

Plan of Work 2025–2026

Adopted at BM89, Banja Luka, May 2025

The European Students' Union (ESU) Annual Plan of Work (PoW) outlines the key areas of work and initiatives to be undertaken during the corresponding mandate of the elected political representatives. The programme points within the PoW are organised into thematic clusters of work (Social Dimension, EEA, Quality Assurance, Fundamental Values and Solidarity, Organisational Development and Capacity Building).

The PoW is closely aligned with ESU's [Strategic Political Priorities \(SPP\)](#), which define the organisation's long-term advocacy goals across strategic focus areas within a five-year framework.

To demonstrate these connections, programme points that are directly linked to the SPP are marked with [SPP]. Additionally, points that relate to work spanning multiple clusters are marked with [cross-cluster XX].

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1. Overarching political priorities

1.1. BWSE

ESU will rethink the questionnaires for the 2027 Bologna With Student Eyes publication with a long term vision of BWSE in collaboration with partners from the SPICE Project in which BWSE is embedded.

1.2. Student Rights Charter

Now that The Council of Europe has created the working group on the Student Rights Charter, ESU will co-chair this working group and coordinate with the NUSes that are in the Working Group. In parallel ESU will continue to support the work of NUSes that are advocating for a SRC in their national context, and will cooperate with NUSes that have similar documents at national or institutional level to collect and disseminate good practices and relevant examples. [SPP]

1.3. Union of Skills, VET and Lifelong Learning

1.3.1. Union of Skills and Lifelong Learning

ESU will accompany the discussions on the Union of Skills, especially with regard to funding and the different new initiatives. ESU will advocate for a lifelong learning perspective in education (especially regarding Up/Reskilling and VET). ESU will advocate for a better integration of lifelong learning in higher education through adapting higher education curricula, recognition processes, access pathways etc. to break up educational silo approaches. [SPP]

1.3.2. Vocational Education and Training

ESU will advocate for our priorities from the new statement on VET into relevant EU processes like the European Strategy for Vocational Education and Training (VET), the Skills Portability Initiative, and the pilot of a European VET diploma. [SPP]

2. Social Dimension (SD)

Policy

2.1. Living conditions and student support services

To support its advocacy work on student support services, ESU will, with the NUSes, draft an overview of student support services across the different countries. [SPP]

2.2. Resolution on LGBTIQ(A+) students

ESU will draft a new resolution on LGBTIQ(A)+ students for BM90, based on the BM72 resolution: *Statement on the experiences and rights of LGBTIQ(A+) students*.

Advocacy

2.3. EHEA TPG D on SD

ESU will co-chair the Thematic Peer Group (TPG) D on Social Dimension, in conjunction with the implementation of the INSPIRE project. ESU will arrange Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) and TPG D meetings and support unions in advocacy towards their national ministries to further the implementation of the Principles and Guidelines on the Social Dimension.

2.4. Student Support Services

2.4.1. Council recommendation on Student Support Services

ESU will engage with the European Commission but also with the future Irish presidency of the Council to create a Council Recommendation on Student Support Services. [SPP]

2.4.2. EU Affordable Housing Plan

ESU will engage with the HOUS committee in the European Parliament, the Commission and the special task force on housing to have a strong student housing component in the First EU affordable housing plan, but also to have specific requirements in building new student housing in future cohesion and investment funds. [SPP]

2.5. Union of Equality

2.5.1. Revision of the EU LGBTIQ(A+) strategy

ESU will advocate the revision of the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy for 2026–2030 to safeguard the progress already made and try to have a stronger focus on students.

2.6. Social Fairness

2.6.1. Intergenerational fairness

ESU will engage in the process of the development of a new EU Intergenerational fairness strategy, including by engaging in consultative processes and mapping relevant stakeholders in the Youth sector. ESU will advocate a vision based on already existing positions regarding the input for the strategy from a student and higher education perspective.

2.6.2. EU-Anti poverty strategy

ESU will develop a briefing note on the connection between higher education and poverty, both in regards to education as a preventative tool against poverty and regarding the phenomenon of student poverty and advocate for interlinkages between the new strategy and the work on (higher) education. [SPP]

2.6.3. New Action Plan European Pillar of Social Rights

ESU will review the current targets of the European Pillar of Social Rights and create a briefing note to be distributed to influence the review of the Action Plan.

2.6.4. Rights and Inclusion of Students with Disabilities

ESU will push for a harmonised European approach to disability rights and advocate for the European Union to revise its Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021–2030. The work will include demands for accessible mobility programmes, the involvement of disabled student representatives in policy-making and better data collection on the inclusion of disabled students.

