

Resolution of the Student Council for Higher Education

The recent budget proposal of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Thorbjørn Jagland, came as surprisingly oblivious to the Student Council for Higher Education (ŠRVŠ). We acknowledge the current situation in which austerity measures are necessary to be taken, however, we consider it regrettable when resources allocated for the youth sector and their education are the first to be sacrificed, especially looking at the recent developments throughout Europe. The rise of the far right, Euroscepticism, homophobia as well as xenophobia are increasingly present in the public sector. The initiatives that were funded through the youth sector were specifically targeting these prevailing dangers. The funding that was provided to the NGOs was used to fight hate speech and intolerant attitudes by engaging with the youth and enhancing critical thinking and constructive discussions.

It is questionable whether ending the financing of the youth sector should even be considered as a sufficient solution for the current crisis. ŠRVŠ recognizes the importance and advocates for working with and for young people and young human rights defenders. Furthermore, we call for rejecting the proposed contingency plan of the Secretary General as the partial agreement is a voluntary cooperation between member states, requiring extra funding and a complete dismantlement of the structures that have been developed over the last decades. We are strongly against the forming precedent of youth sector being primarily affected by a crisis. We should invest systematically in our future and protect our future investments.

Text in question:

Page 10, point 49 of the Secretary General's Contingency Plan. *"Should it be required to implement the contingency plan, the Secretary General considers it necessary to lessen this impact across sectors and preserve the Council of Europe's leading role in key areas of its work. He therefore proposes to end the financing of the Organisation's youth sector activities from the Ordinary Budget as of 1 January 2021 and to set up a new enlarged partial agreement on Youth. This would provide a possibility to continue with part or all current activities, as well as an opportunity for increased financial support from the European Union. Over the coming months a study would be undertaken and a more detailed proposal would be presented that would allow this enlarged partial agreement to be in operation by 2021."*