

The European Students' Union



ESU ACTIVITY REPORT 2011



CONTENT

Welcome	2
Achievements 2011	4
The Times are a-changin'	9
ESU Events	11
Getting Heard In The Media	16
Our Members	19
A glimpse into student campaigning 2011	22
Who are we?	24
Who is who?	28
The European Students' Union	30

WELCOME

by Allan Päll, ESU Chairperson

European Students' Union (ESU), representing students since 1982. In these, almost thirty years, ESU has been going from strength to strength as a European organisation. Each year has been crucial. This report brings to the fore our notable achievements and work done in 2011.

Fresh memories might seem unsure whether it was a good or a bad year. Endless talk about the end of Europe at one side, while others were reaffirming that we should not let a good crisis go to waste and move over to federalism.

Last year, doubts about solidarity in Europe reached new highs. Cracks in the system highlighted that when some countries are in recession, others can be almost booming. In some countries more than half of the youth, including graduates, cannot find jobs, not to mention any secure and decent ones. Yet in other parts of Europe, engineers are sought from literally anywhere.

These European debates affect students directly each day. Yet, the carousel of higher education reform on the national level was at full speed in 2011. Almost all of our member unions were campaigning throughout the year on national issues. Yet at the same time, our members' con-

»The higher education budget is peanuts in the total budget«

tribution to the European student movement has grown.

ESU has been tirelessly advocating for education as a solution to societal and economic challenges. And we did see a tipping point when major international organisations adapted to our policy line. Students all over Europe should take credit and campaign further to advocate, but also campaign to stop the bill being pushed over to future generations and youth.

In the EU budget proposal for 2014–20, higher education and research are the areas with significant increases in budget while almost everything else has been frozen. Even though the higher education budget of some 19 billion Euro is peanuts in the total budget, this should be seen as an important political message that national governments should support and follow.

Indeed, we have made funding of higher education our priority and we will keep it highest on the agenda until we see some results. We will win when rescue packages to governments will include a clause to increase public investment in higher education. We will win when the overall trend will be to actually increase student support to crucial groups in our societies. We will win when we convince governments to depoliticise higher education and to commonly agree on its vitality for our democracies.

Financing the Students' Future is our project which we are using to prove and promote our ideas about how to sustain the continuous expansion of higher education in a way that will be accessible to all so that no student would be left out. ESU has been working to provide evidence and support to member unions through reports and events and training.

In a year of national focus on austerity and the bailout of entire governments, when the future of Europe is in doubt, we have managed to ensure that the student movement is still going from strength to strength, and that ESU is the most crucial platform for our members to come together. This should not be taken for granted.

Our representatives and staff have been dedicating more days than there are stars in the sky to safeguard and protect student representation. We work to make sure that our governments understand that without the support of students, our societies will not progress. I thank each and every one of you for this contribution and wish us all strength of will to continue.



Allan Päll

ACHIEVEMENTS 2011

SORTING BELARUSIAN TROUBLES

At the end of 2010, students in Belarus were faced with hard times as many of them protested against the fraudulent elections of Alexander Lukashenko. These protests were violently oppressed and many students were jailed and later expelled from their studies for missing exams. Even though this happened during the Christmas period ESU responded swiftly, with many of its members actively reacting on the brutal oppression of the demonstrations against the Lukashenko elections.

With its members, ESU sent urgent letters to EU institutions and national governments of its member countries. In response, education ministers from Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania and Sweden all wrote to their Belarusian colleague expressing concerns about the strong measures taken against staff and students who participated in the demonstrations. The case of Belarus has been a hot topic throughout the year as the Lukashenko government applied for membership of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) on 30 November 2011. ESU opposed this application as it holds the opinion that strong demo-

cratic and academic reforms are needed in the country first.

Even though the Ministerial Conference will only take place in the end of April 2012, the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG) already decided to advise against EHEA membership of Belarus at its meeting on 18–19 January in Copenhagen. They will ask Belarus to work on reforms first. ESU will continue to support the free student movement in Belarus and other civil society organisations in the country.

SHAKING STANDSTILL OF BOLOGNA

Throughout 2011 ESU has been criticising the slow progress of the Bologna Process which aim is to create a truly comparable and flexible education system across Europe. Although the Bologna Follow-Up Group, bringing together representatives from the members' national education ministries, met several times in the past year, this unfortunately did not lead to any noticeable progress.

»Students in Belarus continue facing hard times«

One of the clearest symptoms of the hampering of the Bologna Process is the lack of interest of fulfilling even the simplest Bologna goals. This is evidenced by the fact that national students' unions are not consulted as often as in the early years of the Process, established in 1999.

ESU feels that the current loose arrangements that connect EHEA countries might eventually lead to a decline in the process's relevance. This loose approach seemed to work in the early years of the Bologna Process, but ESU now sees an obvious need for revision and has been urging for this. Discussions in the BFUG often focus on politically less significant issues such as language regime, while the true problem lies in the lack of will to fully implement the Bologna changes.

In its statement ›The Bologna Process towards 2012‹, ESU criticizes the ongoing slowdown of the implementation of the Bologna objectives and expresses its concern regarding the lack of consultation of national stakeholders, such as student bodies and teacher unions. This statement was adopted at ESU's 60th Board Meeting, in Tallinn, Estonia.

In 2012 the BFUG will adopt the Bucharest communiqué—setting out the Group's action lines for the next three years—at the Bologna Ministerial Conference on 26

and 27 of April. ESU has provided input for the Communiqué while also preparing its own report on progress of the Bologna Process in a new, 2012 version of ›Bologna With Student Eyes‹ to be published in April 2012.

INFLUENCING THE EU

With many European Union institutions located in the capital of the EU, ESU is headquartered in Brussels and much of its advocacy activities are focused on one of these institutions. In the last year, the European Commission presented several new documents concerning higher education and it proposed the EU's long-term budget. The texts and budget proposals are now under discussion in the European Parliament and the European Council.

The most important documents for higher education in the past year are the ›Erasmus for all‹ programme—part of the EU's long-term budget—and the ›Modernisation Agenda for European higher education‹. Nonetheless, the EU 2020 Strategy remains an important point of attention for ESU as education was given a big role in this Strategy. ESU has been lobbying extensively for its priorities to be taken up in the new proposals by releasing various statements, proposing amendments and issuing press releases on several occasions.

