Launch of the international student housing report: 
How are exchange students navigating the housing crisis?

The report addresses the main challenges provided by exchange students when it comes to accommodation, making proposals to address them at different levels.

In response to numerous reports from students across Europe expressing concerns about acute housing conditions, the European Students’ Union (ESU) and the Erasmus Student Network (ESN) launched a snap survey in early November 2022. The findings of the survey seek to provide Higher Education Institutions and policymakers with an evidence-based assessment of the existing challenges and lay the foundation for new initiatives to address them together with the students.

The survey, which got almost 9000 answers in around 1 month, shows that a quarter (25%) of respondents experienced scams, proving the need for better support measures in this area. Lack of information about housing conditions (41%) and excessive deposit payments of more than 1 month (49%) are the most prevalent issues reported by students. The report shows clear differences among countries in almost all parameters. As an example, more than 38% of students going to Italy suffered scams, while only 10% of students going to Finland did.

The housing issues seem to be more related to the difficulties in accessing accommodation than to the actual quality. In that sense, overall satisfaction with housing quality standards is considerably high, despite considerable regional differences. Safety and security, friendliness towards internationals and location score well, while value for money receives the worst scores. Generally, satisfaction with housing is drastically higher whenever student housing is available for exchange students.

The success of this data collection effort can be attributed to the support and collaboration of Higher Education Institutions, Erasmus+ National Agencies, student organisations, and other key stakeholders such as University networks. Their collective dedication and participation allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the housing conditions faced by exchange students.

On the 11th of July, the Erasmus+ Committee released the 2024 draft of the Annual Working Plan. In it, there is a repetition from the Annual Work Plan from 2023 acknowledging the need of support in regards housing: “active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation, including through collaboration with the relevant stakeholders for the provision of appropriate and affordable housing”. Even if we welcome the willingness from the European Commission to keep supporting stakeholders to tackle the housing crisis, our report highlights the fact that not enough measures have been taken to help...
mobile students. ESN and ESU thus urge the Commission to expand their work with stakeholders on that matter to improve the housing situation for mobile students. Both organisations stand ready to work together to find new solutions to this issue.

We are extremely pleased with the remarkable response to the survey and would like to express our gratitude to all the students, Higher Education Institutions, and other stakeholders who contributed to its success. The findings of this research report present a clear picture of the housing challenges faced by international students, and it is our responsibility to address these issues and work towards viable solutions. By collaborating with policymakers and institutions at all levels, we are convinced that many of the challenges can be tackled in the short and medium terms. - Juan Rayon González, President of the Erasmus Student Network

The results of this survey highlight the importance of prioritising the well-being of international students. Through close cooperation with key stakeholders, we can ensure that the voice of students is heard and that tangible actions are taken to improve their housing situations. This report marks an essential step towards fostering better conditions for students during their exchanges and enhancing the overall quality of the Erasmus+ programme. - Horia Oniţa, President of the European Students’ Union

The release of this research report marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts of ESU and ESN to advocate for the rights and well-being of exchange students in Europe. By leveraging the comprehensive data collected from across Europe, the organisations aim to drive meaningful change, empower students, and create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

About ESN:
Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is a non-profit international student organisation. ESN has 44 National Organisations and more than 500 local associations, active in more than 1000 Higher Education Institutions. Our mission is to represent international students, thus providing opportunities for cultural understanding and self-development under the principle of Students Helping Students.

About ESU:
The European Students’ Union (ESU) is an umbrella organisation representing 45 national unions of students from 40 European countries. ESU advocates for the rights and interests of students across Europe and works to ensure accessible, inclusive, and high-quality education for all.

Contact:
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