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# Student Union of the University of Eastern Finland

Environmental Programme

2020



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**NB: This document is a translation from the original source text. The translation is not binding; its purpose is only to explain the contents of the original document in English. In case there are any ambiguities in the translation, please check the original document for the correct and binding expressions.**

1 **1 Introduction**

2 The Environmental Programme of the Student Union of the University of Eastern  
3 Finland (ISYY) sets the environmental principles and objectives for the Student Union  
4 and its activities. The programme also describes practical means for implementing the  
5 principles and achieving the objectives. The programme plays an important role in the  
6 way in which environmental considerations are taken into account by those working for  
7 and in cooperation with the Student Union.

8

9 The previous Environmental Programme dates back to 2015, and an update was  
10 deemed necessary. The aim is to make the programme more tangible, including  
11 concrete objectives and measures that will be taken into account by those working for  
12 and in cooperation with the Student Union. The Student Union is committed to  
13 implementing the Environmental Programme by decision of the Representative  
14 Council. Furthermore, the members of the ISYY Executive Board must implement the  
15 programme within their own sectors, and report its implementation annually. In future,  
16 the Student Union is committed to updating the Environmental Programme at an  
17 interval of every other term of the Representative Council.

18

## 19 **2 Implementation of the Programme**

### 20 **2.1 Principles and Objectives of the Programme**

21 Environmental principles form the basis of the Environmental Programme and also  
22 provide guidelines for the objectives and measures to be set. The environmental  
23 principles and the measures used to achieve them are as follows:

- 24 ● ISYY plays an active role in environmental matters by taking them into account  
25 in its own activities and by encouraging partner institutions and stakeholders to  
26 do the same.
  - 27 ○ The Annual Report includes a section detailing the measures taken by  
28 the Executive Board to implement the Environmental Programme across  
29 different sectors.
- 30 ● ISYY acts as a responsible student union that promotes sustainable  
31 development from an ecological, economic, social and cultural point of view.
  - 32 ○ Each year, the Action Plan of ISYY features one sub-theme focusing on  
33 sustainable development, including how the chosen sub-theme will be  
34 taken into consideration at every sector and event, as well as throughout  
35 Student Union communications.
- 36 ● ISYY actively promotes environmental awareness by way of its activities and  
37 communications.
  - 38 ○ Throughout the year, ISYY members are regularly informed about  
39 environment and climate related theme days, and members are actively  
40 encouraged to participate in discussions, campaigns and events.  
41 Environmental communication is an established feature of ISYY's  
42 Communication Strategy.

43 Environmental principles are put into practice through objectives and a proposed set of  
44 measures. This programme contains both general and more detailed environmental  
45 objectives that relate to different areas of activity within the Student Union. The general  
46 objectives of the Environmental Programme are as follows:

- 47 1. The Environmental Programme will become a central pillar of how the Student  
48 Union operates.
- 49 2. The objectives of the Environmental Programme are achieved and the proposed  
50 set of measures are put into practice.
- 51 3. In accordance with the objectives set out in the Environmental Programme,  
52 different stakeholders, such as student organisations, will take an environmental  
53 perspective into consideration in their activities.  
54

## 55 **2.2 Monitoring and Reporting of the Programme**

56 The Representative Council and the Executive Board are responsible for monitoring  
57 the implementation of the Environmental Programme. The Executive Board  
58 implements the programme as a part of all activities, while the Representative Council  
59 monitors the implementation of the programme. The Executive Board member  
60 responsible for environmental matters is also responsible for coordinating the  
61 implementation of the Environmental Programme within the Executive Board and  
62 sharing reports with the Representative Council.  
63

