



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
AND RESEARCH



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## UPDATE FROM THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION (EUA)

### Main initiatives, events and publications in autumn 2017

#### 1. Autonomy

At its Annual Conference in Bergen, on 6-7 April 2017, EUA presented the state of play on university autonomy in Europe, with the launch of its newly updated Autonomy Scorecard. The Scorecard can be consulted [here](#). The extensive study, which profiles and scores 29 higher education systems, can be found [here](#). The transversal report on Autonomy was published in early 2017. Please see [here](#) for more details.

#### 2. Learning and Teaching

##### *TRENDS 2018*

Following its 8<sup>th</sup> TRENDS survey to European higher education institutions, EUA is now working on the TRENDS 2018 report, which will focus on learning and teaching developments. The report is expected to be published by spring 2018. It will be submitted to the 2018 Bologna Ministerial Conference, and used in various policy and practice contexts. The preliminary results were presented in the first European Learning and Teaching Forum, in September 2017 (see below). More information on Trends can be found [here](#).

##### *EUA Learning and Teaching Initiative*

More than 280 delegates took part in the first European Learning and Teaching Forum organised on 28-29 September 2017, at the University Pierre and Marie Curie, Paris. In order to prepare and complement the Forum, EUA coordinated 4 thematic groups on L&T, which includes a total of 31 universities across Europe. The feedback from both the Forum and the groups shows that there is great interest towards and value in further developing European dimension in L&T matters and EUA will continue these activities. More information can be found [here](#).

##### *European Forum for Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching (EFFECT)*

The EFFECT project (Erasmus+ KA3, 2015-2018) aims at facilitating European exchanges and collaboration on teaching enhancement, identifying and developing innovative practices, supporting the institutions in developing strategic approaches, and assessing the feasibility of a sustainable structure for the enhancement of L&T at European level.

Among other activities, EFFECT has developed a set of ten [European Principles for the enhancement of learning and teaching](#) which have been launched in autumn 2017. These Principles are non-prescriptive and underpin the need to re-emphasise the education mission of the university. They are intended to serve institutional leaders working with staff, students and other stakeholders to ensure the quality, relevance and attractiveness of higher education. The EUA Council, which gathers the Presidents of 33 European National Rectors' Conferences, endorsed the Principles in October 2017. As a next step, EFFECT will connect the Principles with practice, by developing guiding questions to accompany institutions who would like to engage with these Principles, and use them as a reference document for reflecting on their institutional strategy and practices in L&T.

Project partners are:

ESU; Education International/ETUCE; the University of Eastern Finland; the Higher Education Academy (UK); the University of Porto; and the Rectors' conferences of Estonia (through University of Tartu, associated), Germany, Hungary (with Corvinus University of Budapest associated), Ireland (with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education associated), Latvia (through University of Riga, associated), and Poland. The Centre for Education and Learning of University Leiden, TU Delft and Erasmus University Rotterdam is also associated to the project. More information can be found [here](#).

### **3. Quality assurance**

#### *European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)*

The 12th European Quality Assurance Forum will take place in Riga, Latvia, on 23-25 November 2017. This annual event is co-organised by the E4 group (ENQA, ESU, EURASHE and EUA). More information can be found [here](#).

#### *Enhanced Quality through Innovative Policy and Practice (EQUIP)*

The EQUIP project, which is led by EURASHE, supports and promotes a consistent, efficient and innovative embedding of the ESG 2015 at grass-root level. The project identifies the challenges and works collaboratively with all stakeholders and policy-makers to propose, share and discuss the applicability of new solutions. A study on implementation challenges, solutions and policy impact of the ESG 2015 will be published in February 2018. Early 2018, the project will also publish European-level policy recommendations to stakeholder groups and to feed into discussions leading up to the 2018 EHEA Ministerial Conference. More information can be found [here](#).

### **4. Internationalisation**

EUA supports the internationalisation of its members through conferences and projects. At the same time, it engages in international dialogue, in particular with sister organisations around the world. Over the last decade, internationalisation has emerged as an issue of high importance for universities. This has generated a network of international partners that continue to convene and collaborate in different settings and on different issues. Some examples of this are:

#### *The Arab-EU Higher Education Conference (AECHE)*

AECHE is a joint endeavour with a Steering Committee comprising EUA, the Association of Arab Universities, UNICA, UNIMED, joined by other partners, among them the Union for the Mediterranean, with the University of Barcelona hosting the Secretariat. It organises biannual HE Leadership and thematic events. AECHE established a scheduled, systematic participatory dialogue and cooperation process, which offers different parties to join and integrate their initiatives and pool resources. The Process has been acknowledged in a joint memorandum of the EU and the Arab League. The last AECHE Conference, AECHE 4, took place from 24 to 26 April 2017 in Rabat. It resulted in the release of the Rabat Declaration, which can be found [here](#). More information on AECHE can be found [here](#).

