



**European Students' Union (ESU)**

Fighting for students' rights since 1982

[www.esu-online.org](http://www.esu-online.org)

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## **Press Release COVID-19: Position Paper - Monday, 6th of April 2020**

**The recent outbreak of COVID-19 and its implications on public and private life** have over-rolled Europe with an unmatched gravity. We currently find ourselves at the beginning of an omniferous crisis that will have a persisting impact on the future of our continent and the European Union. Unemployment rates are skyrocketing while authoritarians seize the opportunity to manifest their power by using the crisis to bypass parliaments and rule by decree. The most severe health crisis in a century is rapidly turning into a political and economic crisis.

**Robert Napier, President of ESU** remarks “We want to highlight the incredible efforts and the personal sacrifices made by students and interns that currently stand in the frontline of the fight against this deadly disease while being exposed to massive physical and psychological pressure as well as the danger of infecting themselves and their loved ones.” He continues demanding that “governments and higher education institutions need to ensure adequate monetary remuneration and academic recognition of the unspoken exertion students, interns and civilian servants are undertaking in the scope of this pandemic.”

**Sebastian Berger, ESU's Vice President** notes that “COVID-19 represents a historical juncture for the European Union. The EU's ability to implement coherent policy as well as targeted political and economic measures will decide on its faith in times of uprising nationalism and growing Euro-scepticism.” He furthermore states that measures such as the Recovery Action Plan “need to become a channel of green transition for the European continent: A Green Deal based on disinvestment on carbon-intensive sectors and investment in carbon-neutrality of production, transportation and delivery of energy and goods. The economic crisis resulting from the current health crisis must not become an excuse to delay the action on climate and environmental sustainability.”

The European Students' Union and many of its members are currently supporting mobile and international students throughout the whole world by providing knowledge on how to return to their home countries. “We urge governments to intervene by securing the repatriation within the EU and beyond its borders of all those who are willing to return by providing safe and cost-efficient means to do so”, says **Gohar Hovhannisyán, Vice President of ESU** in conclusion.