64 The annual report is shared with the Representative Council at the end of the calendar  
65 year, before the following year's budget and action plan have been approved. The  
66 report must indicate how the principles of the Environmental Programme have been  
67 complied with, to which extent the objectives have been achieved and how the Student  
68 Union has utilised the proposed measures in its general operations. In addition, the  
69 report should detail how the Student Union has communicated about the programme  
70 to stakeholders, such as student organisations, and what means have been used to  
71 encourage them to comply with it. The report must also include practical ideas that  
72 could be used to improve the implementation of the Environmental Programme in the  
73 future.  
74

## 75 **2.3 Environmental campaigning**

76 Environmental campaigning plays an essential role in the way that ISYY's  
77 Environmental Programme is implemented, and action against climate change is a  
78 notable element of the campaigning. Environmental campaigning is an important  
79 component of both ISYY's internal and external communications. ISYY members are  
80 provided with environmental communications and they receive information about  
81 environment-related events organised by the Student Union, among other things. In  
82 addition, environmental campaigning is incorporated into other ISYY activities, such as  
83 the annual training sessions that are organised for student organisations.

84

85 ISYY's active and enthusiastic environmental campaigning is not directed only at ISYY  
86 members, but also the management of UEF, the city councils of Joensuu and Kuopio,  
87 as well as other partner institutions. The campaigns are designed so that both current  
88 environmental issues and long-term environmental objectives are taken into  
89 consideration. When it comes to environmental matters and campaigning, ISYY works  
90 in collaboration with the environmental sector of the National Union of University  
91 Students in Finland (SYL) and other student unions around Finland. Due to student  
92 unions' role as active players in society, ISYY also aims to participate in the public  
93 debate and discussion regarding environmental issues. When official statements are  
94 made or opinions shared with the general public, the arguments used by ISYY must be  
95 based on independent, scientifically evaluated knowledge or information from credible  
96 sources.

97

## 98 **3 Activities of the Student Union (ISYY)**

99

100 The Executive Board member responsible for environmental matters or another  
101 member of the Executive Board must be in regular contact (at least once during the  
102 autumn semester and once during the spring semester) with volunteers, actives and  
103 staff members working for ISYY regarding the implementation of the Environmental

104 Programme. The following sub-chapters introduce some of the ways in which  
105 environmental considerations should be taken into account in the activities of the  
106 Student Union.

107

### 108 **3.1 Meetings**

109 Since the Representative Council, Executive Board and ISYY clubs hold regular  
110 meetings, the environmental perspective must be taken into account in the way  
111 meetings are conducted. The printing of meeting materials is to be avoided whenever  
112 possible. When the physical presence of participants is not required, meetings are held  
113 remotely in order to reduce unnecessary travel. Meeting facility bookings are optimised  
114 according to the number of participants, and energy is saved by switching off lights and  
115 devices that are not in use.

116

117 During meetings, ISYY is committed to serving ethical, eco-friendly food and drink that  
118 is locally produced, organic and Fair Trade certified, whenever possible. All food and  
119 drink that is served is vegan. The meeting catering should generate as little waste as  
120 possible, and hence special attention must be paid to the quantity and recyclability of  
121 the packaging materials. Reusable crockery and cutlery is preferred over disposable  
122 tableware, and the amount of food served must be optimised to meet the demand in  
123 order to avoid any food waste. Any waste generated during the meeting is sorted and  
124 disposed of in an appropriate manner.

125

### 126 **3.2 Travel and Transportation**

127 The Executive Board, Representative Council and ISYY staff members are required to  
128 travel between Kuopio and Joensuu as well as attend meetings and events around  
129 Finland throughout the year. If these meetings or events are very brief, or physical  
130 presence of participants is not required, they should be attended remotely. The need  
131 for travel is assessed on a case-by-case basis. When travelling is required, the form of  
132 public transport with the lowest levels of emissions should be used. However, if it is not



133 possible to use public transport due to unsuitable routes or schedules, carpooling is the  
134 next best option. People are encouraged to commit to low-carbon commuting, such as  
135 walking or cycling.