Projects

2.7. INSPIRE

ESUs representative towards the BFUG TPG D on Social Dimension together with the project officer in charge of INSPIRE and an additional Hacks member will implement the project in conjunction with the co-chairing of the TPG D on SD.

2.8. IncluDE

ESU will participate in the literature review and look into different existing policies and initiatives on equity, diversity and Inclusion.

2.9. BLOOM

In late September, or the beginning of October, ESU will organise an International activity with AMLÉ and IGLYO on Sexual Health Education in Ireland.

2.10. ActiveSpaces

If granted, ESU will work on this project which focuses on physical activity as a solution to reduce stress and combat poor mental health among students.

2.11. ELIPSE

If granted, ESU will work on this project which tackles issues related to mental health and suicide prevention.

2.12. Project on Student Health

ESU will work on a project application with our associate members focusing on mapping health services, including mental health support services, available for students and their accessibility across Europe.

3. European Education Area (EEA)

3.1. Further development of the ESU Conference of Student bodies of the Alliances

3.1.1. Steering Committee of CoA

The Steering Committee of CoA will support Hacks in work related to managing and leading the Conference of Student Bodies of the Alliances.

3.1.2. 3rd Conference of Student Bodies of the Alliances

ESU will organize the 3rd Conference of Student Bodies of the Alliances event with the support of a NUS.

3.1.3. Fostering collaboration between NUSs and CoA

ESU will organize online meetings to promote good practice examples and exchange experiences regarding the collaboration between NUSes and student representatives of Alliances. This will offer strong grounds for further work and enhance progress in advocating for student rights within European University Alliances combining expertise from local, national and European levels. Moreover, ESU will actively work to engage more student councils in the CoA, encouraging their participation and integration into ESU's collective structure.

3.1.4. Continuous evaluation of Conference

ESU will continue internally monitoring and evaluation work of CoA based on feedback received from members.

Policy

3.2. Minimum criteria for student representation within the Alliances

ESU will finish the survey on student representation within the European University Alliances. Data collected will be the base for the work on developing an ESU position on minimum criteria for student representation in the Alliances. [SPP, Cross Cluster PR]

3.3. Gathering data for development of an ESU position for QA framework for the European University Alliances

ESU will collect data on the developments related to internal quality assurance policies and mechanisms through NUSes, QA Pool and CoA. Gathered data will be used to inform the creation of an ESU position regarding the creation of an external QA framework for the European University Alliances which will be used for further advocacy work.

Advocacy

3.4. Future of the Alliances

3.4.1. Community of Practice

ESU will contribute to the initiative through dedicated engagement in the External Advisory Board and through involvement in several Topical Groups.

3.4.2. Investment pathways

ESU will monitor the developments and gather knowledge through different channels including Community of Practice and Future4Alliances project. [SPP, Cross Cluster PR]

3.4.3. Monitoring Framework

ESU will sustain the advocacy and lobby efforts regarding establishing a transparent Monitoring framework of European Universities Initiative.

3.4.4. Governance structures

ESU will maintain lobby efforts for more systemic involvement of democratically elected student representatives into Governance structures of European University Alliances.

3.5. Higher Education Observatory

ESU will contribute to the future phases of the Higher Education Observatory's development and operation, including the feedback on indicators for the Student Benchmarking Tool.

3.6. European Degree (Label) criteria

3.6.1. Monitor developments regarding criteria

ESU will continue monitoring developments related to European Degree (Label) criteria and inform the Board and CoA. Advocacy and lobby efforts will be based on existing policies.

3.6.2. Launch of innovative joint European study programmes with a European Degree (Label)

ESU will gather data and contribute to the discussions regarding the Launch of innovative joint European study programmes with a European Degree (Label).

Projects

3.7. INST.ALL

If granted, ESU will work on advocating for upward convergence of student rights through administrative and legislative changes, aiming to fulfil key objectives of the European Universities initiative and European Education Area, especially the Inclusivity framework for Alliances.

3.8. EMBRACE

If granted, ESU will work on this project focusing on enhancing students' wellbeing in the university alliances.

3.9. Future4Alliances

ESU will contribute as associate partner in bringing students perspective to projects objectives; establish a legislative and technical framework that is favourable to European Universities alliances, and strengthen the coherence of national and regional funding for these alliances, complementing Erasmus+ and other European programme funds.

