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

Highlights since the last BFUG meeting in Sofia 5-6th of February 2018

Bologna with Student Eyes 2018

Since February our research team have been drafting their articles for the Publication Bologna with Student Eyes. The publication has been realised since 2005 and is based on a survey mapping the perception of implementation by the National unions of Students of Bologna reforms between ministerial conferences. This year's publication will be launched in May prior the ministerial conference. Within certain fields, the perception of implementation differs between the views presented in the 2018 Bologna Implementation Report and Bologna with student eyes.

74th Board Meeting, 25-27th of April, Bled, Slovenia

Between the 25-27th of April we are holding our bi-annual general assembly (Board Meeting, BM) in Bled, Slovenia. The BM will decide upon ESUs statement for the ministerial conference, our views on the future of Education in Europe and the prospective European Educational Area and revise our Introduction to our policy papers. The meeting will also elect a new Presidency and Executive committee that will be starting their mandate from the 1st of July 2018.

[ESC35 in Tallinn](#)

From the 13th to the 17th of March ESU's unions gathered in Tallinn, Estonia to discuss inclusion in higher education, and specifically that of international students. Our members shared experiences, ideas and initiatives, found common grounds and new solutions. EÜL, our Estonian member, hosted the event in cooperation with the Executive Committee of ESU. Furthermore, ongoing political processes in Europe and ESU's work was discussed in open sessions. The input given at the [European Student Convention](#) (ESC) by our members will guide our responses and work towards the Ministerial Conference and the new EU initiatives.

Visa Directive responses

[We provided our response](#) to the open consultation on the EU's new visa directive which underlines policies that are essential for enabling students to make use of their opportunities to study abroad. Removing bottlenecks and easing the bureaucratic burdens put on the students through offering support and creating solutions tuned to the needs of students is the overarching goal. ESU has asked for visa permits to be granted for the entire duration of the study. Given the urgency for receiving a visa in the short timeframe between an accepted application and the need to move we want students to be informed about decisions no less than 30 days after the application. Solutions need to be found for students that are yet to have received a visa by the beginning of their study programme. Foreign students should also be given the opportunity to work in the hosting country, to make studying in other countries economically feasible to more students.

Launch of the Together Moving Forward 2018 Project

ESU has launched the call for the second edition of the “Together, moving forward” small grants project. Student initiatives leading to positive student and refugee interactions can be granted a sum of up to 10 000 €. The deadline is set for the 15th of April and our hopes are high that this round will also lead to innovative and forward-looking projects that ease the access to higher education for refugees and construct bridges between the student and refugee populations. Both the [call](#) and a [website](#) for the project can be found online. New for 2018 is that ESU has a shared project with the Organising Bureau of European School Students Unions (OBESSU) that is based on the same principles and shares objectives, but fosters cooperation across different levels of education as well.