

ESU written report for the XCVII Bologna Follow-Up Group meeting

Copenhagen, December 2025

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1. Latest ESU activities

○ 49th European Student Convention



From February 25th to 27th, the National Union of Students gathered in Galway, Ireland, for the 49th European Students' Convention, co-organized with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI). Considering the ongoing revisions of the ESGs and the ECTS Users' Guide, the event naturally focused on quality assurance of higher education. The convention aimed to inform members about these updates while also deepening their understanding of the topic. To achieve this, participants created their own microcredentials on a subject of their choice, drafting learning outcomes, assessment methods, and more.

○ **89th Board Meeting and new ESU Elected representatives**

The 89th Board Meeting (BM89) of the European Students' Union was held in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where we have chosen "Western Balkan Accession to the EU" as the theme of our seminar days. Notably, this was also the moment where we elected new representatives for the upcoming mandate 2025./2026. Lana Par as President, Arno Schrooyen and Daciana Pop as Vice-Presidents, Duarte Loper, Nora Angelova, Urszula Lis, Luka Lešić, Franziska Sophia Knogler, Bálint Koós, Katariina

Järve as members of the Executive Committee, and Bianca Pace was appointed as Human Rights and Organisational Development Coordinator.



○ **50th European Student Convention**

At the end of September, the lively town of Barcelos from Portugal became the host of student representatives from across the European Higher Education Area. Between September 21st and 25th, ESU held its 50th European Students' Convention, with the help of FAIRe - the national union of students from Portugal. ESU has gathered member unions to discuss the Multiannual Financial Framework of the European Union and the Erasmus+ programme. The event has combined training, simulations of EU decision-making processes, discussion, debates, planning and consultations.

○ **ESU QA Pool Training**

Between 12–14 October, the training for ESU's Student Expert in Quality Assurance Pool took place in Braga, Portugal. The theme of the training was "Quality with Equity - Strengthening the Social Dimension in Higher Education". ESU welcomed partners from ENQA, EQAR and A3ES, who contributed to the training of our student experts and their broader understanding of European quality assurance structures, the European Standards and Guidelines and good practices from various national contexts.

2. SPICE and INSPIRE

● **SPICE**

Stakeholder Perspectives on Implementation of Commitments in the EHEA (SPICE) has officially started on the 1st of September, 2025. The project is coordinated by the European Students' Union (ESU) with EUA, ENQA, EURASHE and IHS as partners.

Through SPICE, the 2027 edition of Bologna With Students' Eyes (BWSE/ESU), Trends 2027 (EUA) and the QA Mapping analysis (ENQA) will be published. SPICE aims to provide tools, training and institutional trend analysis and will use longitudinal data to measure the impact on student experiences. The first results will be presented during the 2027 Ministerial Conference. Overall, the goal of the project is to reduce commitment implementation gaps, deliver evidence-based insights and foster a flexible, inclusive and cohesive European Higher Education Area by 2027.

So far, two Consortium meetings have taken place: one online and one in Brussels, Belgium. ESU has also begun drafting the BWSE questionnaires together with IHS and two dedicated working meetings have been organised for this purpose - one in November in Brussels and another in December in Vienna.

● INSPIRE

Since the last BFUG, the INSPIRE project, supposed to support the work of TPG-D, has been granted, and the work has started. The project is coordinated by ESU with MFHEA (Malta and co-chair of TPG-D), MOES (Latvia and co-chair of TPG-D), IHS and IDE. The project held its first peer-learning activity in early November in Oxford, in Parallel with the TPG-D meeting. This first Peer-learning focused on Principles 2 and 3 of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA, with the Lifelong Learning Platform as a guest speaker.

In addition, the INSPIRE project will conduct three country reviews, and a call for interest was launched during the summer. In the end, 5 countries applied: Portugal, Greece, Romania, Lithuania, and Austria. After reviewing the applications, the consortium decided to move forward with Austria, Lithuania and Portugal. The reviews will take place in 2026.

3. Latest policy and publications

- [Serbia: ALL EYES ON SERBIAN STUDENTS](#)
- [Statement regarding the Wave of Student Protests in Europe](#)
- [Solidarity with student protesters and civil society in Turkey](#)
- [Statement on the Implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System \(ECTS\)](#)
- [Statement on the Rights and Inclusion of Disabled Students](#)
- [Statement on Vocational Education and Training](#)
- [Statement On Latvia's Commitment To European Values And The Istanbul Convention: Since when are human rights up for debate?](#)
- [Addressing discriminatory migration measures in Lithuania against non-EU/EEA international students](#)
- [Statement on the next Multiannual Financial Framework](#)

BM89 Resolutions

- [Belarus: Resolution on Forced Graduate Employment and Restricted Student Mobility in Belarus](#)

- [Netherlands: Students Must Not Be Priced Out of Sports and Culture](#)
- [Resolution on Defending the rights of students from Western Sahara!](#)
- [Resolution on Resisting the Far-Right Assault on Higher Education](#)
- [Resolution on the future of students housing in Spain](#)
- [Resolution on the banning of Conversion Therapy in the EU](#)
- [Belgium: Resolution against potential attacks on mobility, access to Higher Education and equality between European citizens](#)
- [Portugal: European Union's Multiannual Financial Framework \(2028-2034\) – Student Mobility, Internationalization and the Future of Erasmus+](#)
- [Resolution on the Restriction of Student Travel Rights in Romania through Emergency Ordinance no. 156/2024](#)
- [For a fair and inclusive European visa strategy](#)
- [Resolution on Ensuring Safety Standards in Student Dormitories Across Europe](#)
- [Resolution on protecting the rights of Hungarian minorities in Europe](#)
- [Resolution against the continued threat to funding for student influence in Sweden](#)

4.ESU Plan of Work

With the beginning of ESU's 2025/26 mandate the annual [Plan of Work](#) has come into effect. On a broader level ESU will focus on the next edition of Bologna With Student Eyes (BWSE); Union of Skills, VET and Lifelong Learning and the Council of Europe development of a Student Rights Charter.

