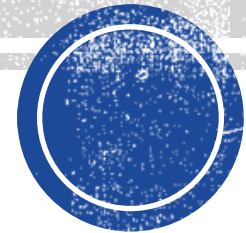


# **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY STUDENTS ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**ENOTHE ANNUAL MEETING 2023 – OVIEDO, SPAIN**



**Bruna Bastos, OT, Master's Student at Polytechnic of Leiria - School of Health Sciences**  
**Kira Hanßmann, OT, B.Sc. - University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück**

# ABOUT US



- Occupational Therapist
- Master's Student | Hand Therapy
- President of SPOTeurope
- President of the Students Association at School of Health Sciences – Polytechnic of Leiria



- Occupational Therapist
- Events Coordinator of SPOTeurope
- Member of ENOTHE Tuning Task Force

# **“WELCOME TO BECOMING PROTAGONISTS OF CHANGE”**

**- JUTTA BERDING**

# STUDENTS ROLE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

*“A partnership goes far beyond the mere **consultation, involvement, or representation of students in decision-making processes.** Where a partnership exists, students do not only identify areas that could be enhanced, but they help to identify ways in which that enhancement can be carried out, as well as to help facilitate the implementation process wherever possible. Above all, a true partnership means that neither party acts unilaterally but rather that there is an **active collaboration** between the two. Each party must recognise what the other brings to the table and must **value that contribution for the cooperation to work.** In this way, a partnership can be seen as opposed to a transactional or consumerist relationship. **Students actively participate in shaping and co-producing their education, rather than merely receiving it passively.** This includes the **effort that students put into their learning process in the classroom, but also the work that students are increasingly doing to shape their experience at the course, departmental, institutional and national levels.**” – European Student Union*

# STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT

## Market model

- Viewing students as customers, positioned external to the institution, they 'acquire' education. The student knows best what kind of improvements are needed.

## Development model

- Students are partners in a learning community. They possess not just rights, but also obligations, and actively share their knowledge to foster the advancement of their university.

**HIGHER  
EDUCATION AS  
A SITE OF  
DEMOCRATIC  
CITIZENSHIP**

Higher education aims to foster democratic values in students, guiding them to become active democratic citizens within their communities.

**HIGHER  
EDUCATION AS  
A LEARNING  
COMMUNITY**

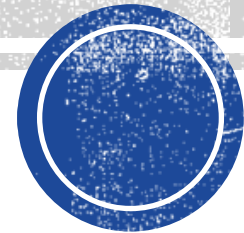
Close student-faculty connections boost learning for both, relying on effective feedback for mutual growth. Students actively collaborate in the learning environment.

**HIGHER  
EDUCATION AS  
A CRITICAL  
INSTITUTION**

Higher education involves not just tackling curriculum-defined problems but also critically analyzing issues that shape society's future. Here, students become critical thinkers.

