

Stance on the Palestinian genocide

Academic year 2025/2026

ESN Spain is committed to promote international mobility, intercultural education, inclusion and defending human rights. These principles, which guide our work since our foundation, directly question our actions regarding the serious humanitarian situation that lies amongst the Palestinian people, especially their youth and university community.

This stance arises from a process of dialogue and internal debate with the volunteers that make up the 38 sections that form ESN Spain, reflecting the diversity of sensibilities and collective compromise within our network.

ESN's mission is based on building bridges between different cultures, promoting peace and mutual understanding between international youth, now beyond Europe, even if the Erasmus+ programme was intended as such at first.

Higher education and, thus, student mobility, are tools for social transformation. We find ourselves facing a genocide that has been going on for decades and that, specially throughout recent years, has had clear goals: civilian population, wealth, educational and sanitary institutions; in other words, people, cultural identity, education and health. Therefore, we are facing a direct attack against the values we defend and against the tools and institutions that guarantee and promote the wellbeing and future of society.

The stance is a renewed commitment. Yes, it comes late, but it arrives with the clear belief that silence is not an option when the values that lay the foundation of our work are at risk.

We want to express our profound concern over the impact that the violence and destruction has had over the civilian population, particularly on children, young adults and students. Palestinian educational centers have suffered severe damage or have been left completely inoperative, which has interrupted access to education from the primary stage to higher education.

Additionally, the situation has affected Palestinian students in Europe, many of which live in distress over their family's safety, the uncertainty over their futures and the impossibility to return to their place of origin.

From a place of respect for internal cultural diversity within our network and maintaining our commitment with our European values, ESN Spain declares that:

- It condemns the genocide and the violation of human rights from Israel, as well as any type of violence aimed at the civilian population. Likewise, it defends the necessity to protect those people according to International Humanitarian Law, as well as the importance of safe humanitarian corridors and quick and effective international assistance.
- It requests an immediate and permanent ceasefire that allows human lives to be protected and a guarantee to humanitarian aid.
- It demands respect towards protected civilian infrastructure, such as educational centers and hospitals, as well as personnel, paying attention to the compliance of international standards in the context of a conflict.
- It expresses solidarity and support towards the youth and the Palestinian university community, whose right to education is severely violated.
- It defends a political, united, right and long-lasting solution, respecting coexistence and equal sovereignty, in accordance with the principles of international law and the European commitment to peace.
- It demands conditions that guarantee a secure exchange mobility, with special emphasis on students from conflict-affected areas.

ESN Spain, as a member of a network deeply connected to the European institutions and the Erasmus+ ecosystem, recognises the key role played by the European Union in peace promotion, university cooperation and its growth. In the last decade, Spain and Palestine have maintained a partnership framework within Spanish Cooperation, centered on institutional strengthening, the promotion of rights and support for education.

We reiterate that international mobility is only transformative when it is secure, inclusive and respectful to human dignity. For that reason we urge the Spanish and European institutions to expand the emergency scholarships, hosting programmes and academic protection for all affected students.

As ESN Spain, we want to invite local and international students to promote awareness activities on education for peace, diversity and intercultural dialogue; offer safe spaces for Palestinian students that are enrolled in Spain; increase all inclusive practices and emotional support; and work with universities and collaborative organizations to impulse new academic and support opportunities.

We are confident that, within the European framework and through Spain's active cooperation with Palestine, we can contribute to rebuild dialogue paths, opportunities and hope for new generations. ESN Spain will continue working to ensure that any student, in any place of the world, will be negated its right to learn, to move and above all, to live in peace

On our part, as a support network for international students, we can't ignore that our colleagues have to endure this tragedy first-hand. Our words are not only a symbolic gesture, but also an act of consistency and commitment towards those who form part of it.

That's why, we implemented the following actions nationwide:

- Educational and awareness campaigns in networks and universities.
- Solidarity activities with Palestinians in coordination with verified NGOs.
- Promotion of the use of fair trade products and ethical suppliers at local and national events.
 - Ethical audit of partners and development of a national policy on responsible partnerships.
 - Promoting a debate on our position regarding the genocide in Palestine within the ESN International network and coordinating with other European youth organisations and entities.
 - Internal training and educational spaces on the actual international context and human rights.

With this stance, we reaffirm our commitment to the defence of human rights, education, peace and solidarity, as guiding principles of our network and in accordance with our rights. **We believe that the voice of youth, critical and informed, must play a central role in building a future that actively defends human dignity.**