EU 2020 STRATEGY

The EU 2020 Strategy, created to ensure smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the regional bloc, includes two education targets. These are: i) that by 2020 less than 10 percent of the population aged 18–24 should have left school early, and ii) that at least 40 percent of the EU's young adults (30–34) should have completed tertiary or equivalent education.

To realise these targets across all member states ESU has called upon the European Commission to be more active in aiding member states set appropriate targets within their National Reform Programmes, designed to implement the Strategy, as many countries have not done so.

Moreover, during each Education, Youth and Sports Council in 2011 (February and November) ESU has sent a press release urging the national education minister to free up money for higher education, not only to achieve these targets but also to ensure increased and more well-supported, inclusive student mobility. However, there are still many EU member states—19 in total—that are planning to cut their education budgets, if they have not done so already.

MODERNISING EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

To influence the content of the new European Commission communication dubbed ›Modernisation of European Higher Education‹, ESU organised a European Joint Day of Action with national unions of students on 27 April to raise awareness on the importance of this new agenda. The Communication sets out the main guidelines for the next decade of European higher education and is therefore an essential document relevant to all national unions of students in Europe.

When the Communication was released on 20 September, ESU reacted with a strong press release highlighting the weak points of the Agenda. ESU then began working on its full, detailed response, adopted at BM61 in Sofia. ESU is disappointed that the EU's Executive failed to send out a clear message regarding government investments into higher education. The Council did not dare commit to the minimum level of investment in education of two percent GDP. ESU is hoping that the European Parliament, which is currently drafting its report on the Modernisation Agenda and has received ESU's input, will clarify the EU's long-term education priorities.

EU BUDGET

The European Commission proposed the EU's long-term budget (2014–2020) in 2011. However, ESU believes that the funding as proposed will be insufficient to meet the expectations raised by EU member states in their Europe 2020 Strategy. If the EU aims to succeed with the Europe 2020 strategy a clear and radical re-allocation of EU funds towards these benchmarks is needed, according to ESU.

The EU's budget line ›Erasmus for all, published on 23 November 2011, acknowledges the added value of learning mobility and internationalisation of higher education. But ESU is still urging for more relevant budgetary commitments as it deems this crucial to achieve student mobility opportunities that are truly for all. Most importantly, ESU does not believe the proposed EU loan scheme will lead to more students studying abroad, especially regarding students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

QUEST—PROMOTING QUALITY IN EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

In addition to FinSt starting in 2011, the QUEST project (Quest for Quality for Students) was also launched last year. This project aims to achieve greater student involvement in the area of quality assurance while also identifying pan-European perspectives on what matters for students and what information should be provided to them regarding higher education and studies.

QUEST

QUEST FOR QUALITY FOR STUDENTS

ESU's pool of Quality Assurance Experts became involved in the project through the first QUEST workshop held in Edinburgh in July. Furthermore, the desk research has been continuing throughout the year and national site visits that will feed into the first report on student involvement in quality assurance were organised throughout October in Finland, Spain and the Netherlands. The QUEST project will run for a further two years.

»ESU is disappointed that the EU's Executive failed to send out a clear message«

FINST—MAPPING FUNDING SYSTEMS

This projects' timing could not be more suitable. While many countries in Europe are either increasing tuition fees or shifting from grants and scholarships towards loans, ESU is carrying out a two-year project, ›Financing the students' future‹ (FinSt). The project aims to map all existing funding systems in Europe and deliver input for future policies, both on national and European level, something that is of tremendous importance for students across Europe.

The project successfully kicked off in May 2011 with a seminar in Tallinn (Estonia), attended by around 150 student representatives. Through various activities including workshops and group discussions, participants were able to share their views and experiences on funding systems in their countries and the impact they have on students.



The project also involves three students' representatives exchange programmes. Two of these exchanges took place in 2011.

In September, six students gained insight on the funding debate in the United Kingdom at the NUS UK headquarters in London. In December, another six student representatives visited and worked with ÖH, ESU's Austrian member, learning about the financing system and discussions in Austria. The next and final exchange will take place in April 2012, when another six students' representatives will be hosted by EÜL, studying Estonia's financing debate.

A Consultations Seminar took place from 24 to 27 November in Liverpool, enabling participants from a range of stakeholders including universities, businesses and academic staff to look at financing of higher education from different perspectives. Guiding principles as well as future scenarios and considerations were discussed, including the way in which tuition fees can impact quality and access to education.

The FinSt project will run until late 2012 but it is anticipated that the outcomes will continue to inform and support the work of ESU, national unions and policy-makers even after completion.

FUND OUR FUTURE
NUS & UCU: STOP EDUCATION CUTS

**STOP
EDUCATION
CUTS**

UCU
University and College Union

n u s

national union of students

MIL

RE
CUTS

FUND FUTURE
NUS & UCU: STOP EDUCATION CUTS

STOP
EDUCATION
CUTS

000

THE TIMES ARE A-CHANGIN'

Over the past decades ESU has gradually shaped itself from an information exchange bureau into a strong and established representative voice of students in Europe. This has been mainly a reaction to external factors such as the emerging European higher education system and student mobility. ESU has directed political focus towards Brussels-based institutions and has internally started to develop a better understanding of financial sustainability.

First and foremost, ESU's purpose is to represent the rights and interests of students, mainly towards various intergovernmental processes and European institutions. To be fit for this purpose, while adapting to the dynamic political context, ESU has undergone an exhaustive self-evaluation process, which came to an end in mid-2011.

This resulted in changes to the elected structures of the organisation, voted through two consecutive Board Meetings at Tallinn in May and in Sofia in November 2011.

CHANGES IN STRUCTURES

The changes reflect the need to be more flexible in organising our work internally while simultaneously strengthening our base in Brussels. From July 2012, an ESU »Presidency« consisting of three full-time

representatives will be established in Brussels. The Board also agreed to move towards a three-year strategic cycle and longer term planning of activities.

