

WEST EUROPEAN STUDENT
INFORMATION BUREAU

WESIB

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STUDENT
HANDBOOK

(A GUIDE TO WESIB MEMBER UNIONS)

AUSTRIA

Legislation

The Austrian Union of Students (OH) is based on a federal law enacted in 1973 (Law for the Austrian Union of Students = Hochschulerschafstsgesetz).

Membership

All Austrian and foreign students studying in Austria belong to OH.

OH must collect a membership fee from each member. This fee must be, for a given year, at least 0.5% but not more than 1.5% of the highest yearly scholarship granted in that year.

The final amount is determined by the Union's Central Committee - the student parliament.

In accordance with this calculatory method each student must pay approx. \$13 (ATS 240) per academic year. Thus, the Austrian Union of Students has a yearly total budget of approx. \$1,945,000 (ATS 35,000,000).

This sum is collected by the Union and then distributed as follows:

22% of the collected membership fees are kept by the Central Committee for its own activities; 57% are divided among the local student representatives at each university in proportion to the number of students registered at each university; 20% go into a fund to finance projects relevant to student or general politics which are undertaken by students or student groups. A committee decides about how this money is to be allotted. The remaining 1% are put into an OH Social Fund, from which needy students are then given financial support. The uses for the money allotted to the local student representative officers are decided upon autonomously.

Work

The work of OH extends to meet the idealistic and financial needs of its members.

Specifically this means:

- * The participation of OH in academic bodies as well as its cooperation in other administrative offices as given in the Law for Scholarships (Studienforderungsgesetz);
to give reports to the federal authorities and specifically to the Ministry of Science and Research, the academic governing bodies and the legislative bodies on opinions and suggestions concerning student and university affairs within their competence; the representation of the general interests of its members when dealing with legislative bodies, federal and academic administrations, international student organisations and the general public.

- * Well-aimed support through, among other things, student advisory offices, making study aids available, the creation of work groups, the organisation of refresher courses and arranging student trips.
- * Cultural advancement through, among other things, the management of student book stores, the organisation of lectures, theatre performances, concerts and arranging for visits to these activities as well as to museums and other cultural activities.
- * The promotion of physical education through sports activities and competitions.
- * Health care, as long as it is not a case of social insurance.
- * Financial aid and support through, among other things, grants for needy members, financial support for housing, job mediation for members and the management of student dormitories, mensas and other economic institutions which help to serve the Union when fulfilling its functions;
- * The participation in other activities of a cultural, social or economic nature as allotted to the Union by the Ministry for Science and Research or by the academic governing bodies.

In addition, it has been determined that all federal ministers who draft bills which affect student affairs must submit their proposed bills to the OH for examination.

The university administration must place a directory of all the students registered (with name, sex, citizenship, status, home and school address and branch of study) at the disposal of the Union.

Structure

The highest board of OH is the Central Committee with 65 delegates plus the chairmen of the local student unions from each university.

The most important tasks of the Central Committee are electing the OH Chairman and determining a budget.

The Central Committee meetings are held publicly and can be visited by any and all students.

At each university there are local student representatives of the Austrian Union of Students (Main Committee), who fulfill their duties autonomously. In addition, there are student representatives in every faculty and branch of studies.

Departments

The Department of Social Affairs (Sozialreferat) has the task of advising students on all scholarship, grant and social rights matters, as well as administering the Social Fund.

OH, through this department, has established Kindergartens. The department is also responsible for housing, part-time jobs and summer jobs.

OH, by means of one of its own organisations - The Austrian Foundation for Student Support (Osterreichische Studentendforderungsstiftung) - is one of the largest administrators of student housing in Austria. It is in charge of the administration of 18 student dormitories with 2,300 apartments, which in many cases are self-governed by the students themselves.

An organisation was founded in Vienna three years ago by the Union - The Student Housing Service (Studentisches Wohnservice) - which, with the help of government and municipal subsidies, rents apartments in older apartment buildings, restores them and then lets them at cost price to needy students for the length of their studies.

Another important task - especially of the Department for social affairs of the Central Committee consists of drafting suggestions for new laws aimed at improving the social situation of the students. This concerns above all student housing and the Law of Scholarships (Stipendiengesetz).

A further central duty is fulfilled by the Department for Education and Student Policy (Referat Fur Bildung und Politik). This office advises students on their legal rights as students and is also active on a conceptual level in organising and structuring all studies offered at the university. Suggestions for changes in specific branches of studies and in the General Law for Higher Education (Allgemeines Hochschulstudiengesetz) are drafted by this office.

Economic activities are carried out by a company which belongs to the Austrian Union of Students, the Economic Enterprises, Ltd (Wirtschaftsbestriebe ges.m.b.H.). The task of this OH-organisation extends from edition scripts (booklets of detailed notes, exercises, etc. for a given course or class), to operating copy machines at the individual universities, to making cheap study aids available. In addition to this, there is an OH-PUBLISHING HOUSE which publishes written works by students (dissertations, projects, etc.) in book form which are not published by commercial publishing houses.

OH is a shareholder in the Austrian Student Mensa Service (Osterreichische Mensenbetriebs ges.m.b.H.). The Union holds 40% of the shares, the remaining 60% are held by the federal government. The Austrian Student Mensa Service manages 17 mensas with the task of serving the students high quality meals at the lowest possible price.

The Department for Women (Frauenreferat) deals with the specific problems of female students. The focal point is on questions regarding discrimination, female students with children and helping to increase the number of women in male-dominated fields.

Department of Foreign Students: 10% of the students at Austria's universities are foreigners. The Department for Foreign Students helps them above all with problems arising from the admission into an Austrian university and social problems.

The Department for Sports (Sportreferat) offers sporting equipment at greatly reduced prices and organises sports events (for example, skiing courses).

The Department for Press Affairs of the Central committee puts out the "OH-Express" as its official newspaper approx. ten times per year. This newspaper is sent directly to approx. 80% of the students. Other tasks of this department include the preparation and organisation of press conferences, the production of posters and flyers and maintaining constant contact with the journalists of the most important newspapers and agencies.

The tasks of the Department for Financial Affairs (Finanzreferat) include the economic administration, constant financial supervisory duties, accounting, the drawing up of budgets and the closing of accounts.

Contacts with the Authorities

The Austrian Union of Students representatives are members of two committees in the Ministry of Science and Research. These are the "Social Committee" (Sozialkommission) and the "Committee for Exceptional Financial Aid for Students" (Kommission für außerordentliche Studienunterstützung). The Social Committee, which convenes only rarely, has up until the present time dealt mostly with problems concerning the price formation of the mensa meals. In the future it intends to deal more with the questions concerning student social problems on the whole.

The "Committee for Exceptional Financial Aid for Students" was organised in order to aid students who have serious financial problems which could even endanger the completion of their studies. This aid is in the form of a one-time subsidy. The applications filed by the students are decided on by members of the Ministry for Science and Research and Austrian Student Union representatives. \$340,000 (ATS 6 million) are granted yearly in this manner.

The Austrian Student Union functionaries fulfill one of their most important tasks as members of the various university commissions and committees. These are:

- * the Institute Commissions
- * the Study Commissions
- * the Institute Board
- * the Academic Senate
- * the Complaints Committee

Chairman: Michael Goldinger
Vice-Chairman: Werner Suppan
Secretary General: Johannes Wieser
Press and Informations-Officer: Wolfgang Bergmann
Treasurer: Peter Zeilerbauer
Officer for Sozial affairs: Jolantha Belik
 Co-workers: Max Deml, Nicole Sofikis
Officer for Women affairs: Johanna Riegler
 Co-worker: Aurelia Weikert
Officer for cultural affairs: Franz Schuller
Officer for foreign students: Dr. Hooshang Parvizi
 Co-worker: Maziar Koshravipour
Officer for Higher education: Joachim Schwendenwein
 Co-worker: Alexandra Ruß, Bettina Goldinger-Riedmann
Officer for peace and enviroment: Michael Undorf
Referee for third world activities: Anneliese Vilim
Referee for civil service: Christian Mahringer
Referee for student housing: Werner Suppan
Referee for study information service: Anita Lackenberger

Political student organisations represented on the National Board ("Zentralausschuß") and number of seats:.