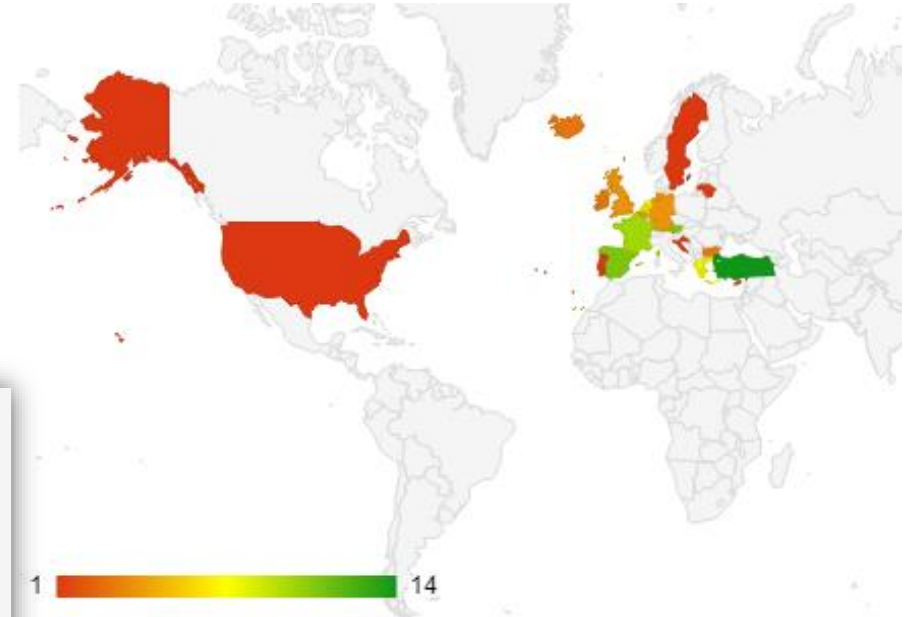
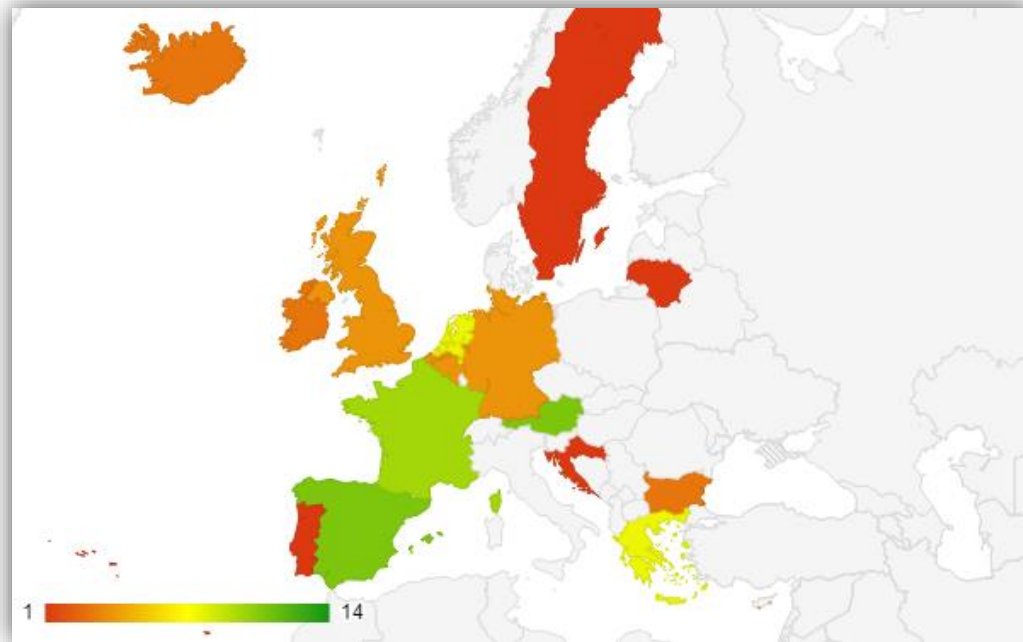
# STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE — SURVEY RESULTS

*Occupational Therapy students role in higher education*



# STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

- Online survey
- 89 participants
- 18 countries worldwide (focus on Europe)
- 13 questions, key findings

