ANTRAG

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Antragstext

OUR VISION FOR A STUDY PROGRAM THAT FITS YOU – OUR PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY

We want to create an academic experience that empowers you, celebrates individuality, and meets the challenges of our modern world. We believe in education that adapts to you – not the other way around. Our proposals seeks to create opportunities for every student to thrive through international experiences. At the heart of our vision is internationalization as a key to excellence and innovation. By strengthening global exchange, we can foster creativity, cross-cultural understanding, and groundbreaking ideas. We are dedicated to building stronger connections between universities, expanding mobility programs, and preparing students to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

Our mission is clear: to expand opportunities for students through global exchange, fostering creativity, cultural understanding, and innovation. Programs like ERASMUS+ have already opened doors, enabling thousands to gain life-changing experiences across Europe. Therefore, it is even harder to understand why the EU Council is planning to cut the ERASMUS+ budget. This shows there is still so much more room for improvement, especially in the European dimension of higher education. This is why we are committed to expanding and enhancing international mobility.

YOU DERSERVE NOTHING BUT THE BEST! Together, we can turn this vision into reality. Explore our concepts in our election program here:

1. YOUR STUDIES, YOUR LIFE, YOUR PATH

1.1 Start Up Your Future: The Founders’ Semester

Learn how to turn great ideas into successful business – right on campus. We want to provide an alternative to 9-to-5, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and equipping you with the tools to succeed. Internationalization plays a crucial role, particularly in the early stages of founding a business. As globalization progresses, it becomes increasingly important for startups to expand internationally at an earlier stage. Why not begin this journey with a study abroad experience?

To promote the entrepreneurial spirit, we call for the establishment of startup centers that provide essential support, including assistance in raising both private and public capital. Additionally, we aim to expand consulting services and introduce a founders’ semester, with its structure and requirements determined by each individual university. We also propose the awarding of ECTS points for founding a company, and the enhancement of transparency in spin-offs to encourage more student-led ventures.

Demands:

- Promote the entrepreneurial spirit by setting up startup centers that also provide support in raising capital
- Expand student consulting services
- Introduction of a founders’ semester
- Awarding of ECTS points when founding a company
- Increasing transparency in spin-off options

1.2 No More Endless Prerequisite Chains: Study What Challenges You

Access to new areas of knowledge should not be limited by rigid prerequisites. Where foundational skills are required, bridging modules or assessments should provide the necessary support. Equally important is the swift and straightforward recognition of ECTS credits earned format foreign universities. These credits must integrate seamlessly, ensuring that diverse educational experiences are acknowledged and valued. At the heart of these changes lies the commitment to fostering a mindset that prioritizes curiosity and exploration over rigid achievement metrics. By implementing these measures, we aim to dismantle barriers, embrace individuality, freedom, and prepare the education system for the demands of the future.

Demands:

- abolish prerequisite chains

- Ensure quick acceptance of credits from foreign university courses as part of degree requirements

1.3 Freedom for Studies: Drop Attendance Rules, Strengthen Hybrid Learning

It is time to transform how we approach university education. Students should no longer be held back by rigid attendance policies that hinder meaningful learning. If you are already an expert in a subject, why should you first take the beginner's course when you can attend it concurrently? We call for a bold shift towards practical, hands-on education that values engagement and growth over mere physical presence. Outdated attendance requirements unfairly impact international students, limiting your ability to thrive and to gain as many experiences as possible. By abolishing mandatory attendance and embracing hybrid learning formats, we can provide the flexibility you need to succeed. This freedom allows you to explore your host country, reconnect with loved ones, and fully engage in your educational journey.

Unfortunately, many degree programs have become monotonous and rigid, depriving students of the opportunity to actively shape their study plans. Additionally, the increasing "schoolification" of many programs limits personal development and interdisciplinary education. To foster personal growth and specialization, students should be given more freedom to pursue their own interests. Universities must aim to nurture independent, critically thinking individuals. Therefore, we call for at least 15% of courses in all curricula to be self-

chosen electives, with a special focus on offering practical, career-oriented electives.

Demands:

- Abolition of mandatory attendance in lectures and courses
- Free choice between in-person and online teaching for as many courses as possible
- Free licenses for e-learning platforms, cloud services, and study-related software
- Increase student autonomy by ensuring at least 15% of all curricula consist of freely chosen electives

1.4 Summer and Winter School Revolution: Study Whenever Works for You

To enhance academic flexibility and global engagement, universities should expand summer and winter school programs that offer the same quality and credits as courses during regular semesters. These programs allow students to advance their education during breaks without compromising degree requirements, while also breaking the traditional semester structure, enabling students to maintain momentum and graduate sooner. Expanding short-term mobility and hybrid international experiences provides students with flexible global learning opportunities, whether physical or virtual.

A common issue is the selective recognition of study achievements from other institutions, often due to curricula that are overly content-focused. To simplify credit transfer, universities should shift towards outcome-based curricula that focus on learning outcomes and competencies. Streamlining credit transfer mechanisms for both domestic and international students will support seamless academic mobility.

