



January 21, 2021

STUPS places inclusion and equality as a university priority

Throughout yesterday, the European STUPS network, co-financed by the Erasmus + Program, and led by the University of Huelva, brought together almost fifty student leaders, university managers and research staff of recognized prestige in an online activity. The objective was to test the first version of a European index of student participation, which, among other elements, tries to shed light on inclusion and equality in the university legislative context of Europe.

In this event, in which participated people representing Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, Italy, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the Czech Republic, the complexity of this pioneering tool in the measurement and comparison between student participation systems of the different countries of the European Union was addressed. In this sense, issues such as dual university models came to the fore, such as the Austrian one, which houses a generalist university system and a technical one, with notable differences within the same country.

This new European index of student participation is based on a system of indicators that evaluate the potential for participation offered by the different countries around four dimensions: government and management; academic and quality; social, cultural and sports; and a transversal to the previous ones of equality and inclusion. Regarding the weighting of these dimensions and their respective indicators, an interesting debate was opened that will continue over time to give the participants the necessary margin to mature their positions.

Finally, the entry barriers to student representation, which usually leave the most disadvantaged groups out of it, occupied an important part of the debate, evidencing the added difficulty of combining the active defence of the student body with the need to maintain a job, with the care of relatives or due to a physical or sensory disability.

In a short time, the results of this new index will be known, which will collect the valuable contributions of the experts who have participated in this pilot test. Simultaneously, the STUPS team is planning the extension of this measurement and comparison tool in collaboration with academic and government authorities.

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STUPS - Student Participation Without Borders is an ambitious project co-financed by the Erasmus + program of the European Union, which objective is to strengthen and promote the participation of students in the good governance of higher education institutions from an inclusive perspective.

The STUPS consortium, led by the University of Huelva (Spain), is integrated by five members, the University of Évora (Portugal), the University of Applied Sciences of Upper Austria (Austria), the European Union of Students (Belgium) and the Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency of the Junta de Andalucía (Spain).

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