



European Democrat Students

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On budget cuts for higher education in times of crisis

- 2 We, European Democrat Students, the member organisation of the European People's Party:
- 3 - Regarding the impact of the financial and economic crisis on higher education systems
- 4 across the EU,
- 5 - Having the strong belief that "Europe 2020" is the guiding line for all 27 member states,
- 6 - Focusing on the recognition of higher education as a central pillar for sustainable economic
- 7 growth at EU level by the European Commission,
- 8 - Recognising the principle of knowledge based economy,
- 9 - Emphasising that higher education is a factor for the economic recovery,

Call on governments to:

- 11 1. Ensure that education budgets are not cut even as economies contract. Moreover, a stable
- 12 effective and efficient higher education system will cushion the negative effects of any financial
- 13 and economic crisis on itself.
- 14 2. Increase investment in innovations.
- 15 3. Focus education on obtaining generic skills. Nowadays labour market demands skillful and
- 16 well qualified people.
- 17 4. Prioritise higher education and research funding.
- 18 5. Update higher education curricula and legislation and develop accreditation, management
- 19 and legislation. Inefficient and ineffective courses, subjects, curricula and programmes should
- 20 be improved or merged in accordance to students' and labour markets' demands.
- 21 6. Reform the process of HEI accreditation. It should be objective, precise, and more of it
- 22 should depend on students.

- 23 7. Introduce rating systems for the HEI. It will make higher education institutions focus on
24 better results and high quality.
- 25 8. Ensure transparency when spending public resources, especially in state financed higher
26 education institutions. Separate academic from financial management at universities.
- 27 9. Encourage mobility within the EU by taking advantage of all opportunities (Erasmus,
28 Erasmus Mundus, etc.). It will gradually bring the process of synchronisation of EU higher
29 education agenda and principles, good practices, etc.
- 30 10. Sustain investment in higher education and research. Effectively and efficiently invest in
31 higher education and tuition systems and at the same time improve results in the field.
- 32 11. Engage (or enlarge the share of) private investors in higher education as another viable
33 solution, closely related to making a higher education institution attractive (good reputation and
34 results).
- 35 12. Coordinate and interact at EU level. There should be a common policy dialogue on what is
36 happening in different countries in the field of higher education. On that basis strategies should
37 be drafted, adopted and implemented in correspondence to "Europe 2020".
- 38 13. Reform public research and innovation systems. Implement market principles as public
39 financed higher education institutions do not compete for higher quality and often provide poor
40 education, skills and knowledge.