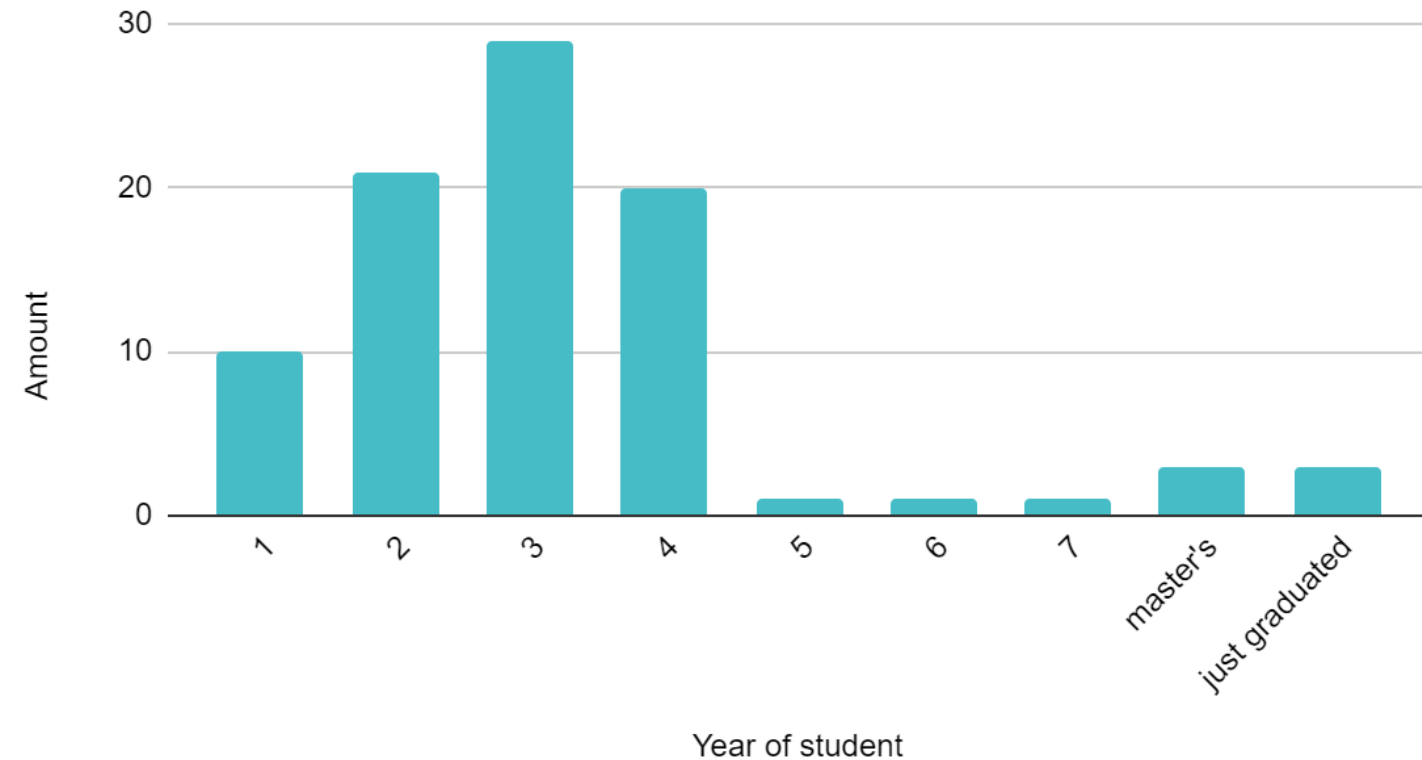




# STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

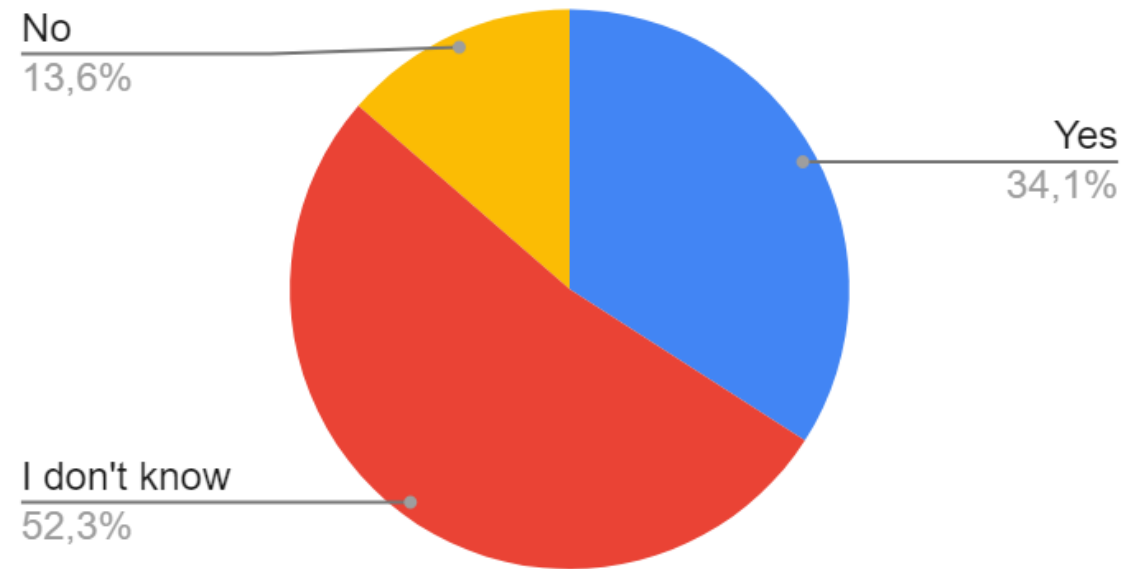
## ■ School year

Amount and Year of Bsc.



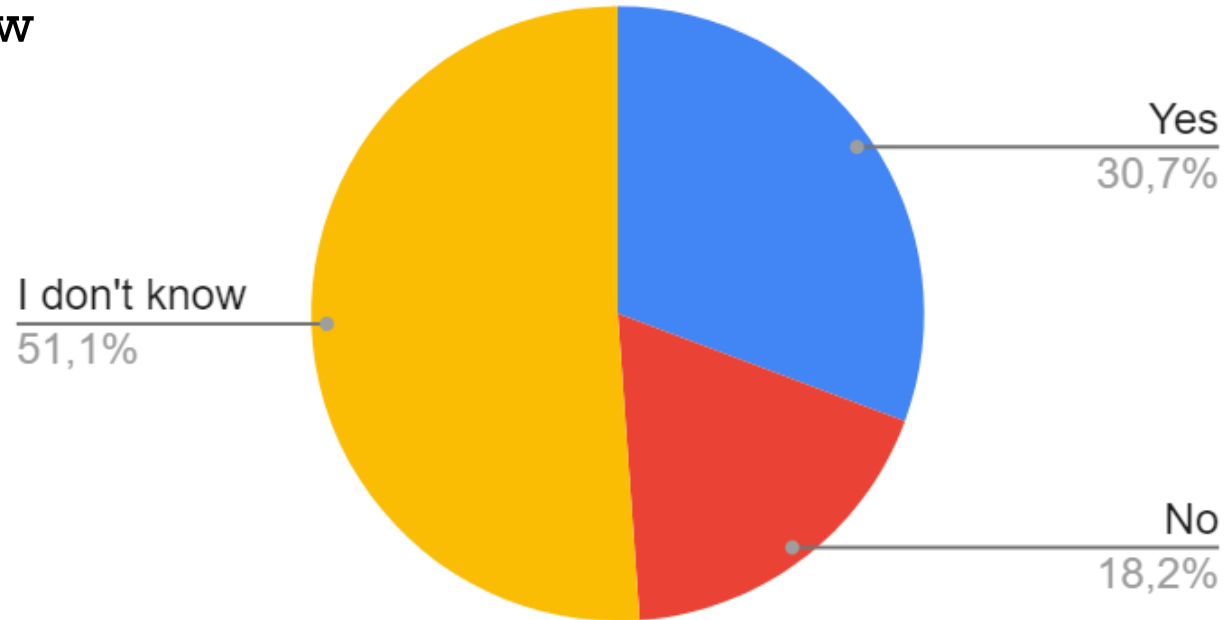
# DEGREE COMMITTEE

- 34% yes
- 52% I don't know



# OTHER COMMITTEES

- 31% yes
- 51% I don't know





# **IMPROVEMENTS MADE THROUGH OT STUDENTS' IDEAS**

**IMPROVEMENTS  
MADE THROUGH OT  
STUDENTS' IDEAS**



Modification of tasks +  
deadlines = better  
coordination of  
different subjects



cooperation with other  
societies; congresses  
and conferences  
organized by students.



