European University Association (EUA): Main initiatives, events and publications in Spring 2019

1. Autonomy

2. Learning and Teaching

3. Quality assurance

4. Internationalisation

5. Inclusiveness

6. University finances & EU funding

7. Research & Innovation

8. Doctoral Education

1. Autonomy & governance

TRUNAK project: university autonomy in Kazakhstan

The Autonomy Scorecard methodology supports the implementation of the Erasmus+ TRUNAK project that focuses on improving the regulatory framework for universities in Kazakhstan (2017-2020). In 2019, the consortium built on EUA's analysis of the state of play of the Kazakh regulatory framework to develop its own recommendations for a future model of university governance. A milestone seminar will be held in Atyrau, Kazakhstan, on 15-17 May 2019 to discuss the proposals.

University mergers

In Spring 2019, EUA carried out an update of its University merger tool, which records over 120 merger/clustering processes over 21 countries in the period 2000-2019. Data collected includes type of founding institutions, number of students, location, etc. A brief summary presenting the data will be released in Spring 2019, together with the launch of a survey addressed to the merged institutions to generate feedback on the change process.

2. Learning and Teaching

EUA Learning and Teaching Activities

Following the successful conclusion of the 2018 EUA Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups, whose reports were published in January 2019, the 2019 European Learning and Teaching Forum was hosted by the University of Warsaw, Poland, from 14 to 15 February 2019. The reports of the 2018 Thematic Peer Groups, whose work fed into the Forum programme, are concerned with promoting active learning in universities, career paths in teaching, continuous development of teaching

competences, and evaluation of learning and teaching. EUA has since initiated a new round of Thematic Peer Groups, which meet several times throughout 2019 to discuss topics concerning internationalisation in learning and teaching, evidence-based approaches to teaching, student assessment and curriculum design. These four Thematic Peer Groups will meet for a pre-Forum workshop in Utrecht on 12 February 2020 with the objective of exchanging and discussing the challenges and potential recommendations identified during the previous, group-internal meetings. This workshop is followed by the 2020 European Learning & Teaching Forum, which will be held in Utrecht, the Netherlands on 13-14 February 2020. As in the previous years, there will be reports summarising the work of these groups, including recommendations brought forward by them.

European Forum for Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching (EFFECT)

The EFFECT project (Erasmus+ KA3, December 2015- March 2019) 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 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. EFFECT has been working to connect the Principles with practice, and engaged a selection of 12 European higher education institutions to test the Principles in their home institutions. The consortium also developed 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.

More information can be found here.

3. Quality assurance

European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)

The 2018 EQAF was held on 15-17 November 2018, hosted by WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business) and AQ Austria. The papers presented at the Forum are available via this link.

The 2019 EQAF will be held on 21-23 November 2019, hosted by TU Berlin (Technical University of Berlin). This annual event is co-organised by the E4 group (ENQA, ESU, EURASHE and EUA) and the theme of the 2019 Forum is 'Supporting societal engagement of higher education'. This edition of EQAF will explore how external and internal QA processes can support engaged higher education institutions in developing activities that meet the expectations and needs of all stakeholders and demonstrate their value to society. The call for contributions for the 2019 EQAF is currently out. The call seeks proposals for paper presentations, workshops or world café discussion starters. The deadline to submit proposals is 22 July 2019.

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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:

Centralised Support for Higher Education Reform Experts (SPHERE II)

The University of Barcelona (coordinator) and EUA currently comprise the consortium SPHERE II (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts), an initiative funded by the European Commission. SPHERE II 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.

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 Bucharest, in May 2019.

EUA will continue its commitment towards the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Rectors' Conference (ARC). Together with the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and the International Association of Universities (IAU), EUA will contribute to the programme of the conference, and develop ARC policy recommendations that will be conveyed to the ASEM ME. The next ARC Conference will take place at the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) in Bucharest, in May 2019, back to back with the ASEM ME.

Development of the Internationalisation of PhD Studies in South-Africa (Yebo!)

The Yebo! project (2017-20, Erasmus+) is focused on developing the internationalisation of doctoral education in South African universities. It will develop a web-based portal and organising thematic conferences and training sessions. The project builds on the FRINDOC framework for international doctoral education developed by EUA. Five European and seven South African higher education institutions together with EUA, the Coimbra Group and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development are involved in the project. The University of Montpellier is the project coordinator. More information can be found here.

