

Mind Our Education: Global Call For Action - 17th of November

The pressure to succeed academically and have your entire self-worth denoted by grades and numbers; The pressure to outperform your peers and be the very best, juggling the rest of your life to fit into this race; The pressure and expectation that family and personal issues should not be facilitated and understood by the formal education system. This is the situation where students find themselves in education systems all over the world. In this highly stressful education environment, and with the world changing every day, the pressure that students face often threatens their mental health, which concretely impacts on their potential to fully exercise their right to education. Towards the International Students' Day we call on school and university students from all over the world to unite in calling to guarantee a healthy education environment for all students!

OBESSU, the **Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions**, brings together 31 national unions and organisations from 24 countries to fight for school students' mental health and general well-being to be respected, protected and fulfilled in order to fully exercise the right to education.

*Since 1975 we have fought for better learning conditions, trying to bring more attention to student welfare and a stronger voice in education policy-making. Leading up to this year when on the **17th of November**, International Students' Day, we highlight **how the lack of supportive and preventive school environments affect the mental health and general well-being of school students.***

ESU, the **European Students' Union**, is the umbrella organisation of 45 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 39 countries. The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students in Higher Education at the European level.

*For ESU, it is paramount to engage in policy-making processes which relate to the social dimension of learning and the conditions around it. One of our strategic political priorities for the period 2018-2020 is to **advocate for a better specific support for students with health issues including mental health.***

A healthy school environment is far from being guaranteed for all. An internal OBESSU investigation has shown that school environments are highly stressful for school students. The increased pressure to succeed and stand out amongst our peers in the 21st century is pushing students to their limits, which often result in ill

mental health which in turn can result into excluding people from continuing their education, especially in difficult social environments or disadvantaged areas where mental health is still highly stigmatised.

Moreover, the personal dimension of education is often undervalued. Schools and Higher Education Institutions as we know them nowadays, do often not represent a safe space to share difficult background situations and problems connected to the personal sphere. The staff at all levels often lacks expertise to deal with this dimension and act upon it. It is only with student-centred learning and the cooperation of all stakeholders in education that we can achieve better recognition and support systems.

Not having proper access to psychological and mentoring support services and right information results in students not knowing how to manage their mental health and often leads to self-diagnosis. *“Nearly half of the European countries neither assess the quality of mental health services for children and adolescents, nor have guidance in place for the transition from child to adult mental health services.”* (WHO 2017)

We are demanding that all students be **guaranteed a healthy environment in order to fully access education**. In particular, we demand mental health education to be part of national curricula, free and high-quality psychological and mentoring support, medical check-ups for all students, full recognition of ill mental health as a factor impacting on School and Higher Education students performance, student-centred learning and inclusion for all students, regardless of their background.

How can you support and join the campaign?

Co-sign the campaign as soon as possible via email at 17now@obessu.org, use [these communication materials](#), share OBESSU and ESU social media and website posts using the hashtags **#MINDourEducation**, **#17Now** and **#InternationalStudentsDay**, and tag **@OBESSU** and **@ESUtw** and the organisations you want to reach out to. The campaign will be running from now until the 17th of November 2018.

Stay tuned and follow OBESSU on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and ESU on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).