4. Quality of Education (Q)

ESU Structures

4.1. Quality Assurance

4.1.1. Work on enhancing ESU QA pool and support for enhancing national QA pools

ESU will continue to work on enhancing the QA Pool and dedicate to offering support and Peer-Learning opportunities to NUSes for development of their national QA Pools of student experts, including through targeted efforts capacity-building in countries with fewer QA Pool members to ensure regional balance, and by providing trainings for QA Pool members.

4.1.2. Work on International cooperation and increasing the number of partners

ESU will continue the work on identifying the opportunities for increasing the number of partners and on international (global) cooperation on student participation in quality assurance, through partnerships with GSF, AASU (within the HAQAA initiative) or INQAAHE.

Policy

4.2. Q policy paper

ESU will revise the Policy paper on Quality of Higher Education based on the feedback gathered from NUSes and ensure that it is up to date with all other policy developments.

4.3. Doctoral students

ESU will produce a policy paper on Doctoral students in EHEA based on the work of the Task force on Doctoral students and information gathered from NUSes.

4.4. Skills and Competences

4.4.1. Micro-credentials revision of statement

ESU will initiate a revision process of ESU's current statement on microcredentials, adopted at BM80, taking into account recent developments such as the implementation of the European Approach to Microcredentials, digitalisation

strategies, and national-level frameworks and will emphasize the need for accessibility for full-time students so that they get future-proof knowledge and skills.

4.4.2. Skills portability initiative

ESU will develop a position regarding the Skills Portability Initiative. [SPP, Cross Cluster IM, EEA and PR]

Advocacy

4.5. Digitalisation and AI

ESU together with the Task Force on AI and Digitalisation will work on different upcoming initiatives on the topic (e.g. EU 2030 Roadmap on the future of digital education and skills, EU AI in education initiative, CoE Draft Recommendation on teaching and learning about artificial intelligence) and continue to foster cooperation with relevant stakeholders in the sector. [SPP, Cross Cluster PR]

4.6. Learning and Teaching

4.6.1. STE(A)M education

ESU will follow-up with the STEM Education Strategic Plan. Lobby and advocacy efforts will be put into promoting and working on including a competences related perspective, including the advocacy to reintroduce the STEAM (A for Arts) concept and to include competences and humanistic oriented approaches into STEM initiatives. [SPP]

4.6.2. L&T: European Competence Framework for Academic Staff

ESU will develop a vision for the EU Competence Framework for Academic Staff and advocate towards it. Besides general knowledge on pedagogy, further foci will be the development of competencies regarding a diverse student body, digitalisation, GBV and active citizenship education. ESU will follow-up on the newly adopted Recommendation on Accessible Learning and Teaching with a focus on equipping educators to create barrier-free, student-centered learning environments. agenda. [SPP, Cross Cluster SD & PR]

4.7. Quality Assurance

4.7.1. ECTS Users Guide revision

ESU will continue with the work in the Advisory Group for the revision of ECTS Users Guide and contribute based on the ECTS statement and data gathered through BWSE. [SPP]

4.7.2. Revision of European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance and European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programs (EA)

ESU will continue the work on ESG and revision focusing on including the quality assurance of digital learning tools and methods and reflecting the social dimension of education and public responsibility and student involvement in governance. [SPP]

4.7.3. Student participation in QA procedures and governance

ESU will continue promoting and safeguarding Student participation in QA procedures and governance by collaborating with various stakeholders; ENQA, EQAR, EUA and national QA agencies. But also through QA pool training, EQAF workshop and work with NUSes. [SPP]

4.8. Recognition

4.8.1. Recognition of Prior Learning

ESU will engage with the European Commission, DG EAC and DG EMPL and future Cypriot Council presidency and advocate for a revision of the Council Recommendation on validating non-formal and informal learning (2012) with the inclusion of specific adapted provisions for HE. [SPP]

4.8.2. Automatic Recognition

ESU will continue working within the CoE working group on Automatic Recognition and contribute with the students perspective. ESU will also actively contribute to the work of TPG B on Automatic Recognition. [SPP]

Projects

4.9. BP4LnT

ESU will examine existing definitions, practices and implementation gaps from students' perspective in relation to the implementation of the SCL approach and student perception of institutional policies on LLL, using SCL Toolkit as reference point. ESU will also organize two peer-learning events, one on SCL and one on LLL for the Board as part of statutory events, and two peer-learning events for attendants of the Conference event.

4.10. Applied QA

If granted, ESU will work on increasing student participation in the quality assurance of Universities of applied sciences together with EURASHE.