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.

Biannual mailing on refugee inclusion

To continue the collaboration and synergies from ongoing initiatives such as the Refugees Welcome Map and the previously completed inHERE project (Higher Education Supporting Refugees in Europe), EUA prepares a biannual newsletter (in spring and autumn) on the integration of refugees into European higher education.

This newsletter features updates from higher education projects and initiatives on the theme, as well as relevant publications, event announcements, policy news and funding opportunities. Readers are encouraged to use a dedicated webform to submit news stories from their own projects, event invitations and new publications on the theme. Subscriptions to the mailing are possible via EUA's main webpage, in the section "Subscribe to our newsletters" at the bottom right corner of the page.

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), carries out activities to foster the engagement of young third-country nationals (TCNs) and their peers in six Southern European Countries, including awareness raising campaigns and student mentorship programmes. For the project EUA has conducted a comparative cross-country on higher education access and participation as a means to societal integration. The study aimed at understanding access-related barriers and identifying operational recommendations to remove said barriers. It will be published in April 2019.

REACT project - Refugees and Recognition

The REACT project, led by NOKUT, builds on the recently completed Erasmus+ project Refugees and Recognition, which developed a common methodological approach to the recognition of refugees' qualifications. Taking this work a step further, the REACT-project develop and test this methodology in major refugee-receiving countries and in cooperation with higher education institutions admissions offices. It will provide recommendations to higher education institutions and identifying best practice cases that illustrate pathways for admission of refugee students to further studies. EUA is an advisory partner to the project.

INVITED project

In late 2017 and early 2018 EUA has organised 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. Based on the focus group discussions, a publication has been prepared. IN addition, the outcomes of the groups were the basis for the INVITED project, which aims to support universities in developing and strategies towards equity, diversity and inclusion. The project is a collaboration between EUA and EUCEN, with support of ESU.

EUA Annual Conference (11-12 April 2019)

The 2019 EUA Annual Conference will be hosted by Sorbonne University on 11-12 April 2019. The conference topic will be 'Driving innovation in Europe's universities'. As usual, institutional leaders, higher education researchers and analysts as well as representatives of other bodies involved in educational policy will be invited to attend the conference. The event will be preceded by the EUA Board Meeting and a Leadership Roundtable on 10 April 2019. More information on the event can be found here.

6. University finances & EU funding

Public Funding Observatory

The Public Funding Observatory Report 2018 (March 2019) offers the most up-to-date information on 33 different higher education systems across Europe.

EUA has been following the evolution of public funding to universities 2008 and the present report covers funding trends up until 2017, including a short-term outlook for 2018/19. It categorises countries into three different areas, namely systems with sustained growth in funding, systems with sustained funding decreases and those showing improvements.
EUA's monitoring reveals that since the crisis, the divide between higher education systems that increase public funding, and those that reduce investment, is getting wider. It also shows that any recovery that can now be detected is slow and fragile.

The monitoring is conducted in close cooperation with EUA's collective members, the national rectors' conferences, which regularly provide extensive funding data from their countries.

The Public Funding Observatory Report 2018 is complemented by a full update of the online interactive tool and individual country reports.

Simplification of EU funding

EUA understands simplification as the achievement of a coherent set of rules, mindful of the diversity of actions and beneficiaries accommodated in a programme, and that ensures both high-quality processes and an effective use of resources.

EUA argues for the wider acceptance of nationally recognised institutional management and accounting practices of beneficiaries as the most significant way to enhance efficiency and participation in the programme.

After the release of a compendium of national and institutional accounting practices as well as strategic and practical recommendations to improve the acceptance of institutional accounting practices in funding schemes (September 2018), EUA convenes a new informal stakeholder meeting on Horizon Europe simplification and alignment of funders' practices (May 2019).