more hours for  
practice, more places  
for internships



Nothing due to external  
restrictions



Less final exams more  
group projects

**IMPROVEMENTS  
MADE THROUGH OT  
STUDENTS' IDEAS**



Lessons: way of teaching, order and content



Better distribution of workload and exams, more voluntary courses



Increase the amount of OTs as professors instead of other medical professionals



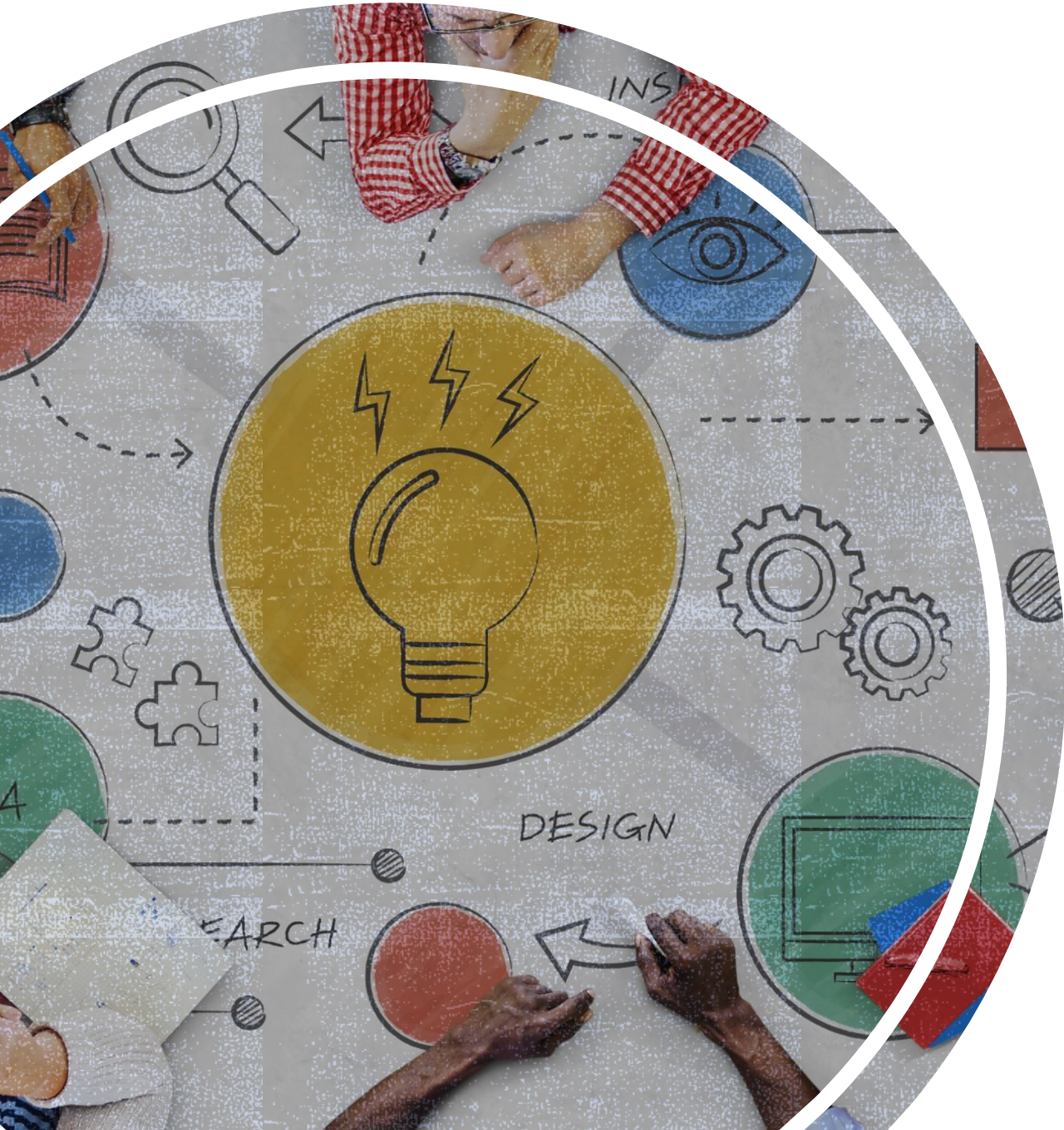
Payment for internships