4.11. IDE-SCelt

If granted, ESU will contribute to developing a three-workshop faculty development programme to equip HEI instructors and leaders with inclusive, student-centered, and digitally enhanced teaching strategies. It fosters pedagogical innovation by integrating AI-driven tools, micro-credentialing, and open-access resources. The project enhances teaching excellence, digital transformation, and institutional capacity-building through a scalable Train-the-Trainer model, facilitating long-term impact across European HEIs.

4.12. SHIFT

If granted, within this project ESU will contribute to creating a response to the challenges of academic rigidity, skills mismatches, and the limited recognition of learning outcomes from mobility experiences, directly contributing to the priorities of the European Education Area and the Erasmus+ Programme.

4.13. MESCHE

If granted, ESU will work on this project which aims to foster a culture of lifelong by promoting the understanding and value of micro-credentials among learners, while testing a unified European system for the exchange of micro-credentials across universities to promote quality assurance and encourage collaboration among higher education institutions (HEIs) in Europe.

4.14. PATHWAYS2SKILLS

If granted, ESU will work on this project which aims to develop a scalable guide for universities to improve career guidance for adult upskilling, focusing on SME workers and vulnerable groups, by identifying effective counselling tools and regional skills needs.

4.15. BHPS III

If granted, ESU will work on fostering Bologna Key Commitments through training and capacity building opportunities for NUSs.

5. Fundamental Values and Solidarity (FaVS)

Policy

5.1. Statement on Active Citizenship Education

ESU will develop a statement on Active Citizenship Education. [SPP]

5.2. Resolution on Roma, Sinti and Travellers Community Students

ESU will write and propose a resolution on Roma, Sinti and Travellers Community students and advocate towards the CoE initiative "Guidelines on Romani policy and pedagogy in line with CM/Rec(2022) on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture".

Advocacy

5.3. Refugee and at-risk students

5.3.1. A European approach

ESU will Advocate for a European approach to a human rights defender support tool for politically persecuted students at risk and continue to support NUSes who are working on the topic. [SPP]

5.3.2. VISA Strategy

In EUs new VISA strategy, ESU will advocate for ensuring swift access to VISAs for students and academics at risk who are coming to Europe for protection. [SPP, Cross cluster IM]

5.4. Fundamental values in HE and Active Citizenship Education

5.4.1. Digital citizenship

ESU will build up knowledge on digital citizenship and digital citizenship education and explore its linking points with higher education. [SPP, Cross Cluster Q]

5.4.2. Academic freedom and fundamental values

ESU will continue its advocacy for academic freedom and fundamental values.

5.4.3. Security and Defence and their interlinkages with higher education

ESU will explore the interlinkages between defence and security policy vis-a-vis higher education and students, mainly in relation to the Union of Skills, the European Research Area and current budget negotiations. ESU will further explore the topic of peace education.

5.5. EU macroeconomic governance and MFF

ESU will advocate for sufficient funding for HE-relevant programs and initiatives in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), including with regards to KA1 (Mobility) and KA2 (Cooperation Partnerships, Alliances, EHEA, Operating Grant) and through the LLLP WG on the MFF. [SPP, Cross Cluster IM]

5.6. Human Rights, Global Engagement and Solidarity

5.6.1. Global Student Forum

ESU will continue its work in GSF, strengthen global partnerships and look to expand its network further.

5.6.2. Student protests

ESU will support NUSs to defend student rights on national levels. We will support all student protests in line with ESU's values in Europe, advocating their rights and

spreading awareness of violations of student rights towards European decision-makers. [SPP]

5.6.3. Support regarding Ukraine and Belarus

ESU will continue its support and advocacy work for students and student organisations in Belarus and Ukraine. This includes supporting those who are facing challenges within Belarus and assisting the diaspora of Belarusian students and student activists in exile. At the same time, ESU will support Ukrainian students – both within the country and those who have fled – by advocating for their equal access to higher education in Ukraine and across Europe. ESU will also contribute to efforts aimed at the reconstruction and modernisation of the Ukrainian higher education sector. [SPP]

5.6.4. EU enlargement

ESU will continue to explore how to support NUSs from candidate countries regarding the education chapters of the enlargement process. ESU will follow the initiative “an EU fit for enlargement: policy reviews and reforms” and explore how to engage with it. ESU will keep connecting with EU delegations in candidate countries and getting NUSs to contribute to the Enlargement Reports and consultations before the Screening Meetings

5.7. Defending Civil space on the European Level

ESU will continue our work to defend the shrinking civic space and attacks on NGO funding at the European level, in close cooperation with our partners, including through the WG on NGO Funding. ESU will follow the EU initiatives “EU Strategy to support, protect and empower the civil society” and “European Democracy Shield”.