136

### 137 **3.3 Events**

138 Environmental considerations are taken into account in the planning and  
139 implementation of any event organised by the Student Union with the aim of reducing  
140 the burden caused to the environment. Event advertising and communications are  
141 primarily conducted via digital communication channels, such as social media, while  
142 printed forms of communication are reduced to a minimum. However, if physical  
143 invitation letters or posters are required, they are printed on eco-labelled or 100%  
144 recycled paper.

145

146 Reusable crockery and cutlery is preferred over disposable tableware at events with  
147 catering, and food should come packaged in a manner that generates as little waste as  
148 possible. Efforts must be made to minimise food waste, while any waste generated  
149 during events is sorted and recycled in an appropriate manner. The food and drink  
150 served at events must be ethically and ecologically produced, and vegan wherever  
151 possible.

152

## 153 **4 Stakeholders, Interest Groups and Partner Institutions**

154 When ISYY cooperates and communicates with different stakeholders, interest groups  
155 and partner institutions, it is important to highlight the environmental perspective and  
156 raise awareness about relevant environmental issues.

157

### 158 **4.1 Student Organisations**

159 Student organisations play an important role among university students by organising  
160 a wide range of activities for them. Student organisations are a critical link between  
161 students and the Student Union, but it should be noted that these organisations do not  
162 operate under the authority of ISYY. Therefore, student organisations cannot be  
163 instructed to act in a more environmentally friendly manner, but they can be  
164 encouraged to do so.

165

166 One of the most influential ways to encourage eco-friendly practices is to modify ISYY's  
167 grant application criteria: in order to receive grants, student organisations are required  
168 to demonstrate a willingness to take environmental considerations into account during  
169 their activities. The themes of the Environmental Programme are to be included in the  
170 annual organisation training sessions that are attended by board members of student  
171 organisations. During training the board members are provided with information about  
172 how environmental aspects can be taken into account in different activities and they  
173 are encouraged to turn to the Student Union for guidance on how environmental  
174 objectives can be set and achieved. ISYY also encourages student organisations to  
175 cooperate with their own school or department so that environmental issues are paid  
176 more attention to and the environmental objectives can be achieved. The Student  
177 Union must also facilitate the eco-friendliness of student organisations with practical  
178 measures, for example by loaning reusable crockery and cutlery that can be used at  
179 events instead of disposable ones. Student organisations are encouraged to take care  
180 of recycling at their events and premises.

181 **4.2 The University**

182 The Student Union cooperates closely with the University. ISYY is determined to  
183 ensure that there are student representatives in all of the working groups and other  
184 decision-making bodies of UEF, allowing ISYY to actively initiate and promote  
185 environment-related action at university level. At meetings that are held between ISYY  
186 and UEF staff, the environmental perspective must be deliberately highlighted in order  
187 to encourage change. The Student Union must be determined in regards to achieving  
188 its environmental objectives and, when necessary, the views of the UEF  
189 representatives must be challenged in order to improve the overall environmental  
190 performance of the University.

191

192 When ISYY and UEF organise events together, ISYY must ensure that environmental  
193 matters are taken into account. The Student Union must encourage the University to  
194 achieve the environmental objectives set out in the Strategy of UEF (UEF 2030 –  
195 Seizing a Sustainable Future). The Student Union is engaged in lobbying the University  
196 to design subject-specific study modules on sustainable development that boost  
197 students' professional skills and promote their awareness of sustainable development  
198 in general. ISYY also encourages the University to share information about different  
199 environmentally-themes study opportunities with the student population. In addition, the  
200 Student Union must exert pressure on the University to commit to a divestment from  
201 fossil fuels.

202

203 **4.3 Campus Cities**

204 Since ISYY operates in two different locations, work must be done to influence both the  
205 City Council of Kuopio and the City Council of Joensuu. When talks are held with the  
206 representatives of Kuopio or Joensuu, ISYY must emphasise the importance of  
207 environmental considerations across the entire spectrum of the councils' activities from  
208 city planning to environmental monitoring.

