GMA 15

June

2026

Update SWO UvA
Status: Informational
Dear GMA, As the board already announced verbally during the last GMA, negotiations have been underway for some time with the UvA to formally establish our partnership and funding. We also informed you at that time that the UvA intends to reduce the funding we receive from 177k per year to 100k. This amount has not yet been finalized. In the meantime, we have had the opportunity to meet with the Director of Student Affairs (StS), and although we were unable to obtain the clarity we had hoped for, there are still a number of developments we would like to share with you. We are doing so now in writing, as the GMA expressed this preference during the last meeting. With comradely regards, B81

What has happened since the last GMA?

At the last GMA, the board had just been informed of the new subsidy amount for 2027. Since then, we have had the opportunity to meet with the Director of StS to discuss their decision-making process and to explore both the consequences of this decision for ASVA and the possibilities for addressing it in a different way.

It is important to note that the amount we will receive starting in 2027 will be earmarked. This means that our grant amount "flows" from the substantive agreements we make in the cooperation agreement (SWO) and that we must therefore also report to the UvA every year.

We have repeatedly asked how "fixed" the current amount of 100k is, but unfortunately have not received a clear answer. The UvA emphasized that the grant amount is calculated based on the SWO, and that if we want to change something, we must focus on that.

What is the current state of affairs?

The conclusion we as the board have drawn from the aforementioned discussion is that we will, in any case, meet with StS again to review the SWO we have drafted. It is important to note that we have always been told that our subsidy would decrease gradually and that it would therefore not be reduced by such a large amount all at once. The argument for why this must now suddenly happen is that the substantive terms of the SWO determine the subsidy amount—something we were only told a few weeks ago, after we had nearly finalized the SWO (in terms of content).

Fortunately, we now still have the opportunity to go back to the drawing board, and discussions regarding the SWO will resume. By the time this document is presented to the GMA, the negotiations should already have resumed, and we will be able to provide further clarification verbally.

The current state of affairs essentially boils down to the fact that we still have very little clarity, and by reopening the negotiations, we will attempt to increase the subsidy amount. One of the few advantages of this form of allocation, however, is that we have received a commitment that if the agreements remain the same year after year, our subsidy will also remain the same. According to this logic, which StS itself proposed, it would mean that as long as we maintain the same agreements in the successive SWOs (which are drawn up annually), our subsidy should not shrink any further.

How are we dealing with the budget cuts?

Regardless of the exact amount we will receive in 2027, it is clear in any case that it will be significantly less than what we have received so far. Unfortunately, this means that we will have to figure out how best to deal with the budget cuts. In consultation with the supporting bodies, we have developed a number of ideas to manage this effectively and not simply pass the buck to B82.

First and foremost, it will be an important task for the KaBeCo to consider how we can reorganize ASVA (or at least the broader steps that need to be taken toward that end) in order to absorb the reduced subsidy. This primarily involves a long-term vision of what the union should look like in order to be not only more militant/effective, but also how the union must be structured to continue functioning with a smaller budget. Possible approaches include, for example, merging portfolios or reorganizing them. The current portfolio distribution and pillars are not that old, so there is a chance that we will look at ways to overhaul or restructure them.

Unfortunately, decisions will also have to be made in the short term, which will likely mostly concern personnel costs (our largest expense). In this regard, the KabeCo can collaborate with the KasCo to determine if and how savings can be made in other areas. It is important to note here that we have absolutely no intention of **terminating employees' contracts prematurely and that we will always** communicate transparently and well in advance if contracts are not renewed.

Furthermore, we will explore the possibility of hiring an additional KasCo member to reduce the workload and provide better support in financial decision-making. We will also contact the LSVb and the FNV to see if they can offer any support. We expect that the LSVb, in particular, will have resources available to support us in this process.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the responsibility for cost-cutting within ASVA should by no means rest entirely with the board. Major decisions will have to be made, and the time and stress involved would hinder B82's functioning if this burden were placed entirely on them. This is why we, as B81, are already making preparations by establishing the KaBeCo and expanding the KasCo, respectively.

We, B81, are doing everything we can to push the negotiations in our favor, but it is a difficult balance between cutting costs now and continuing to negotiate. We believe that if we were to successfully implement significant cost-cutting measures now, the UvA would view these premature cuts as a sign of their sound decisions, which would weaken our negotiating position.

Timeline

To clarify this document, we would like to include a brief timeline, though with some caveats, as we do not know when the negotiations will conclude. We can be more specific regarding the KaBeCo and other committees:

- June 15: KaBeCo approved, HR amendment for additional KasCo member
- August 28: Additional KasCo member approved
- December 2026 GMA: approve framework policy,
- February 2027 GMA: evaluation of framework policy, KaBeCo relieved of duties

The framework policy will primarily focus on long-term solutions, which we hope to begin implementing as early as 2027. We hope that, in collaboration with the KasCo

and the KaBeCo, we will be able to formulate and implement short-term solutions once we have clarity on the budget amount.
We cannot say much yet about the potential budget cuts that may be implemented in 2026 and 2027 because negotiations are still ongoing, and because it depends on the UvA's earmarking. This means we will likely have to cut back on specific portfolios, but that is precisely what we are focusing on in the negotiations.

Conclusion

Our beloved organization is at a tipping point. None of us are happy with the current state of affairs and the enormous task ahead of us, but we must nevertheless face reality and, above all, think pragmatically about how to deal with these (forced) developments. We must always consider the consequences our decisions will have for our people, but above all how this affects our position as a union and the impact it will have on the broader student movement. It has long been our intention to steer ASVA more toward becoming a "true" union, one that is supported by its members, organized at the grassroots level, and thus able to play a prominent role in the student movement. This remains our goal, though we will now have to move in that direction more quickly than is actually desirable, due to the budget cuts the UvA is imposing on us.

We would like to emphasize one last time that the board is doing everything in its power, on the one hand, to oppose this decision as much as possible, and, on the other hand, to carefully consider our options and take practical steps to ensure this entire process proceeds smoothly. We hope for the GMA's trust and understanding in these difficult circumstances.