#### *Centralised Support for Higher Education Reform Experts (SPHERE)*

The University of Barcelona (coordinator) and EUA currently comprise the consortium SPHERE (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts), an initiative funded by the European Commission. SPHERE provides training and networking for Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) and National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) in European neighbourhood countries (former Tempus countries) between January 2015 and December 2020. More information, as well as the list of upcoming events, can be found [here](#).

#### *European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU-SHARE)*

EUA is involved in the project "European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE)" (2015-2018), funded by the EU. SHARE aims to strengthen regional cooperation by enhancing the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education. The SHARE

workshop/symposium took place in Bangkok in August/September 2017. Further information about the SHARE project can be found [here](#).

### *ASEF Rectors' Conference and ASEM Meeting of Education Ministers*

As the representative of European universities, EUA is engaged in the Asia-Europe Meeting of Education Ministers (ASEM ME), which is organised on a biennial basis. The next meeting will take place in Seoul, South Korea, in November 2017.

EUA, together with the ASEAN University Network (AUN), has also actively participated to the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Rectors' Conference (ARC6), which took place at Singapore Management University on 12-13 October 2017. In particular, EUA and AUN, together with ASEF, lead the development of ARC6 [policy recommendations](#), which will be conveyed to the ASEM ME.

### *Modernisation of Institutional Management of Innovation and Research in Southern Neighbouring Countries (MIMIr)*

Thirteen higher education institutions are participating in the MIMIr project together with the Moroccan and Jordanian Ministries for Higher Education and Research, EUA and the Association of Arab Universities. They will work together under the coordination of the University of Barcelona to improve the institutional management of innovation and research at Moroccan and Jordanian partner institutions. More information can be found [here](#).

### *Harmonization and Innovation in Central American Higher Education Curricula: Enhancing and Implementing the Regional QF (HICA)*

[HICA](#), driven by university associations, universities and ministries, intends to support the reform, innovation and harmonisation of higher education curricula in six Central American countries. The project will further develop and implement a regional qualifications framework for Central American Higher Education ('MCESCA') – proposed by the prior project [Alfa PUENTES](#) - to which EUA also contributed as a partner.

## **5. Inclusiveness**

### *Refugees Welcome Map*

In late 2015 EUA has launched the [Refugees Welcome Map](#) campaign, to showcase the commitment of the higher education sector in welcoming refugees. The interactive tool so far has gathered around 300 initiatives that focus on the integration of refugees through a number of concrete activities, such as bridging and language courses, community outreach and research, the adaptation of recognition procedures and scholarships for refugees.

### *Higher Education Supporting Refugees in Europe (inHERE)*

The information gathered in the map has been analysed through the inHERE project, co-funded by the EU and lead by UNIMED, in order to identify [good practices](#) which potentially can be upscaled or transferred to other institutions and their respective local contexts. The project will offer training to university staff on specific activities for refugee integration through a series of online events, as well as a staff training week in early 2018.

### *Towards Empowered Migrant Youth in Southern Europe (TandEM)*

The TandEM project, co-funded by the AMIF fund and lead by the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), will carry out activities to foster the engagement of young third-country nationals (TCNs) and their peers in six Southern European Countries. The project will contribute to improving access to and integration of TCNs into higher education by conducting a comparative cross-country study aimed at understanding access-related needs, and identifying operational recommendations to remove barriers. These will feed into a pilot student mentorship scheme.

## *EUA focus groups diversity & inclusiveness*

In late 2017 and early 2018 EUA will organise two focus groups on [diversity and inclusiveness](#) and on [public engagement](#), based on the imperative for broader participation in higher education, which opens up discussions on the social responsibility of universities and points towards a number of strategic and practical questions for institutions about how to deal with issues of diversity, inclusion, equity and access. With the focus groups, EUA aims to give interested members the opportunity for open exchange and peer learning on concrete aspects, such as institutional strategies for diversity management, policies for equal opportunities, social innovation or widening participation of underrepresented groups.