Policy and representation of ESU will be guided by an extended Executive Committee that is replacing the current smaller committees. The Executive will consist of the Presidency and five to seven further members. To enhance representation and support capacity building within ESU's members as well as with student organisations outside the network, coordinators of membership, equality and student rights' advocacy and campaigning will start to work in 2012.

STUDENT EXPERTS

In order to engage a wider range of students with ESU, specialised student expert pools will be created. One such is already existent in the field of quality assurance, promoting student involvement and training students to take part in European quality assurance activities and reviews.

To be closer to students, ESU's online presence through social networks has significantly increased in 2011 and brought more visibility to ESU's actions, but much remains to be done. For the improvement of internal communication ESU installed an IT and Communications task force.

*»First and foremost,
ESU's purpose is to re-
present the rights and
interests of students«*

CHANGES IN ESU SECRETARIAT

Changes also took place in the ESU Secretariat with the introduction of two new positions—the Project Assistant and the Development Officer. The necessity of the first one cannot come as a surprise as ESU is currently running three long-term European Commission funded projects and is involved in a number of partnerships—support and assistance was needed.

The idea behind creating a position of Development Officer was to diversify ESU's income streams and seek ways of using the organisation's expertise beyond the benefit of its membership. ESU is actively seeking new methods for students and our wide network to provide crucial advice and consultancy in higher education reform and student involvement. Progress is being made although it will still take some time to see tangible outcomes.

Then again, what is an organisation without its active membership—just a legal entity? Getting to know ESU's members, to recognise and value diversity, and encouraging cooperation between national unions has played an important role.

It started at the 21st European Students' Convention in Budapest (February 2011), which called for action on the threats to »genuine« student participation and to prevent turning students into passive consumers. Evolvement of student organisations and their united voice is crucial in this battle and ESU works to improve this.

Undoubtedly it is important to assure that ESU's membership has a shared sense of identity for a European organisation, eager to improve its internal culture and commit to its work. Building on the Vision Task Force report from 2010 the ESU membership gathered at a consultation event and later the Board adopted a renewed vision and mission statement. As the external environment demands action on behalf of students, it is incredibly important that ESU could serve as a uniting platform for student unions fighting to reach sustainable, accessible and high quality higher education in Europe.

CLEAR PRIORITIES ARE NEEDED

More than this, financial and human resources are becoming ever more scarce and to present an outcome at the end of the day, clear priorities are needed. Achieving on the agreed priorities means that we must focus on building on the available resources, organising capacity building, managing internal and external communications, re-allocating as well as finding new resources. This has been a clear message coming from the ESU membership through the Board Meetings in 2011.

Times do change indeed, but ESU's strong belief in an open and democratic Europe, where students shape a sustainable future together with their fellow Europeans has not changed a single bit since its creation in 1982.



ESU EVENTS

In 2011 the European Students' Union (ESU) organised several events for its members as well as a number of smaller-scale training sessions and seminars. The four main events where the delegations from 45 national unions of students meet, two European Students' Conventions (ESC) and two Board Meetings (BM), including topical BM seminars, will be highlighted in the next few pages. The most important meeting is the bi-annual Board Meeting which is the highest decision making body of ESU. Dur-

ing this meeting, ESU representatives are elected and policy priorities are decided. The ESCs are packed with training sessions, workshops and seminars to help unions both function better internally and perform better externally. Next to these events, ESU organised two handover meetings for its elected representatives to discuss their priorities in 2011: one in Amsterdam in January and one in Prague in June.

A photograph showing a group of young people, likely students, gathered outdoors. Many are holding bright blue balloons. In the foreground, a young woman with glasses and a black turtleneck sweater is holding a blue balloon. Next to her, a young man in a dark coat is also holding a blue balloon and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background shows other people and a green metal structure, possibly part of a bridge or a large building. The overall atmosphere is festive and social.

»In 2011 the European Students' Union (ESU) organised several events for its members as well as a number of smaller-scale training sessions and seminars«

ESC 21 ADDRESSED STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE

At the 21st European Students' Convention (ESC21), which took place in Budapest from 15 to 18 February, around 120 representatives from national unions of students from 38 European countries addressed the negative trends in students' participation in higher education governance all over Europe. The ESC21, an official event of the Hungarian EU Presidency (first semester of 2011) was jointly organised by ESU and its Hungarian member union, HÖÖK.

BUDAPEST DECLARATION

The representatives adopted the 'Budapest Declaration' at the event. The main message of this declaration is that higher education, as a public good, should include students at the heart of its decision-making to be able to formulate adequate responses to societal and economic challenges. In the text, the students argue that Europe's academic values and democracy are at stake when facing issues such as cuts in representation rights and freedom of speech. The full declaration can be downloaded on www.esu-online.org/news/article/6065/58.

The Budapest declaration emphasises the importance of students' involvement at all institutional levels. This builds on the promise of the Bologna Process that students would be recognised as equal partners and would be meaningfully involved

at every level of decision-making. Sadly enough, more than ten years after this promise, this largely remains a dream. In no European country are students involved at every level.

During the event in Budapest, discussed and mapped the emerging threats to student rights, debated ways to improve the participation of students and exchanged best practices on how to be influential and how to campaign for inclusion.

HUNDREDS OF BLUE BALLOONS

Participants met as well with the President of Hungary, Pál Schmitt. To conclude the convention, the students released hundreds of blue balloons on the Freedom Bridge in Budapest to express their solidarity with repressed students worldwide. The event fed into the production of a handbook dubbed 'No Student Left Behind', promoting some of the student participation campaigns of ESU members.

Following up on the Budapest Declaration, student participation was also put in the limelight when ESU together with the Council of Europe and the Armenian Ministry for Education organised an event in Armenia on this topic. This event highlighted once more the importance of student participation for the future of the European Higher Education Area.

FINANCIAL FUTURE OF STUDENTS IN THE LIMELIGHT—ESU'S 60TH BOARD MEETING AND SEMINAR

Financing of higher education was the main topic of the seminar organised in the wake of ESU's 60th Board Meeting, taking place from 2 to 4 May in Tallinn, Estonia. While universities across Europe are contemplating or have already set higher tuition fees, ESU addressed the question how this development can be tackled, as increasing tuition fees and study costs are restricting the accessibility of higher education.

