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## D2.3 Annual student engagement report 2017-18: Bulgaria

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# 1. Introduction

The SAVES 2 project ([www.saves-project.eu](http://www.saves-project.eu)) brings together the Student Switch Off (SSO) and Student Switch Off + (SSO+) campaigns (<http://bulgaria.studentswitchoff.org/home/>) in fourteen different universities across seven European countries; Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania and the United Kingdom. This report provides a detailed overview of the student engagement activities performed as part of the Student Switch Off campaign in Bulgaria. SSO+ activities will start in Bulgaria from the 2018/19 academic year, therefore they are not part of this report.

The SSO campaign is an inter-dormitory energy-saving competition, that focuses on a predefined set of activities, encouraging students to save energy in their dormitories. The dormitory that saves the most energy on each campus, is announced winner and rewarded for their efforts. Energy savings are determined by comparing pre-intervention electricity consumption, with post intervention electricity consumption, in each dormitory.

The SSO+ campaign aims to raise awareness amongst students in the private rented sector helping them reduce their energy costs. It focuses on making students aware of energy performance certificates (EPC), smart meters and energy efficiency, thus helping reduce their exposure to energy poverty.

Each country has a dedicated dormitory coordinator to deliver the SSO engagement activities and country manager to oversee the SSO+ activities.

Chapter 2 describes the activities undertaken as part of SSO.

## 2. The Student Switch Off campaign in Bulgaria

### 2.1 Universities taking part

Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (UoS) is the only university in Bulgaria participating in the SAVES 2 project. All of its 17 dormitories are managed and owned by UoS, and participated in the Student Switch Off campaign during the 2017-18 academic year. All the dormitories are expected to continue to take part in the campaign in 2018-19.

Name of University	Number of dormitories	Number of dormitories taking part in SAVES 2	Number of students living in dormitories taking part in SAVES 2
Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"	17 (with a capacity of accommodation for 6 668 students)	17	6,300

Table 1. Universities taking part in SAVES 2 in Bulgaria

### 2.2 Engagement activities

Throughout the academic year a number of activities took place in the dormitories in Bulgaria. These dormitory visits and end of year events. The section below describes these in more detail and what engagement levels were reached.

#### 2.2.1 Launch of the campaign

A series of launch activities took place at UoS to make students aware of the Student Switch Off campaign. The dormitory coordinator organised a 'light' launch of the SSO campaign in September 2017 by announcing the project on the university's website (where usually all kind of activities and projects are published). A Student Switch Off SSO Facebook page was created in July 2017



(<https://www.facebook.com/UOSSSO/>) followed by launching the website (<http://bulgaria.studentswitchoff.org/home/>) in March 2018. Students were able to find out more about the campaign, follow its activities, and become involved.

### 2.2.2 Ambassador training sessions and ambassador engagement

Student Switch Off ambassadors play a key role in making the SSO campaign a success. Their role is to engage their peers in the dormitories, by raising awareness on SSO and encouraging them to save energy.

Students in each of the thirteen European universities taking part in Student Switch Off had an opportunity to come along to an hour-long training session, ran by the relevant dormitory coordinator. In UoS however, due to changes in staffing during the course of the campaign, a training session was not run for the 2017-18 academic year. Due to the same reason, the campaign also started later. However, UoS are planning to train a new dormitory coordinator for the 2018-19 academic year who will frequently (at least twice a month) visit the dormitories of the university and organise various events in order to get more students involved in the SSO campaign. As part of their role they will also be training SSO ambassadors.

### 2.2.3 Dormitory visits/on campus face-to-face activities

There were three dormitory door-to-door visits organised by the dormitory coordinator during the 2017-18 academic year. During each of them students were informed about the SAVES 2 project, the aims of SSO campaign, the importance of saving energy and, of course, the ways to reduce their exposure to fuel poverty by getting into good energy saving habits whilst living in dormitories. Ways of reducing their energy bills was also mentioned during the visits, as a mean of getting the students interested in the SSO.

Name of University	Number of onsite engagement visits	Description of Activities	Number of students signed up to SSO
University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski"	3	Introducing the SSO campaign; distributing leaflets; raising the awareness of among the students about the ways of reducing the energy they are using.	52 (this is the number of the Facebook page followers; during each dormitory visit, students were being asked to follow it. Moreover, it appears to be the most efficient dissemination channel).

Table 2. Face-to-face engagement activities at UoS

### 2.2.4 End of year event

Due to the shorter nature of the campaign at the University of Sofia, the end of year event was small scale. A small stall with promotional leaflets, containing summarized information about the project and the SSO campaign was run in the main building of the university where the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Geography, Faculty of Linguistics and the History faculty are based. It was run in June 2018, when the official graduations usually take place. As a result, there were a number of conversations with several students, who still had not heard about the project and its aims, which, again, helped for raising the awareness amongst them.



