERE team
    - In national reform committees
    - In reaching out to other students/promotion



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