The seminar, jointly organised by ESU and its Estonian member union (EUL), forms part of the FinSt project. It mainly focused on how the financial future of European students should look and how private spending in higher education for example can play a role. Participants identified global trends, such as the ongoing economic crisis, that are at the root of shifting government attitudes towards public spending on higher education.

Following the seminar, the 60th Board Meeting of ESU took place, where national unions adopted several external motions on key issues in higher education. The delegates furthermore criticized the slow progress of the Bologna Process in a statement and elected their Executive Committee (EC) and Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) for 2011/2012.

A motion on fighting the budget cuts in the Netherlands passed the vote during the meeting, as well as motions on the social dimension of students' participation and the higher education developments in Hungary. Other motions that received support from the Board concerned the situation of students in Belarus, in Ukraine, the problems with EU and international internships and the issue of higher education financing and the IMF.

TALLINN DECLARATION

Students furthermore adopted the ›Tallinn declaration‹, addressing G20 university leaders who held their meeting at the same time of the BM, in which they asked for the sustainable development of higher education. Additionally, the students supported an external motion on the Euro-Mediterranean mobility program and expressed their support to students in Maghreb and Middle East countries. Lastly, concerns voiced through ESU's Hungarian member union HÖOK on economical and higher educational reforms in Hungary were addressed in another motion. All external motions can be downloaded here: <http://www.esu-online.org/documents/motions/>. The Bologna statement can be downloaded here: <http://www.esu-online.org/documents/statements/>.

»Education has increasingly become a European competency«

DEBATING THE EXPANSION OF THE ERASMUS SCHEME—ESC 22

The future outlook of ESU was the main topic of discussion for around 120 students' representatives from the ESU membership who met in Łazy, Poland, for the 22nd European Students' Convention. The event took place from 30 August until 3 September. The Polish minister for Higher Education, Barbara Kudrycka, visited the event and revealed the plan from the Polish EU Presidency to open up the Erasmus scheme to non-EU countries, which generated a lot of media attention for ESU.

VISION BUILDING

Since 2009 vision building has been high on the agenda for ESU. ESU was founded in 1982 but many internal and external changes have taken place ever since. Education has increasingly become a European competency as a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the establishment of Bologna Process and the Erasmus scheme. Since its foundation the membership of ESU has grown from 7 member unions in 1982 to 45 in 2012.

There were plenty of opportunities for the participants to raise issues they deem important for the future of ESU during the Łazy ESC, including transparency issues, the proposal for a new vision and structure of ESU and the expansion of the Brus-

sels office. Alongside the vision for ESU, participants were briefed on EU affairs and the ongoing Polish EU Presidency.

Last but not least, students discussed the plan from the Polish EU Presidency to expand the current Erasmus scheme to non-EU countries. The Polish Minister for Higher Education, Barbara Kudrycka, speaking at the event on 30 August, said: »We would very much like to see a widening of the Erasmus-scheme to non-EU countries, not only our Eastern neighbors but also for example the ones in the southern neighborhood. According to me, the best diplomats for countries are students and scientists.«

EXPANSION ERASMUS SCHEME

ESU strongly supported the Polish EU Presidency in its quest for a widening of the popular Erasmus scheme. Speaking at the ministerial meeting 'Go East, Erasmus!' from the Polish EU Presidency, in Białystok on 28 September, Allan Päll, ESU's Chairperson said: »Where would Europe be without Erasmus? We are confident that the current Erasmus generation will create more integration and understanding in Europe as this group has, in an early stage in their lives, had the chance to study and be friends with fellow Europeans and experience another culture.«

»ESU strongly supported the Polish EU presidency in its quest for a widening of the popular Erasmus scheme«

BM 61 DISCUSSIONS ON ACCESSIBILITY

Around 120 students' representatives from 45 National Unions of Students across Europe discussed ongoing developments in higher education from 10 to 12 November in Sofia, Bulgaria, during the 61st Board Meeting of ESU. They formulated common statements on budget cuts and other law proposals from European governments, which are, according to ESU, bound to harm higher education. These statements can be read here: <http://www.esu-online.org/documents/motions/>.

INCREASE IN TUITION FEES

Among the main concerns for ESU is the increase of tuition fees across many European countries. Allan Päll, Chairperson of ESU said: »Increasing tuition fees could lead to an exodus of their own young people who are forced to study in a country where education is still affordable, creating eventually more and more inequality in Europe.«

Ahead of the BM, a two-day seminar on the future of the social dimension within higher education took place on 8 and 9 November, in Sofia. The participants defined what the state of play in Europe is concerning equality in higher education since the start of the Bologna Process. Several concrete proposals, on how to

improve access to education to all groups of learners have been discussed including a detailed presentation of the Social Dimension Observatory for the EHEA. ESU is actively involved in shaping the idea for this observatory and will contribute to its implementation.

VISIT TO ROMA COMMUNITY

Delegates from the national unions of students moreover visited a local Roma community in Sofia where they saw how the Roma people are struggling with access to elementary education, let alone secondary and tertiary education. They were welcomed into the houses of the Roma, visited a local church and discussed the difficulties this minority group is facing in Bulgaria. At the University of Sofia, the participants were able to ask questions to Roma that are undertake a degree at the university and they discussed how ESU members could be of support to them.

ESU's Board also elected new committee members for 2012 in Sofia and four national unions of students were given the status of ESU candidate member: ANSA (Armenia), NSS (Ukraine), SCSU (Serbia) and ASYOU (Azerbaijan).

GETTING HEARD IN THE MEDIA

ESU's mass external communication mainly took place through the new and improved ESU website. Additionally, ESU increased traffic on its Facebook fanpage from about 5,000 to nearly 10,000 'likes' by posting more regular updates and experimenting with the possibilities of the fanpage, such as organising live chats and asking questions to ESU 'fans', students from all over the world. With the launch of the new website, the ESU Facebook page is connected with ESU's homepage, contributing to the growth of the 'likes'.

ESU also initiated its Twitter account @ESUtwit in February 2011. One year later it already has more than 1,250 followers, with the aim of tripling this by early 2013. An integrated Twitterbox is featured on ESU's homepage, displaying all of ESU's tweets, including those directed to @ESUtwit. In addition, all ESU projects have a specific hashtag (#ESU_QUEST, #FINST, #SAGE) that is used during project events and activities.