'EU funding for universities' campaign

EUA's work on FP9 and on Erasmus+ is included in its broader campaign 'EU funding for universities', which also puts forward recommendations for impactful simplification and increased efficiency and value for money of EU funding programmes. In 2019, the campaign feeds into the preparation of the implementation of the next programmes, as well as into the debate leading to the adoption of the next multiannual financial framework of the European Union, and focuses on added value of EU-level investment in research & innovation. In addition to previous membership consultations on Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ EUA has published a list of concrete reasons to step up EU investment in research and innovation and in higher education exchange and cooperation here. [More information under the section "Research & Innovation"].

Efficient university management: USTREAM project

The USTREAM project is supported by the Erasmus+ programme and examines 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 project addresses the question of operational efficiency in universities in a European comparative way. In the second semester of 2018, EUA released thematic publications on the topic of efficiency, building on the findings from the different peer-learning seminars and the national policy events. "**Efficiency, Effectiveness and Value for Money: Insights from Ireland and Other Countries**" was released in October 2018. It provides examples of government-led initiatives implemented in response to national policy objectives and university-led collaborative initiatives and partnerships pursued by the Irish higher education sector to jointly tackle common issues, reduce duplication, maximise value for money and achieve critical mass. In December 2018, "**Efficiency, Leadership and Governance: Closing the gap between strategy and execution**" explored the key ingredients for successful strategy implementation at universities, that is, effective institutional leadership (governance and management), coherent operating models and structures and institutional culture. In the framework of the project, EUA also launched a pilot **University efficiency hub**. The online portal provides useful background data on general framework conditions for efficiency, effectiveness and value for money at the system level, supported by comprehensive datasets on short- and long-term public funding and autonomy trends across Europe. The portal offers access to a dynamic database of good practices in efficiency and effectiveness and allows higher education institutions to self-evaluate the internal structures and measures for efficiency and effectiveness.

In Spring 2019, the recommendations developed as part of the project activities will be compiled in a final publication (June 2019).

Procurement in higher education

A substantial share of public investment is spent on public procurement in the European Union and quality public services depend on well-managed and efficient modern procurement. Public higher education institutions, including university hospitals, are important public procurers.

Universities act not only as buyers (of goods, services and works), but also as providers for other public authorities as well as companies, particularly in the context of research, development and innovation. In December 2018, EUA released the report "**A comparative analysis of public procurement frameworks and practices in universities in Portugal and selected EU member states**" for the Portuguese higher education sector. It is designed to provide a comparative overview of the existing public procurement frameworks in selected EU member states and to showcase the procurement systems and good practice at several universities. Next to an analysis of the 2014 EU Directive on public procurement, the study covers a sample of seven benchmark countries representing different government, legal and university traditions: Austria, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The results of the analysis will be further exploited in the first semester of 2019.

7. Research & Innovation

EUA contributed to several research and innovation (R&I) policy areas with the aim of supporting EUA members in following up and contributing to main developments at EU level. The work of EUA in R&I is coordinated through high-level working groups gathering input from all EU countries. Policy dialogues in 201 revolved around the development of the next framework programme for research and innovation (Horizon Europe), Open Access/Open Science, research assessment and Smart Specialisation Strategies. The field of Energy as a major underlying societal challenge continued to be a thematic focus area of the EUA Platform of Universities in Energy and Environment. In close relation with research and innovation, Doctoral Education, a central activity characteristic of universities, was addressed through the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (Section 8).

EUA proposals for the next framework programme for research and innovation (Horizon Europe)

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 November 2017 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, programmes, instruments and criteria of participation.

EUA joined a broad coalition of major European university networks in March 2018 issuing a call to member states to double the investment in research, innovation and education. In April 2018, EUA also responded to the European Commission's call for feedback on mission-oriented research and innovation (R&I) in FP9. The response of the association sets out four framework conditions for successful missions and identifies six challenges and opportunities for mission-driven R&I in FP9. In May 2018, EUA set out its proposals for designing the European Innovation Council (EIC). The Association outlined a broad and comprehensive sketch of the EIC for the benefit of society, including a call to clarify its relationship to existing instruments, such as the European Institute for Innovation

and Technology. In June 2018, EUA released its analysis of the proposal by the European Commission for Horizon Europe providing views on the underlying principles, the overall structure and the rules of participation of the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The Association also joined a coalition of 13 other university networks issuing a joint response to the proposal. In July 2018, EUA proposed individual and joint amendments for the rapporteurs in the European Parliament to be taken into consideration for their reports on the proposal of the European Commission. The Association was also a signatory of the joint statement of university networks entitled "Research excellence and cooperation must prevail in Horizon Europe" (November 2018).

