

Minutes of the European Liberal Students Network meeting in Oslo November the 26th 2006

Were present: Lukas Schweiger (LSF – Austria), Gotz Galuba (LHG – Germany), Thomas de Jager (JD – Netherlands), (NLSF – Norway), Fred Maghe (FEL – Belgium).

The main issue of this meeting was to find some common ground and some common issues that our MOs could raise together and discuss while we all know that student policies (if we except the Bologna process) are drawn up by member states governments and by universities themselves. We will mainly try to influence and focus on universities. Our main goal will be to try promote liberal values on European campuses. Having said that, we have:

- discussed the name our group should take. “LIFES” (Liberal Forum of European Students) has been proposed but the real “Life” word in its plural version is spelled “LIVES”. We decided not to choose the name yet since some MOs were absent.
- reminded that we had decided to campaign on European campuses during the Winterthür meeting about the use and importance of the EU in people’s every day lives. Students in Biology, Engineering, Medicine, etc. are not always convinced EU plays a key role since they barely discuss “public topics”. Insisting on this, even if it seems so clear to us, is never pointless. This would be part of our lobbying job. Regarding that aim, for instance, FEL will definitely support the European Citizen’s Initiative and will have students campaigning to collect signatures in favour of it. The “No Visa” campaign is also a great opportunity to promote the Liberal values throughout Europe. For instance, once again, FEL will translate the leaflet in French so that it can be distributed on Belgian French Community campuses. Much wider campaigns can be launched on other European matters: campaigning at that level resembles more a rulebook, raising a broader spectrum of issues.
- talked about ways to make it easier for students to go and study abroad. For instance, we have learned that 70% of the Dutch students would like to use the Erasmus program to study abroad while only about 15% actually do it. We think it could be good to have universities standardizing their programs and ECTS policies in a deeper way. Moreover, there are discrepancies in between universities in terms of facilities to get housings for students coming from other countries.
- stated that this forum would be a good opportunity to create awareness for national problems. If anything interesting which is “student related” happens, this forum should be the place to say it and see how our fellow members react to it.

- agreed to promote anything that would support research in Europe, exchanging knowledge, etc. Nevertheless, we are not in favour of making exchange programs compulsory for all European students.
- decided to work, if needed, with student counsellors who are usually very close to student's concerns. It would be good to have liberal representatives in these councils.
- pointed out that, in European universities, fees for students outside the EU is usually much more expensive. In the spirit of the "No visa" campaign, "Equal fee" could be an idea...
- eventually discussed about the idea of rising a seminar about student related policies. Would it be possible? Where? When? What about the budget? Would LYMEC get involved? Possible to get EU funding?

We kindly ask the representatives of the European Liberal Student Network Organisations who will attend the IFLRY GA in Andorra to meet again and discuss these topics and these minutes.

The next European Liberal Student Network will take place either "somewhere" (to be discussed) in March or in Berlin during the LYMEC seminar where we will most likely draw up a plan of action that will be presented to the GA.