Next to the improved presence and visibility on social networks, ESU experienced a global boost in media attention by expanding its press databases and sending press releases at the right moment. ESU's news stories created headlines in the New York Times, Jerusalem Post and XinHua, a Chinese press agency, as well as in respected international education media outlets, such as University World News, Times Higher Education, ScienceGuide. National media outlets in Malta, Romania, France, Spain, Norway, Austria and other countries wrote articles about ESU as well.

In addition to the aforementioned increased media presence, specialised European media such as EuropeanVoice, Euro-politics, EUobserver and EurActiv devoted several articles throughout the year on ESU's view regarding European higher education policies. ESU also appeared on television and radio in Bulgaria, Denmark, Belgium and other European countries. In particular, the story on expelled students

in Belarus and the plans of the Polish EU Presidency to expand the Erasmus Scheme to Eastern Europe attracted a lot of media attention for ESU.

Visibility and media attention can of course always be improved, for instance by expanding the national press database and increasing the usage of ESU's YouTube channel. Nonetheless, this year has seen great improvements, indicating that ESU is on the right track.

ESU continues its monthly newsletter, the 'Student Voice', which currently consists of around 3650 active subscriptions, marking an increase of 650 subscribers since March last year. The newsletter readership mainly includes students' representatives, higher education staff, bureaucrats as well as experts including government and NGO representatives. A visual overview of ESU's press coverage and social media can be found on the following pages.

European Students' Union
9.938 „Gefällt mir“-Angaben · 321 sprechen darüber · 21 waren hier

Nichtregierungsorganisation (NRO)
ESU, founded in 1982, is the umbrella organisation of 45 national unions of students from 38 countries. ESU represents students rights at the European level and is the

Info

Fotos

9.938

„Gefällt mir“-Anga... Karte

Veranstaltungen

Beitrag

ESU IN THE PRESS

The New York Times

Europe

WORLD U.S. N.Y. / REGION BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE HEALTH SPORTS OPINION ARTS STYLE TRAVEL JOBS REAL ESTATE
AFRICA AMERICAS ASIA PACIFIC EUROPE MIDDLE EAST

More Germans Are Opting to Study Abroad

By JUDY DEMPSEY
Published: January 23, 2011

BERLIN — In a country once known for its lack of mobility for students and employees, more and more students are deciding to study abroad.

According to a report published this month by the German Welfare Service, an agency financed by the national Ministry of Education and Research, the number of German students studying abroad nearly doubled, from 52,000 to 102,000, from 2000 to 2008.

The increase comes at a time when the government of [Germany](#), where there are more than two million students, is pumping additional money into higher education programs and the [European Union](#) continues to offer billions of euros in financial incentives for young people to study in any of the 27 member

...ization for 47 student unions across Europe, said

...culturally from mixing in such an international
Twitter

RECOMMEND

TWITTER

LINKEDIN

SIGN IN TO E-MAIL

PRINT

REPRINTS

SHARE

Log in to see what your friends are sharing on nytimes.com. Privacy Policy | What's This?

What's Popular Now

The Benefits of Bilingualism



Why I Am Leaving Goldman Sachs

MOST POPULAR

E-MAILED BLOGGED SEARCHED VIEWED

1. Paul Krugman: Broccoli and Bad Faith
2. Opinionator: Nature-Deficit Disorder
3. Puberty Before Age 10: A New 'Normal'?
4. Op-Ed Contributor: The Gated Community
5. 2 Studies Point to Common Pesticide as a Cause of Bee Colonies
6. Books of The Times: How to Teach Art in 80 Minutes
7. Movie Review | 'Bully': Behind Every Harassment Is a Lot of Clueless Adults

»ESU increased traffic on its Facebook page to nearly 10.000 likes«



ESU

@ESUtw

The European Students' Union (ESU) headquartered in Brussels, is the umbrella organisation of 45 national unions of students from 38 European countries.

Brussels · <http://www.esu-online.org>

Edit your profile

1,160 TWEETS

1,117 FOLLOWING

1,127 FOLLOWERS

Tweets

Following

Followers

Favorites

Lists

Similar to you



Karl Aglus @karlagius
Following



Allan Päll @allanpall
Following

Tweets



European Youth Forum @Youth_Forum

#Barroso calls for giving priority to reducing youth unemployment in his pre-European Council press statement europa.eu/rapid/pressRel...

Retweeted by ESU



Leaders of Tomorrow @leadersot

New report out on mobilization of youth in the Euro-Mediterranean area. Download it here: goo.gl/ZpXB4 fb.me/DOYGpB30

Retweeted by ESU

View photo



ESU @ESUtw

Students to come up with solutions for #unemployed young

19m



ESU IN THE PRESS

Students of European Students' Union int'l conference gather in Estonia

English.news.cn 2011-05-03 09:07:20

Profesorii și studenții olandezi, în stradă

atie/scoala_in_lume/Profesorii_si_studentii_olandezi-in_strada_0_414559038.html

My Adevarul: username

adevărul.ro școală & educație



EUROPE: Erasmus expands to help Arab Spring - University World News

www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20110927172800634

EUROPE: Erasmus expands to h...

University World News



Issue 00214

31 March 2012

Register to receive our free newsletter by email each week

SEARCH

Advanced Search

Global Edition / News / World Round-up / Features / Commentary / World Blogs / Student View / Academic Freedom

Special Reports Special Editions Africa Edition / Letters / Archives / HE Events Diary / About Us / Contact Us

EUROPE

EUROPE: Erasmus expands to help

EU students sing praises of Israel's pro... JPost - International

www.jpost.com/International/Article.aspx?id=236828

students sing praises of Isra...

Breaking News

22:32 Six injured in Rwanda grenade attacks

JPost.com > International

EU students sing praises of Israel's protest movement

By BEN HARTMAN

LAST UPDATED: 09/06/2011 03:29

Send Large Small Print Share

Israel Focus

GREEN ISRAEL

Top stories from last week's edition

GLOBAL Fast pace of student growth predicted to slow

GLOBAL The impact of the economic crisis on higher education

SOUTH AFRICA University

Sok i Universitas

annonse

SISTE NYHET 2012-03-28

Maktesløse medisinstuden

Mister minister

Går for sammenslåing

UiO isolerer seg stadig m

UiO skal granske HiOA-r

2012-03-26

Verdifulle meteoritter



OUR MEMBERS

Europe is not yet entirely united and ESU does not have members from all European countries. Modern student movements in many countries only started to develop after the dismantling of the Cold War legacy. The networking and development function of ESU is still an important beacon as ESU unites unions that are truly representative, independent, democratic and open to all students. This means that interest among new unions in ESU membership is still very high.