Open Access/Open Science

Given the increasing importance of ease of access, fast circulation and valorisation of research results and data in the transition to a more open scholarly communication system for the benefit of science, the economy and society at large, 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 publications and 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 – released in a report in February 2018 – and the work of the EUA's Expert Group on Science 2.0/Open Science.

The recommendations illustrate the increasing and considerable work and engagement of European universities in the transition towards a more open scientific system. In September 2018, the Association also indicated its support for 'Plan S', an ambitious plan by research funding organisations to accelerate the transition towards Open Access by 2020. EUA provided further input to the 'Implementation Guidance' of Plan S in February 2019.

Another focus area are negotiations of large-scale contracts for scientific publications with publishers. Work in this area is led by the EUA High-Level Group on 'Big Deals' since 2016 and it resulted in a first report mapping major scientific publishing contracts in Europe in April 2018 and informed a complaint to European authorities on a lack of competition and transparency in the scientific publishing secotr. Preliminary results of the follow-up survey were published in early 2019. EUA is now planning to fund a study project on implications of so-called 'read-and-publish' agreements to support the work of the negotiating consortia.

EUA's efforts in Open Access/Open Science will continue with additional attention to three priority areas: research assessment; citizen science; open science skills and education. As a first step in these areas, EUA published a roadmap on research assessment in June 2018 (see below). EUA also partners in the new FAIRsFAIR project focussing on the development of data management and in particular FAIR data competences and skills of students.

Research assessment
As part of its work on Open Science and Open Access, EUA is becoming involved in discussions on research assessment. In the *EUA Roadmap on Research Assessment in the Transition to Open Science* (June 2018) EUA commits "[...] to raise awareness and support [universities] in the [improvement] of

research assessment approaches that focus on research quality, potential and future impact, and that take into account Open Science practices." Priorities are to (1) gather and share information by launching a European university survey on research evaluation (March 2019), (2) start a dialogue between stakeholders by organising a series of workshops on research assessment in the transition to Open Science (the first edition to focus on researchers' recruitment and career progression, May 2019) and (3) make policy and good practice recommendations.

Smart specialisation (RIS3)

In June 2018, the Secretariat published a response to the European Commission Joint Research Centre's report on "A Regional Innovation Impact: Assessment Framework for universities". The report provides initial input to the discussion on EU-level regional innovation performance-based funding of universities and a related assessment framework. It outlines an assessment system for universities in which performance indicators are supported by narratives providing qualitative evidence of their contribution to regional innovation ecosystems. In its response, EUA stressed that such a system could be of great value to an individual university in its self-assessment and progress tracking over time. However, it should not serve to rank performance nor determine funding allocations for universities as they operate in different regional context. This response is a part of the EUA's recommendations on maximising the effectiveness of smart specialisation strategies published in February 2018.

On 13 November 2018, EUA held the fourth edition of the Workshop on Smart Specialisation entitled "Universities as Regional Lead Institutions". The event was jointly organised by EUA, Universities Austria (UNIKO), and the Conference of Italian University Rectors (CRUI), in close collaboration with the EUA Expert Group on RIS3. It took place at University of Graz in Austria under the auspices of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU. The event was the fourth in a series of annual workshops on Smart Specialisation jointly organised by national rectors' conferences and EUA.

The workshop provided an opportunity to take stock of past achievements and identify emerging priorities for building successful European innovation ecosystems in the post-2020 period. It addressed the impact of universities on their innovation ecosystems, entrepreneurial education and training, the interaction between research and innovation strategies, the monitoring of RIS3 and the need in post-2020 policies for regional research and innovation.

Based on the messages that emerged from the workshop, EUA published a statement with recommendations for policy makers and universities to support them in building successful European innovation ecosystems in the post-2020 period. The recommendations were also echoed in the report concluding the EUA project on Innovation Ecosystems which was presented at an event on 8 March in Brussels.

