

Political
Economy
Society
Maastricht



Board Report

Semester 1

2025

Table of Contents

S
T
R
U
C
T
U
R
E

01.

Introduction

02.

Vision & Mission Statement

03.

Academic Activities

04.

Professional & Skill
Oriented Activities

05.

Community & Social
Events

06.

Partnerships & External
Relations

Table of Contents

S
T
H
E
T
H
N
C
O
C

07

Membership Growth &
Data

08

The Hierarchy

09

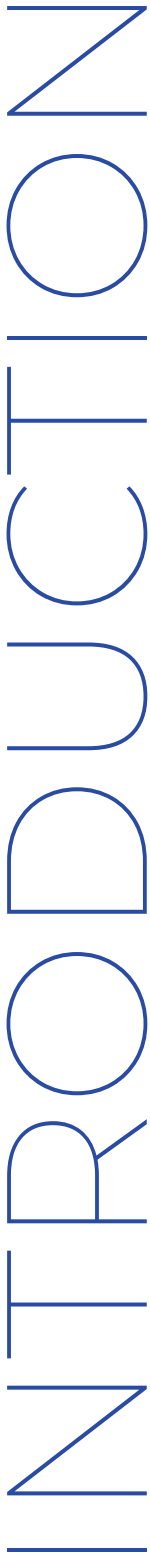
Challenges & Lessons
Learned

10

Plans for Semester 2

11

Conclusion



Aim of the report

This report provides an overview of the Political Economy Society (PES) Maastricht's activities during Semester 1 of the 2025 academic year. It outlines the academic, professional, and community-building initiatives undertaken by the society, highlights key achievements, and presents the outcomes of strategic partnerships.

This semester also symbolized a fresh start for PES, marked by an almost entirely new Executive Board, with the exception of the President, who collectively re-established consistency, structure, and ambition within the organization. With the explicit aim of revitalizing PES, strengthening its presence within the university environment, and elevating the society's academic and professional reputation, the board leveraged a unique advantage: a multi-university & multi-faculty membership base that includes both Zuyd and Maastricht University students.

This report therefore offers the Advisory Board a clear and evidence-based assessment of PES' renewed direction, performance, and impact.

Semester Overview

Semester 1 was marked by a substantial increase in event activity, high attendance, and strong engagement with themes related to multipolar realignment, international security, and political careers. PES successfully delivered a balanced combination of academic lectures, professional panels, and social events aimed at fostering intellectual curiosity and community cohesion.

Theme of the Semester

The theme guiding PES Maastricht this semester was multipolar realignment, reflecting the major shifts currently reshaping the global order. As traditional powers, especially the United States, face new challenges, emerging actors across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America are gaining influence - whether this be politically, economically, or culturally. This transition toward a more competitive and fragmented system raises essential questions about global governance, security, and diplomacy.

By centering our events on this theme, PES aimed to give students a clear and structured understanding of how states are recalibrating alliances, pursuing strategic autonomy, and navigating an evolving balance of power. The theme provided coherence across our lectures, debates, and the Paris trip, encouraging members to critically assess the opportunities and uncertainties of an increasingly multipolar world.

VISION & MISSION STATEMENTS

Our Vision

PES Maastricht envisions a vibrant, intellectually engaged student community that critically explores global political and economic developments. We aim to be a leading platform within UM and Zuyd, known for fostering informed debate, academic rigor, and meaningful dialogue in an increasingly multipolar world.

Our Mission

Our mission is to offer accessible, high-quality opportunities for students to engage with contemporary political and economic issues. Through expert events, cross-faculty collaboration, and an inclusive community, PES provides a structured space for learning, discussion, and professional development across both UM and Zuyd.



”
Connecting students with each other, experts, scholars, and best-in-their-field companies.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

01

Future in Politics Night & Networking - 25.11.2025

A 60-minute panel discussion followed by a networking session at the Law Faculty, focused on careers in politics and international affairs.

Speakers included:

- Dominique Selier: Policy Officer at Neth-ER, representing the Dutch knowledge community in EU policy development.
- Gergana Noutcheva: Associate Professor in International Relations and EU Foreign Policy at UM.
- Elissaveta Radulova: Associate Professor in Public Policy & Administration at UM.
- Roberta N. Haar: Principal Investigator of the Horizon REMIT EU project, Professor of Foreign Policy Analysis and Transatlantic Relations.

The panel offered students a unique opportunity to engage with professionals working across EU governance, diplomacy, public administration, and foreign policy.