- (23) Aktionsgemeinschaft, Rudolfsplatz 6, 1010 Wien
- (16) Verein sozialistischer Studenten Österreichs (VSSTÖ), Schmerlingplatz 2, 1010 Wien
- (15) Junge Europäische Studenteninitiative (JES), Rossauer Lände 33, 1090 Wien
- (2) Kommunistischer Studentenverband (KSV), Kölblgasse 18, 1030 Wien
- (1) Liberaler Studentenverband (LSV)
- (2) Die Rebellen vom Liang Shan Po
- (2) Vereinte Grüne Österreichs Studenten (VGÖS)
- (2) Sozialistische Alternative (SOAL)
- (1) Linke Alternative Liste (LAL)
- (1) Liste "Theologische Fakultäten"

BELGIUM (Flanders)

History : Vereniging Van Vlaamse Studenten (VVS)

VVS was established on 17th December 1938 as a result of the transformation of the National Union of Belgian Students (UNEB) into the Federation of Students in Belgium (FSB), an umbrella organisation for the two autonomous organisations, the Association of French Speaking Students (AEEF) and VVS.

Before World War II neither organisation was very active due to the fact that the Belgian government had already started a partial mobilisation at the beginning of 1939.

After the war the activities started again, mainly under the influence of the Student Parliament of Louvain (LSP). From then until the sixties VVS developed into a totally autonomous organisation, as the FSB wasn't working very well.

During this period VVS organised about six congresses in cooperation with the Dutch Student Union, published a monthly student review and a study about the social stratification of the Flemish student population.

On 22nd October 1960 VVS decided to withdraw from the FSB as that organisation had become useless. Co-operation with French speaking students continued on a bi-lateral basis.

Soon VVS was recognised by the authorities as the mouthpiece of Flemish students.

In the early sixties the discussion between the 'corporatist' and the 'trade unionist' with VVS was settled in favour of the latter. On the 17th November 1962 VVS was transformed into a General Student (Trade) Union.

This emerged especially during the 1960's and 1970's. For example in May '68 with the linguistic division of the universities of Louvain and Brussels, the democratisation of university structures, the reform of the scholarship system, the actions against fees increases, against numerous clauses, etc.

VVS has always propagated an open public educational system. Also, the Union has always advocated Regional Social Services for Students, the enlargement of access to university and higher education generally, and an adequate study income. Several study and working documents have been published on these subjects. VVS has always struggled against all measures that would retract the democratisation of education.

These are the issues which still determine the work and actions of VVS today.

At the end of the 1970's VVS was transformed from an overall organisation to an organisation based on individual members. This was due to a change in governmental legislation and to a change of attitude towards the organisational tasks of VVS itself.

Legislation

VVS is obliged by a law concerning national youth organisations to have:

1. Regular activities concerning different aspects of student political and social life. At least ten activities a year.
2. A publication, appearing at least 4 times a year. (The name of the magazine is "Ad Valvas").
3. Branches of the union (minimum four) in three different provinces.

VVS have to organise at least three national activities with the participation of the regional branches.

Membership

At present there is no compulsory membership of local unions nor collective membership of the VVS.

Fees

Membership fees are paid directly by individual members to the National Union. Members don't pay any fees to the local branch of the Union.

NATIONAL

Structure

- * Congress: Once a year
 - supreme policy-making body
 - elects: National Executive Committee
- * National Council: Consists of regional representatives and the National Executive Committee and the National Board
 - responsible for the concrete policy and activities of the union
 - elects: the National Board and additional members of the NEC
- * National Executive Committee:
 - responsible for the day to day administration of the union
- * National Board:
 - financial and legal responsibilities

Areas of Work

The main theme of all VVS campaigns is the democratisation of education, which is seen as being part of a general struggle for emancipation of the whole population.

There are three special committees in VVS, on:

- Education
- Emancipation and development
- Women and Higher Education

If necessary, VVS co-operates with other groups and organisations in order to have a greater impact on the various issues.

International

In 1946 VVS was one of the signatories of the IUS founding document. At the moment VVS is not a member of IUS, though there are very fruitful contacts and cooperation. VVS has participated in several international events of IUS. VVS is also working with the International Student Research Centre (ISRC) on a research project : the EEC Policy on Education and its Impact on the Universities and the students of the EEC countries.

Since 1985 VVS has been a full member of West European Student Information Bureau (WESIB). VVS is working together with several European students organisations in order to have a better coordination in the EEC and Council of Europe countries on educational matters.

Now that the EEC increasingly is engaged in the educational field, and now that several European countries emerge parable retrenches on the educational budgets, cooperation between the European Student Organisations is more than necessary. Therefore VVS is also taking part in the European meeting of student organisations.

Major issues

Government cut-backs:

The budget which was presented to the parliament by the Belgian government in May 1986 included a 199 billion franc (approx. \$4.5 billion) saving. Almost the entire sum to be taken from cuts in social security, public services and the education budget.

The cuts are disastrous for the Department of Education: The university budget is held at the 1985 level for 1986 and 1987; state subsidies for students social services (restaurants, housing, medical and sports infrastructure, students organisations, etc.) are cut by 50%; six thousand jobs in education are to be lost; the universities can finance their own budget deficit (caused by the government measures) by increasing fees; etc.

VVS see these measures, together with the rest of the plan as bringing an end to the democratisation of education and going back to the elite universities of the past.

Studies have shown that the number of students from "lower social classes" have diminished rapidly since 1973, when the first measures against a payable education for everyone were taken (higher fees). At the moment student grants cover only half of the cost of the total study cost. New economy measures will add to this problem.

Methods

Through petitions, publications, debates, actions, demonstrations, etc. VVS informs the student community and acts as a pressure-group. There is co-operation with other groups, such as the trade unions of university staff and the large trade union federations.

In relation to the government cut-backs, if they are not withdrawn a boycott of fees will be organised.

VVS see their motivation and militancy as having to compensate for their lack of financial means.

VVS co-ordinates and brings together different student clubs and organisations together into regional and national contact bodies.

On a national level, actions and ideas are discussed with the Federation of French speaking students (Federation des Etudiant(e)s Francophones - FEF)

Contact to Authorities

There are contacts with the Minister of Education (National Government) on an irregular basis. VVS, together with FEF, have explained their point of view to the Education Section of the National Parliament.

VVS has a delegate to the High Council for Study Financing (Flemish Government).

LOCAL

Structure & Elections

On the regional level the national members of VVS are organised by a regional committee. The members of that committee are executive members or have contacts to the local unions.

The structure of the local union varies substantially from union to union:

General Student Council (ASR, Leuven) : one student is elected in each section organisation

Student Council of Ghent (GSR) The different umbrella organisations (study groups, section organisations, political organisations) are represented in the GSR

Student Association of Brussels (BSG) direct election by the students

Smaller universities : direct election by all students or by the members of the local union only

There are practically no staff working directly for the local unions. Some universities have student services with a staff working part-time for the unions.

Areas of Work

Local unions have many areas of work, depending on the union, ranging from entertainments to actions against the government on the retrenchment of the educational budget.

Major Issues

As at a national level. Local unions decide upon their own activities and issues within the guidelines of Congress decisions and policy.

Contact to Authorities

Some VVS members are elected to the Boards of Universities.

BELGIUM : French-Speaking Community

History: Federation des Etudiant(e)s Francophones (FEF)

In the post war years there was a National Union of Students for all Belgium, in which French-speaking students participated.

In the 1960's MUBEF (French-speaking student movement) was created.

The Front des Etudiants Francophones (FEF) was established in 1975. FEF went through a process of developing and reinforcing its structures throughout the late 1970's.

In 1982 the "Front" was renamed the "Federation" and for the first time employed personnel to administer the organisation.

Legislation

There is no legislation concerning the organisation of students on a national or local level. There is an official recognition by the government the FEF is the representative of French-speaking students in Belgium. The Board of "State" Universities have an obligation to allow the participation of students in their Boards.

Membership

All of the local unions of students, with the exception of one local union, have compulsory membership. This has not been a conscious choice, rather the consequence of the "historical development" of FEF.