Projects

5.8. Project on Academic Integrity

ESU will develop a project to engage with the topic of academic integrity, especially as to promote the topic from a student point of view and regarding developments in the field of digitalisation.

5.9. MOUSTACHE

ESU will reapply with the MOUSTACHE project on active citizenship education in higher education.

5.10. StAR Project

ESU will work on Students At Risk and Refugee Students within the StAR Project (if granted).

5.11. NELS

ESU will implement the deliverables connected to the NELS project which develops microcredential courses on student leadership and activism.

5.12. EngageAll

ESU will keep working within the EngageAll project to increase awareness and recognition of student engagement and civic participation in the acquisition of key competences among all Professional Higher Education (PHE) students.

5.13. WEB-CTRL

If granted, ESU will work on this project who will propose a virtual exchange for students in the Western Balkans.

5.14. EU-Care

If granted, ESU will work on this project to harmonise the implementation of educational corridors for refugees across the European Education Area.

6. Internationalisation and mobility (IM)

Policy

6.1. Statement/Resolution on BIPs

Blended intensive programs (BIPs) are increasingly used as a solution to offer shorter mobility opportunities to students who might not be able to go on traditional mobility. ESU will adopt a statement/resolution outlining our views on BIPs, including the challenges students might face when participating in BIPs. [SPP, Cross Cluster Q and SD]

Advocacy

6.2. Access to Erasmus+ for Region 14 and Hungary

ESU will continue to advocate for establishing the Faroe Islands and reestablishing Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Hungary as members of the Erasmus+ program. [SPP]

6.3. Next Erasmus+ program

ESU will advocate for sufficient funding of Higher Education (HE) in the next Erasmus+ program period (2028-2035), especially for HE mobility & KA2 cooperation partnerships. [SPP, Cross Cluster PR]

6.4. Visa Strategy of the EU

By the end of 2025, the European Commission will present a new Visa strategy which should be connected with the Union of Skills objective to attract international students. ESU will advocate for a strong student component in this strategy to facilitate access to Higher Education for non-EU students. [SPP, Cross Cluster with PR]

Projects

6.5. AUREA

ESU will continue coordinating the AUREA project and organize an online event based on the first results and prepare the interim report. ESU will contribute to the report on the current state of automatic credit recognition and to the creation of a common definition on what full credit recognition is.

6.6. ROME

If the project is granted, ESU will work on tackling the financial barriers to access mobility for different groups of students, looking into different existing financial support and seeing what their impact is on access to mobility.

6.7. Rainbow+

If the Rainbow+ project is granted, ESU will lead a two-year European initiative focused on researching and developing resources to foster more inclusive and supportive environments for LGBTIQ+ students in higher education, particularly within mobility programmes like Erasmus+.

7. Organisational Development and Capacity Building (ODCB)

Internal Policy/Work

7.1. Alumni Network

An alumni network strategy will be developed, including aspects such as knowledge-sharing sessions to harness alumni knowledge and experience, in-person alumni meetings, online alumni networking meetings, a (bi-annual) alumni newsletter and a structured network including membership fees.

7.2. Statutory events

A plan for the statutory events will be made at the beginning of the mandate, and updated throughout the year. The plan will include relevant deadlines, a template structure for ESCs, and ideas for relevant capacity-building activities for the different events. ESU will also explore the possibility of changing the structure of the ESC to make it more policy-based and to allow Board members to contribute to policy-making from the very beginning, including the brainstorming phase.

7.3. ESU database with all policy and content

ESU will develop a comprehensive Excel database cataloguing all ESU policy papers and resolutions, sorted by topic, year, cluster and sub-cluster topics. Alongside this, the EC will establish a structured digital folder system containing all related presentations used in seminars, conferences and external engagements, in order to improve institutional memory, and support future team members.

Projects

7.3. SYNC'UP

If granted, the project will aim to strengthen the capacities of member organisations of each consortium by providing them with opportunities for capacity-building events focused on specific areas of expertise.

7.4. ESU Statutory Events

ESU will explore the possibility of EU funding streams to co-fund statutory events (e.g. CERV, youth-related calls, etc.).

7.5. NUSs Mobility & Exchange Project

ESU will explore the possibility of capacity-building targeted funding streams to enable mobility programmes between student unions.