Enabling students to complete their studies in 5 years



representing and promoting occupational therapy in France




## **IDEAS FOR INVOLVEMENT IN FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

72% of students  
would like to be  
involved

 **Advocacy**

 **Social Networking**

 **Feedback on the Curriculum/ Decision-making concerning the curriculum**

 **Surveys**

 **Joining a committee**

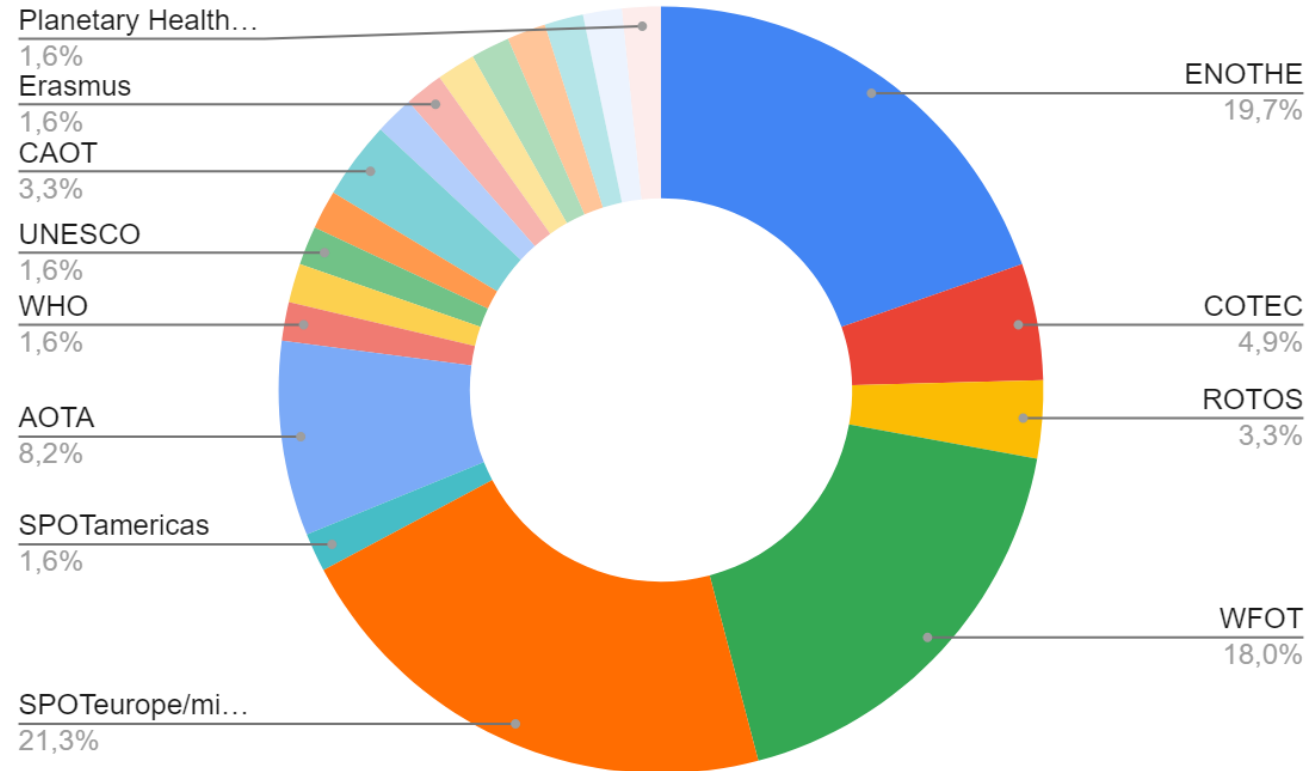