The local unions affiliate to the FEF voluntarily. The members of FEF are the local unions. 6 out of 8 local unions (95% of the students) are members of FEF.

There have been discussions to change the membership to individual membership both on a local and national level, but this has been considered to be impractical (at least for the moment), and the idea dropped.

Fees

Students do not have to pay fees to the local union, except at one university where the annual membership fee is 400 BEF (approx. GB £7) each year.

The local unions pay an affiliation fee which ranges from 2,500 to 170,000 BEF a year. The fees are determined in proportion to the financial means of the local union (approx. 10%).

NATIONAL

Structure

* Federal Council:

- Supreme decision-making body
- meets once or twice a year
- elects Federal Secretariat
- each local union has five representative plus one for each 1,000 students (e.g. a local union with 18.000 members has $5 + 18 = 23$ representatives to the Federal Council).

* Federal Board:

- takes decisions between Federal Council Meetings
- each local union has one vote
- no limitation on the number of representatives allowed.

* Federal Secretariat:

- makes proposals to the Federal Boards, which takes the decisions
- consists of President, Vice-Presidents, and 5 Federal Officers: Finances; Social, Education; Information; Foreign Students.

* Staff Structure:

- there are two Permanent Secretaries employed to assist the work of the Federal Secretariat.

Areas of Work

- Educational Affairs
- Social Affairs
- Foreign Students Affairs

Major Issues

- 1984/85 : - reduction of scholarship
 - the "credit-system" educational issue
- 1985/86 : - reduction of education and social budget
 - study fees increases
 - prolongation of military and civilian service
- 1986/87 : - budget reduction ("Val-Duchesse" plan) :
 1.2 billion FEB cut in universities budget,
 60% increase in fees and 4 billion FEB cut
 in research budget.

Methods

- Lobbying to get information
- Press Coverage
- Demonstrative Actions: demonstrations, occupations, etc.
- Development of proposals on the various issues (when the defensive actions don't require all of the energies and resources).
- Personal interventions on behalf of members (military service, immigration, scholarships, etc.)

Contact to the Authorities

Government:

- informal meetings with members of government and more official meeting (for example, with press coverage) when the situation requires it. There is also lobbying through Members of Parliament from the different political parties.

Academic Authorities and French-speaking Community Authorities:

- recognition as a member of official committees.

Local University Authorities:

- through personal contacts and through local unions.

LOCAL

Structure and Elections

There are two basic types of structures of local unions:

1. A "council" or "parliament" elects and controls a committee (executive). Elections are held in April/May each year. Every student is entitled to vote.
2. Faculty associations elect and control a committee. Students in each Faculty elect representatives. Every student who is a member of the Faculty Association is entitled to vote. The FA Representatives elect the committee.

In all local unions representatives are elected on a personal basis, except approximately 10-15% who are elected on a party basis.

Areas of Work

In "type 1" (see above) the local union deals with all students questions: academic, social, foreign students and cultural and sport affairs.

In "type 2" the local union does not deal so much with culture and leaves it to the Faculty Associations.

Major Issues

In 1986/87, the local unions have been faced with the reduction in the National Education budget and have been involved in actions organised by the FEF. They also deal with local issues relating specifically to the students in the university.

Federal Secretariat

President and External Relations: Luc Devigne

Vice-Presidents: Francine Serre
Jean-Paul Lacomble

Federal Secretaries for Education
Social
Foreign Students
Finances
Information

Staff

Permanent Secretaries: Guy Bocage
Philippe Poot

Politics

There are no political factions operating within FEF. Because the number of Board members is unlimited (one union, one vote) there is no way of giving any break-down of political allegiances. Some members are politically orientated but do not work as such within FEF.

Due to the non-party representation there is self-censorship on political questions going beyond students interests.

The principles which prevail in distributing the Secretariat post are:

- balance between the 3 types of universities (State, Catholic, and Free non-catholic)
- balance between large and small universities
- neutrality of the President

Member Organisations: Local Unions of Students

FRANCE

Introduction

Student organisations in France are voluntary organisations with a national structure and local associations. These student unions participate in the different types of students elections (see below). On the national level, the two dominating student organisations are UNEF-ID and UNEF. There are also a number of smaller organisations claiming to be "national unions."

Legislation

The applicable legislation in France regarding the organisation of students at the local and national level is the 1901 Law on associations. The law prescribes that three persons, after having advised the prefectural authorities, can freely form an association.

Membership

Membership in local student organisations is voluntary in France. This is true for all sorts of unions in the country (student unions as well as workers unions). French law does not allow compulsory (automatic) membership.

Elections

There are three different kinds of student elections in France:

- 1) Elections for University and Faculty councils
- 2) Elections for student representation on the so called "Oeuvres Universitaires" (bodies responsible for the administration of social aid and student grants)
- 3) Elections for the leadership of the national union and the local associations.

In the first two elections, all students are allowed to vote. The elections are based on a system of lists of candidates presented by the different student organisations.

In the third election, only members of the particular organisation are allowed to vote.

History: Union National des Etudiants de France - Independante et Democratique (UNEF-ID)

UNEF was established in 1907. In 1971 there was a split. In 1980 unity was re-established. Since that time, due to a dispute over the name "UNEF" with the other main national student organisation the title UNEF-ID has been used to establish the distinct identity of the organisation. The main organisational principle of UNEF-ID is the right of tendency, the right of members to establish competing groups within the union.

NATIONAL

Structure

* Congress: meets annually.

- supreme body of the union
- elects the Administrative Commission

* Administrative Commission : meets every 8 weeks

- 51 members or more
- elected by the Congress giving representation in proportion to the strength of the tendencies at the Congress
- oversees the work of the National Bureau as defined by the Congress
- elects the National Bureau, including a President, Secretary General and Treasurer, from among its own members

* National Bureau: meets every 2 weeks

- at least 20 members
- elected by the Administrative commission from among its own members
- appoints a legal advisor
- looks after the day-to-day administration of the union
- under the control of the Administrative Commission, it implements the decisions of the Congress

* National Collective: meets 2 times each year

- composed of the National Bureau, the Administrative Commission, and one representative (usually the President) of each local organisation

Areas of Work

Commissions:

- University Commission
- Social Commission
- International Commission

Member of:

- CNAJEP (French National Youth Council)
- Health Foundation of Students in France
- FNSU (National Federation of University Sport)
- CNESER (National Council for Higher Education and Research), which gives its views to the Minister on various issues. UNEF-ID has a majority on the Council.
- CSEN (National Council of National Education)
- ONISEP, CEREQ (Centre for Studies and Research on Studies and Qualifications)
- WESIB
- International Association of Students (Secretariat member)

Links with:

- MNEF (National "Mutuelle" of French Students - a mutual benefit society). The President of MNEF has a seat on the UNEF-ID National Bureau
- FNEMS (National Federation of Medical Students)
- FNET (National Federation of Student Technicians)
- Foreign Students Associations

Membership Fees

Members in UNEF-ID pay FrF 30.00 to the central organisation and FrF 15.00 three times a year to the local branch.

Methods

UNEF-ID try to achieve their aims by dialogue as well as confrontation. Along with its representation in decision-making bodies, UNEF-ID also organises campaigns, demonstrations, strikes, etc. to drive home its message. The French student movement have a long tradition of using the extra-parliamentary methods in their work.

Contact with Authorities

There are regular contacts with the Government on issues of concern for students. UNEF-ID is represented on a number of official bodies within the field of higher education.

LOCAL

Structure

* Union Action Committees (UAC) :

- must have at least 5 members (if it has more than 10 it may sub-divide.
- elects a bureau which must have, at least, a President, a Secretary General, and a Treasurer.
- the orientation of the UAC must be within the framework defined by the Congress of the union.

* General Association of Students (AGE)

- one AGE in each university town (except Paris)
- brings together all Action Committees of the union in the town or centre
- co-ordinates the activity of the Action Committees through a town collective consisting of the Presidents of those Committees
- at the time of the Congress the AGE must bring together the majority of members of its Action Committees or their delegates

Areas of Work

The AGE is represented in:

- the University Council
- the City "Admissions Commission"
- local section of MNEF (National "Mutuelle" of French Students) and the Student Social Security
- CROUS (Regional Centres of University "Oeuvres")
- the grants commission

More than 1500 representatives of UNEF-ID are on University and Faculty Councils.