02

Lecture: AI as a Driver of Global Power - 27.11.2025

Delivered by Konrad Kollnig, this lecture explored how states are leveraging AI to influence diplomacy, security, and global power asymmetries. The session examined geopolitical competition, technological innovation, and the future of international order.

03

Lecture: Rethinking Multipolar Alignment – Europe, Power & Gender - 28.11.2025

A thought-provoking lecture exploring how shifting global power dynamics intersect with Europe's role and gendered perspectives on international politics. Dr. Meltem Burak drew on her work in EU policy, gender equality, and UN initiatives to challenge conventional views of multipolar alignment and security. The session invited participants to reflect critically on Europe's place in a changing world and to reconsider whose voices shape our understanding of power.

PROFESSIONAL & SKILL-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

01

Executive Board Workshop — 14.10.2025

The Executive Board participated in a UM-organized training at Kaleido Space, Tapijn. The workshop provided an overview of university resources available to student associations, strengthening internal capacity and organizational knowledge.

02

Collaboration with Zuyd European Studies Department

PES maintains a formal partnership with the European Studies department at Zuyd University.

This collaboration provides:

- Promotion support for PES initiatives
- Financial support for events
- A requirement of two PES events per semester hosted at Zuyd facilities, improving accessibility for Zuyd students and integrating their academic community with PES activities

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL EVENTS

01

Info Drinks to Kick-start Academic Year

A welcoming event at Stadspark aimed at introducing new students to PES and its mission.

02

Opinion Unplugged - 23.09.2025

A dynamic debate format where participants confronted statements on contemporary political issues. The goal was to stimulate critical thinking and provoke intellectual exchange in an informal yet rigorous setting. The event encouraged participants to challenge their assumptions and articulate their viewpoints clearly.

03

Political Speed Dating - 1.10.2025

An innovative, fast-paced debate format centered on the theme "Greed of Power". Participants rotated discussion partners each round, generating lively exchanges and encouraging diverse viewpoints.

04

Trivia Night - 8.10.2025

A thematic trivia event revolving around the semester's core concept: multipolar realignment. The evening stimulated geopolitical thinking through accessible, competitive activities.

05

Active Members Bowling Night - 11.10.2025

A team-building recreational evening to strengthen internal cohesion among active members.

06

Conspiracy Theory Family Feud - 12.11.2025

A high-energy social event combining humor with critical thinking about misinformation and conspiratorial narratives.

07

Paris Trip - 20.11.2025 to 22.11.2025

A three-day academic excursion including visits to:

- The Indian Embassy
- The Turkish Embassy
- A full UNESCO Headquarters tour

This trip extended PES' international and diplomatic exposure, deepening members' understanding of multipolarity, cultural diplomacy, and foreign policy.

PARTNERSHIPS & EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Academic Partnerships

Partnership with European Studies Department (Zuyd University)

Our partnership with the European Studies Department at Zuyd University provides PES with formal recognition as an official student association within their academic community. This collaboration grants us promotion through Zuyd's communication channels and requires PES to organize two formally recognized academic events each year in cooperation with the department. In addition, Zuyd offers the opportunity to receive targeted funding for events that align with the university's academic values and objectives. This partnership strengthens PES' visibility, credibility, and ability to deliver high-quality programming across multiple institutions.

Official Recognition by Maastricht University

PES is an officially recognized student organization of Maastricht University. In close coordination with the university, we also enable our members to sign up for and engage with the Global Citizenship Certificate, further integrating our activities with UM's educational and development goals.

Community Partnership

Collaboration with Sweet Coffee Café in Maastricht

PES maintains two partnerships with Sweet Coffee Café, providing:

- 20% discount on drinks for members
- €2 discount on lunch

This partnership enhance member value and strengthen PES' local community presence.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & DATA