 **Participation in events**



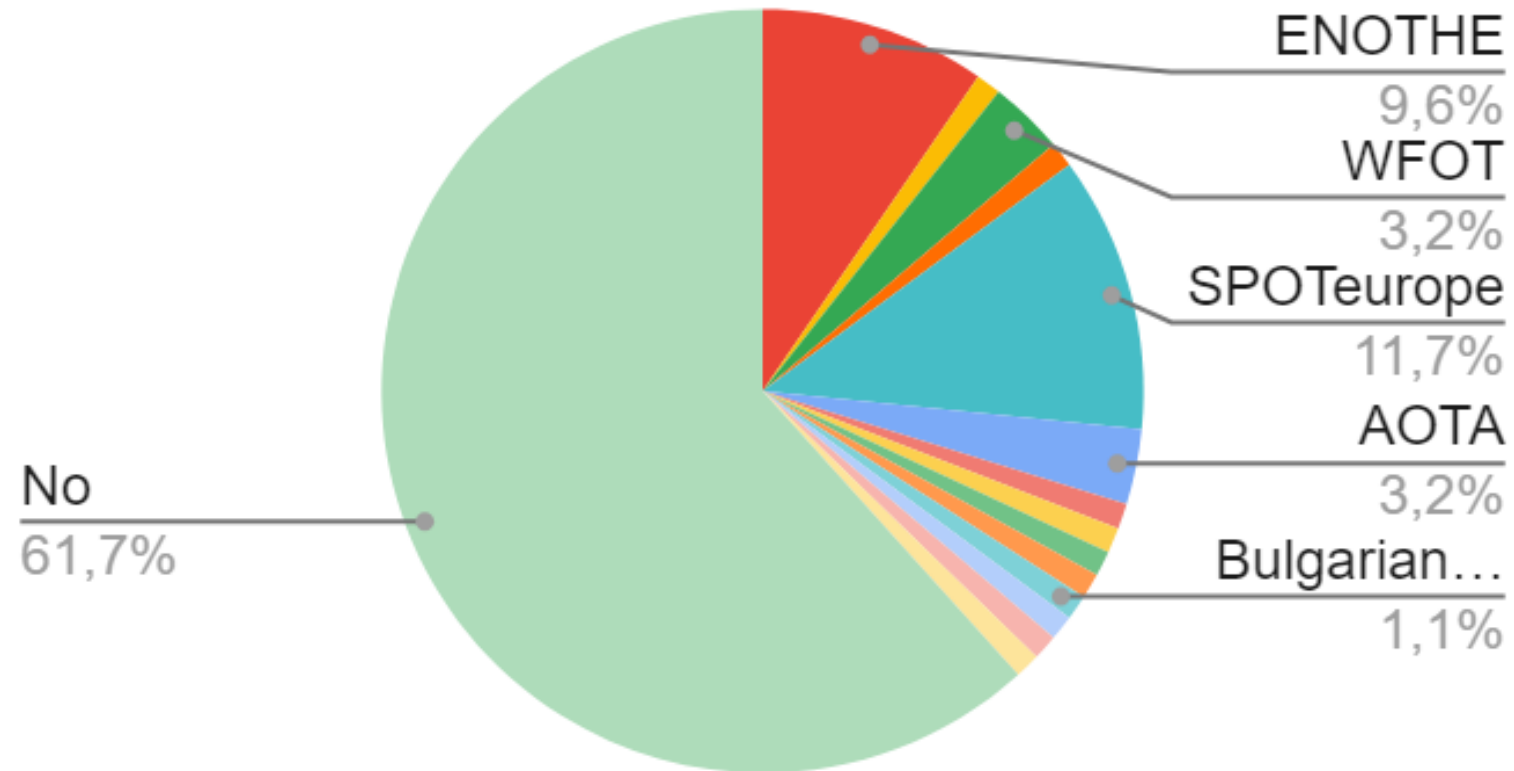


# **WHY IT'S RELEVANT TO BE INVOLVED IN AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

# KNOWLEDGE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



# KNOWLEDGE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR OT STUDENTS





# **ROLE OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION**





“Actively participate in the design of the curriculum based on the shortcomings encountered during internships.”