ESU gained four new candidate members in 2011: ANSA from Armenia, SCSU from Serbia, NSS from Ukraine and ASYOU from Azerbaijan. And in 2012 study visits to these unions will be organised in accordance to the procedure of deciding on their eligibility based on ESU's membership criteria.

In addition, active contacts have been developed with student unions in Albania, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia and Turkey. A dilemma in ESU surely is how to expand and to support all the new members while maximizing our efforts of representation at the European level. This is in continuous reflection at ESU's Board Meetings, but shows how potent a united student movement is in building aspirations.

In 2011, ESU has been supporting the campaigns and demonstrations of many of its members, for instance in Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Israel, Cyprus and has beyond this supported the student uprising in Chile and offered democratic support for the academic world in countries where the ›Arab Spring‹ started. Many of ESU's members are fighting against budget cuts in higher education and rising tuition fees as well as the decrease of student participation.

»This means that interest in ESU membership is still very high«

OUR 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 Balgaria (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 Yliopilaskuntien 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 Önkormányzatok 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**



SFS

Sveriges förenade studentkårer



USI

Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

NSO

Norsk studentorganisasjon



**Latvijas
Studentu
apvienība**

**ŠTUDENTSKÁ
RADA
VYSOKÝCH
ŠKŮL
SLOVENSKEJ
REPUBLIKY**

STUDENT
COUNCIL
FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION
OF SLOVAK
REPUBLIC



Unel **fzs**

freier Zusammenschluss
von studentInnenschaften

SK: >RVŠ

STUDENTSKÁ KOMORA RADY VYSOKÝCH ŠKŮL
STUDENT CHAMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF HEIS



The Students' Parliament
of the Republic of Poland
www.psrp.org.pl

SUS

samok



eesti üliõpilaskondade liit

CREUP

Coordinadora de Representantes
de Estudiantes
de Universidades Públicas



an·sr

Alianta Națională a
Organizațiilor Studentești
din România



national union of students

LUS
Luxembourg
University Students'

LSAS

SHÍ
Stúdentaráð Háskóla Íslands

Latvijas Studentu Apvienība (LSA) **Lithuania** Lietuvos Studentu Sajunga (LSS), Lietuvos Studentu Atstovybiu Sajunga (LSAS) **Luxembourg** Union Nationale des Etudiant(e)s du Luxembourg (UNEL), Luxembourg University Students' Organization (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 Externa (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 Públicas (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)

A GLIMPSE INTO STUDENT CAMPAIGNING 2011

*** SOM PROTI
SPOPLATNENIU
ZDRAVOTNEHO
POISTENIA PRE
STUDENTOV!**

From January to April
Slovakia (SRVS) Against the payment of social insurance for students over the age of 26

March – June 2011
Finland (SAMOK & SYL) For more equality in social benefits



27 March 2011
Denmark (DSF) Joint
Day of Action (Mo-
dernisation Agenda)



27 January 2011
Macedonia (NSUM)
For changes in Higher
Education Law
2,000 participants

7–10 March 2011
Romania (ANOSR)
Against changes in
Higher Education Law
300 participants



January 2011
Netherlands (ISO &
LSVB) Against the
budget cuts in higher
education
20,000 participants



26 March 2011
UK (NUSUK)
Against public sector
budget cuts
250,000 participants

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul



January 2011
ESU Handover
Amsterdam,
Netherlands

February 2011
ESC 21 – Budapest,
Hungary

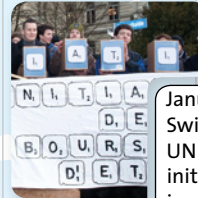


May 2011
BM 60 – Tallinn,
Estonia

June 2011
Handover –
Prague,
Czech Republic



September 2011
Norway (NSO)
Campaign for more students' housing
7,000 signatures



January 2012
Switzerland (VSS/
UNES/USU) Citizen's
initiative for equality
in scholarship system
140,000 signatures

October 2011
Hungary (HOOK)
Against new higher
education law
10,000 participants



November 2011
Ireland (USI) Against
rise of tuition fees
50,000 students



January 2012
Estonia (EUL) Against
Higher Education Law.
About 1,000 partici-
pants at protests and
5,000 participants
on Facebook support
page



September 2011
Israel (NUIS) Protest
for social justice
400,000 participants

November 2011
Latvia (LSA) Against
budget cuts
3,500 Participants



February 2012
Czech Republic
(SKRVS) Against pro-
posed Higher Educa-
tion legislation

Aug

Sep

Oct

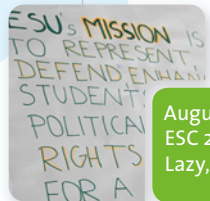
Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar



August 2011
ESC 22
Lazy, Poland



November 2011
BM 61 – Sofia

WHO ARE WE?

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 45 national unions of students' from 38 European countries and represents the interests of about 11 million students to all key European decision-making bodies: the European Union, Council of Europe, UNESCO and the Bologna Follow Up Group. Throughout the years, ESU has witnessed many internal and external changes while continuously developing itself to what it is right now: a professional advocacy and capacity building organisation that is influential and recognised as an important stakeholder at the European and international level.

ENSURE STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION

Besides representing European students, ESU aims to ensure and strengthen students' participation and to increase the student input into higher education policy and decision making at the local, national and European level. ESU promotes a higher education system based on the values of quality, equity and accessibility for all. Another important aim for ESU is to be renowned and respected as a source

of expertise on higher education policy at all institutional levels and to build links and foster an exchange of information, ideas and experiences among students and student platforms at a regional and global level.