Demands:

- Expand comprehensive summer and winter school programs equivalent in quality and credit to regular semesters

- Expand short-term mobility programs and modern, hybrid international experiences

- Permit students from other universities (both domestic and international) to enroll in summer and winter schools with simplified credit transfer mechanisms

1.6 Cross Borders, Expand Horizons: Boost Erasmus, Joint and Individual Study Programs

Expanding Joint Study Programs and individualized study options, alongside strengthening university alliances, is essential to positioning the university as a gateway to international experience. Integrating optional mobility windows into curricula is a key step in this effort, providing students with flexible opportunities to study or intern abroad without delaying their academic progress. These initiatives offer students valuable opportunities for global engagement, enhance mobility, and foster intercultural competencies. However, their full potential can only be realized with stronger promotion to increase awareness and participation. As emphasized in performance agreements, the expansion of university alliances is vital for advancing collaboration, research synergies, and shared resources. Such efforts not only enrich the academic experience but also strengthen the university’s international profile and rankings, making them a strategic priority. International mobility, however, is as essential for faculty as for students. We advocate for team-teaching models to enable short-term faculty exchanges abroad, allowing educators to gain and share valuable experiences. To sustain these benefits, returning teams should remain active and contribute to "international classrooms," where diverse students learn together, fostering intercultural skills and global readiness.

Demands:

- Expand Joint Study Programs and individualized study programs

- Foster and strengthen university alliances (beyond programs like Erasmus)

- More cooperation between Austrian and foreign universities

- Integrate optional mobility windows into curricula

- Strengthen faculty mobility through team-teaching models and "international classrooms" to enhance intercultural competencies and global collaboration

2. CAMPUS LIFE MATTERS

2.1 Empowering Campus Life: More Events

We demand more events to be organized on campus because they are not just activities – they are lifelines. They represent connection, community, and belonging. We also call on the ÖH to organize more events aimed at fostering networking between incoming and local students. These events break down cultural barriers, build friendships, and spark cultural exchange. They transform a campus from a mere place to study into a vibrant, welcoming home for all students.

Demands:

- Whether it is legendary parties or athletic events like the ACSL, we want more unforgettable activities that bring campuses to life!

- ÖH-organized events to foster networking between incoming students and local students

2.2 Support for Student Clubs and Initiatives

We strongly advocate for the establishment and support of various clubs and initiatives that allow students to meet, grow, and expand their horizons. Debate clubs, reading groups, and teams for technical competitions must be actively supported by universities and the ÖH, providing them with essential resources such as facilities and financial backing. To further support this, we demand the

establishment of a dedicated website by the Federal ÖH, showcasing the various existing student clubs and initiatives across Austria, while also providing clear information on available funding opportunities.

In particular, we call for the creation and promotion of international networking among students through European Students' Associations. These are student-led organizations that operate at a European level to advance cross-border collaboration and exchange. A prime example of this is the European Law Students' Association (ELSA).

Demands:

- Promote students' associations, initiatives, clubs, and groups

- Establish a dedicated website by the Federal ÖH, showcasing the various existing student clubs and initiatives and providing information on the funding opportunities

3. FAIR PLAY

3.1 Reducing Barriers for International Students

It is time to break down the barriers that burden international students! Reducing targeted bureaucracy is increasingly recognized as essential for facilitating student and researcher mobility, promoting international exchange, and enhancing the quality of educational institutions.

Currently, students from third countries applying for a residence permit in Austria are required to prove they have €703.58 per month to cover living costs until the age of 24. After that, the required amount inexplicably jumps to €1,273.99 per month – a figure that assumes their cost of living suddenly nearly doubles overnight. We demand an immediate reduction of the required amount to €703.58 per month for all students, regardless of age. Additionally, while the Bologna Process aimed to harmonize degree recognition across member states, many graduates still face bureaucratic hurdles. We call for automatic recognition of degrees within the European Economic Area (EEA) to ensure smooth mobility. Lastly, to improve accessibility, all official documents, including those from the government, universities, and ÖH, must be available in English so that language does not hinder students' understanding of their rights and

obligations.

Demands:

- Reducing the required amount for students from third countries applying for a residence permit to study in Austria

- Automatic recognition of degrees within the European Economic Area (EEA)

- Official documents, including government forms as well as Federal ÖH and university paperwork, must be translated into English more comprehensively

3.2 Affordable and Accessible Housing for International Students

Finding housing is one of the biggest challenges for international students in Austria. High rents, limited availability, and complex bureaucracy make it difficult for them to settle and focus on their studies. To address this issue, the ÖH must take decisive action. Simplifying bureaucratic processes for international students seeking housing is essential to make finding and securing accommodation easier. Additionally, the ÖH should expand its offerings of affordable housing, especially as it manages many student dormitories, to better meet the needs of international students. Furthermore, dedicated ÖH support services should be established to assist students in navigating housing challenges, providing guidance and resources to alleviate the burden. Ensuring access to affordable and accessible housing is crucial for creating an inclusive and equitable environment where all students can thrive.

