

Editors' note

This issue of ANZJES, the third for 2023, is a student issue. It has been compiled from the selection of essays and policy briefs written by undergraduate and post-graduate students from Australian and New Zealand universities. This issue includes the winners of the ESAANZ Essay Competition 2023 for the best undergraduate and postgraduate essay in both Australia and New Zealand. We have also included two additional essays selected by the editorial board as representing outstanding potential in research on the European Union. The second part of the issue presents a selection of policy briefs written by Master of Education students from the University of Melbourne who participated in the study tour in Europe in 2023.

Student essays

From among the 27 submissions for the essay competition in 2023, the ESAANZ committee selected four winners.

Best two essays by an undergraduate student:

- Georgina Lyes from the University of Canterbury, essay titled: "The Role of the European Union in Third-country Immigrant Integration".
- Freya Smart from the University of Melbourne, essay titled: "What can the 1985 Soviet film *The Most Charming and Attractive* tell us about attitudes toward the consumer culture of the late Soviet era?"

Best two essays by a postgraduate student:

- Anton Aslund from the University of Otago, essay titled: "To be or not to be a State? The alignment behaviours of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Russia"
- Grace Vanderkolk from the University of Melbourne, essay titled: "In the shadow of famine: Russian relations between Kazakhstan and Ukraine: How do Russo-Ukrainian and Russo-Kazakh relations impact memorialisation of the Holodomor and Kazakh famine?"

The two additional outstanding essays selected for publication are:

- Hamish Stayt (undergraduate) from the University of Canterbury, essay titled: "A critical analysis of the European Unions' structure and approach to economic recovery during times of crisis."
- Lexie Preen (postgraduate) from the University of Otago, essay titled: "Putin's retelling of the Great Patriotic War myth and the construction of Russian national identity."

Student policy briefs

In September 2023, 17 students from the Faculty of Education at the University of Melbourne participated in a multi-disciplinary post-graduate subject course: Education Policy in Practice: European Education policy and national systems. This course, supported by the Erasmus + Programme of the European Union, provided a comprehensive overview of the EU, introducing and exploring policy and practice innovations, advancements, and challenges in European education. The innovative character of this subject was its delivery through a study tour component with visits to three countries in Europe: Belgium, Italy, and Poland. As a result, the students have written policy briefings on selected countries.

All policy briefs have addressed a specific education policy issue, including teacher qualifications, teacher shortages, sustainable development, protection of LGBTQIA+ students, and response to the influx of Ukrainian refugee students. All of the policy briefs acknowledge the complexities of the current education systems, and the socio-political challenges of the contexts in which schools operate. It is worth emphasising the main messages and recommendations resulting from these policy briefs. For the Flemish education system, *Fasiha Faizi* recommended redeveloping teacher qualifications, strengthening leadership and promoting teaching as a profession. *Lin Lin* addressed her policy brief to the Chairman of the Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development of Hong Kong recommending, on the basis of the Italian experience, to devise guidelines on education for sustainability for relevant sectors towards the goal of making climate change education compulsory for all learners, among other points. Three policy briefs related to Poland's educational challenges. *Jared Prentis* provided a list of recommendations on supporting LGBTQIA+ learners in Poland, such as strengthening school inclusive policies and empowering schools to monitor and address violence. *Blake Ellul-Thorn* focused on teacher shortages in Poland and argued that, while wage increases would significantly promote the teaching profession, the complexity of factors influencing the growth of the profession required a sector-wide consultation and long-term planning and implementation. The final policy brief by *Kate Weir* addressed the significant issue of the influx of Ukrainian refugees into Poland, and the schools' role in managing education of students from Ukraine. She pointed out an interesting fact that only 40% of school-aged Ukrainian refugees were enrolled in Polish schools in 2023, so focus on increasing enrolments and inclusivity should become one of the major directions of education policy in Poland.

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