»Another important aim for ESU is to be renowned and respected as a source of expertise on higher education policy at all institutional levels«

ESU regularly produces publications, such as the ›Bologna With Student Eyes 2012‹ and provides trainings to increase the knowledge of the national students' unions. All written materials are provided free of charge, while attendance at training is heavily subsidised through projects that are funded by the European Commission.

STUDENT UNION DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Student Union Development Committee (SUDC) supports the development of student unions in Europe. It carries out this work in cooperation with the other working structures of ESU as well as the member unions. The SUDC develops its own plan of work and defines its work methods based on the general plan of work of ESU.

GENDER EQUALITY CROSS COMMITTEE

The role of this committee is to ensure the implementation of ESU's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and to increase awareness and understanding of gender equality issues among ESU and its members. It is made up of one member from each of the other four content committees.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

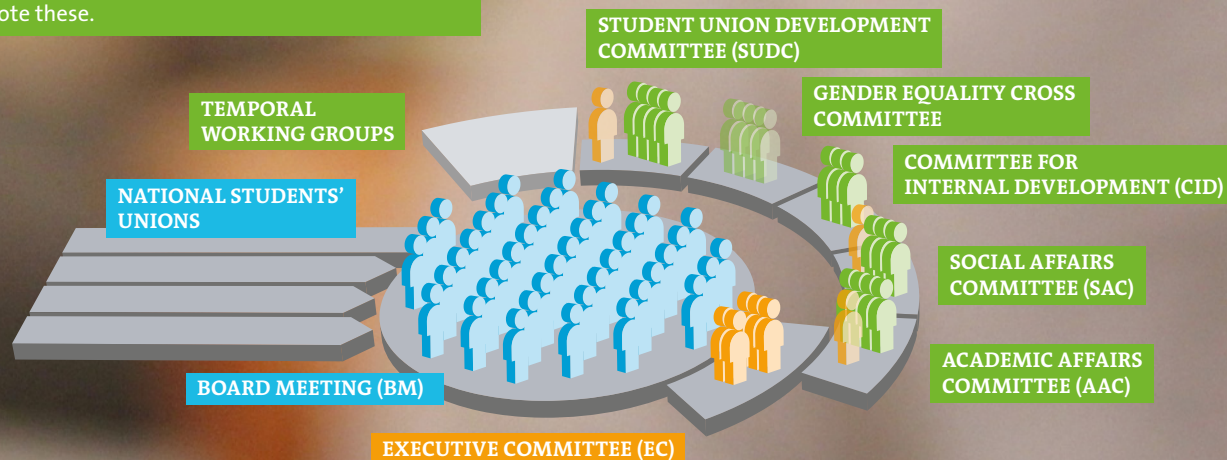
The Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) is responsible for developing expertise and representation regarding academic affairs. It deals with issues such as EU affairs, quality assurance and ECTS (European Credits Transfer System). It monitors these developments, produces policy papers, drafts statements and develops external strategies to promote these.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Social Affairs Committee (SAC) is tasked with researching, training and representing students in the field of social affairs of higher education. The SAC focuses on questions on access to higher education, participation in and completion of one's studies. It therefore involves all work regarding the social dimension of higher education, including financial affairs, students' health, accommodation and work.

COMMITTEE FOR INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

The Committee for Internal Development (CID) is responsible for finances, public relations and internal working conditions. Initially, its work is to develop the plans for organisational development by setting up new initiatives and developing portfolios. Finally, it is a reference point for elected representatives, making them feel comfortable in the organisation and making sure they are able to use the facilities that are offered.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Executive Committee (EC) consists out of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three general members. The EC is responsible for steering and coordinating the organisation, both politically and financially, on a day-to-day basis.

COMMISSION FOR INTERNAL AUDITING

ESU has a Commission for Internal Auditing (CIA) which has the competency to act as a financial advisory body to the EC and the Board. The CIA can make recommendations and express opinion to the EC and BM on all financial matters.

ESU'S FINANCES

As an NGO, ESU relies heavily on funding from European and international institutions for its continued operation. This trend continued in 2011, as the European Commission awarded ESU one new multi-year grant for the project »Student Advancement of Graduates Employability« (SAGE). The European Commission continues to account for the majority of project grant income received.

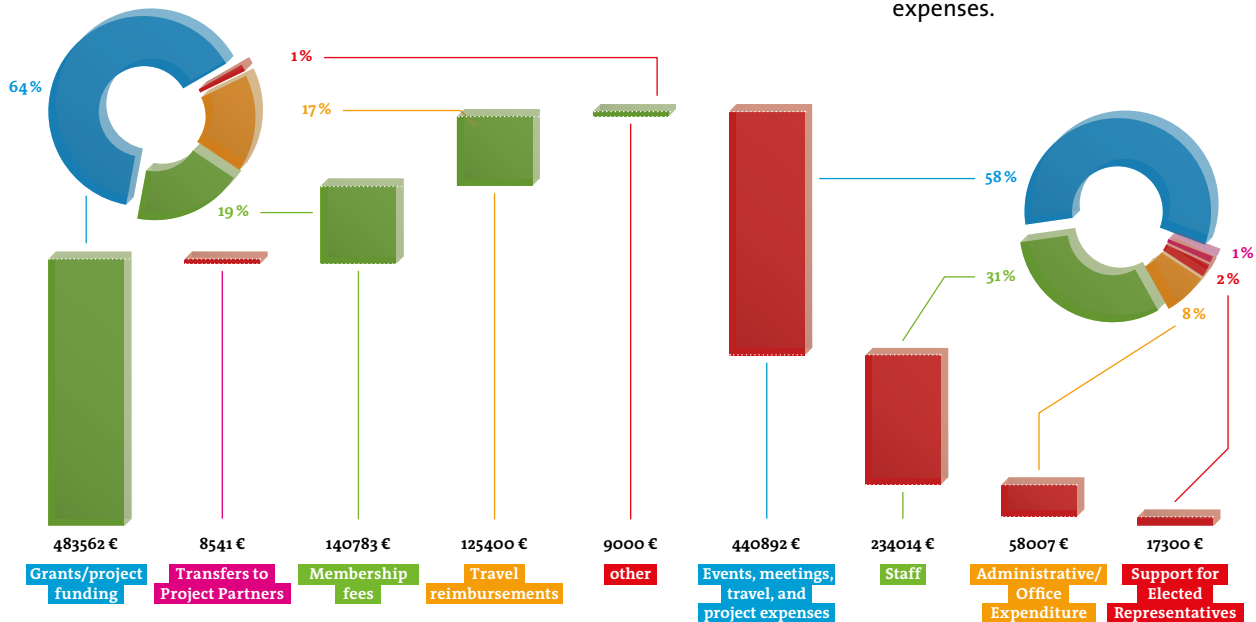
In 2011 the Commission provided an administrative grant to support ESU's core functions and overall sustainability. Additionally, ESU received a grant to fund a part-time Executive Assistant position

from the Belgian organization Fonds Maribel Social du Secteur Socioculturel as well as a part-time Project Assistant for the period of September 2011 till February 2012. ESU would like to thank the Commission and Maribel for their continued support.