Politics

There are several political tendencies within UNEF-ID. The main organisational principle of the union is the right of tendency, the right of members to establish competing groups within the union.

Members of the National Bureau

ICELAND

History: Studentarad Haskola Islands (SHI)

The Students Council within the University of Iceland (SHI) was established in 1920. As this is the only University in Iceland the Students Council in the University is also the National Union of Students.

Membership

All students in the University are members of the Union and vote in the elections.

Membership Fees

All students pay a membership fee to the SHI.

Structure

There are 30 delegates in the council.

Within SHI there are four committees:

- Educational Committee
- Students Interests Committee
- Meetings and Cultural Committee
- Foreign Policy Committee

The Board is comprised of the chairpersons of these four committees as well as the SHI Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Treasurer.

The SHI has an office staffed by a Managing Director (usually the Chairperson of the Council) and a secretary.

Elections

15 of the Council delegates are elected each year for a two-year period in a vote of all the students, 13 each year are elected as ordinary delegates and 2 as student representatives on the University Committee.

Principal Areas of Work

- Supplying information about the University's affairs.
- (In Autumn) running a housing agency.
- (In Spring) running an employment agency in collaboration with other school boards.

- Publishing a newspaper 8 times a year.

The Students Social Organisation was formed in 1968 as a branch of the Students Council. The SSO is responsible for:

- Students book shop
- Students travel agency
- Students dining facility
- A pub (with no beer)
- Student Dormitories
- A hotel run during the summer vacation.

Major Issues

Study Finance/Student loans

The priorities are guided by the political majority on the SHI Council.

Methods

Contacts with Authorities

Students have four representatives on the University Council, elected directly by the students.

Staff

Officer of General Affairs: Gudny Bjork Eydal

Executive

Politics

There are three political groups represented on the SHI Council:

- Association of Democratic Students
- Association of Radical Students
- Association of Leftist Students

At present the representatives of the ARS and the ADS have a majority on the Council. However the centrist grouping ARS have in the past supported the ALS.

IRELAND

History : The Union of Students in Ireland (USI)

USI was established in 1959 arising from dissatisfaction of many of the members of the Irish Student Association. The ISA had merely been a link group for debating societies in the Universities and was not a Union as we understand the word. USI began as a group who organised debates and travel and summer employment but throughout the sixties there was a greater push for students to contribute towards the development of education. A big issue during the first 10 years was the need for student grants. This was finally achieved in 1968. The end of the 1960s saw the greatest rise in student power with many colleges being closed by strikers and student unions holding alternative lectures. Work was also done to highlight the growing recognition that third level education was the privilege of the wealthy.

A new Constitution was adopted in 1970 witnessing a rise in militancy and a move away from old Representative Council type structures to mass movement Student Unionism. The period of 1965-69 was spent mainly trying to seek recognition from the Government. However the world upsurge in demands for and rights around the Vietnam War showed up the limited participation in the union and the discussions which followed led to the new constitution. The new constitution established the Congress with representation based on student numbers as the new policy making body. Previously the Congress had only had equal powers with the Executive.

During the 1970s the work of the Union developed in all areas. USI was instrumental in the setting up of the NCEA (National Council for Educational Awards) and helped to establish the National Youth Council of Ireland. Grants were gradually improved and the Union held seminars on many educational matters such as representation, academic affairs, etc. Post Graduate income limits were won and Southern Student grants when studying in the North would be paid in Sterling. Work on Welfare and womens issues developed.

During the 1970s the work of the Union became heavily involved with the IUS and International Work. 1981-82 saw a reaction to this with allegations of junketing and an ignoring of local education issues. This saw a move towards mass participation and the idea of a 'defence organisation' against cutbacks. 1983-84 saw a high profile campaign against the removal of medical cards with some USI Officers jailed. USI won an index linking of grants and many local issues. The notion of a loans system has been defeated on 2 occasions. In the last few years work has developed on national affairs, building links with welfare groups, etc. Despite the non affiliation of 3 of the 7 universities, the union is still strong, is recognised by all bodies as the National Students Union and has more respect from Trade Unions, Welfare Groups, politicians, etc.

Legislation

There is no legislation relating to the organisation of students in Ireland.

Membership

Membership of the student union in all but three of the Higher Education institutes is automatic. Local student unions apply to become a Constituent Organisation (CO) of USI. All students who are members of the CO are members of USI.

In 1986 there was an attempt by the authorities to prevent automatic membership in the College of Art, Commerce and Technology, newly created as an amalgamation of some already existing Higher Education institutes.

This was successfully defeated by USI using solicitors letters based on little other than precedent in other colleges and warning the principal about having to meet delegations from each site.

There has been quite a bit of discussion on the principles of organisation - lately at a Special Congress in December 1984 when a new Constitution was adopted. Before that a high court case was taken in 1982 by two students of a non-affiliated college who wished to run for election on the basis that their ISIC Card said they were a member of USI. The High Court accepted that there was no individual membership of USI. Discussions on the principles of membership have always accepted the Federal nature of the Union.

Membership Fees

Most Student Unions run a capitation system - Money is paid as part of college fees - level determined by student unions in association with the college.

A few universities get a block grant system from the college. These are negotiated by student/college boards annually.

Further Education Colleges get grants from education & Library Boards.

Primary Teacher Education Colleges pay a voluntary capitation paid directly by the students.

Amounts vary from £2-£60 per student each year.

The Student Unions in Constituent Organisations pay USI IR£2.20 for each full-time student and IR£1 for each part-time student each year.

NATIONAL

Structure

- * Congress: Meets once a year, at Easter. Each Constituent Organisation (CO) sends a delegation (minimum two persons) the size of which depends on their student numbers.

Takes all policy decisions

Elects national officers.

- * National Council:

Meets once a month, with each CO and each national officer having one vote.

- decides upon implementation of policy and strategy planning
- responds to major issues of the day
- in extreme situations it can suspend a Congress policy until the next Congress.

- * Officer Board:

6 Full-time national officers; 7 area Convenors (plus Deputy Convenor for the Northern Region); Chairperson of the Womens Rights Action Committee

- takes day to day decisions

- * Staff:

Dublin : 1 Information Co-ordinator
 2 Secretaries

Belfast: 1 Regional Research & Development
 Officer & 1 Personal Assistant
 (Part-time)

- The Belfast posts are funded jointly with NUS (UK)
There is no real structure as the staff in both offices are so few.

Elections

National Officers are elected at Congress, where each delegate has one vote. The system of election is the single transferable vote method of proportional representation, based on the Irish Electoral Act. Candidates for the National Officerships must be nominated in writing by a Constituent Organisation in advance of the Congress. No national officer can hold the same position for more than two consecutive 1-year terms of office.

Areas of Work

Education: Representation; Academic Affairs; Places; Facilities; Student Finance; Fees; Grants, etc.

International Work:

Mainly confined to South Africa, Nicaragua and WESIB.

National Affairs:

Opposition to repression in Northern Ireland; Attempts to build a cohesive student approach to the National Question; Promoting discussion on the issues.

Welfare: Mostly information distribution. A manual is produced and conference held.

Communications:

Newspaper (15,000 issues, 6 times a year); Information bulletins to local Unions every 2-3 weeks.

Development:

Organisation seminar; Class representatives seminars in colleges; work with training schemes, etc.

Women's Affairs:

Sexism in Education; Sexism on Campus; Information for women.

Major Issues

- * A rise in fee levels.
- * A reduction in the level of grants in real terms, coupled with narrow rules of eligibility.
- * Overcrowding in colleges.
- * Lack of Library, Teaching and Medical Facilities.

Working Methods

Campaigning on issues facing students will manifest itself in different tactics depending on the particular issue. USI do not exclude any tactic even if it means breaking the law.

The Union runs seminars on all areas, but particularly Development and Training, National Affairs, Welfare, etc.