The EUA Energy and Environment Platform (EUA-EPUE)

2018 was an important transition year for the "EUA Energy and Environment Platform" in several dimensions: Firstly, following the successful experience of the UNI-SET project, reported in the "Energy Transition and the Future of Energy Research, Innovation and Education: An Action Agenda for European Universities", EUA Council discussed and adopted the proposal of enlarging the remit of the EUA-EPUE platform to Energy and Environment (Brussels, 26 January 2018).

Secondly, the EUA-EPUE chair, Prof. Torbjørn Digernes (Norwegian University of Science Technology), after a long and successful career, retired in 2017. After 10 years of commitment and engagement

supporting the development of the EUA-EPUE platform, Dr Douglas Halliday (Durham University) was proposed as new chair of the platform. Dr Halliday was a member of the UNI-SET Steering Committee and one of the main authors of the Action Agenda report. Furthermore, Dr Halliday has represented the EUA-EPUE platform in many occasions and events (e.g. EUSEW 2017, EUSEW 2018, Nancy Energy Clustering Event, IEEE Smart Grids for Smart Cities etc.). EUA Council discussed the EUA-EPUE chairmanship and appointed Dr Halliday on 16-17 October 2018. The official announcement will be included in a EUA newsletter on 22 February 2019.

Central to the Platform's 2019 agenda will be an "Energy & Environment Clustering Event" hosted by Durham University on 23-24 September. The event will discuss the need for new skills and knowledge for the energy transition, as well as reflect on global discussions about education and climate. Furthermore, the EUA-EPUE platform, in collaboration with the Energy-SHIFTS project (Energy Social Sciences & Humanities Innovation Forum Targeting SET-Plan) will co-host a workshop on 'Evidence in the energy policy process' on 19 June 2019 (Brussels, Belgium). Finally, as an outcome of its involvement in several SET-Plan working groups (Energy Consumers, Smart Cities and Communities, Energy Efficiency in Industry, Energy Efficiency in Buildings, Batteries for Energy Storage and Electromobility, Bioenergy and Renewable Fuels), EUA-EPUE and its new chair plan to be represented in the 12th SET-Plan Conference, 12-14 June 2019 (Bucharest, Romania).

8. Doctoral Education

Study on Doctoral Education

In 2018, EUA-CDE conducted in collaboration with researchers of the University Ghent a Europe-wide survey on the organisation of and challenges in doctoral education that counted on the participation of 311 institutions in Europe. The resulting survey report "Doctoral education today: approaches and institutional structures" was published in January 2019.

Development of the Internationalisation of PhD Studies in South-Africa (Yebo!)

Please see "Internationalisation"

EUA-CDE Thematic Workshop (January 2018)

The EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) invited academic leaders, heads of doctoral schools and doctoral education professionals to the 2018 Thematic Workshop. They reflected on key practices that have been introduced, i.e. institutional structures, doctoral supervision, transferable skills training and career development, and intersectoral collaboration and their impact on doctoral education and its outcomes. Part of this discussion considered if and how universities are building an evidence-base by monitoring and evaluating the practices and structures they have in place. More information can be found here.

Doctoral education event

EUA and the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts organised an event for European and national policy makers, leaders of higher education institutions and Brussels-based stakeholders on the transformation of doctoral education in Europe. A brochure was prepared for the event and is available [here](#).

EUA-CDE Annual Meeting (June 2018)

EUA-CDE brought together 225 participants on 7 and 8 June to discuss excellence through diversity in doctoral education. Hosted by the University of Ljubljana, exchanges on this topic were held against the background of an ever more international higher education landscape. Plenary sessions discussed various aspects of excellence through diversity in doctoral education, including its role as a central hub for mutual learning and collaboration in universities and its contribution to the internationalisation of higher education institutions. Exchanges between participants also shone a light on emerging topics such as doctoral candidates' wellbeing, which will be taken up in future activities. More information can be found [here](#).

The Meeting was preceded on 6 June by the Regional Rectors' Round Table on Doctoral Education with academic leaders from the Regional Platform for Benchmarking and Cooperation in Higher Education and Research. Participants discussed doctoral education challenges specific to their universities and region and held and exchange on strengthening their relations with the European doctoral education community.