

# PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION: EUA DATA AND PERSPECTIVES

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What I will  
cover today

**Some definitions**

**Trends 2024 data**

**Reflections**



# Some definitions

PUBLIC  
RESPONSIBILITY  
OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION (EHEA  
STATEMENTS ON  
FUNDAMENTAL  
VALUES, 2024  
TIRANA  
COMMUNIQUÉ)

➤ **What:**

*"[...] the obligations of the higher education community to the broader society of which the higher education community is a part."*

➤ **Who:**

*"The higher education community encompasses all staff and students as well as institutional leaders, and the members of higher education organisations [...]."*

➤ **Some constitutive elements (non-exhaustive):**

*Ensure respect of values, pursue truth and knowledge production, dissemination etc., uphold standards, inform society, contribute to societal solutions, engage in public debates, etc.*

# WHAT IS THE THIRD MISSION?

## There is no Third Mission

- Whatever universities do is built on and links to research & education

## Everything is Third Mission

- Whatever universities do in research & education is to the benefit society and mankind

## No real or constant definition

- Diverse approaches to what the third mission is and what activities it includes

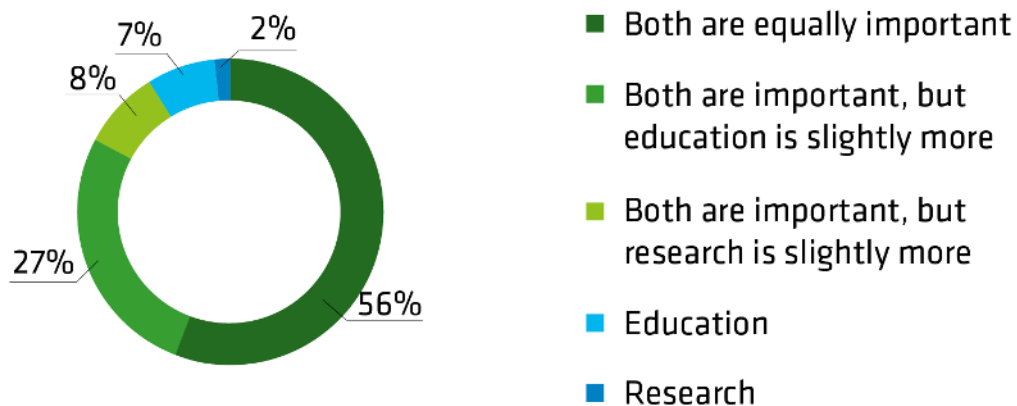
- Relationship between universities and stakeholders from the non-academic world
- Sum of all activities concerned with the generation, use, application and exploitation of university knowledge, capabilities and resources, outside of the academic environment
- Contributions to the social, cultural and economic development of communities



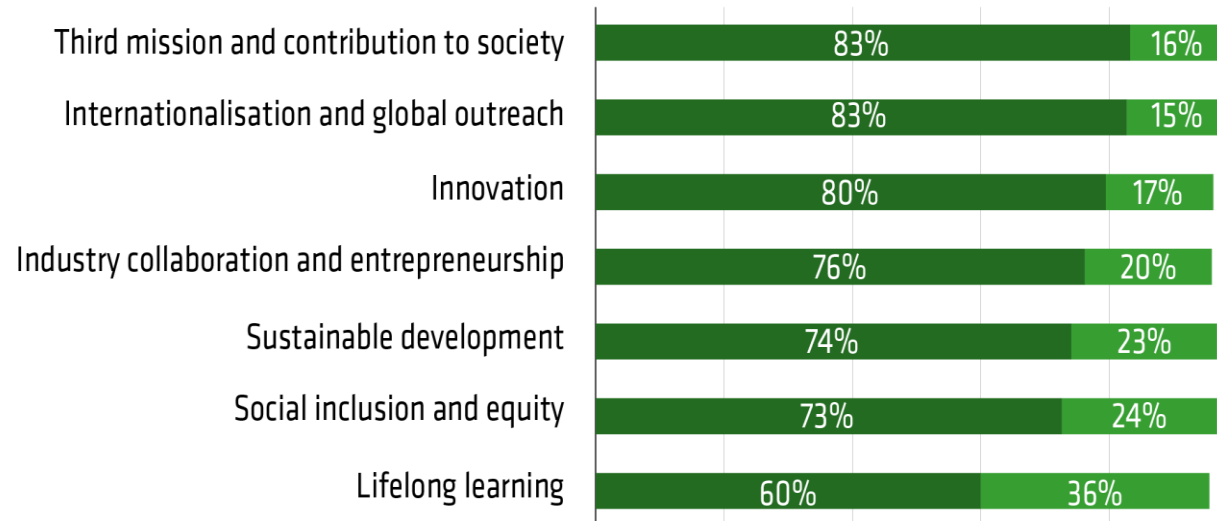
# Trends 2024 data

# MULTIPLE INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS

**Primary mission for 56% – research and education equally important**



**Third mission at the top, along with internationalization and followed by innovation**



■ High importance ■ Medium importance

Q7 What would you consider your institution's main task? N=488.  
Q8 How important are the following areas for your facility? N= 482

THIRD MISSION  
ENGAGEMENT IS  
CONSIDERED  
IMPORTANT AND ON  
THE RISE

**83%**

Define it as 'highly important'

**2%**

Institution is not very active

**62%**

Strategic priority

**28%**

Contribution already quite good and stable

**70%**

Increased their contribution to, and engagement with society

**59%**

Want to increase in the future

## INSTITUTIONAL PREPAREDNESS FOR THE THIRD MISSION/ CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

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**49%** Established structure for a systemic approach