209

210 ISYY exerts pressure on the councils to provide better public transport services, cycling  
211 routes, recycling facilities, eco-friendly housing and other initiatives that facilitate  
212 greener living. ISYY also encourages the councils to increase the amount of vegetarian  
213 food served at council-run offices, schools and other institutions. In addition, the city  
214 councils are encouraged to engage in ambitious environmental and climate action and  
215 budget a sufficient amount of money for environmental purposes. In general, they are  
216 encouraged to achieve their current environmental objectives and pursue new ones.  
217

#### 218 **4.4 Other Stakeholders, Interest Groups and Partner Institutions**

219 When the Student Union cooperates with different partner institutions, stakeholders and  
220 other interest groups, environmental considerations must be taken into account at all  
221 levels. The Student Union informs its partners about the Environmental Programme  
222 and encourages them to act in an eco-friendly manner as well. The following sub-  
223 chapters cover some of the Student Union's key partners with regards to environmental  
224 matters.  
225

##### 226 **4.4.1 Restaurants and Cafés on Campus**

227 ISYY encourages the catering companies responsible for restaurants and cafés on  
228 UEF campuses to make ecological choices with regards to the food and drink being  
229 served. The catering companies are encouraged to reduce food waste, pay attention  
230 to the carbon footprint of the products on offer and increase the amount of plant-based  
231 options on the menu. The quality and appeal of plant-based menu options must be  
232 improved, without increasing the price of the lunch for students.  
233

##### 234 **4.4.2 Student Housing Companies Joensuun Elli and Kuopas**

235 A considerable number of students live at rental apartments owned by student housing  
236 companies Joensuun Elli (in Joensuu) and Kuopas (in Kuopio). ISYY highlights the  
237 importance of reducing the carbon footprint of student accommodation and encourages

238 the student housing companies to consider environmental aspects in the way they  
239 operate. When talks are held with the student housing companies, environmental  
240 issues should be discussed by mutual agreement. The housing companies are  
241 encouraged to communicate more transparently about accommodation-related  
242 environmental objectives, switch to renewable sources of energy and invest in  
243 sustainable construction and renovation methods. In addition, pressure must be  
244 exerted on the companies to improve the energy efficiency of the student  
245 accommodation, including electric appliances.

246

#### 247 **4.4.3. Campus Organisations**

248 ISYY's environmental campaigning is also directed at campus organisations that are  
249 encouraged to take environmental matters into consideration in all activities. Since  
250 many campus organisations are active in different areas of the society, they are also  
251 encouraged to raise environmental issues among their peers and when participating in  
252 the public debate and discussion.

253

#### 254 **4.4.4. Commercial Collaborations**

255 The Student Union requests that existing collaboration partners take environmental  
256 issues into account in their business activities and makes it clear that cooperation can  
257 continue only if this condition is met. However, if a collaboration partner shows  
258 complete disregard towards environmental considerations, ISYY must terminate the  
259 cooperation agreement at the earliest opportunity. When new commercial  
260 collaborations are established, partners must agree to take environmental  
261 considerations into account in the way they operate, details of which are included in the  
262 terms of the cooperation agreement.

263

## 264 **5 Facilities**

265 The Student Union has an office on each campus: the office space in Joensuu is owned  
266 by the University Properties of Finland Ltd (SYK), while the one in Kuopio is owned by  
267 the Student Union (ISYY). In addition, ISYY owns rental property elsewhere. The  
268 principles set out in the Environmental Programme apply to the use of the Student  
269 Union facilities, regardless of whether they are owned or rented.

270

### 271 **5.1 Offices**

#### 272 **5.1.1 Energy Consumption**

273 Practical measures are taken to reduce energy consumption at the offices, including  
274 switching off lights, computers and other electronic devices for the night, as well as  
275 reducing the indoor temperature. However, the temperature should be kept at an  
276 ambient level that is considered comfortable by those working at the office.