Note on Membership Performance

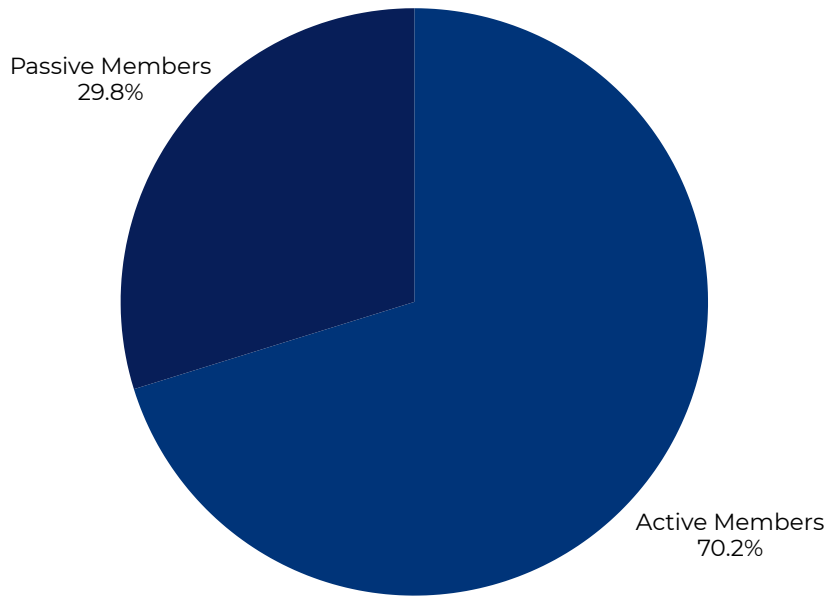
PES Maastricht experienced strong membership growth during Semester 1, reaching a total of 118 registered members across Maastricht University and Zuyd University. This diverse student base reflects a wide range of nationalities, academic backgrounds, and study programs, underscoring PES' broad appeal and interdisciplinary character.

While exact month-to-month figures are not included here, event participation and registration patterns indicate continued growth throughout the semester, supported by consistent outreach, high-quality programming, and increased visibility on campus. The society's presence across multiple faculties, including FASoS, SBE, LAW, UCM, and the European Studies Department at Zuyd, has contributed significantly to this expansion.

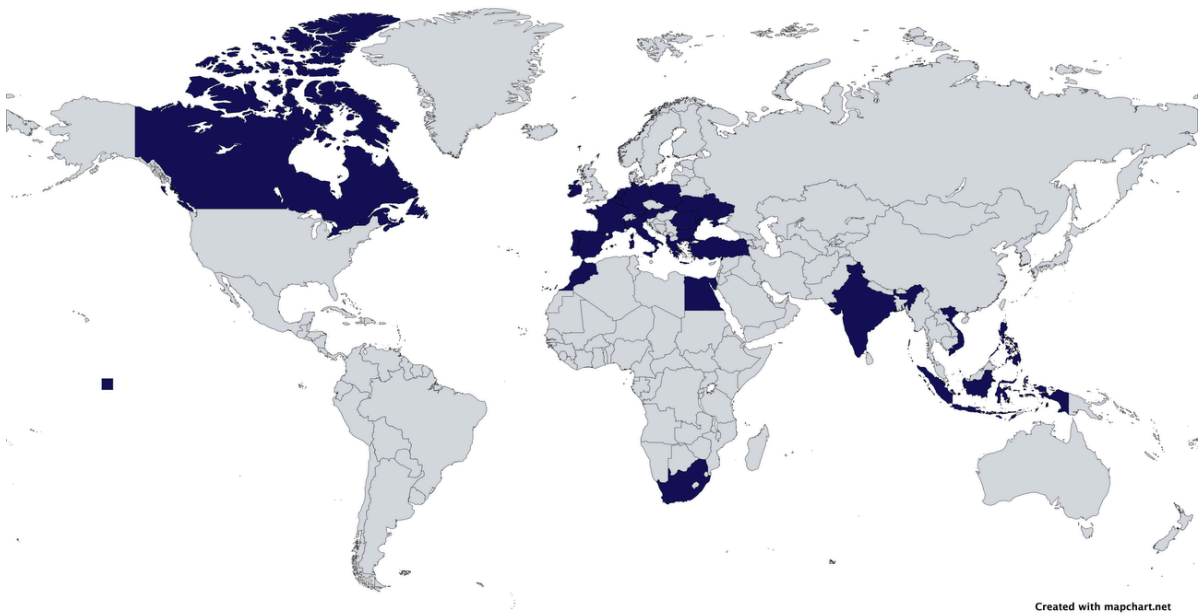
The membership base is characterized by its strong international composition and high level of engagement, with most events reaching full attendance. This reflects both the relevance of the semester's theme and the effectiveness of PES' renewed structural consistency and communication strategy. The consolidation of a multi-university community has also strengthened PES' visibility and broadened its academic reach.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & DATA

