



RESOLUTION

“Students at Risk”

COUNCIL OF MEMBERS/
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
MADRID, SPAIN, 27-28 NOVEMBER 2015

Freedom of speech, democracy, and the rule of law are at the core of the European Youth Forum, and are central to our beliefs. The European Youth Forum must, therefore, based on our values, have a responsibility - insofar as is possible - to secure the safety and freedom of human beings and to support their fight for these values.

Throughout modern history, students and student movements have been in the vanguard of every non-violent revolution and are rightly perceived as a threat to many authoritarian regimes. A common way to counter this is for those in power to use the threat of expulsion or other harm to a students' prospects at a critical phase in their life.

We as the youth of Europe believe that these students have to be supported in the most optimal way and that the "Students at Risk" programme is a way to achieve this.

The aim of "Students at Risk" is to target students who have been expelled from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) due to their political fight for human rights and democracy. The programme aims to give those students the opportunity to finalise their studies, as knowledge and critical thinking are crucial for their personal development, thus reducing the risks otherwise incurred by activism. The programme is based on information from local cooperation partners like NGOs, political foundations and think tanks, embassies, and the European Endowment for Democracy, all of which are aware of and can explain the students' situation. This programme has been shown to be successful in Norway, Poland and the Netherlands, among other countries.

In order for a student to qualify for the programme, and to prevent abuse of the programme, they must meet the following criteria:

The student must have been expelled for non-violent activism in support of democracy and human rights. If possible, this reason should be referred to in the letter of expulsion. If the student has formally been given an alternative reason for the expulsion, they must prove that the true reason is due to their non-violent activism.

The student must prove their non-violent activism through newspaper articles, photos, films, online articles or prosecution.

A mechanism should be put in place to make sure that candidates for the programme can not abuse the purpose of the programme, e.g. a letter from an NGO or an institution such as the European Endowment for Democracy or from an embassy. The letter must refer to the type of activism in which the student has participated and should describe whether it has occurred for a longer period of time.

The student must have sufficient skills to complete a degree in the country where they will be studying.

The student must meet the European standards for qualifying for a Bachelor or Master programme at a European HEI.

The aim of the programme is to facilitate democratic change. Implementation of the programme must ensure that it does not either become a factor contributing to brain drain nor conflict with general immigration or asylum policy.

We, the European Youth Forum

- Believe in the freedom to fight for a democratic future;
- Strongly condemn the expulsion or suspension of students, or the threat thereof, as a means to suppress non-violent activism;

Call upon the European Parliament and the Member States:

- To support the introduction of "Students at Risk" at a European level as a complementary part of the Erasmus+ programme.

Call upon the European Commission:

- To allocate funding for Higher Education Institutions of the EU who want to engage and participate in the "Students at Risk" programme. Financially, this should not affect the already existing programmes.