ESU wants to thank its many external partners for providing funding that enabled ESU's elected representatives to participate in dozens of higher education conferences, meetings, and workshops throughout 2011. ESU's current level of involvement would not be possible without their support.

The 2011 budgeted expenditures follow the pattern of previous years with the majority share allocated to projects and activities. This enabled ESU to deliver on its aims, objectives and plan of work for the year.

The number of staff at the Brussels office increased in 2011 by one Development Officer and a Project Assistant. The two elected members are supported by a secretariat. The cost of maintaining an office in Brussels and other administrative expenses is a small portion of our annual budget. ESU also contributes modest support to its elected representatives to cover a portion of their position-related expenses.



FROM WESIB TO ESU

ESU was founded in 1982 by seven national unions of students (NSU Norway, NUS-UK, SFS Sweden, SHÍ Iceland, UNEF-ID France, DSF Denmark and ÖH Austria) and first was called WESIB, the West European Student Information Bureau. The political changes in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980s affected WESIB as well, as it opened up itself to national unions of students from the former east.

In February 1990, WESIB dropped the »W« to become the European Student Information Bureau (ESIB). As the European Communities gained more influence on higher education in Europe and certainly with the start of the Bologna Process, the objective from just an information sharing organisation changed into to a political organisation that represents the views and interests of students. In May 2007 ESIB changed its name into the European Students' Union (ESU).

ESU has a democratic structure based on the primacy of its members—45 nation-

al unions of students from 38 different countries across Europe: the Board. The Board meets twice a year and elects ESU's officials on an annual basis. The elections appoint ESU's representative structure: an Executive Committee and five content committees that work on various topics such as academic affairs, gender equality, social affairs and students' union development. In addition to the content committees, ESU had two working groups in 2011 which worked on the topics of international cooperation and immigration and ethnic minorities.

PROFESSIONAL SECRETARIAT

The daily work of the Executive Committee and the elected representatives is supported by a professional Secretariat which consists out of two Financial Officers, a Communications Manager, a Project Officer, a Project Assistant and an Executive Assistant, all six based in Brussels.

»In May 2007 ESIB changed its name into ESU«

WHO IS WHO?

Executive Committee 2010–2011

Bert Vandenkendelaere, Allan Päll, Robert Santa, Rasa Cincyte, Karina Ufert

Executive Committee EC 2011–12

Allan Päll, Karina Ufert, Rok Primozic, Nevena Vuksanovic, Kaloyan Kostadinov

Academic Affairs Committee 2010–2011

George-Konstantinos Charonis, Monika Maljukov, Magnus Malnes, Andrea Blättler

Academic Affairs Committee AAC 2011–12

Fernando M. Galan Palomares, Magnus Malnes, Mari Simola, Rahel Siegrist

Committee for Internal Development CID 2011

Luis Coelho and Daniela Bartolo

Gender Equality Cross Committee GECC 2011

Florian Kaiser, Fernando M. Galan Palomares, Marek Baranski, Daniela



Bartolo, Kaloyan Kostadinov, Monika Majukov, Rasa Cincyte

[Social Affairs Committee SAC 2011](#)

Karl Agius, Florian Kaiser, Brikena Xhomaqi, Taina Moisander

[Student Union Development Committee SUDC 2011](#)

Liliya Ivanova and Marek Baranski

[Commission for Internal Auditing \(CIA\)](#)

Juuso Leivonen, Christine Scholz and Kristine Bak Nielsen

[Secretariat](#)

Atena Feridooni, Erik Schrama, Corinna Karlsen, Marco Ranieri, Marianne Slegers, Natalia Tarachiu, Nicole Rathmair, Karoline Helldorff, Theodore Galariotis

THE EUROPEAN STUDENTS' UNION

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 45 National Unions of Students (NUSes) from 38 countries in Europe. ESU was founded in 1982. The NUSes are open to all students in their respective country regardless of political persuasion, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, sexual orientation or social standing. Our members are student-run, autonomous, representative and operate according to democratic principles.

We celebrate our 30th anniversary this year. In the past three decades, ESU has represented and promoted 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. Through our members, we represent more than 11 million students in Europe and successfully influence policies that affect students Europe-wide.

»We celebrate our 30th birthday this year«

Increasingly taken at the European level, ESU's role as the only European-wide student platform is similarly growing.

We focus on supporting our members through organising seminars, campaigns and conferences relevant to all students in Europe, conducting European-wide research, partnership projects and cam-

paigns and producing a variety of publications.

Besides this, we bring together, resource and train national student representatives on policy developments in higher education at the European level. Since decisions on higher education are in-



CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARIAT

The European Students' Union
Rue de la Sablonnière 20
1000 Bruxelles, Belgium
Tel: +32 2 502 2362
secretariat@esu-online.org

IMPRINT

Activity Report 2011
Brussels, March 2012
by European Students' Union

EDITING AND PROOFREADING

Allan Päll, Karina Ufert, Marianne Slegers.

IMAGE CREDITS

Marianne Slegers: pp. i, 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, and 21

Bert Vandenkendelaere: pp. 2, 3, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29

George-Konstantinos Charonis: 8 and 9
NASC: 14 and 15

PROOFREADING

Aengus Ó Maoláin, George-Konstantinos Charonis

DESIGN AND TYPESETTING

Linus Rowedda.

PRINTING BY

Laserline, Berlin on 100 % recycling paper.