



## **BM 77 – Malta**

### **Fighting for students' rights in Higher Education Institutions for Music and Arts in Italy**

The defence of students' rights in the Academies of Fine Arts, Conservatories, Dance and Drama Academies and Higher Schools for Industrial Arts has to be considered as a mandatory duty, for the role they have in the preservation and the renewal of culture and art. In the Italian HE system, the aforementioned institutes have been categorised as AFAM ("Higher Education Institutions for Music and Arts").

However, their proper funding and the creation of a coherent mechanism of degree conversion has never been on the national agenda, leading towards a state of despair and uncertainty. Currently, AFAM diplomas are not classified as degrees by the Italian Law. This has created shambolic problems under the side of job searching and international mobility, making thus the pursuit of a career in the EHEA troublesome.

Although enrolments into AFAM schools have risen by 7% per year since 2010-2011, there has not been an investment plan by the Italian government, making the funding for artistic education dramatically lower than the funding for university education. This leads to a denial of the right to study to a higher number of students every year.

Furthermore, since July 1st, 2019 the AFAM personnel who was hired with a precarious contract (namely Co.Co.Co.), and consisted in a large part of the teaching body, were not able to teach anymore due to a government decree, hence putting a halt to regular teaching. Directors cannot hire professors, since no regularization of the positions has been put forward by the government. In addition, the hiring of teachers via non-precarious contracts is blocked due to the budget cuts approved in the years 2009-2010 (see "Riforma Gelmini" and "Decreto Brunetta"). Several students cannot currently complete their academic career and risk losing their academic grants, due to the unavailability of courses and exams.

Finally, the most recent national law on the functioning of AFAM schools is dated 1999, yet it has shown problems ever since. For example, the number of exams sessions granted by law is of 3 per year, a number significantly lower compared to the norm of Italian universities and this creates visible problems to every AFAM student. Moreover, AFAM schools are currently not involved in the



programming of post-degree careers: as of today, no regularised Ph.D are available for AFAM, making the access to the labour market harder (especially for what concerns positions in public education).

Considered all of the above, the European Students' Union expresses its concern and position on the following issues:

AFAM schools need more investments, starting off with the forthcoming 2020 budget law. ESU demands a strong stance by the Italian government and the Italian Ministry of Education, so that a comprehensive plan of renewal of structures and services is planned and financed for the whole higher education system. ESU supports UDU's and CPCSAI's (the Conference of the Presidents of Art Schools Student Councils) campaigns to ask for more funds.

The Italian government must classify the diplomas issued by AFAM as degrees of equal value to the ones issued by universities. ESU supports UDU's and CPCSAI's lobbying for a fair recognition of studying careers.

New teaching personnel must be immediately recruited with stable contracts. Teaching in art academies cannot mean to be subject to uncertainty for one's future, risking to worsen dramatically the quality of teaching.

The national regulation on AFAM must be reformed, in order to grant the same rights for all of students in Italy, beginning from a fair evaluation. Post-degree paths, including Ph.D.s, must be created and financed adequately.

**Proposed by:** UDU

**Seconded by:** FEF, LIS

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The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 46 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 40 countries. The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO.