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## An Internationalised Student Union

### §1 Introduction

Malmö University is an urban and cosmopolitan learning institute, with a highly diverse student body. Since its inception, it has championed a multidisciplinary approach and a vast array of English-language courses. It is due to these factors that the university has also experienced an increasing influx of international students. With internationalisation becoming a focal point of the university, Studentkåren Malmö must readjust its mode of operations to harmonize the goal of an internationalised university. We must seek out better methods to accommodate the growing international student-body.

### §2 Membership

Following the parliamentary decision in 2009, membership within a student union is voluntary. In the past, the obligatory membership rule allowed the organisation to maintain its status quo pertaining to a sole language policy. However, with the abolishment of the aforementioned prerequisite, we are in need of an alteration if we are to attract our non-Swedish speaking students. As per our constitution, our organisation is open to all, regardless of background. During our recruitment campaigns, we seek out students with this regulation in mind.

### §3 Engagement

There exist numerous manners for which students are able to engage themselves within the union. Our numerous bodies include:

- Student Union Council
- Student Union Board
- Associations/Committees
- Boards within the university
- Events

Though the working language of a great majority of these bodies is Swedish, we have established a principle that allows English-speakers to be engaged, with several of our associations functioning with English as their working language. This principle constitutes holding meetings in both Swedish and English where necessary, with an English explanation granted when sought.

In the past, English-speakers were often segregated into a corner patronizingly-dubbed as "The English Corner" during the Council meetings, with an interpreter assigned. Our current modus operandi has abolished this said system. In place, council members are free to sit as they please, with their peers having the responsibility of translating the discussion. Furthermore, voting is done in both languages. This process has thus far been met with a positive response from both Swedish-speakers as well as English-speakers.

A problem which requires further mitigation might lie in the various decision-making boards throughout the university, which possess seats to student representatives. As of Autumn 2010, a greater percentage of students who have been voted into these boards have been English-speaking, particularly in the Faculty of Culture and Society. While many of these boards have been receptive to taking in English-speakers, there stills exists a sense of apprehension to do so

on an overall level. An initiative on the university's front to allay this aversion might assist in resolving the matter.

#### **§4 Documentation**

As stated earlier, our working language is Swedish, and a vast deal of our written endeavours are in the said language. Furthermore, based on Swedish law, all documentation has to exist in the Swedish language. However, this has not deterred us from translating various texts to correspond to our international students. Many of our documents exist in both languages, and are translated based on demand. Our communicative mediums (Facebook, website) are usually required to possess information in English. Furthermore, students are more than welcome to acquire assistance with regards to interpretation from the organisation.

#### **§5 Employment**

All current and potential employees within the organisation are required to be proficient in the English language. Although our working language is still Swedish, we must adapt ourselves to cater to our international students. An English-speaker is more than welcome to apply to any of our available positions as well as candidate to the various electoral positions of presidency and ombudsman provided that they meet the requirements.

#### **§8 Conclusion**

Studentkåren Malmö exists as a platform to represent all students within Malmö University. Though a complete overhaul with regards to language may not be a feasible resolution, we will do all we can within our empowerment to attract and accommodate our international students. As indicated earlier, we are an organisation that is open to all, and it is with this tenet that we will continue to function. Though we cannot promise an internationalisation process that mirrors that of the university, we can certainly execute one that is parallel in approach.