277

#### 278 **5.1.2 Waste Management and Cleaning**

279 At the ISYY offices everything that can be recycled is recycled, including biowaste,  
280 paper, cardboard, glass, metal and plastic. Combustible waste, hazardous waste, as  
281 well as electrical and electronic waste are collected and recycled in a safe, appropriate  
282 manner. The Student Union ensures that the offices are equipped with suitable  
283 containers for waste management and clear instructions for recycling, and that cleaning  
284 is taken care of using eco-friendly products and cleaning equipment.

285

### 286 **5.2 Properties of the Student Union**

#### 287 **5.2.1 Waste Management and Cleaning**

288 Recycling must be taken care of at the properties owned by ISYY and recycling bins  
289 for different types of waste must be easy to use and readily available. Clear instructions

290 on how to sort waste are made available at all properties and information about  
291 recycling is shared with tenants and other people using the facilities. If the property is  
292 part of a limited liability housing company, ISYY aims to ensure that recycling is well-  
293 managed throughout the building complex.

294

295 If cleaning services are outsourced, it needs to be agreed that only eco-friendly  
296 products and cleaning equipment are used at the facilities, and one of the criteria for  
297 selecting the service provider should be their commitment to protecting the  
298 environment.

299

### 300 **5.2.2 Water and Energy Consumption**

301 Unnecessary consumption of water and energy should be avoided at the properties  
302 owned by ISYY. The tenants and those using the facilities are instructed to save energy  
303 by switching off lights, devices and the stove in the sauna when not in use. Whenever  
304 possible, the properties are only equipped with eco-friendly, energy-efficient  
305 appliances, devices and light bulbs. Water consumption is reduced by investing in high-  
306 quality plumbing fixtures, fittings and appliances that are well-maintained. The  
307 consumption of electricity and water at the Student Union facilities is monitored  
308 regularly and adjustments are made accordingly. The Environmental Programme must  
309 be kept in mind when selecting the electricity provider for the properties owned by ISYY:  
310 the electricity used must be environmentally friendly and come from renewable energy  
311 sources.

312

## 313 **6 Acquisitions and Investments**

314 The Student Union aims to take environmental considerations into account during  
315 tendering and procurement processes. When buying furniture or equipment, the option  
316 that is sustainably manufactured and of higher quality should be selected. Before  
317 purchasing new goods, it must be ensured that ISYY does not have a similar item that  
318 could be used to avoid having to buy something new. The lifespan of existing furniture  
319 and equipment should be extended through servicing and repair, and ideally old items  
320 should only be replaced when they are beyond repair. Any disused pieces of furniture  
321 or equipment that are in good working order are either sold or recycled.

322

### 323 **6.1 Office Equipment and Office Supplies**

324 Environmental considerations are also taken into account when purchasing office  
325 equipment and office supplies. With the shift to electronic communications, there is less  
326 need for printer paper. However, when paper products, such as printer paper and  
327 envelopes, are purchased, they must be Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified.

328

329 Electronic equipment should only ever be purchased when absolutely necessary and  
330 when it is not possible to repair. Any office equipment purchased must be energy-  
331 efficient and of high quality.

332

### 333 **6.2 Property Acquisition and Renovations**

334 The environmental aspect is always taken into account in property acquisition and  
335 renovations, including reflection on how essential and eco-friendly these activities are.  
336 When acquiring new property, the energy efficiency of the building should be an  
337 important factor to consider during the decision-making process. Furthermore,  
338 renovations should always aim to make the facilities more environmentally friendly.

339



340 **6.3 Investments**

341 The Student Union aims to make investments that are both eco-friendly and ethical.  
342 Whenever possible, investments are made in companies that support or provide  
343 environmentally friendly products and practices. Those responsible for investments are  
344 committed to the principles laid out in the Environmental Programme.