



European Students' Union (ESU)

Fighting for students' rights since 1982

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SOLIDARITY STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY-DATE PROPOSAL IN UKRAINE

European Students` Union (ESU) is an umbrella organization of 45 National Students` Unions representing more than 20 million students across Europe. Together with the Ukrainian Association of Students (UAS), an independent national students` union of Ukraine, which unites people studying in the Higher Education Institutions as well as students` governments and other self-governing students` organizations, we actively aim and work towards proactive support and promotion of democratic and human rights, academic freedom in Ukraine as well as Europe as a whole.

Ukraine's education system, especially nowadays, is facing long-standing challenges, including the struggle with raising the quality of learning, provision of inadequate skills required in modern societies, and a level of public spending on higher education that does not realistically support the efforts to achieve high quality of teaching. Additionally, it causes deterioration of the public's trust in education. ESU stands with all the students in Ukraine and supports the students` movement towards the introduction of major educational, democratic and organizational changes, reforms and programmes.

The former Soviet rule and the rapid social transformation that took place after the collapse of communism still carry the burden of some of the problems with the quality of the HEIs specifically¹.

The current presidency is working towards students' benefit by supporting and promoting student involvement and introduction of educational reforms.

Students, along with their representatives and activists, have played an essential role in provoking the changes within the Ukrainian HEI system, achieving such major shift with the pro-European(Maidan) protests in 2014². This united platform has brought attention to, and enabled, changes in the Ukrainian universities and the quality of life for students and faculty staff through new legislations and the implementation of democratic processes.

International Youth Day is an international awareness day introduced and supported by the United Nations with the main purpose to draw attention to a given set of cultural and legal issues surrounding youth. Youth Day in Ukraine is commemorated on the last Sunday of June. This date was accepted during Soviet times (1958) as a Soviet holiday "The day of Soviet youth". Currently, the last countries that celebrate Youth Day on this date are Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.

The Office of the President of Ukraine notes that the purpose of postponing the date of the Youth Day celebration is to support the desire of Ukrainian youth to integrate into the European community, as well as the initiative of youth organizations and movements with the decree coming into force on January 1, 2022.³

Ukraine is a modern European country, and in order to support the desire of Ukrainian youth to integrate into the European community, to promote the values of democracy and freedom, **ESU, together with UAS, strongly encourages that the day dedicated to celebrate Ukrainian youth be celebrated on the date endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1999, August 12th as the International Youth Day.**

¹ <https://wenr.wes.org/2019/06/education-in-ukraine>

² CHANNELL-JUSTICE, E. (2014). FLEXIBILITY AND FRAGMENTATION: STUDENT ACTIVISM AND UKRAINE'S (EURO)MAIDAN PROTESTS. *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 58, 59-65. Retrieved August 29, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24583215>

³ <https://www.ukrgate.com/eng/?p=18306>