Contacts to Authorities

USI are recognised, if not formally, as the Irish National Union of Students. Contacts are made as necessary depending on issues that arise. Most State bodies concerned with education include us on mailing lists and frequently ask for our views/response. We regularly make submissions to Government and the Department of Education as well as other groups on a wide variety of issues.

LOCAL

Structure

- * Union General Meeting (UGM)
Open to all students in that college
- * Class Representative Council
- * Executive

In some colleges UGMs are the Supreme Governing Body while in other UGMs and Council have similar weight. Some colleges have facilities for Referenda.

Elections

Elections take place either late in the academic year for long course colleges or early in the year for short course (i.e. 2 year) colleges. Class Rep Elections are usually held about 1 month into the academic year.

Generally any full or part-time student can stand for Executive Posts while Class Rep Elections are limited to members of that class.

Areas of Work

- Education
- Organisation
- Publicity
- Entertainments
- Services
- Campaigning on local issues
- Co-operating with USI on national issues

Staff Structure

In 26 counties few unions have more than 1 administrator and a secretary with a shop manager. Most employ part-time shop or entertainments staff. Some employ their own travel staff, in other cases these are directly employed by USIT. In the 6 counties, the FE colleges have no staff though some have employed people under the ACE (Action for Community Employment) Scheme. The 2 Universities have large staff numbers:

Permanent Secretary

Administrative Staff	Senior Secretarial Staff
----------------------	--------------------------

Bars Travel Shop Billiards Secretarial Staff/Printing
(Services Staff)

Major Issues

Universities: Fees/Grants

RTC/VEC (Technological/Vocational) Colleges:

Grants, Representation on College boards, threat of Dublin Institute of Technology to prevent Unions in its colleges from running shops, pool tables and other services.

Affiliation to Regional/National Organisation

Colleges who wish to may affiliate to USI if they subscribe to the USI Constitution and pay the prescribed fee currently £2.20 per full-time and £1.00 per part-time student.

All local student unions are members of their Area if affiliated to USI. Non-affiliates are sometimes allowed to sit in attendance. One area (West) charges a small area fee.

There are eight area committees which help to organise and co-ordinate activity.

National Officers

Patricia Hegarty - President
Sean O Hargain - Deputy President
Peter Graves - Education Officer
Una Gillespie - Womens Rights Officer
Paddy McPoland - Union Development Officer
Nick Reilly - Campaigning Officer

Politics

No officer is a member of a political party. Political parties do not organise students at a national level. Student groups exist for:

- Fianna Fail
- Fine Gael
- Progressive Democrats
- Labour Party
- Workers Party
- Sinn Fein

None of these groups run candidates in USI elections on a party political ticket.

Staff

Dublin: Information Co-ordinator - Alistair Rutherfordale
Secretaries - Lorraine Coughlan
Una Kelly

Belfast (jointly with NUSUK):
Regional Research and Development Officer
- Peter O'Neill
Personal Assistant (part-time) - Laura McCreight

USI: Constituent Organisations

Student Unions at the following colleges:

Thomond College of Education Castletroy Limerick	Technical College Clash Tralee Co Kerry	Regional Technical College Bishopstown Co Cork
Crawford Municipal School of Art Shearman Crawford St. Cork	Regional Technical College Carlow	Regional Technical College Waterford
St Patrick's College Kiltegan Co Wicklow	University College Cork	School of Marine Radio & Radar O'Connell Avenue Limerick

MALTA

Due to the small size of the Republic of Malta and to the fact that there is only one university in the country, there is just a national union of students and no local unions. However, each faculty of the University and the faculty of theology (which is separated from the University) have their own particular student association. There are also other student groups aimed at the promotion of particular ideologies or activities.

History: Kunsill Ta' L-Istudenti Universitarji (KSU)

The Maltese student union was founded in 1915. Until 1979, the so called Students Representative Council (SRC) represented the students in the Royal University of Malta.

In 1978, a "New" university was set up alongside the "Old" (Royal) University of Malta. The students of this new institution organised in the New University Students Union (NUSU). The faculty of theology no longer formed a part of either of the universities and its students formed the Theology Students Association (Gh.S.T.).

In March, 1979, all these student bodies joined together in the University Students' Council (KSU). KSU principally succeeded the Students Representative Council and today remains the sole representative of Maltese students in higher education.

The students of the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology in 1962 set up their own union (MCAST). This union ceased to exist in 1978 when the college was incorporated in the New University. The two former colleges of teacher's training also had their own union prior to their incorporation in the New University.

Traditionally, Maltese students and their organisations have always taken an active part in the history of Malta and in the development of the country. Many former student union officers have held important positions in government.

Legislation

Prior to the 1978 amendments (Act XXI) of the 1974 Education Act, the Students Representative Council was set up by legislation to form an integral part of the University. Today, as a consequence of the amendments, KSU is not governed by any legislation, but by its own Statute and regulations which are established by its General Conference and its Executive Council.

Membership

Membership in KSU is automatic upon registration at the University or other educational institutions. Students are individual members of KSU, although there is no membership fee charged by the union.

Decision-Making Bodies

- * General Conference
 - meets annually in October
 - meets in extraordinary sessions when called by the Executive Council or upon request by at least 10% of the members
- * Executive Council
 - fulfils the decisions of the General Conference
 - takes initiatives to reach KSU's aims
 - determines policy in between General Conferences
- * Administrative Board
 - ensures that decisions taken by the Executive Council are carried out
 - fulfils the policy of KSU
- * President & General Secretary
 - represent the union
 - direct the policy of the union

Elections

The members of the Executive Board are elected in a three tier system of election.

- 1) members "ex officio" by virtue of having been elected on the Council and Senate of the University, the Faculty Boards of the University and the Faculty of Theology
- 2) members elected in a general election by all members of the national union
- 3) representatives from each faculty elected by the students of the respective faculties

The Administrative Board is elected from the members of the Executive Council by the members of the Council.

Principal Areas of Work

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1) Educational affairs | (Academic department) |
| 2) Student welfare | (Services department) |
| 3) International | (International department) |
| 4) Co-ordination with other youth organisations | (National Dept) |
| 5) Publications | (Publications department) |
| ("L-Student") | |
| 6) Foreign students | (Foreign students department) |
| 7) Social activities | (Entertainment and fund-raising) |
| 8) Student travel | (National Student Travel Foundation, NSTF) |

Working methods

KSU primarily believes in obtaining justified demands through a dialogue with the authority concerned. It develops its own programmes and proposals for discussion and possible adoption.

If this method fails, the national union often resorts to action by organising campaigns (posters, stickers, demonstrations). KSU has a vast experience in lobbying politicians and administrators. Petitions on the national level have been organised and even presented to the Speaker of the Parliament.

KSU uses its own publications, the local press and exhibitions to propagate its message. The broadcasting media are virtually inaccessible to the student union.

Major Issues

The major issues in recent years have been:

- * The system of admission to university
- * The dependence on sponsorship (and not purely academic merits) for access to higher education
- * The abolition of the Humanities and the Faculties of Arts and Sciences
- * The expulsion of the Faculty of Theology from the University
- * The lack of university autonomy from government control
- * The rigid application of the concept of work experience for a complete higher education
- * Inadequate student representation in decision-making bodies
- * Government monopoly in education
- * The right of students to take industrial action
- * Exploitation of students by their employers
- * The establishment of a National Education Council with adequate student representation
- * Campaigns against famine and in favour of development aid to countries in the Third World
- * Participation in the evaluation of the Worker-student scheme

Contacts to the Authorities

The relationship between the national union of students and the old Maltese Government (Labour Party) was strained to say the least. Contacts were very limited due to the refusal of the Government to meet with the student officials. Contacts with the then opposition were better and more frequent. For example, KSU was invited to a National Conference on Education organised by the Christian Democrats in 1985. Now that the Christian Democrats are in power there is plenty of scope for an improvement in Government/KSU contacts.

Within the University KSU is well respected and contacts as well as student participation are more regular. The Rector of the University has appointed a Delegate for Student Affairs.

KSU Officers have frequent contacts with individual members of Parliament, although party discipline often goes before any sympathies these may have with student complaints.

