

# Bologna Process - are we witnessing a real change in governance philosophy?

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# ESU - A long story short

- **1982: WESIB was founded by seven national 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 Students in Europe**
- **2007: ESIB is renamed into ESU**
- **2007, October 17<sup>th</sup> : 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



# Over 11 millions of students in Europe!

**49 members**

**38 countries**



# ESU – key data

- **Mission:** promoting the educational, social, economic & cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant organisations & institutions
- **Areas of work:** the Bologna Process, The Lisbon strategy (education&training 2010), mobility, equal opportunities, students' financing, qualifications frameworks etc.

## HE - main aims

ESU outlines **four major aims** of higher education:

- ✓ The promotion of active citizenship and democracy
- ✓ Developing the labour market
- ✓ Knowledge development
- ✓ Personal development

# Shift in HE paradigm

- Increased demand of HE
  - Globalisation
  - Social dimension
- Mobility of students and staff
- Need for regional and international recognition
  - QA
  - LLL

Change in institutional  
governance

# The European Experience within the Bologna Process at institutional level

- **Institutional autonomy**
- **Formal inclusion of stakeholders in governance structures**
- **Recognising the need for students involvement at all levels**

# Fundamental change = STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

- Students = legitimate stakeholder
- Students' involvement in all levels of decision making
- Students in Quality Assurance
- Students involved in curricula changes
- Creating the ultimate goal -> **student centred learning**

# Students as legitimate stakeholder

- No effective reform can be made without **ownership**
- **Participation and contribution** to the design and implementation of HE reforms are essential to create a sense of ownership
- **Essential input**, as students are the ‘users’ of any educational or pedagogical tools
- **Diversity** in the needs must generate **flexibility and cooperation**, based on a public support system

# European realities

- Status granted by ministerial communiqués → national **formal recognition** by law provisions
- More self-evident in high-level structures than at the bottom level
- **Little recognition** when talking about **strategic planning, curricula development and budget issues**
- Diversity in the forms of recognition, but usually seen as a part of a check-list
- **Not** all student representatives are **sufficiently empowered** to contribute to the decision-making process

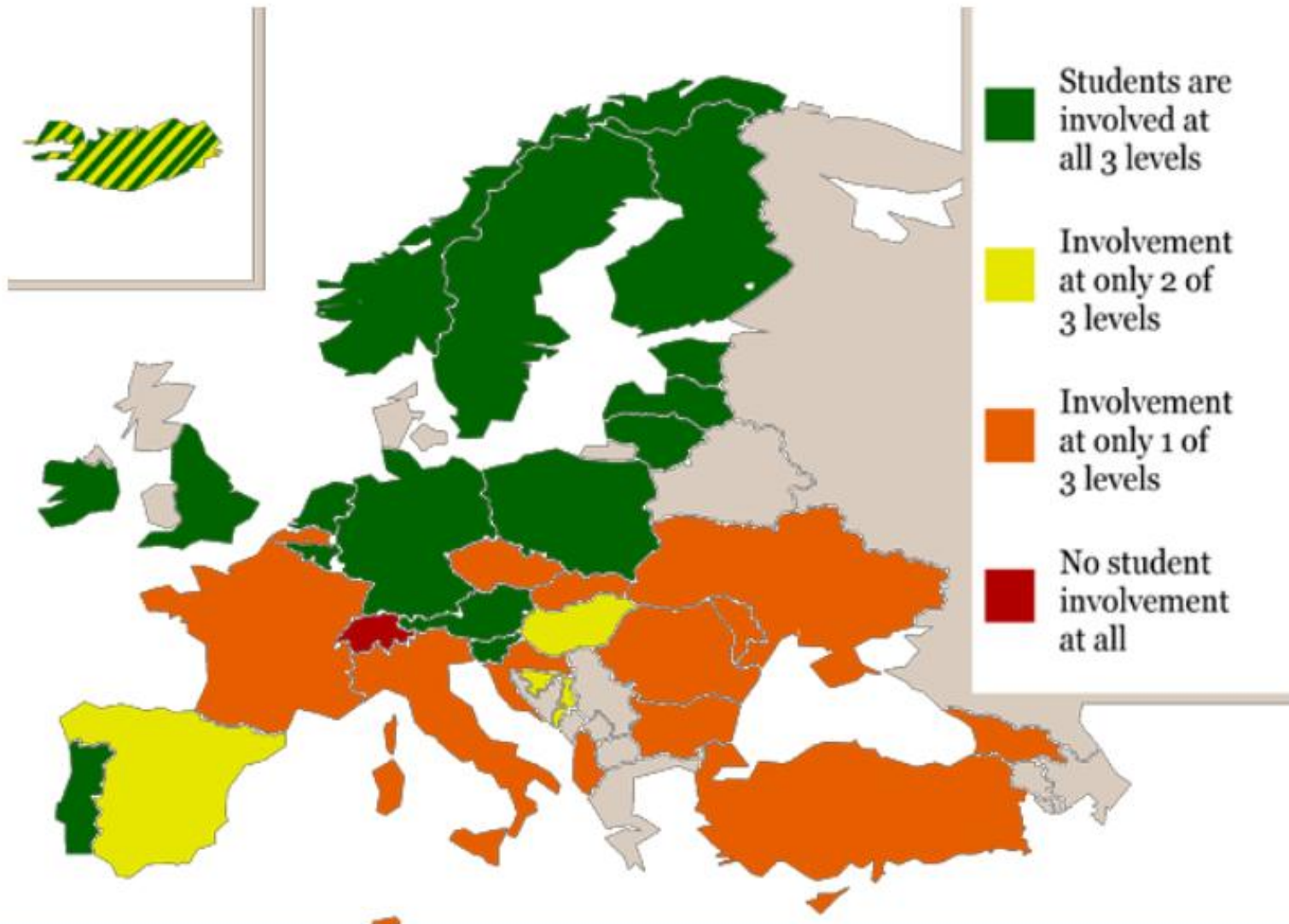
# Students in all levels of governance structures

- Students are usually involved in national and institutional governance structures due to legislative impositions
- Involvement at department/faculty/programme level is very difficult in some countries
- In several cases, students are not allowed to take part in decisions concerning staff or budget matters.

# Students in Quality Assurance

- **3 levels:**
  - **National**
  - **Institutional**
  - **Faculty/programme/departmental**
- **More involvement at top levels**
- **Sometimes regarded as a formal exercise: in most cases the “questionnaire culture” does not work**
- **Different situation in Europe (see next slide)**

Fig.3: map student participation in QA



# Student Centred Learning

- Focus on the **diverse students' needs** (social dimension)
- Fostering **flexibility and focus on learning outcomes** (flexible learning paths)
- The role of the teacher as a **guide** and not only as lecturer -> teachers training
- **Mainstreaming LLL** in HEI's missions
- **Shift in governance** -> including students in the decision making processes, not only in election exercises
- Needs **supplementary financial effort**, but it's more effective in the long run

# Main future institutional challenges in the eyes of European students

- Reaching the desired mixed-goal : **university autonomy and more inclusion of the academic community**
- **Balancing democratic decision-making and public accountability of HEI**
- **The new institutional organization needs to be better focused on the student and its needs, while avoiding to be commercial or too hierarchical**

# Questions?

# Thank you for your attention!

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