

## Updates on ESIB actions for BFUG in Helsinki 12-13 October 2006

### European Student Convention

ESIB will hold its 12<sup>th</sup> European Student Convention in Helsinki 12-16<sup>th</sup> of October, that means it is overlapping a bit with the BFUG meeting and ESIB hopes that the BFUG will take this opportunity and meet some of the European students during our common dinner.

The discussions at the 12th European Student Convention will revolve around the concept of the European Higher Education Area after 2010. In the year 2010 elements from the Bologna process will still be present, but new processes will surely start. What will come of the Lisbon process? What is the role of students in this change? In order to prepare ourselves for these challenges we need to take an active role in the discussion. Therefore this convention will deal with the issue of the EHEA "post 2010".

More information can be found at [www.esc12.fi](http://www.esc12.fi)

### ESIB Statement on Efficiency & Equity in Higher Education Institutions

This is a summary of the ESIB statement on the Commission communication on Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems.

***The European Commission has released a communication, "Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems", which proposes a view of education economics that is not universally agreed upon.***

**The European Commission's paper promotes a strong pro-tuition stance whilst failing to offer any propositions as to how to enhance equity. ESIB – The National Union of Students in Europe, believes that this communication is incomplete and dangerously suggestive.**

#### *Socio-Economic Factors*

The EC's communication states that tuition fees may contribute to equitable access whilst admitting that socioeconomic background will effect what a student is able to pay. ESIB declaims the illogical nature of this statement. **If it is so that the socio economic background influences financial considerations, how can access remain equitable?**

#### *Inapplicability of 3rd Country Parallels*

The EC proposes offsetting the negative effects of tuition fees by providing targeted financial support, whilst agreeing that collected data on such support is **"too recent to be fully studied"**.

#### *Towards a Better Definition of Equity*

We support **equity and efficiency**. Ensuring equitable access means giving attention to those issues the EC excludes from the definition (gender, ethnic minority status, disability, regional disparities).

#### *Alternative Views on Efficiency*

The European Commission's Communication suggests that the annual investment into Higher Education Institutions be made by those who can least afford it, whilst pointing out that **the knowledge economy would be significantly weakened by students choosing not to**

## **pursue Higher Education.**

### *Real Policy Alternatives are Needed*

The EC claims that tuition fees will improve the quality of teaching and reinforce student motivation. We believe this to be a weak statement –rather, **attention should be given to providing a true student-centric learning experience.**

### *Students Essential to Lisbon*

ESIB supports the Lisbon Strategy's goals of growth and better jobs. Considering students are essential to this strategy, **creating access barriers is counter productive.**

**ESIB continues to fight for an efficient and equitable higher education system.** We strongly refute the view that public funding is regressive and believe that **steps need to be taken in order to ensure this communication is redrafted.**

For more information, please contact:

Bea Uhart on +32 2502 23 62, or [bea@esib.org](mailto:bea@esib.org)

### **Bologna with student eyes**

ESIB has completed the pilot phase of our Bologna with student eyes survey and are in the coming days sending the questionnaire out to our members. We expect answers during the autumn and will be working on the answers as they come in.

### **Upcoming events**

ESIB has its 51<sup>st</sup> Board meeting in the end of November/beginning of December. The Board will elect a new Executive Committee and agree on a plan of work for the coming year.