Political groups

There are at present three political groups active on the campus of the University of Malta:

- * Christian Democratic Students (SDMU) (the most active with the largest membership; dominating within KSU)
- * Progressive Student Workers (SHPU) (close to the Labour Party)
- * Ecological Students Movement (M'83) (small, but active group)

KSU elections have generally been held on a non-party basis. The three groups are not formally represented on any body of the national union. Their officials are sometimes elected to the Executive Council, but cannot hold any of the six major offices in the union by statute.

Officers of KSU

President	Vanni Xuereb (*)
Vice-President	Cecilia Pirotta (**)
VP Education	Jonathan Pace (**)
Secretary General	Lucien Stafrace (**)
International Secretary	Margot Zammit Montebello (**)
National Secretary	Paul Portelli (**)
Treasurer	Simon Gatt (**)
Assistant Secretary General (Organisation)	Gianni Cutajar (**)
Public Relations Officer	Joseph Restall (**)
Assistant International Secretary	David Fenech (**)
Assistant PRO	Gordon Refalo (*)

Members of the Executive Council

Stephan Attard	(*)
Doreen Spiteri	(*)
Kevin Aquilina	(*)
John Portelli	(*)
Alan Abela	(*)
Hector Scerri	(*)
Paul Bilocca	(*)
Nicholas Cachia	(*)
Martin Fenech	(**)
Sandro Pisani	(***)

(*) = elected in University elections for Council, Senate and Faculty Boards and the Faculty of Technology elections for Council and Senate

(**) = elected in KSU General Elections

(***) = co-opted

NETHERLANDS

History : Landelijke Studenten Vakbond (LSVB)

In the 1960's the student movement was very lively and quite successful. Big actions were organised to obtain greater democracy in universities. In those turbulent years the first national union was established - the National League of Councils (LOG). At the end of the 1960's LOG came to a quiet end.

In the 1970's the movement livened up again coming together in the Foundation of the Students Union (SVB), which also collapsed after a few years.

In 1983 LSVB was established as a Federation of already existing and newly founded student unions.

Legislation

There is no legislation in the Netherlands concerning the organisation of students. There are, however, rules regarding the representation of students on both faculty and university councils. In these councils 30% of the representatives are students, elected by students at the university in annual elections.

Membership

Students join their local Union on a voluntary basis. LSVB is a federation, affording its local member organisations a great deal of autonomy.

Not all of the local unions think it is necessary to be organised on a national level, or they don't agree with the way the national union works (too practical, not practical enough, too radical, not radical enough, too theoretical, not theoretical enough, etc.).

Nineteen local unions are members of LSVB: eleven university unions and eight vocational school unions. Five local unions are not members at present.

The only principle for membership is that the local union be democratically organised.

Membership Fees

Each local union asks for a different membership fee. Sometimes the fee includes certain reductions for books and other study materials which can be bought in shops owned by the union. Sometimes the fee includes membership of a faculty organisation. The lowest fee is NLG 5, the highest NLG 30.

Each member union of LSVB pays an annual fee of NLG 250 plus NLG 1 for each individual member which they have.

NATIONAL

Structure

* All-Members Meeting:

- all members entitled to attend

* Council:

- all members entitled to attend
- meets on a regular basis (every 2/3 months)

* Executive Board:

- 5 members, elected by All-Members Meeting
- looks after day-to-day work of LSVB

In addition there may be working groups, committees, etc. established by the Council, with members of all interested unions invited to attend.

Elections

The Executive Board is elected by the All-Members Meeting. As all the positions involve very hard work without pay (and often without gratitude) there are hardly any candidates.

Areas of Work

- actions against the new study-finance system, information about rights concerning study financing
- actions against a wide range of economy measures on higher education, for example the "concentration-operations" at universities and vocational schools in which whole faculties and school have been closed
- the start of a national discussion on the quality of education and access
- courses for student-members in school and university councils
- initiative to establish a national information and service bureau for student
- etc.

Methods

The working methods depend on the issue. For example, study-finance:

When the government published its proposals LSVB studied it in order to come up with a response. Then information about the proposals were distributed among the students. In May 1985 there were actions against the proposed law. - Almost every university was occupied by students for weeks, there were local and national

demonstrations. LSVB then wrote its own proposal for a study-finance system which was put forward in parliament by the left-wing parties. Now the government's proposal has become law, with a few changes for the benefit of students. LSVB is now giving information about it to students and trying to change parts of it by all possible methods.

Contact with the Authorities

LSVB meets with the Ministry of Education at least four times a year.

Contacts with members of parliament are conducted mostly on an ad-hoc basis, but are often very productive.

LOCAL

Structure

The normal structure of a local union is as follows:

* All-Members Council:

- meets twice a year
- elects an Executive Board or Secretariat once each year

* Council Meetings:

- meets regularly
- some unions elect the Council, others have it open for everybody to participate

Elections

Executive Board or Secretariat elected annually by All-Member Meetings. Usually very few candidates for the unpaid hard work.

All students participate in elections to their university/faculty council. Local unions choose persons to be on their "party-list" and campaign to win as much support as possible for their list from among the students.

Areas of Work

Some unions are only interested in the material circumstances of students. Some unions (especially the unions for students in Higher Vocational Schools) exist to support their representatives in the school council. Some unions (especially the older ones) have a wide range of activities: discussion groups about education (quality, access, etc.); information rounds about study financing and other students rights; womens groups; foreign-policy/solidarity groups; reproduction facilities; student housing bureaus; etc.

Contacts to Authorities

Student representatives are elected to the councils of Higher Level Educational institutes and to faculty councils.

Each local union finds the most appropriate way to influence the local policy.

Politics

The local unions are political organisations in the sense that they strive to improve the material and other situations of students. Neither LSVB nor its local unions are allied with any political party.

Executive Board

Marten Teitsma	President
Renee Broekmevlen	Vice-President, Treasurer, International Secretary
Jaap de Bruyn	National Secretary

NORWAY

History : Norsk Studentunion (NSU)

NSU was founded as NSS (Norsk Student Samband) in 1936. The name was changed to NSU in 1964.

Legislation

There is no legislation regulating the organisation of students in Norway.

Membership

Membership of NSU is generally collective, but certain exceptions have recently been introduced.

Students at each member institution, college or (in the case of the universities) faculty vote on the issue of membership of NSU. Provided that a required majority votes in favour of membership, all students are collectively affiliated to the national union.

Following criticism of the "automatic", collective membership, NSU recently introduced the possibility of active withdrawal from the union. Students can sign a withdrawal form valid for one semester at a time, upon which the fee is returned to the student welfare organisation.

Fees

Each student is required to pay a membership fee (presently NOK 20.50 per semester) which is included in the student union fee paid by the student at the start of each semester upon registration.

Structure

The main policies of the national union of students are decided at the National Conference (NSU Landssting) which is held once every year. At this conference, each member institution is represented in proportion to its size. Larger member institutions have representation from smaller units (institutes, faculties) on their delegations.

The second level of decision-making in the national union of students is the National Board (Landsstyre) which meets approximately five times a year. The Board takes all important decisions in between Board meetings. It consists of five full-time officers and non-paid members.

NSU organises approximately 46,000 students from the universities at Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø as well as from most of the other colleges in the country (commercial colleges, colleges of technology, sports, arts, agriculture et cetera).

NSU does not organise all the post-secondary level students in Norway. Students at nursing colleges and teacher training colleges are organised in unions of their own. Students at "district colleges" and Norwegian students studying abroad also have their own, separate unions. NSU, the other student unions and the national organisation of school pupils together form an umbrella organisation called DUK. The purpose of DUK is to act jointly on issues of common concern, such as study finance. NSU acts as co-ordinator of DUK.

Areas of Work

- Study finance and student welfare (social welfare, housing student health care, kindergartens, etc.)
- Education
- International
 - bilateral relations
 - solidarity with the Third World
 - peace and disarmament
- Women's issues (co-ordination of women's groups, seminar/conferences)
- Organisation (organisational development)
- Information ("selling" NSU)

Working Methods

Depends on the time and the issues.