## 2.3 Communication with students

The most effective ways of communicating with the students in UoS during the 2017-18 academic year were the face-to-face meetings and the University of Sofia Student Switch Off Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UOSSSO/>), where information on SSO activities was regularly uploaded.

A website was also created for the SSO campaign where students could find further information: <http://bulgaria.studentswitchoff.org/home/>.

Through the face-to-face meetings the project was introduced to students and as a result, a number of them got involved with its aims and means of reducing their energy. The UoS SSO Facebook page was used regularly to update students about the campaign in UoS in addition to how it is going in other countries, making students feel part of a wider campaign.

## 2.4 Engagement materials

A variety of branded engagement materials were created at the start of the academic year to be used throughout the campaign to engage students: these were mainly leaflets containing summarized information on the SAVES 2 project and in particular, the SSO campaign. For the next 2018-19 academic year UoS is planning to create new materials, such as SSO branded notebooks, pencils, t-shirts and hats.

UoS has contacted a number of companies in the recent months, to support the SSO campaign by donating prizes that can be given to students as part of mini engagement competitions throughout the year.

## 2.5 The energy dashboard

The [online energy dashboard](#), created and maintained by Ecovisum, is a fantastic tool to engage students, letting them know how much energy they are saving throughout the year in their dormitories.

The dormitory coordinator informed students at UoS about the dashboard (<https://switchoff.nus.org.uk/uni-sofia/halls>) during the face-to-face dormitory visits and through articles posted on the UoS SSO Facebook page. Although the dashboard wasn't fully functional during the 2017-18 academic year, some of the students we reached said that they found it useful in terms of the opportunity to observe their progress in energy saving and also expressed their willingness to participate in future campaigns, when organized.

## 2.6 Successes and innovations

The biggest success of the campaign was the number of students reached, who pledged to save energy in the campaign through following it on social media (we already have 52 followers on our Facebook page). Another success, that deserves to be mentioned, is the energy saving the students made during the 2017-18 academic year - 8% of energy was saved during the year compared to the previous year.

Energy saving is increasingly a topic of interest for students at UoS, and the team at the university want to help embed the behaviour in students' everyday life by creating a new way of living, new habits in their everyday activities, that will help to positively influence the energy poverty in Bulgaria and thereby contribute to improve the environmental conditions for living.

## 2.7 Challenges and lessons learnt

The biggest challenge for the UoS was keeping up with the targets and requirements of the project, having in mind the changing of staffing (and lack of a dedicated dormitory coordinator throughout the academic year) and lack of student ambassadors. Therefore, the biggest priority for UoS for the 2018-19



academic year is to find a dormitory coordinator in order to get as many students as possible involved in the project.

For the 2018-19 academic year UoS is planning to run several competitions (including photo competitions and climate quizzes), creating an Instagram page, organizing at least three events – for the beginning of the academic year, for the end of the semester and for the end of the year. For the beginning of the year UoS plans to organize a stall and distribute leaflets. In the course of the year we will also visit the dormitories and distribute advertising materials regarding the project – T-shirts, hats and notebooks.

We are working on a better communication plan for the next academic 2018/2019 year, where all of the activities we plan will be carefully organized. UoS will also organize at least two photo competitions and will prepare an opening- and closing-the year events.

## 2.8 Photos

Below is a selection of photos from the 2017-18 SSO campaign at UoS.



Photo 1. Students from UoS who attended a focus group to discuss SSO





Photo 2. Students from UoS who attended a focus group to discuss SSO



Photo 3. Meeting in UoS dormitories we organized during the academic 2017/2018 year – Hall 42B.

### 3 Conclusions

As a conclusion, there are a number of improvements in the activities of the UoS that need to be done for the 2018-19:

- Find a dormitory coordinator to work closely with students on the campaign;



- Train student ambassadors to support the campaign and involve their peers;
- Disseminate more materials, regarding the project;
- Reach more students through the SSO and the SSO+ campaign in the next academic 2018/2019 year;
- Organize at least one more communication channel (for example: Instagram);
- Organize more face-to-face meetings in the dormitories.

However, the University of Sofia had its own achievements and opportunities, that make us optimistic about reaching our future goals. UoS plans to improve and upgrade its SSO webpage and make the energy dashboard more "reachable" for more students. To engage more students, the campaign will be made more visible on campus, with more engagement materials and prizes.