## **6. EUA's contribution to the mid-term reviews of Erasmus+ and Horizon 2020**

EUA conducted a consultation of its membership on the interim progress of the two major EU funding programmes for research and higher education: Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+. This consultation was launched by EUA ahead of the official mid-term review of these two programmes. The aim was to develop a comprehensive view of the university sector in time for European-level discussions on the future of Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ and their post-2020 successors. The findings are presented in two reports, and a concrete set of recommendations has been published for both H2020 and Erasmus+. The reports and recommendations are available [here](#).

### *EUA proposals for the next framework programme for research and innovation (FP9)*

In November 2016, EUA published its [vision for the design of FP9](#) which identified three key thematic areas of concern for universities in the post-2020 period: 1) providing long-term policies and funding instruments for research; 2) reinforcing collaboration and minimising discrepancies across the EU; 3) seeking a stronger alignment of policies for education, research and innovation.

In view of the forthcoming negotiations for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, EUA has further defined its vision in the position paper entitled "From vision to action: EUA proposals for the next framework programme for research and innovation (FP9)" by providing a reflection on each thematic area and putting forward specific recommendations for the design of FP9 rules and criteria of participation. The position will be available on the [EUA website](#) after the official launch at the [EUA Policy Event](#) on the future EU framework programme in the European Parliament on 9 November 2017, hosted by MEP Christian Ehler.

## **7. Research & Innovation**

### *Open Access/Open Science*

Given the increasing importance of research data in the transition to a more open scholarly communication system, EUA has developed a series of aims and recommendations to further assist European universities and National Rectors' Conferences in moving towards open access to research data. In 2017, EUA published its [recommendations on Open Access to research publications](#) (June), [recommendations on Research Data Management and Text & Data Mining](#) (October), as well as the [EUA political statement on Open Science](#) (October) with key messages from the university sector addressed to EU institutions and national governments. The documents were guided by the results of the [Open Access survey 2016-2017](#) and the work of the [EUA's Expert Group on Science 2.0/Open Science](#). The package of the 2017 recommendations illustrate the increasing and considerable work and engagement of European universities in the transition towards a more open scientific system.

### *Smart specialisation (RIS3)*

In March 2017, EUA issued its [response](#) to a European Commission public consultation on Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) aimed at finding a fresh approach to European growth and jobs through regional innovation strategies. EUA's response addresses the importance of political support, transparency and convergence of innovation policies and the need for more synergies between EU instruments and programmes. It also underlines that human talent acts as a fundamental driver of innovation and proposes to provide greater flexibility of cohesion fund use in order to further improve the responsiveness of regions to new emergent areas of research and innovation. In addition, in

October EUA organised in collaboration with Universities Estonia and Universities Finland the Workshop on RIS3. The goal of the event was to develop a series of recommendations for actions to improve the effectiveness of European regional research and innovation funds, both at governance and operational levels. It also served as a forum to strengthen the strategic role that role of universities play in their regional innovation ecosystems, and to contribute to the shape of RIS3 beyond 2020.

### *UNIversities in the SET-Plan (UNISET) project*

Co-ordinated by EUA, the FP7 UNI-SET project aims to mobilise European universities to contribute to the European energy goals spelled out in the European Energy Union, the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan) and the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. UNI-SET has mapped existing energy-related Master, Doctorate and Research programmes at European universities and collected empirical data about the range of university activities in disciplines and scientific fields related to the SET-Plan. It has also been active to monitor the skills and professional profiles needed in the current and future European energy sector. Results from these two activities informed the discussions at the UNI-SET Energy Clustering Events held between 2015-2017. In addition, the UNI-SET consortium is currently preparing a report entitled “Energy Transition and The Future of Energy Research, Innovation and Education - An Action Agenda for Europe’s Universities”, which seeks to stimulate new innovative approaches to learning, teaching and research at universities. Moreover, the project partners will release their findings from the UNI-SET Universities and Employers Surveys, providing insights from more than 130 universities and 130 companies respectively, before the end of the project in December 2017. More information can be found [here](#).

## **8. Other upcoming events**

### *USTREAM peer learning seminar: Policy frameworks for efficiency and effectiveness*

USTREAM, a project co-ordinated by EUA, seeks to examine the measures that are in place in universities across Europe to enhance efficiency at operational level, and also analyse policies at system level that support universities in their efforts to operate more efficiently, with a view to identify good practice examples and develop recommendations for further development. The first USTREAM peer learning seminar dedicated to policy frameworks for efficiency and effectiveness took place on 1 and 2 June 2017 in London, UK. The seminar was organised by Universities UK (UUK). More information can be found [here](#).