

# Building Skills for knowledge Economy through Implementation of University Reforms

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**KEN**

Knowledge  
Economy  
Network



# A long story short

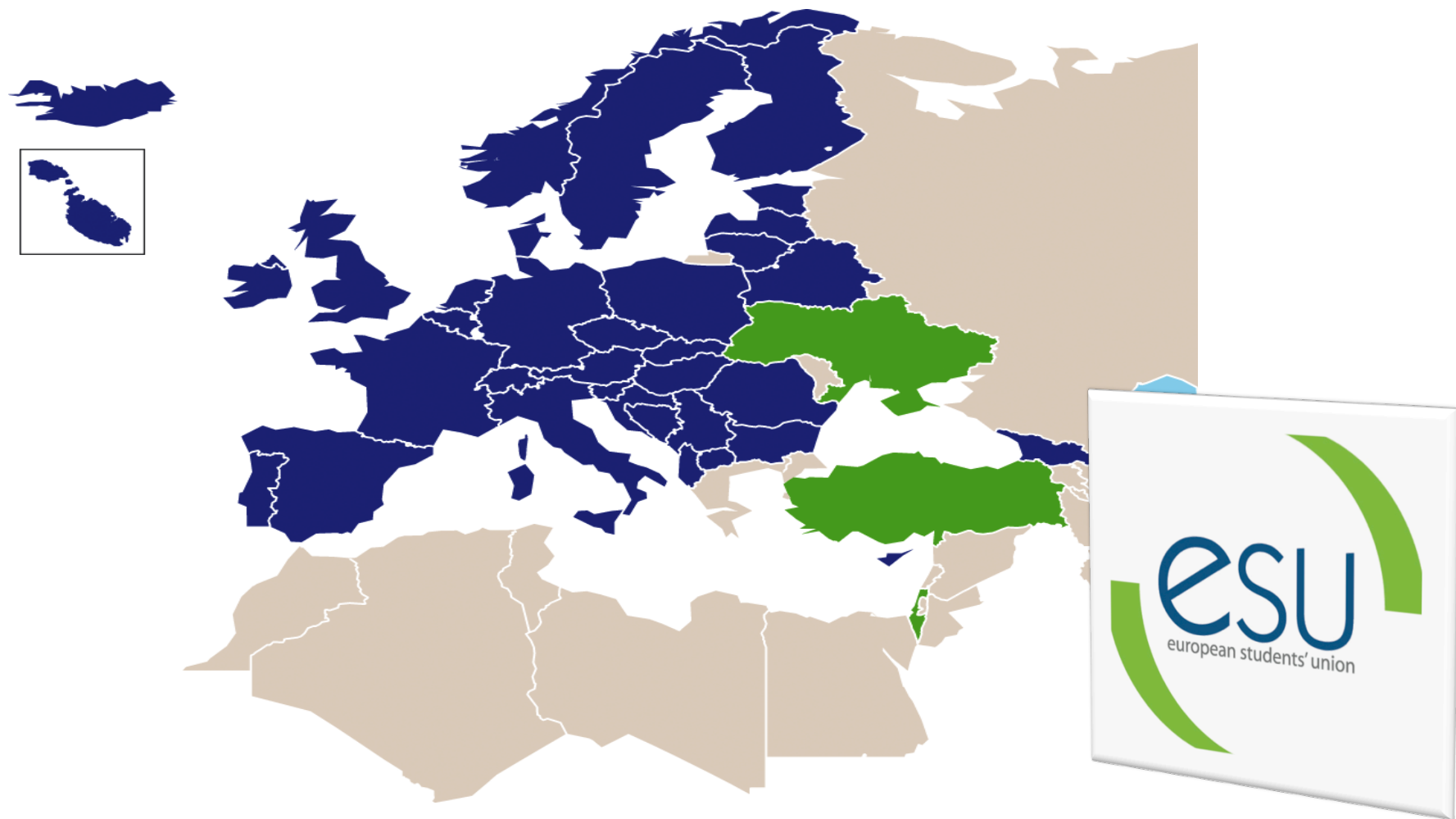
- 1982: WESIB was founded by seven unions
- 1989: The Wall fell and WESIB changed to ESIB
- 1999: The Bologna Process starts and ESIB creates content committees
- ESIB turns into ESIB – The National Unions of Students in Europe
- 2007: ESIB is renamed into ESU
- 2009 : The Bologna Process celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary



# Over 11 million of students in Europe!

- 45 members = National Unions of Students
- 38 countries
- Stakeholder role: UNESCO World Higher Education Forum + 10 Paris, 2009; OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ); European Union; European Commission; Council of Europe; Bologna Follow Up Group

# Over 11 million of students in Europe!



# Breaking the borders

- There should be **no binary divide** between work and education, and we need to see both **rights** as interdependent and interrelated.