Methods include:

- development of own programmes and proposals
- campaigns
- demonstrations
- lobbying
- training

Major Issues for NSU in recent years have been:

* Government white papers (summaries of recent development and outline of planned policies in a given field) on:

- 1) Study finance (1984)
- 2) Higher education (1985)
- 3) Research (1985)

In the case of the first two papers, NSU produced its own alternatives presenting its version of the current situation and introducing NSU's alternative solutions and proposals.

* New law on the organisation of student welfare

The bill contained rules on how decision-making bodies in the student welfare system should be organised. NSU's main criticism was that the organisation of this system should not be the subject of a national law, but instead be up to the students to decide. Other complaints are that the law lacks a clear statement on the responsibility of the Government to cater for student welfare and that there is little opportunity for local variation and adjustment.

* Law on private colleges

It is the policy of the Norwegian Government to increase the financial aid given to private educational institutions and to grant them a greater degree of freedom from public interference. NSU has opposed this policy and claims that public money should be directed to public institutions.

* Repayment of student loans

In the present study loan system, repayment is made by instalments relative to the size of the loan. NSU favours an income-based repayment system (instalments relative to the ability of the individual).

* International issues

1) International solidarity work

In the last two years, NSU has made solidarity with Nicaragua and El Salvador a priority. The national union has also renewed its work with Poland.

2) WESIB

NSU has been actively involved with the West European Student Information Bureau (WESIB) and took on the position of Chair organisation for 1986.

* Women's issues

NSU is active on women's issues and organises an annual conference for women as well as meetings of all women's groups at different institutes and colleges.

* Organisational issues

The Norwegian national union of students experiences a period of structural and organisational change and is currently giving priority to solving these problems.

Contact to Authorities

NSU has an extensive amount of representation on a great number of official bodies (both state institutions and academic structures). The national union of students is included on the list of institutions and organisations who are usually asked by

the authorities to participate in the discussions of public and political documents, although the union from time to time questions what influence this has on the political process. NSU has meetings with the Parliamentary committee for higher education whenever necessary and has raised important issues with the Rectors within the council of Norwegian universities.

Local Student Unions

There are no local student unions in the traditional sense of the word. However, NSU's work on the local level is organised in five geographical units: Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø and Ås. These units have locally elected executives and decision-making bodies.

Each of the local units have a "NSU meeting". In this meeting student representatives from local member institutions discuss local problems as well as the NSU policies in general. The local NSU meeting can make proposals and decide on the policy to be carried out by the local Executive. However, this policy has to be in line with the overall national policy of NSU.

The local executive is elected by the NSU meeting. Executive members are full-timers or half-timers and are compensated financially for the lost study time. Local NSU elections are held at the beginning of each semester. Although the elections are officially non-political, this is not often the case in practice. Elections to the National Conference are political and are held in March every year.

The major issues for local NSU bodies are more or less the same as at the national level.

Student Welfare

In Norway there are special bodies responsible for student welfare (housing, health care, services, etc.). These bodies are called "studentsamskipnader" (=student associations) and are financed by the students through their term-fee (NOK 260 in Oslo) and by the state.

The students are involved in the decision-making structures of these associations (general assembly and Board). In certain places the students are in majority on the Boards. The general assemblies consist of students only.

NSU Secretariat

Joint Secretary General - Lisa Bang (Higher Education)
Joint Secretary General - Bente Sandvig (Study Finance and
Student Welfare)
Treasurer - Gunnar Olav Morsund
Information - Live Beate Skavdal

NSU Executive 86/87

President : Calle Hedberg
Vice-President (Welfare) : Brit Fritzmann
Women's Issues & Study Finance : Kari Nyheim
Solidarity Work & Educational Issues : Martha Ebbing
WESIB, E.M., Foreign Students
and Education : Rolf Anderson

Part-timers: Mona Nesje
Siw Overas
Jarle Nerland
Anja Bredal

Political Groups

- * Socialist Front (Socialistisk Front, SF) in Oslo and As Radical Front (Radikale Front, RF) in Bergen
- * Norwegian Conservative Students (national organisation)
Moderate group (organised to run in students elections)
- * Norwegian Communist Students

These three are the major groups at present in NSU. A fourth group, the Labour youth students in the past few years have concentrated their efforts on university bodies, including the welfare sector, and have given less priority to NSU.

SWEDEN

History : Sveriges Forenade Studentkarer (SFS)

The Swedish National Union of Students (SFS) has been the national organisation for the students at Swedish universities since 1921. It was founded by students from the universities in Uppsala, Lund, Stockholm and Gothenburg, the main reason being that they wanted to co-operate in international questions. A lot has happened in the educational sphere since then, for instance there are two more universities now. In 1977 a major administrative university reform was made and since then students at university colleges can also become members of SFS.

Legislation

By law, every student at a university or university college must belong to a student union. There is no legislation for a national union of students but as more than 90% of students in Sweden belong to SFS, it becomes the natural representative for student interests. There is no other national union of students in Sweden.

Membership

Each student is a member of the local Student Union. The local Student Parliament decides if the Union joins SFS or not. If the Union joins SFS all of its members become members of SFS.

There are regular debates on the questions of membership, whether it should remain compulsory or be made voluntary.

Fees

Students pay fees to local student unions. The amount varies from union to union, but the average fee is around 400 SEK/year. The fee is normally determined through a decision made by the unions parliament.

Local unions pay fees to SFS. The fee is determined at SFS annual congress. The fee is between 25 - 50 SEK 1986/87 depending on what section one is a member of.

NATIONAL

Structure

- * Congress : Meets once a year. Each Member Union sends a delegation related to the size of the Union.
 - Elections of Presidium and Board
 - deals with all questions within the SFS framework
- * Sections Congresses: Meet once a year. Delegations from Member Unions depending on size.
 - elections of Section Presidium and Board
 - Deal with all questions with the framework of that section
 - Sections:
 1. Philosophic, law and theological faculties (SMAK)
 2. Technology (REFTEC)
 3. Pedagogy (PUS)
 4. Medicine (SMUL)
 5. Agriculture (SLUSS)
- * Special Councils: One for each of the sections
 - deal with questions specific to students in that section
- * Committees : The President and two Vice Presidents take responsibility for one each of the SFS Committees - International, Social and Educational
- * Board: Consists of the Presidium plus 20 persons elected by the SFS Congress
 - deals with questions common for all students
- * Presidium: Consists of the President and two Vice Presidents

SFS has a special committee for problems connected to post graduate studies, and one for student health questions. The Board can establish special committees as necessary.

Areas of Work

SFS has the purpose of looking after the common concerns among students and to represent Swedish students in relation to government authorities in educational, social, labour market, and international affairs, in the way that the members have decided through majority decisions in a SFS body.

SFS primarily works towards parliament, the government and the central authorities. The SFS also functions as a center for the exchange of information and ideas between the local unions.

Major issues

Quality of education, co-operation and collaboration between industry and universities, geographic location of education, general study programmes, the ageing study assistance system, insurance, medical care, price of literature, discounts on train

fares, lack of accommodation, equality, childcare, internationalistaion, grants, foreign students situation, solidarity work, representation, etc.

Methods

SFS works as a trade union with all the questions and problems that concern the student in his/her capacity as a student. SFS follows closely the activities of the government and its bureaucracy. Different means are used to try to influence political parties, members of the Parliament, trade unions, journalists, decision makers and other opinion formers to engage themselves in the problems of the Swedish students. The methods employed are letters, petitions, public statements, demonstrations, campaigns, lobbying, etc. SFS has its own programmes/proposals, representation in a great number of national bodies and committees, etc. As they say "...the democratic arsenal stands at the disposition of SFS and the organisation makes use of it according to the actual needs and wishes."

Contacts to Authorities

SFS has for many years had good contacts with the Government/departments/legislators/local educational authorioties/administration. There are, for example, meetings with the director of the "National Swedish Board of Universities and University Colleges" every month. People who work here have personal contacts with political parties and journalists. A lot of persons in important positions have been active in SFS themselves during their studies.

LOCAL

Structure

- * Student Parliament : Elected annually.
 - elects the President, Board, etc.
 - has a right to be represented in every body at the university or university college
- * Board: elected by Parliament
- * Staff:
 - deal with the Union's affairs on a full-time basis

Elections

Elections are held annually. Every student is allowed to vote. There are:

Personal elections, mainly at smaller unions and younger university colleges.