“To ensure the education meets quality standards and it's accurate based on the challenges and the market that awaits them after graduation.”

“Bring diversity of culture, experience and ideas to high education.”

“The role [...] is to learn and transform educators within the foundations of learning and occupational therapy and in turn improve the quality and quantity of higher education.”

“I think that many students underestimate their own ideas and opinions [...]”

“I know that the society needs us very much and our biggest goal should be to bring occupational therapy awareness to the society.”

# CONCLUSION OF THE SURVEY



Knowledge of committee participation (30%)



Involvement in international organizations is necessary



Little knowledge of international organizations



Most students want to be involved + have concrete ideas

# A PORTUGUESE PERSPECTIVE

*Occupational Therapy students role in higher education*



# REALITY OF STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION – SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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Students  
Association of the  
University –  
30 students;

Pedagogic Council  
– 5 students;

Representative  
Council of the  
University –  
5 students;

Scientific and  
Pedagogical  
Coordination of the  
Study Programme –  
2 students;





# REALITY OF STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION – POLYTECHNIC OF LEIRIA

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General  
Council –  
7 students;

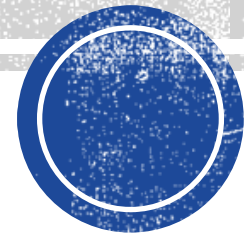
Academic  
Council –  
5 students;

Social Services  
Council –  
2 students;



# **A GERMAN PERSPECTIVE**

*Occupational Therapy students role in higher education*



# GERMAN PERSPECTIVE

- ⑩ Academization still in process
- ⑩ Divided OT community (vocational training vs. higher education)
- ⑩ Not many students generally (how many?), small groups at universities (at my university, 25 students per year)
- ⑩ How many universities for OT in Germany?



# STUDENTS INTERNACIONAL REPRESENTATION

- ⑩ Examples of projects we have been involved in through ENOTHE
- ⑩ TUNING, SIMBA, attending the WFOT congress, free webinars, journal club, collab with ROTOS and COTEC



# CONCLUSION + OUR IDEAS

- ⑩ OT have specific glasses that we think are very nice to wear, we see the world different from everyone else, „OT is a calling “
- How to ensure effective student participation (what would we wish for); more preparation for making change, e.g. in Portugal there aren't many job opportunities for mental health
- ❓ students can be motivated to advocate to start more work places in mental health
- ❓ Tools for advocating; laws can be changed! It's only the context that looks different in different countries ❓ we all want to go the same way, work in a very similar way.
- ⑩ Give students time in their curriculum to network/be involved in projects
- students bring in their perspective on society for the shaping of the future of OT ❓ In OT: Specific for every cultural context! OT is very influenced by changes in society (explain why, and note our role in all of this)
- ⑩ Change by students is more easily done with the support of teachers (e.g. teachers talking to their students ENOTHE, securing financial support for their students to join congresses; role model for change, realistic view on what can be done)
- ⑩ We are mostly young people; we are all at the beginning of our work life; we are very motivated to change in society (e.g. the problem of not changing the system, but only working with the person) ❓ change is easier with a „partner in crime “(change management)
- ⑩ Reflect your own program through the perspective of others (also across borders); also comparing your own study program with other universities can help in reflecting your own study program
- ⑩ we need to fight for our rights as OTs, what we are “allowed” to do in work surroundings;