Active and Passive Member Data

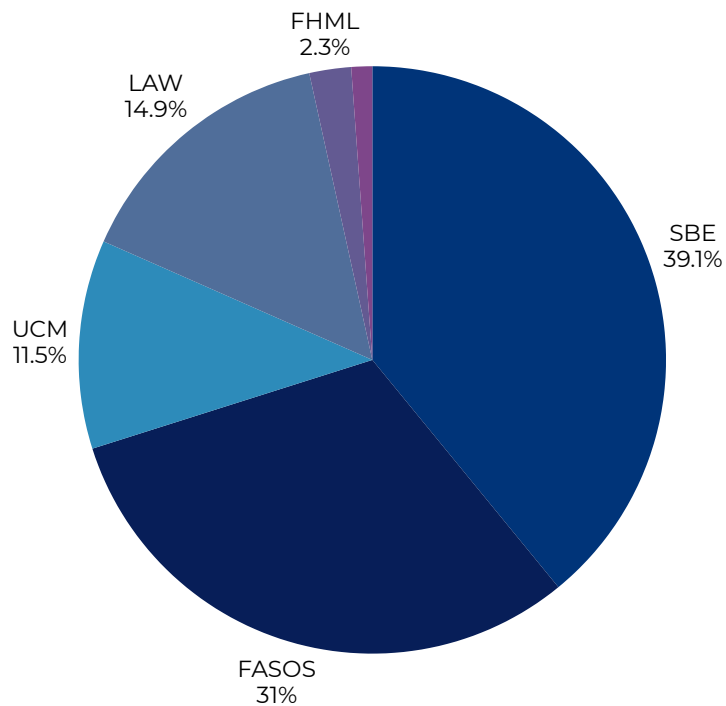


Nationality of Members

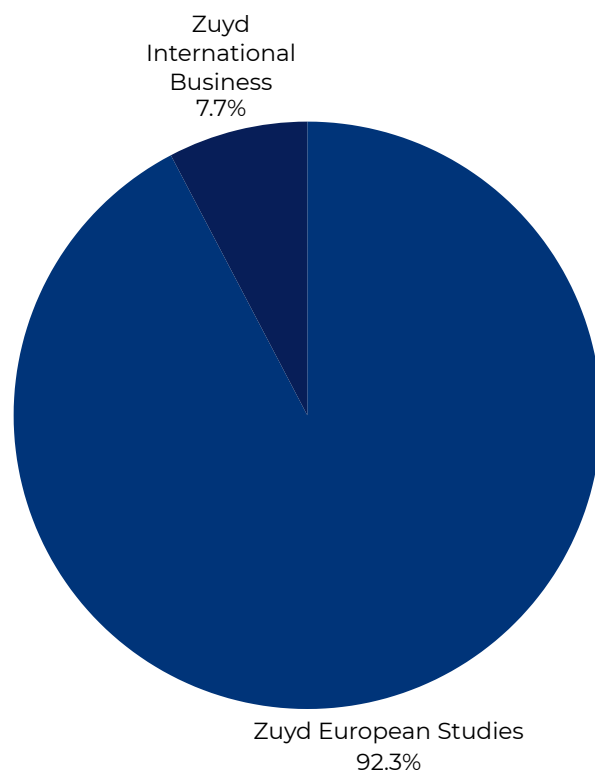


MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & DATA

Faculties from UM

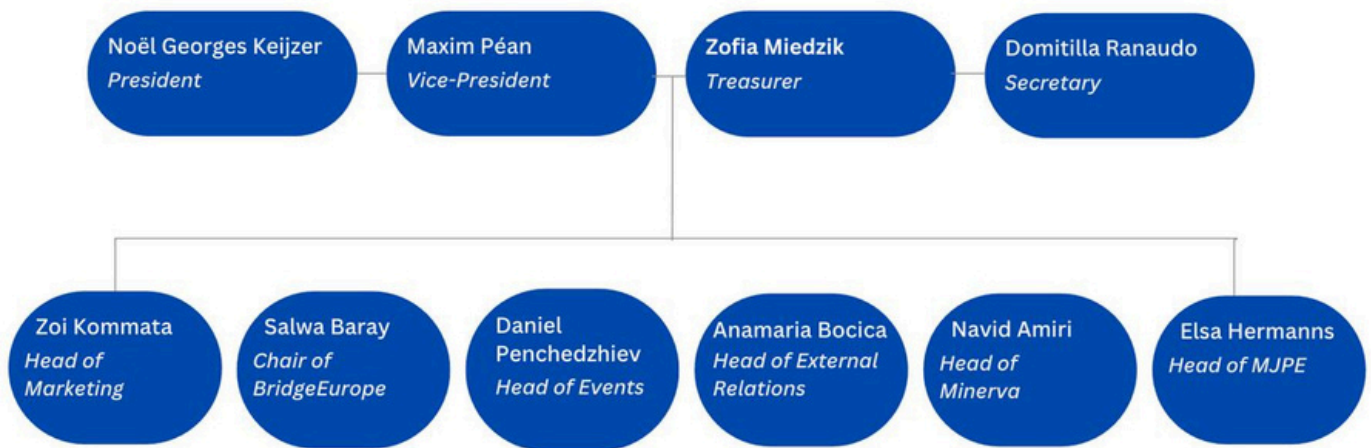


Faculties from Zuyd



THE HIERARCHY

Structure within PES



The Executive Board

President — Noël Georges Keijzer

Leads the overall direction, strategy, and representation of PES Maastricht. Oversees all board operations, ensures continuity, and serves as the primary link between the society, university partners, and external institutions.

Vice-President — Maxim Péan

Supports the President in managing the society's strategic goals and internal functioning. Coordinates inter-committee collaboration, oversees operational consistency, and steps in for the President when needed.

Treasurer — Zofia Miedzik

Responsible for the financial stability of PES. Manages budgeting, payments, reimbursements, and financial planning for events and partnerships. Ensures transparency and sustainable resource allocation throughout the academic year.

Secretary — Domitilla Ranaudo

Oversees internal administration, documentation, and communication. Manages meeting agendas and minutes, maintains organizational records, and ensures smooth information flow within the board and across committees.

THE HIERARCHY

The Governing Board

Head of Marketing — Zoi Kommata

Oversees PES Maastricht's visual identity, branding, and communications. Responsible for designing promotional materials, managing social media presence, and ensuring that PES maintains strong visibility and consistent messaging across all platforms.

Chair of BridgeEurope — Salwa Baray

Represents PES within the European-wide BridgeEurope network. Coordinates cross-border student initiatives, political discussions, and written contributions, expanding PES' reach and facilitating collaboration with other chapters across Europe.

Head of Events — Daniel Penchedzhiev

Leads the planning and execution of all PES academic and social events. Manages logistics, speaker coordination, and event design to ensure that each activity is well-organized, high-quality, and aligned with the society's mission.

Head of External Relations — Anamaria Bocica

Responsible for building and maintaining partnerships with external stakeholders, including faculties, embassies, associations, and think tanks. Enhances PES' academic and professional network and creates opportunities for collaboration, funding, and speaker engagement. Additionally, this committee is responsible for organizing PES trips, examples include the recent Paris excursion centered around Multipolar Realignment.

Head of Minerva — Navid Amiri

Leads Minerva, PES' student-run research institute dedicated to producing higher-level, methodologically rigorous research. Oversees research teams, coordinates projects, supports skill development, and ensures academic excellence through collaboration with faculty and external partners.

