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## UPDATE FROM THE EUROPEAN STUDENTS' UNION (ESU)

### **Statutory events:**

During the 70th Board Meeting (BM70) of ESU, the bi-annual statutory meeting, that took place in Bergen, Norway in May 2016, new Executive Committee of ESU was elected. The team started work at 1st of July 2016 and the mandate will last until the 30th of June 2017. You can introduce yourself with the elected representatives [here](#). During BM70 the policy paper on Public Responsibility - Funding and Governance of Higher Education was revised, outlining ESU's policy on Sustainable Development and Education in International Trade agreements, as well as ESU's stands on HEI - Industry Partnerships.

The seminar linked to the Board Meeting titled "Global Students' voice" brought together student representatives from over the globe to strengthen the students' voice on students' rights and develop a joint vision for the values that the student movement stands for. During the process, the [Bergen Declaration](#) was developed, which is open for student unions around the world to sign it.

The next Board Meeting (BM71) and Board Meeting Seminary will be held in Gdansk, Poland from 29th of November to 3rd of December, where the member unions of ESU will adopt the Plan of Work for 2017, as well as the budget for the next year. ESU will be discussing two policy statements - on the New Skills Agenda for Europe and on the role of education in building peaceful societies and fighting extremism. The seminary will be dedicated to topic "Higher Education and Students Union governance: Towards meaningful participation" with discussions and workshops on safeguarding academic freedom, building national frameworks for student engagement and more.

### **Policy and campaigns' highlights**

ESU has been engaged in discussing and participating in the consultation for the New Skills Agenda for Europe, and after the launch of the Communication on 10th of June, ESU prepared a policy response you can find [here](#). ESU is continuing to work with the revision of EQF, as well as discussing graduate tracking mechanisms that are proposed as one of the actions of the Agenda. During the European Students' Convention in Bratislava, in September, ESU provided workshops to the member unions, building capacity and calling for engagement in developing national skills strategies and further implementation of the skills agenda on national level.

In the Fund Our Future campaign, through the website: [www.globalstudentvoice.org](http://www.globalstudentvoice.org), activists are sharing their initiatives and call for support in their struggles at local and national level. ESU encourages student activists, civil society organisations, policy makers, higher education professionals and supporting individuals to sign the pledge for accessible education and share it among their networks. The petition will be used by national students' unions and movements to support their national campaigns and causes – demonstrating the support received worldwide for a shared commitment to #FundOurFuture.

The initiative has been part of the International Student's day but will continue beyond 17 November and the website will be updated on a continual basis, as a collaborative effort to exchange ideas, inspiration for campaigns, and evidence for arguments on the issue of funding of education.

## New Partnerships

The European Students' Union has become alternate member of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Liaison Group. ESU will be alternate to the Life Long Learning Platform in the sector "Education and Training".

On 12th November 2016, ESU and the European University Sports Association (EUSA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that will enforce the common line of actions binding the two organisations. ESU and EUSA will work together to strengthen general cooperation and partnership between the two organisations; work together in activities and projects promoting sport and physical activities in Europe and social responsibilities projects, with a special focus on higher education students; join forces on working in the European arena, supporting the policy makers and providing know-how in the development of sport and higher education on a European level.

Recently ESU has joined Scholars at Risk (SAR), a network of over 400 higher education institutions in 39 countries working to protect threatened scholars, prevent attacks on higher education and promote academic freedom. SAR member institutions assist persecuted scholars and students by offering temporary research and teaching positions, monitoring and advocating against attacks on higher education, and conducting learning initiatives to promote academic freedom.

## Project Highlights

At the end of May 2016, ESU project titled [Peer Assessment of Student Centred Learning \(PASCL\)](#) ended with the Final Conference, where ESU and its partners put forward the results of the project, such as the new peer assessment framework for "student-centeredness" of a higher education institution. The project participants presented examples of teaching incorporating elements of student-centred learning and university best practices. The conference ended with the award ceremony, where institutions were rewarded for successfully implementing SCL in their education strategy. Wide challenges of SCL implementation in the EHEA still remain and SCL will remain one of the focus areas of ESU also in years to come.

At the end of November ESU will launch a programme aiming at engaging national student unions in positive interactions with student refugees in order to make education systems inclusive and integrate refugee students. The programme will run throughout 2017 and will distribute grants to national and local actions in order to reach the objectives of the programme.

ESU is one of the partners in EQUIP (Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy and Practice) project that is a joint initiative of E4 and other stakeholders to promote the revised ESG among stakeholders. Besides many project meetings, a webinar and a workshop were already organised and more are to follow. The project lasts for two years and a number of workshops and webinars are held. ESU's main activities have been ranging from organising workshops for students to creation and facilitating a focus group for students in upcoming months.

You can find more information about other projects ESU is involved in [here](#).

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