# No student left out

- Involving students more **actively** into curricula development and overall reforms.
- Students are increasingly being viewed as **passive customers** rather than members and **active partners** leaving a severe impact on HE systems and as well society in general (ESU, Budapest Declaration).

# Europe 2020 strategy

- The way forward for the European Union (EU) to thrive economically and socially is through an **innovation-driven** and **knowledge-** and **competence-based economy**.
- The three pillars of Europe 2020 strategy are **smart**, **sustainable** and **inclusive** growth. It is only through **research and innovation** that such goals, state of society and economy can be reached. **Education** and **Research** goes hand in hand

# A New Renaissance

- There is a need to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and undertaking more applied research.
- To do so, as stated by the new European Research Area Board (ERAB) one needs to consider '**excellence**', '**openness**' and '**mobility**' .
- ESU' s reaction on the FP8 Green paper.

# Student-Centred Learning

- The new way of learning is **problem-based**, going out in the field to collect data, digest this and transform it into academic knowledge.
- The demands of research intensiveness and student-centred learning are **not at all competing**. We need the best researchers to teach students to conduct research and find their own answers.

# SCL - problem-based learning

- We need problem-based learning to create the best researchers, but also **the best workforce** and fully developed individuals.
- Student-centred learning makes it necessary for students to undertake research; it makes them **eager to learn.**

# Introducing more practical experience during studies

- Internships are educational opportunities which help to **bridge the gap** between studies and work.
- Work-placements embedded in study programmes and on-site learning are thus advisable .
- There is a need to further **integrate such experiences in curricula** to give a more practical approach to the programmes being offered by the institution.
- Internships **should not exist outside of** (further and formal) **education** - it then indeed becomes an apprenticeship or something that is cheap labour.

# Curricular reform - integrating work placements

- There is currently lack of clear **quality guidelines** regarding internships.
- **Curricular reform** should therefore be combined with **work placements** or **traineeships**, support services for seeking employment and stakeholder involvement along proper graduate tracking.

# Employment upon graduation

- ESU believes that by facilitating greater **cooperation** of HEI with enterprises and economic actors will ensure that curricular developments take place and in return this will permit students to have **adequate chances of employment upon graduation.**

# Collaboration with business in curricula development

- There is a need for further **communication** between governments, HEIs and employers in curricula development.
- A study has shown that in some countries **professional organisations** and employers are **rarely involved** in curricular development.
- Approach of Institutions and academics need to also change – **more open**.

# Collaboration... a fine balance

- ESU has always commended cooperation of HEI with stakeholders in the industry and the world of employment that ensures the **value of studies for students** yet it also highlighted that this should not be done at the expense of **academic freedom**.

# Education - its role in the labour market

- Education is a tool that prepares individuals for the labour market but that complimenting this, an education system must put **the interest of the citizens of society at its centre** and one of its main goals must be their holistic development.

# Long or short vision?

- According to a number of NUSs, excessive focus on employability within the bologna debate was leading to the creation of **reforms suited exclusively to the needs of the labour market.**
- Reform on curricula and HEI should be geared towards **achieving desirable social goals** rather than **short term political objectives.**

# Funding

- **Trust funds:** Individuals and companies should be encouraged to give donations for specific projects or for the HEI in general.
- The funds donated to the HEI can be tax deductible to further encourage it.

# Funding from third parties

- Partnership with industry will provide financing to:
  1. embark on innovative research activity and further develop its activities beyond the reach
  2. facilitate development of research programmes that would generate the interest of international foundations.

# Life-long learning

- In a fast-paced economy, life-long learning should be given due importance.
- Life-long learning must be put at the forefront of the Higher Education strategy owing to its ability of:
  1. Retraining and skills updating. Lifelong learning is above all essential at a transitional stage in one's professional life.
  2. Reaching out to those who opt to further their education further on in life
  3. Acting as cultural enrichment for ageing populations
  4. Furthering education for specific needs

# Student Advancement of Graduates Employability (SAGE)

- SAGE will contribute to improving the quality and efficiency of higher education through promoting outcome based education and building **stronger links to the labour market.**

Aims at:

- building policies aimed at **improving the rate of graduate employability** at European, national and local level
- studying **connectivity between higher education institutions and the economy.**

Thank you!

More information  
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