Head of MJPE — Elsa Hermanns

Manages the Maastricht Journal of Political Economy (MJPE). Oversees the editorial process, coordinates student contributions, ensures high publication standards, and promotes a culture of academic writing and research dissemination within PES.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Internal Challenges

Throughout Semester 1, the Executive and Governing Boards faced several internal structural challenges. Team coordination required continuous refinement, particularly in establishing clear role assignments within committees. The absence of predefined responsibilities made delegation and workflow management more difficult, especially during high-intensity event periods. Additionally, the board needed time to develop shared working habits, formal communication channels, and consistency in planning processes.

What We Improved / Learned Internally

These challenges encouraged the board to adopt more structured internal practices. Committees began clarifying responsibilities, creating task lists, and setting internal deadlines to facilitate smoother collaboration. The board also established more consistent meeting schedules and communication routines. As a result, coordination has strengthened noticeably, and task delegation is now more efficient. Semester 1 helped the team understand the importance of formalized structure, which will continue to guide operations moving forward.

External Challenges

Student engagement also posed a significant challenge. While many students signed up for PES, actual attendance at events did not always match registration numbers, making it difficult to plan room sizes, materials, and catering. This highlighted a gap between initial interest and consistent participation. At the same time, PES is still in the process of diversifying its revenue streams. Beyond membership fees and potential profits from academic trips, the association needs to explore additional sources such as funding applications, merchandise, and collaborations or sponsorships with external partners.

What We Improved / Learned Externally

In response, PES began monitoring sign-up and attendance data more closely and adjusting event planning accordingly. The board also started discussing clearer expectations for members and experimenting with formats that encourage more reliable participation. One concrete idea under consideration is a collaboration with Participay, where participants pay a small amount to register for an event and receive a refund upon attendance, helping to reduce no-shows. Financially, Semester 1 gave the board a more realistic understanding of the costs of running an active association, reinforcing the need to build a mixed funding model that combines membership fees with structured funding applications, merch initiatives, and strategic collaborations.