Party elections, are held at all universities and often at the middle sized unions at the university colleges. The party constellation is not exactly the same as in the ordinary Swedish party system. There are communists, social democrats, agrarian, right wing, non-politicised, faculty parties and sometimes also "obstruction" parties. The participation is usually very low, i.e. around 20-25%.

Areas of Work

Main activities at local student unions are social and educational questions, representation in different boards, etc. The activity varies a lot from union to union because of the size of it. Most of the unions have a magazine, some have bookshops, full medical care can be available, kindergarten, housing, sport arenas and also more festive activities.

Major issues

As at national level.

Affiliation to Regional Organisations

All the Student Unions function independently, and there is no special regional organisation. SFS organises the students on the national level. There can be more than one union in one town, in that case they co-operate in questions of medical care and sport arrangements, bookshops, etc. A local student union can choose to not join SFS. At the moment most of the unions belong to SFS. SFS has today more than 70 local student unions as members and represents more than 145,000 students.

Persons working at SFS 1987-01-07

* = Elected ; 1 year
§ = Employed

Top function

President Int.	Arne Berge	*
Vice President Ed	Ingrid Wetterqvist	*
Vice president S	Maria Östberg	*
General secretary	Mats Jönsson	§
International secretary 25%	Birgitta Arvidsson	§
Social secretary	Eva Sparr	§
Education secretary 50%	Vacant	§
Ed. + post grad. secr. 50/50	Fredrik Jahn	§
Information secretary 50%	Henrikke Bauman	§
Secretary	Caroline Kronke	§
Secretary	Kaj Noura	§
Secretary 25%	Yvonne Walter	§
Accountant 80%	Britt Hein	§

SMAK

President	Bengt Persson	*
Vice president	Anders Svanelind	*
Education secretary	Marie Wärn	§
Education secretary	Robert Hultman	§

REFTEC

President	Per Bjerndell	*
Education secretary 50%	Henrikke Bauman	§

PUS

President	Per Starfelt	*
Vice President	Anna Karlsson	*
Education secretary	Per-Erik Djerf	§

SMUL

President	Ingrid Hemström	*
Education secretary 50%	Vacant	§

SLUSS has no paid president and no staff.

SWITZERLAND

History: Verband Schweizerische Studentenschaften/Union National des Etudiants de Suisse (VSS/UNES)

VVS/UNES was established in 1920.

Legislation

There is no legislation on the national level regarding the organisation of students. Being a federal state, each region (Canton) has its own legislation regarding the organisation of students at the local level. This legislation varies a great deal between the Cantons. Most universities have regulations on student organisation included in their statutes.

NATIONAL

Membership

The members of VVS/UNES are local unions. They pay a membership fee, the size of which is determined by the number of students affiliated to the local union. The present fee is SFR 3.50 per semester for each student. Depending on their financial situation, unions may be granted a reduction of the total amount.

Membership on the local level may be automatic (compulsory) or voluntary. Membership in the national union is collective upon a decision by the local union to join the national structure.

In order to qualify for membership in VSS/UNES, the local union must fulfil certain criteria:

- a) there must be unlimited access for all students,
- b) general elections must be held to the decision-making bodies of the local union and
- c) the local union must be neutral in terms of race, religion and party politics.

The member have depending on their size two or more votes in the Council of Delegates. In all elections, particularly those of the Executive Board, the representation of both languages (German and French), the regions and the major unions is considered.

As a result of the controversy over collective membership, some important local unions were abolished (in the 1970's) or were no longer allowed to pay membership fees. This has had a serious impact on the recognition and the financial situation of VSS/UNES.

Where there is a union of a particular study or region it may join VSS/UNES as associated member (without vote, in order to prevent double-representation).

The National Union of Students of Polytechnics is affiliated to VSS/UNES with an Extra Status.

Structure

The principal decision-making bodies are:

- * Council of delegates (52 persons)
 - meets approx. 4 times a year
 - takes all major decisions
 - considers proposals from Commissions
 - elects General Secretary, Executive Board, Commissions and representatives to other bodies
- * Executive Board (5-7 persons) - meets every 2-3 weeks
 - acts within the guidelines of the Council
 - takes urgent decisions
- * Commissions
 - a) Study finance
 - b) HE policy
 - c) International / Solidarity work
 - prepare the discussion and the proposals for the Executive Board / the Council of Delegates
 - the Commissions act autonomously within the working programme
- * Secretary General - elected for two years
 - the actual executive function rests with the Secretary General

Apart from the Secretary General the staff of the national union is limited to a part-time secretary.

Principal Areas of Work

- Higher education policy
- Student welfare (housing, health insurance, etc.)
- Study finance
- Women in Higher Education
- Information
- International co-operation / Solidarity work

The main work methods consist of continuous representation of students on decision-making bodies on the national level and of representation towards higher education authorities. This work involves presentation of student opinion on a number of subjects of interest to students. VSS/UNES also performs a lot of lobbying and attempts to raise public opinion on matters of particular concern.

VSS/UNES organises seminars on topics of interest in the field of higher education.

Major Issues

- Defense of the student grants system
- New structures and trends
- Policies of austerity in higher education
- Student housing
- Transport matters
- *Legal status of Student Unions*

Contacts with the Authorities

In certain cases, these are fixed by laws or regulations. This is true for decision-making bodies where VSS/UNES is directly represented, such as the Swiss University Conference and the Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students. Other contacts with politicians and administrators vary with time and the subject at hand. Cantonal or local contacts are usually established through the local member union.

LOCAL

Membership

The existence of local student unions and the regulations of their activities vary considerably between different Cantons.

Membership can be either compulsory (automatic) or voluntary. Automatic membership requires legislation in the concerned Canton. Earlier, most unions were based solely on the university regulation, but after a series of court battles, this is no longer enough. Some such battles have resulted in the abolition of the local student union. In one case there is a compulsory fee for services, while membership is voluntary.

The discussion of this issue continues, but in many universities and colleges the return of the automatic membership is considered.

Structure

The principal model is as follows:

- * General elections for a student council of 30-50 people.
- * An Executive Board consisting of voluntary part-timers.
- * Commissions

All local unions employ at least one part- or full-time secretary. In certain cases the Board members are paid for their work.

Elections

In local student elections, all students at the HE institution concerned are allowed to vote. Candidates must be students registered with the respective university. Candidates usually stand for election for a political group or a faculty society. The political groups are not regularly active in the universities, but mainly appear in times of elections.

Principal Areas of Work

- Information
- Representation
- Structures of the Universities and student participation in decision-making bodies
- Counselling
- Services
- Leisure activities

Most of the work is on a voluntary basis. Representation towards university authorities represents the most important area of local student union work. Two unions run student centres. Services are for the most part run independently of student unions, but there are exceptions.

Major Issues

- VSS/UNES has co-ordinated campaigns on study finance
student housing
- The situation of foreign students
- Local issues (transport, etc.)
- Solidarity work
- Leisure programmes / film programmes

Staff

General Secretary :
Administrator :

Felix Baumann
Heidi Guzel-Mosiman

Politics

There is no formalised participation of political groups within VSS/UNES.

Executive Committee

Provisional responsibilities

~~Eva Fernandez - Beberland~~
~~Barbara Schulz~~
- Aeberhard

President, Information Officer,
~~Womens Officer~~

~~Thomas Feer~~
Martin Ziltener

Vice-President, *Finances*
~~Responsible for Social Affairs~~

~~Guilio Jannattone~~

Responsible for University Politics

~~Nicolas Musy~~

Responsible for Finances

~~Sami Kanaan~~

International Officer

Commission Presidents

Thomas Feer
~~Francesca Perucchi~~
Barbara Ringeisen
~~Laurent Wehrli~~

Study Finance

International and Solidarity Work

~~Silvia Buchi~~ ✓ *(as before)*

University Politics

Werner Eberle



Social Affairs

Board

Christoph Lippuner
Barbara Schulz
Patrick Suter
~~Mark~~
Michael Konrad

(Higher Ed. Politics)
University Politics
International / women
Social
Social