The policy work will revolve around the following topics:

- **Social Dimension** (Living conditions and student support services, Revision of the EU LGBTIQ(A+) strategy, Student Support Services, Affordable Housing Plan, Intergenerational fairness, EU-Anti poverty strategy, Rights and Inclusion of Students with Disabilities, Students health and wellbeing)
- **European Education Area** (ESU body of student bodies in the alliances, legal statute, investment pathways, community of practice, higher education observatory, governance of EEA with focus on democratic representative student participation framework, Developments regarding European Degree (Label))

- **Quality of Education** (Digitalisation and AI, Interoperability, QA Pool of ESU, Recognition of Prior Learning, ECTS users guide, microcredentials, VET, ESGs, automatic recognition, learning and teaching, QA in transnational education, Doctoral student, STE(A)M Education, Skills portability initiative)
- **Fundamental Values and Solidarity** (Active citizenship education, Roma, Sinti and Travellers Community Students, Refugee and at-risk students, Academic freedom and fundamental values, EU macroeconomic governance and MFF, human rights and global engagement and solidarity, Student Protests, Defending Civil space on the European Level)
- **International Mobility** (Next Erasmus+ program, Visa strategy of the EU, Accessibility to Erasmus+ for Region 14 countries)

5. ESU upcoming events

Upcoming events	Topic	When/Where
ESU Board Meeting BM90	Date collection and promoting students rights	1st-7th of December, Vienna
Study Session "SLIDE – Student Leadership Initiatives for Democratic Engagement"	Exploring how student representatives can strengthen academic freedom, promote democratic governance in higher education, and reinforce the protection of students' rights. The programme will combine knowledge-building with practical tools and opportunities for peer exchange, supporting participants to develop meaningful initiatives within their unions and communities.	15th to 21st February 2026, Strabourg
INSPIRE PLA	The second PLA of the INSPIRE project, this PLA will focus on inclusive learning and student support services.	18th - 19th of February, Salzburg, Austria

6. Upcoming projects

Upcoming projects	Topic	Start
SPICE	The SPICE project – Stakeholder Perspectives on Implementation of Commitments in the EHEA – supports the implementation of Bologna Process commitments across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), focusing on student-centered learning, mobility, and quality assurance. By bringing together National Students’ Unions(NUSs) and higher education institutions, the project aims to bridge gaps and foster collaboration for advancing higher education reform.	September 2025
INSPIRE	INSPIRE supports the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education (PAGs) across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It addresses challenges in access, equity, and inclusion through evidence-based collaboration, assisting the BFUG’s TPG D on Social Dimension and helping EHEA member states advance inclusive policies for diverse and underrepresented student populations.	September 2025
BP4LnT	The “Bologna Process for Learning and Teaching (BP4LnT)” project aims to explore the implementation of student-centred learning (SCL) and lifelong learning (LLL) across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).	September 2025
INST.ALL	The Inclusivity For Students in Alliances	January 2026

	<p>(INST.ALL) project aims to tackle the ongoing challenges that hinder transnational cooperation in European Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), particularly in the realm of student rights and inclusivity. While the European Universities Initiative has significantly strengthened cross-border collaboration, persistent legal, and structural barriers continue to limit student participation and the implementation of a strong Social Dimension. INST.ALL seeks to bridge these gaps by advocating for policy changes and institutional reforms that ensure the upward convergence of student rights within University Alliances.</p>	
MESHE	<p>MESHE aims to foster a culture of lifelong learning across Europe by promoting the understanding and value of micro-credentials. With the growing availability of micro-credentials, the project seeks to raise awareness among learners of their benefits, while testing a unified European system for their exchange between universities.</p>	January 2026
NewFAV2	<p>The “New Building Blocks of the Bologna Process: Implementing a Common Understanding of Fundamental Values (NewFAV2)” project supports the implementation of Bologna Process commitments in line with the Tirana and Rome Communiqués. It contributes to the 2024–2027 BFUG Working Group on Fundamental Values by initiating the monitoring and assessment of fundamental values across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).</p>	September 2025
ELLIPSE	<p>The ELLIPSE Resilience Enhancement</p>	October 2025

	<p>project builds on the increase in student suicide rates in the last years and how to address mental health issues in Higher Education. By creating courses on suicide prevention.</p>	
<p>REACT</p>	<p>REACT is addressing the decline in physical activity among young adults during the critical transition from education to work. The project uses innovative active design, nudge techniques, and placemaking strategies to transform study and work environments into dynamic, activity-friendly spaces that enhance physical health, mental well-being, and performance. REACT begins with an in-depth desk research phase to map current sedentary trends and active design practices (workplaces and university context).</p>	<p>December 2025</p>
<p>StAR</p>	<p>The Students at Risk (StAR) project is a global initiative that supports students and scholars facing political persecution, conflict, or threats to their academic freedom. It promotes the EU fundamental right to academic freedom through advocacy, research, capacity building, summer schools, and network development.</p>	<p>December 2025</p>