PLANS FOR SEMESTER 2

Academic Goals

PES will continue to align its programming with its core mission: offering a platform where students from all faculties and both universities can meaningfully discuss political and economic issues through diverse lenses. This includes fostering open dialogue, promoting analytical thinking, and facilitating interactions with professionals and experts. The board remains committed to maintaining academic depth and creating spaces for students to exchange ideas constructively

New Initiatives

PES will continue strengthening its relationship with Zuyd University, building on the success and support of Semester 1. In Semester 2, the board aims to establish a more formal connection with Maastricht University as well. To achieve this, PES will request the Advisory Board's support, for example, by helping the association gain access to UM promotion channels.

A major new initiative planned for next semester is the London Trip, designed to offer members exposure to international institutions, policy environments, and professional networks.

In addition, PES plans to establish a new committee, MINOS, which we are formally adopting from a previously independent Zuyd association. MINOS will be launched next semester to further strengthen the Zuyd member base and streamline coordination between Zuyd and UM-related activities. This semester, the board also intends to introduce changes to the legal statutes, including the establishment of mandatory member meetings twice per semester. As these are important governance changes, we would like to present them to the Advisory Board and receive feedback and guidance during the meeting.

Strategic Priorities

PES strives to solidify its identity as a multi-university and multi-faculty association, which is one of its strongest and most distinctive features. Maintaining and expanding this diversity is a central strategic goal for the coming semester. PES aims to remain an inclusive academic community that bridges institutions, disciplines, and perspectives, thereby reinforcing its unique value within Maastricht's student landscape.

PLANS FOR SEMESTER 2

Change to Legal Statutes

This year's Executive Board has identified the need to update PES' legal statutes to better reflect the society's current structure, goals, and level of activity. A key change we propose is the introduction of mandatory member meetings twice per semester, which would serve as formal opportunities to gather feedback, strengthen transparency, and ensure that all members, active and passive, remain informed and engaged in the direction of the association. While PES has made notable progress in community-building this year, there remain gaps in internal cohesion: some committee members still do not know one another well, and attendance at events varies across teams.

By institutionalizing these mandatory meetings within the statutes, we aim to cultivate a stronger, more connected internal community, encourage accountability, and ensure that all committees feel integrated into the broader PES structure. This proposal will be discussed with the Advisory Board, as their feedback and endorsement are crucial to implementing these changes effectively.

Introduction of Participay

To strengthen event participation and reduce the recurring issue of no-shows, the Executive Board intends to introduce Participay as a standard registration and commitment tool for PES activities.

Throughout Semester 1, we observed that while many students expressed interest in attending events, actual turnout did not always match registration numbers, affecting planning, logistics, and in some cases, event quality. Participay offers a structured way for students to confirm attendance through small, symbolic deposits that are refunded upon participation.

This system not only encourages greater accountability but also helps PES manage capacity, allocate resources more accurately, and ensure that events remain accessible and well-organized. By integrating Participay into our workflows next semester, we aim to foster a more reliable engagement culture and enhance the overall experience for both members and organisers.

CONCLUSION



A Semester of Renewal

Semester 1 marked a decisive renewal for PES Maastricht. With a nearly entirely new Executive Board, the society re-established structure, consistency, and ambition, laying the foundation for long-term stability and academic excellence.

Strengthened Identity and Community

PES strengthened its identity as a multi-university, multi-faculty association, reflected in its diverse membership and engaged community, an increasingly distinctive asset within Maastricht.



Academic and Organizational Growth

Through a rich calendar of lectures, debates, panels, and international activities, PES expanded its academic presence while improved coordination, communication, and digital outreach strengthened its overall operations.

PES Maastricht extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the success of Semester 1.

We thank the Advisory Board for their guidance and academic support throughout this period, as well as the many professors, guest speakers, and institutional partners who enriched our events with their expertise.

We are grateful to the European Studies Department at Zuyd University for their continued collaboration and recognition of PES as an official student association, and to Sweet Coffee Café for supporting our community partnerships.

Our thanks also go to the Executive Board and Governing Board, whose commitment, initiative, and teamwork enabled PES to revitalise its structure and deliver a strong program of academic and social activities.

Finally, we extend our appreciation to all PES members, whose engagement, enthusiasm, and diversity form the foundation of our society's identity and ongoing growth.

We thank you for your attention!

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