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**39%** Dedicated leadership portfolio

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**20%** Under-resourced in term of funding & staff externally not fully recognised

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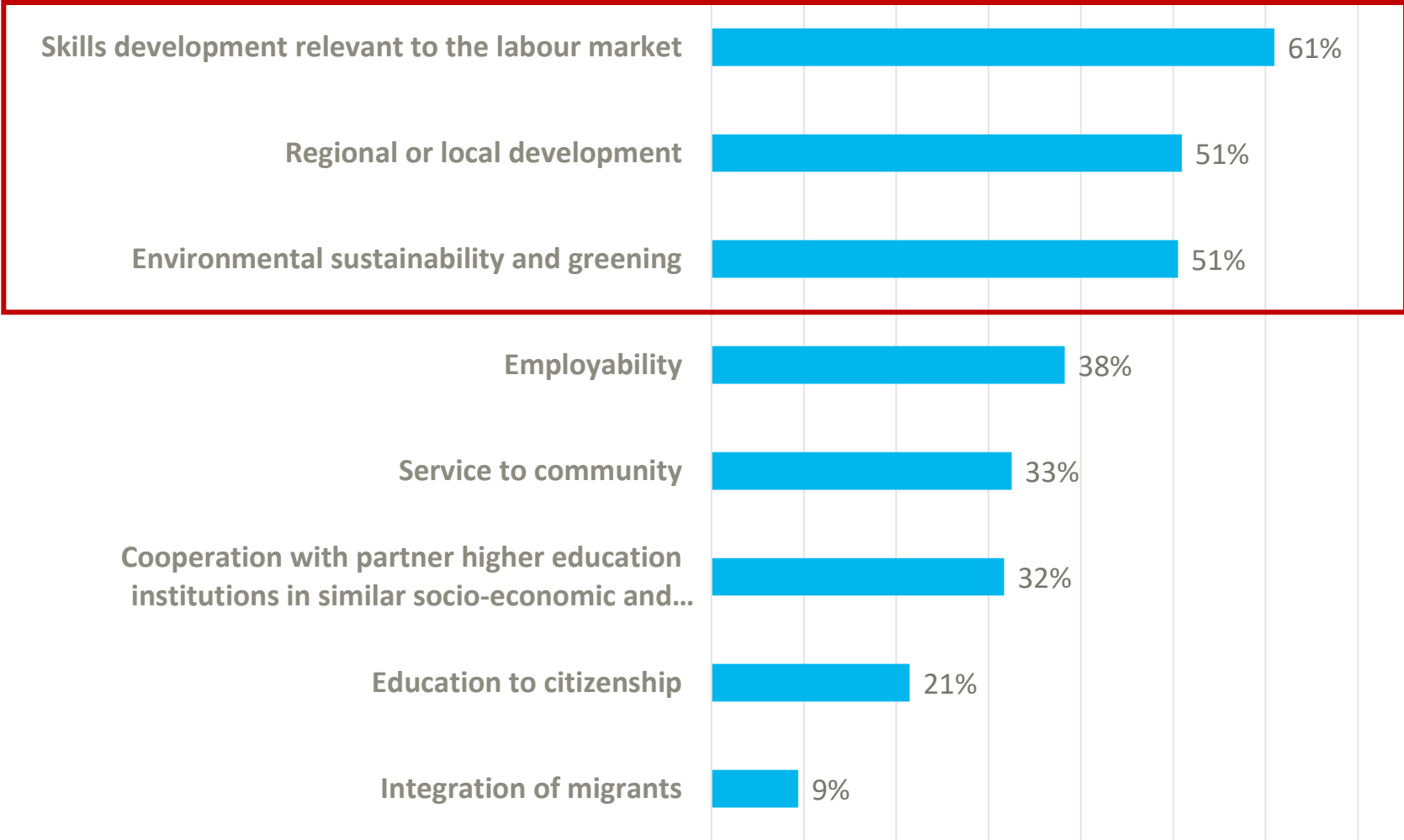
**15%** Difficult to map the institution's activities

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**13%** Strong external pressure to increase

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# TOP AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT/ACTIVITY





# Reflections

# RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH AN 'EUA LENS'



- Many **topics** addressed by EUA in its project and policy work **relate directly** to HEIs' societal responsibility.
- **Examples:** sustainability & greening, support to at-risk researchers and institutions
- Academic freedom:
  - *"Academic freedom is both a right and a **responsibility** held by individual academics and academic communities."*
  - *"Individual academics and students should adhere to fundamental values, such as academic integrity, quality and **responsibility**, and be aware of their own and their institution's role in society."*

# RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH AN INSTITUTIONAL LENS

- **Strong emphasis on values in institutional strategies**
- **Institutions are well-placed to take action**
  - ✓ Multi-disciplinary knowledge
  - ✓ Available infrastructure
  - ✓ Existing links with external partners/civil society
  - ✓ Collegial structures and cultures
- **Are HEIs able to engage more quickly than other actors?**
  - ✓ 2022 Russian invasion in Ukraine
- **Often bottom-up initiatives**
  - ✓ Pressure and momentum from students and staff
  - ✓ 2015 arrival of refugees
- **Impact of student choice**



# Over to you...

- Increasing pressure to engage: risk of overload?
- Risk that education & research become 'too applied'?
- Resource limitations: who decides on priorities and how?



**THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR ATTENTION**