

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001200/25
to the Commission
Sabrina Repp (S&D), Hannes Heide (S&D)
(20 March 2025)**

Subject: Democratic legitimacy and involving school student unions at EU level

OBESSU is currently the only European umbrella organisation of national school student unions. It is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme. However, there are serious doubts about the democratic legitimacy and representativeness of the organisation.

OBESSU represents national school student organisations, but not all school students in Europe. Some Member States do not have national school student unions or are not represented in OBESSU. What is more, the uneven distribution of votes resulting from differences in organisational structures leads to distortions. While some school student unions are democratically legitimate, others represent only small groups, which has an impact on decision-making.

Involving school students in educational policy decisions at EU level is essential. Democratically legitimate student representation could make measures more targeted and sustainable — something that is not currently guaranteed. The situation is particularly problematic in countries without a national school student union or with insufficient representation.

1. What action is the Commission taking to promote democratic school student representation structures in the Member States?
2. Is the Commission planning a pan-European democratically legitimate school student union?

Submitted: 20.3.2025

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Minzatu on behalf of the European Commission
(4 June 2025)**

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is funded through the Erasmus+ programme. This aligns with the programme's goals to promote youth participation, citizenship and inclusive, high-quality education and training.

Funding decisions are based on the extent to which an organisation's activities align with the objectives and priorities of the programme. The Commission is not in a position to assess the organisational structure or internal decision-making rules of an organisation.

According to EU law, the content of education and the organisation of the national educational systems (including the development and organisation of student representation) fall within Member States' competence. The Commission does therefore not intend to establish a pan-European school student union.

However, the Commission will encourage OBESSU to expand by including more national school student unions in their membership.

We note and welcome that a goal of OBESSU in their Development Strategy 2025-2029 is to 'expand the membership to new countries in a sustainable way'.

The Commission will also encourage Member States to establish democratic school student representation structures in order to strengthen student voice in decisions related to education.

Furthermore, the Commission promotes democratic school student and youth representation structures through the EU Youth Stakeholders Group ⁽¹⁾. OBESSU is one of the organisational members of the Group ⁽²⁾. Other members include the European Students' Union (ESU) and the European Democrat Students (EDS).

All EU national youth councils are members of the Group. Students take part in individual or organisational capacity in many of the actions of the Commission dedicated to young people, among them the youth policy dialogues with Commissioners ⁽³⁾ and the EU Youth Dialogue ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/euyouthstrategygroup_en.

⁽²⁾ https://youth.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/EU-Youth-Stakeholders-Group---List-of-selected-organisations_en_0.pdf.

⁽³⁾ https://youth.europa.eu/youth-policy/dialogues_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://youth.europa.eu/eu-youth-dialogue_en.