



Press release: 3 October 2014

European University Association (EUA) Funding Forum:

Higher education stakeholders gather to discuss the funding of higher education in Europe

More than 200 representatives from universities, national ministries, funding agencies, EU institutions and student bodies from over 30 countries across Europe will gather next week (9-10 October 2014) at the University of Bergamo in Italy for the 2nd EUA Funding Forum, a high-level, strategic platform for all stakeholders to monitor, debate and shape developments related to the funding of universities. The focus of the Forum is “designing strategies for efficient funding of universities”.

During the event in Bergamo, participants will be presented with two new pieces of EUA research and analysis relating to HE funding and will have the opportunity to discuss and debate a wide range of topics crucial to the future of European higher education.

Thomas Estermann, Director for Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development at EUA notes: “Given the current economic context in many European countries, it is important to bring different European actors together to discuss effective strategies for ensuring sustainable funding of European higher education. The Forum is also an opportunity to remind those funding universities of the crucial importance of investment in higher education and research for Europe’s future”.

After the opening session, EUA will present the findings of its ongoing study of the different “efficiency measures” that have been introduced by many national governments across Europe, notably as a response to the ongoing economic downturn. Such measures include “performance-based” funding, excellence schemes and mergers. EUA’s analysis, which is part of the DEFINE project, seeks to map the different measures in place in Europe and how they can affect university management and activities.*

After a panel session with university leaders, parallel sessions will deal in more depth with more specific issues such as the impact of austerity measures and the role of university leadership. North American higher education experts will then take a clinical look at the ongoing restructuring trends in the European university sector and draw comparisons with developments in the US and in Canada.

On the Friday morning, EUA will launch and present the 2014 edition of its Public Funding Observatory,* which monitors the evolution of public funding to higher education institutions in nearly 30 European countries. The 2014 update of the Observatory – comprising an online tool and report which together provide country-level data and an analysis of funding trends in Europe -- will be available online from 10 October. *

This will provide useful background to a discussion focusing on European funding and how the new generation of EU funding programmes is having an impact on participating universities, in particular with large funding schemes such as Horizon 2020 or the European Structural and Investments Funds. Further parallel thematic sessions will then give participants the chance to learn more and debate a number of funding-related topics in more detail, including the question of how evolving cost-sharing models affect students and universities.

Finally a panel of “Funders”, including representatives from public authorities, will share their perspectives on what role their institutions can play in fostering strategies for efficient funding of the sector, and what their expectations towards universities are.

The [Forum website](#) includes more information about the event, including the detailed programme.

Ends.

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors’ conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA’s mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

Notes to editors.

- *A copy of the presentation (powerpoint) relating to EUA’s analysis of efficiency measures – part of the EUA-led DEFINE project – will be available on request on Thursday 9 October. The EUA Public Funding Observatory 2014 update (online tool and report) will be published on Friday 10 October.
- [DEFINE](#) is a two-and-a-half-year project (autumn 2012-spring 2015) run by EUA in collaboration with CIPES, the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (Portugal), and the Universities of Oxford (UK), Aalto (Finland) and Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany), and the Copenhagen Business School (Denmark). The project is co-funded by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme.