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Update from ESU to the Bologna Follow-Up Group Meeting in Sofia, February 2018

Highlights since the last BFUG meeting in Tartu 9th-10th of February

New strategic priorities 2018-2020 and Plan of Work 2018

ESU's board adopted a new three year strategic plan in early December which is soon to be uploaded on <https://www.esu-online.org/policy/strategic-political-priorities/> The document stakes out the course for the upcoming years.

Increased focus on open education resources, internships and work based learning and playing a more active role in education against extremism are amongst the new priorities.

Our policies are still clustered into 4 main pillars that also intersect. These are the Social Dimension, Quality of education, Public Responsibility and Governance and Internationalisation. Student participation at all levels of decision making is the underlying premise for all of our work. ESU's member unions agreed that a bottoms-up approach to the work of Bologna, from the student's perspective, is a key factor for implementation to be successful, and to have ownership on the local level.

EU's European Education Area

In the wake of the European Commission's release and presentation of its vision towards a European Education Area the 14th of November, ESU has been stating our position, both as a press release and in media interviews and opinion pieces. We welcome the ambition, but are also surprised by the sudden announcement. ESU hopes for student consultancy in the road ahead, and will involve our members in further discussions around the presented initiatives. At the moment ESU participates in one of the working groups of the European Student Card initiative.

Bologna with Student's Eyes

Until the beginning of February our members are providing us with the data that will lay ground for the Bologna with Student Eyes 2018 edition. The publication will provide a student perception of the implementation of Bologna reforms and follow up the previous editions. Bologna with Student Eyes 2018 will be ready for the Ministerial conference.

Study Session Gender Representation through Queer Feministic Theory

In mid february ESU through Council of Europe will arrange a Study session in Budapest. The session will focus on queer feminist principles as the fabric of a modern, peaceful and socially just European society.

Final Dissemination Conference of the ESPAQ project

In Yerevan, the 14th of November, the final conclusions, objectives and results of the ESPAQ project were presented. Going on for the past 4 years ESPAQ has been promoting, training and creating material to increase student participation in Armenian quality assurance. 150 participants attended the conference, which also saw the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on student engagement concluding the event. Studies and handbooks resulting from the project can be found on <http://espaq.eu/en/archive/publications> .

Together, Moving Forward

In partnership with the Open Society Foundations (OSF) and the Organising Bureau of School Student Unions (OBESSU), ESU engages in a regranting programme for the inclusion of refugees and especially refugee students. Building on the success of the project's first year, a new call for projects is set to be called for in the end of January. The 2018/19 project will also introduce a joint programme aimed at shared projects between students at the secondary and tertiary level of education. More about the programme can be found here: <https://www.esu-online.org/?project=together-moving-forward>