Demands:

- Simplify bureaucratic processes for international students seeking housing

- Create more affordable housing options for international students, especially by encouraging the ÖH, which manages student dormitories, to expand its offerings

- Advocate for dedicated ÖH support services to assist students in navigating housing challenges

3.3 Harmonizing European Education: Bologna Process

Achieving greater harmonization within the European Higher Education Area is essential for fostering mobility. We demand an EU-wide database with information on study programs, costs, and admission processes, helping students make informed decisions about studying abroad. This database should be maintained by the EU Commission and updated by member states, with potential collaborations of non-EU universities. Additionally, the lack of automatic recognition of academic degrees remains a major barrier. To fulfill the Bologna Process' goals, degrees should be automatically recognized within the European Economic Area (EEA). A unified academic calendar will also simplify exchange programs, eliminate confusion, and ensure greater consistency for students transitioning between institutions. Additionally, we seek to address the unfair distribution of ECTS credits. We demand greater transparency between universities and regular reviews to ensure that ECTS points accurately reflect the actual workload of courses, particularly in technical fields.

Demands:

- Create an EU-wide database providing information on degree programs, costs, and admission processes

- Harmonize national academic calendars and create a unified European academic calendar

- Ensure fair distribution of ECTS credits

3.4 Reward Excellence, Support Independence: Expand Scholarships Now

Expanding scholarship opportunities for students from EU and third-party countries is essential for promoting academic excellence and supporting student independence. Scholarships help alleviate financial barriers, enabling talented individuals to pursue higher education. By increasing funding options,

universities can attract top students globally, fostering a diverse and competitive academic environment.

However, many scholarships are not accessible to international students. We strongly advocate for making these scholarships available to all students, especially merit-based scholarships.

In addition, scholarships specifically designed for international students must be expanded. These programs are crucial for addressing the unique challenges faced by students from abroad, such as higher tuition fees, relocation costs, and the lack of local support networks. By increasing the availability and scope of these scholarships, universities can create a more inclusive environment that attracts a diverse range of students from around the world. Additionally, there is a strong demand to increase awareness for scholarships, particularly through platforms like the ÖH website or similar channels.

Demands:

- Expand attractive scholarship opportunities for students from EU countries and third countries

- Demand increase awareness for scholarships (via the ÖH website or similar)

3.5 Open Doors, Open Minds: Level the Field for International Students

Empowering the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) by making it independent from both the ÖH and university governance will enhance its ability to support international students. This autonomy enables ESN to create tailored programs, advocate effectively, and better integrate international students into university life. Furthermore, initiatives like buddy programs play a crucial role in ensuring a smooth start for incoming students by providing peer support during their first weeks. In addition, workshops should be introduced to help international students navigate life in Austria. These workshops should cover topics such as the Austrian job market, understanding employment rights, using FinanzOnline, and other relevant aspects of daily life. Providing guidance on administrative processes, including work permits and visa renewals, is essential for easing their integration into everyday life. These efforts, combined with multilingual support services and intercultural training, will create a welcoming, inclusive, and interconnected campus environment.

Demands:

- Make the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) independent from the ÖH and university governance

- Increase support for ESN with resources like spaces increase support for them

- Make buddy programs a fundamental part of your international experience

- Offering targeted workshops on the Austrian job market, employment rights, taxes, and using FinanzOnline to help international students navigate local systems

- Providing career guidance, as well as a support hub for legal and administrative processes, including work permits and visa renewals

- Multilingual support services and intercultural training for all members of the academic community

3.6 Promoting Languages

We aim to expand access to German language courses for international students in Austria, helping them integrate into academic life and the job market more effectively. To ensure accessibility, these courses should increasingly be offered online, providing flexibility for students. At the same time, we support the promotion of foreign language skills to prepare all students for success in an increasingly globalized world.

To ensure fairness and mobility, we propose the harmonization of language certifications across all universities. This will create transparency, improve comparability, and make it easier for students to pursue academic and professional opportunities, both in Austria and abroad.

Demands:

- Increasing the availability of German courses for international students, with a focus on offering more online options

- Promote foreign language courses

- Harmonize language certifications across universities

3.7 European Student ID

To simplify mobility, a digital European student ID should be created under the leadership of the European Union that securely stores student data. This centralized system would reduce administrative workload for universities and could also facilitate the digital transfer of study information. A digital European platform would be needed to store the data, which should be encrypted according to modern standards. The ID should also fulfill the traditional roles of a student ID, such as granting access to university libraries. Initially, students should have the option to apply for a European student ID during a pilot phase. Additionally, students should have the choice to request a physical card, with the cost being covered by the students themselves.

Demand:

- Create a digital European student ID

4. European Student Union

The European Students' Union (ESU) serves as the umbrella organization for national student unions at the European level. We regret that the ESU has not fully utilized the opportunity to advocate for meaningful collaborations among European countries in the higher education sector, instead focusing increasingly on identity-politics issues. We urge the Austrian Students' Union (ÖH) to push for a stronger integration of the European Higher Education Area within the ESU by advocating for the demands outlined above.

Demand:

- Strengthen European Higher Education integration within the ESU