

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.

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

23 **1. YOUR STUDIES, YOUR LIFE, YOUR PATH**

24 **1.1 Start Up Your Future: The Founders' Semester**

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

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

39 **Demands:**

- 40 • Promote the entrepreneurial spirit by setting up startup centers that also
41 provide support in raising capital

- 42 • Expand student consulting services

- 43 • Introduction of a founders' semester

- 44 • Awarding of ECTS points when founding a company

- 45 • 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 from 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:

- Get rid of 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

78 and interdisciplinary education. To foster personal growth and specialization,
79 students should be given more freedom to pursue their own interests.
80 Universities must aim to nurture independent, critically thinking individuals.
81 Therefore, we call for at least 15% of courses in all curricula to be self-
82 chosen electives, with a special focus on offering practical, career-oriented
83 electives.

84 **Demands:**

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

92 **1.4 Summer and Winter School Revolution: Study Whenever** 93 **Works for You**

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

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

107 seamless academic mobility.

108 **Demands:**

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

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

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

116 **1.6 Cross Borders, Expand Horizons: Boost Erasmus, Joint and**
117 **Individual Study Programs**

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

136 **Demands:**

- 137 • Expand Joint Study Programs and individualized study programs
- 138 • Foster and strengthen university alliances (beyond programs like Erasmus)
- 139 • More cooperation between Austrian and foreign universities
- 140 • Integrate optional mobility windows into curricula
- 141 • Strengthen faculty mobility through team-teaching models and
142 "international classrooms" to enhance intercultural competencies and
143 global collaboration

144 **2. CAMPUS LIFE MATTERS**

145 **2.1 Empowering Campus Life: More Events**

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

153 **Demands:**

- 154 • Whether it is legendary parties or athletic events like the ACSL, we want
155 more unforgettable activities that bring campuses to life!
- 156 • ÖH-organized events to foster networking between incoming students and
157 local students

158 **2.2 Support for Student Clubs and Initiatives**

159 We strongly advocate for the establishment and support of various clubs and
160 initiatives that allow students to meet, grow, and expand their horizons. Debate
161 clubs, reading groups, and teams for technical competitions must be actively
162 supported by universities and the ÖH, providing them with essential resources
163 such as facilities and financial backing. To further support this, we demand the
164 establishment of a dedicated website by the Federal ÖH, showcasing the various
165 existing student clubs and initiatives across Austria, while also providing
166 clear information on available funding opportunities.

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

172 **Demands:**

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

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

177 **3. FAIR PLAY**

178 **3.1 Reducing Barriers for International Students**

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

183 Currently, students from third countries applying for a residence permit in
184 Austria are required to prove they have €703.58 per month to cover living costs
185 until the age of 24. After that, the required amount inexplicably jumps to
186 €1,273.99 per month – a figure that assumes their cost of living suddenly nearly
187 doubles overnight. We demand an immediate reduction of the required amount to
188 €703.58 per month for all students, regardless of age. Additionally, while the
189 Bologna Process aimed to harmonize degree recognition across member states, many

190 graduates still face bureaucratic hurdles. We call for automatic recognition of
191 degrees within the European Economic Area (EEA) to ensure smooth mobility.
192 Lastly, to improve accessibility, all official documents, including those from
193 the government, universities, and ÖH, must be available in English so that
194 language does not hinder students' understanding of their rights and
195 obligations.

196 **Demands:**

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

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

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

202 **3.2 Affordable and Accessible Housing for International**
203 **Students**

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

216 **Demands:**

- 217 • Simplify bureaucratic processes for international students seeking housing

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

221 • Advocate for dedicated ÖH support services to assist students in
222 navigating housing challenges

223 **3.3 Harmonizing European Education: Bologna Process**

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

238 **Demands:**

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

241 • Harmonize national academic calendars and create a unified European
242 academic calendar

243 • Ensure fair distribution of ECTS credits

244 **3.4 Reward Excellence, Support Independence: Expand** 245 **Scholarships Now**

246 Expanding scholarship opportunities for students from EU and third-party
247 countries is essential for promoting academic excellence and supporting student
248 independence. Scholarships help alleviate financial barriers, enabling talented
249 individuals to pursue higher education. By increasing funding options,
250 universities can attract top students globally, fostering a diverse and
251 competitive academic environment.

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

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

263 **Demands:**

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

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

267 **3.5 Open Doors, Open Minds: Level the Field for** 268 **International Students**

269 Empowering the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) by making it independent from both
270 the ÖH and university governance will enhance its ability to support
271 international students. This autonomy enables ESN to create tailored programs,
272 advocate effectively, and better integrate international students into
273 university life. Furthermore, initiatives like buddy programs play a crucial
274 role in ensuring a smooth start for incoming students by providing peer support
275 during their first weeks. In addition, workshops should be introduced to help
276 international students navigate life in Austria. These workshops should cover
277 topics such as the Austrian job market, understanding employment rights, using
278 FinanzOnline, and other relevant aspects of daily life. Providing guidance on

279 administrative processes, including work permits and visa renewals, is essential
280 for easing their integration into everyday life. These efforts, combined with
281 multilingual support services and intercultural training, will create a
282 welcoming, inclusive, and interconnected campus environment.

283 **Demands:**

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

- 286 • Increase support for ESN with resources like spaces increase support for
287 them

- 288 • Make buddy programs a fundamental part of your international experience

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

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

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

296 **3.6 Promoting Languages**

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

303 To ensure fairness and mobility, we propose the harmonization of language

304 certifications across all universities. This will create transparency, improve
305 comparability, and make it easier for students to pursue academic and
306 professional opportunities, both in Austria and abroad.

307 **Demands:**

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

- 310 • Promote foreign language courses

- 311 • Harmonize language certifications across universities

312 **3.7 European Student ID Card**

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

323 **Demand:**

- 324 • Create a digital European student ID card

325 **4. European Student Union**

326 The European Students' Union (ESU) serves as the umbrella organization for
327 national student unions at the European level. We regret that the ESU has not
328 fully utilized the opportunity to advocate for meaningful collaborations among
329 European countries in the higher education sector, instead focusing increasingly
330

331 on identity-politics issues. We urge the Austrian Students' Union (ÖH) to push
332 for a stronger integration of the European Higher Education Area within the ESU
by advocating for the demands outlined above.

333 **Demand:**

- 334
- Strengthen European Higher Education integration within the ESU