



Reykjavík, 9. apríl 2017

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT TO LANDSSAMTÖK ÍSLENSKRA STÚDENTA
AGAINST THE UNDERFUNDING OF ICELANDIC UNIVERSITIES**

A strong, dependable education system is a crucial building block in every socially progressive country. The transfer of knowledge that takes place within the higher education community is essential for the development and the necessary edification needed in a healthy and competitive society. Therefore it is the responsibility of any acting government to priorities in a way that provides the funding needed to ensure these objectives.

These objectives have been reaffirmed in the newest convention made between the parties in the acting government. In the convention it states as follows:

“Icelandic universities shall receive governmental support in order to ensure the quality of education and withstand international competition, while at the same time cooperation and coordination between Icelandic universities and scientific institutions shall be increased”.

The continuous underfunding of Icelandic universities is contrary to this statement and, in fact, detrimental to the universities’ competence in providing that environment. Between the years 1999-2010, other Nordic countries increased funding to their universities between 38- 118 percent, while the government in Iceland only increased their funding by 7,7 percent.

At the same time, the average increase in OECD countries was 46%. The effect of this long term underfunding is being felt hard all over the higher education community in Iceland. For example, the University of Iceland recently announced that it would have to cut 50 courses next year due to austerity measures imposed on the university. Many courses have been cut already, due to chronic underfunding. Another example is the Icelandic Academy of the Arts. They have been

forced to operate in many buildings, some of which are very inaccessible, that are completely unsafe and pose a serious health hazard because of the accumulation of mould.

Many students have had difficulties with breathing, suffered headaches, hair loss and other health related problems because of this. Students and teachers have fled the buildings due to symptoms from the mould, working in unofficial housing instead.

Therefore Landssamtök íslenskra stúdenta (LÍS) expresses their deep concern and demands that the Icelandic government discontinue the irresponsible and unrealistic austerity measures imposed on Icelandic universities. Furthermore, LÍS urges the acting Icelandic government to follow through on the objectives put forth in the convention signed earlier this year, by guaranteeing Icelandic universities the funding necessary to ensure quality of education and withstand international competition, among other objectives.

LÍS also requests that national unions, belonging to the Nordisk Ordförande Møte, stand in solidarity with LÍS in expressing concern over the continuous underfunding, condemning the austerity measures and demanding that the acting government follows the policy put forth in their own convention.

Hereby, we the undersigned commit our support and solidarity with Landssamtök íslenskra stúdenta (LÍS) in the struggle against the continuous underfunding of Icelandic universities.

Denmark, Danske Studerendes Fællesråd

Estonia, Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit

Faroe Islands, Meginfelag Føroyskra Studenta

Finland, Suomen opiskelijakuntien liitto SAMOK and Suomen ylioppilaskuntien liitto SYL

Latvia, Latvijas Studentu apvienība

Norway, Norsk studentorganisasjon

Sweden, Sveriges förenade studentkårer

Signed in Reykjavík, 09.04.2017