

4th EUA FUNDING FORUM

B A R C E L O N A



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EUA Funding Forum: Frameworks that empower, universities that deliver

Forum report

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Structure of the report

- EUA Funding Forum: **niche and functions**
 - **Main findings** from the Barcelona Forum (new developments)
 - **Lessons and recommendations**
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EUA Funding Forum

4th edition of the Funding Forum

- **± 230 Participants:**
 - university leaders (25%)
 - administrators/managers (37%)
 - sector representatives (13%)
 - public authorities (11%)
 - researchers (10%)
 - 2/3 new; 1/3 returning
 - **30 Countries, not only from the EHEA**
 - Focused on: **frameworks that empower, universities that deliver.**
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Niche and (continuing) function of the Funding Forum:

provide a European platform for reflection and action in the area of funding

- FF fills a gap in the EHEA: funding is not an official 'action line' or 'dimension' in the European space for dialogue and practice in HE; it is, however, a European challenge
 - FF provides a platform for exchange of information and experience, stimulates reflection on funding (learning!)
 - FF helps incubate for new initiatives (e.g. Public Funding Observatory, Efficiency Hub)
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4th Funding Forum:

Findings (new developments within
the scope of the Forum)

EUA Funding Forum: milestones for a historical perspective on funding of higher education in Europe

■ Salzburg 2012, Bergamo 2014

- Universities were dealing with the (aftermath) of the economic crisis and great recession
- Significant historical changes: “times will never be the same again” for universities, including in the area of funding.

■ Porto 2016

- Slow and uncertain economic recovery; fractures in Europe (Brexit) and uncertainties about how they will affect the future of Europe and universities; changing policy narratives; uncertainty about funding.

■ Barcelona 2018

- Recovery, but crisis still looming large as a reference (psychologically, operationally, financially, policy-wise). New era not settled? Attempts to repair the damages incurred during after the crisis or move beyond? **Economic growth not reflected in increased funding.**
 - Accentuated divergence of paths of development and policies. PFO indicates specific patterns in different countries, based on two variables: funding and enrollment
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New EUA contributions: policy analysis and tools, for a space for reflection and action in the area of funding

- Public Funding Observatory (**since 2009**)
 - Presents trends in the funding of universities
 - University Autonomy Tool (**science 2012**)
 - Measures and compares systems and trends; Autonomy scorecard
 - **Efficiency Hub (2018)**
 - Discussed what is efficiency, approaches to efficiency; challenges and best practices. Allows self-assessment with regard to efficiency in HEIs.
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State of the play

(Should the crisis/recession remain a reference?)

- Some countries are moving beyond the crisis (more) energetically

 - "Policy hesitation" in other countries
 - replacing newer with older funding policies and models in some countries
 - "immature" new policies/experimentation; induce negative perverse effects (gaming the system, disincentives for cooperation at the national level); efficiency altogether an immature area?

 - Continuing difficulties in the area of funding: e.g. complexity (and inefficiency) of EU funding mechanisms; too many KPIs at national level; inconsistent lists of KPIs, etc.
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New funding initiatives

- Are not only about funding
 - E.g. European University Networks

 - But very few new funding initiatives altogether?
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Changing narratives; need to make the case for universities

- Societal value of universities/university work not taken for granted anymore or even contested. This is reflected in the discussions about efficiency.
 - **How to make the case for universities? Argue about “investment” rather than subsidy.**
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Public vs. private; expanding the space for reflection and action in funding

- Important to include private HEIs (not-for-profit) in the discussion (happening at the 4th Funding Forum) as well as private funding.
- Public-private partnership “is the future”?
- Private (foundation-)funding for research larger than ERC funding?
- Friend-raising

Conclusion: Funding of higher education should remain primarily a public responsibility

Institutional attitudes about, and responses to, efficiency drivers

- Universities accept that concerns for efficiency are justified, even though conceptual and policy frameworks for efficiency are inconsistent (**efficiency for who?**). They are ready to work for efficiency **and** effectiveness.
 - USTREAM project inventors good new institutional practices to increase efficiency (e.g.: university “owning” the curriculum to increase efficiency in teaching; hiring administrators for the administrative work instead of academics). What is the role of governance/autonomy in the discussion about autonomy?
 - Universities remain “**chronically pro-European**”, even when national governments would like to move away from Europe. Universities perceive “**Europe**” **as a solution**, not a problem.
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Recommendations

Long list of concrete recommendations, at different levels

- Communicate! The virtue of external and internal and communication when promoting efficiency measures (listen, reward, repeat..)
 - Seek/promote partnerships. There are good examples to learn from.
 - Universities to engage collectively with the government, not just individually, in the discussions (negotiations) about funding
 - Consider the social impact of funding (methods), not just operational efficiency indicators.
 - Need for stable/lasting funding frameworks.
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Some very final conclusions:

- A very useful Funding Forum – once again.
 - 4th FF provided new information/knowledge, new avenues for reflection and action. New friends.
 - More interactive than previous editions (takes work, but it pays off!).
 - Made possible by a great host!
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- Gràcies, Barcelona!
 - Gràcies, amics de Ramon Llull!

 - And see you in...?
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