

Key activities 2019

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EUA represents the university sector in Europe with more than 800 members in 48 countries. The Association works to bring together its members to develop a European vision for higher education and research. It contributes to key debates in higher education, research and innovation and shapes relevant policies, both at the EU level and in the context of the Bologna Process.

In 2019, the citizens of the EU will elect a new Parliament and there will be a new Commission with new priorities, also for research, education and innovation. Moreover, the EU will decide on a new long-term budget, including a new Erasmus programme and a new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Crucially, the Brexit debate will come to a head, with implications for all stakeholders, including the university sector.

This is a critical time for universities to demonstrate their contribution to tackling local, national, European and even global challenges, such as the environment, social inequality and economic development. Research, education and innovation, the core activities of universities, are instrumental in the development of solutions to many of the broad challenges our societies face. To fulfil this role, universities need sustainable funding, proper framework conditions academic freedom and institutional autonomy – which are under pressure in many countries and, worryingly, even in EU member states. EUA will therefore continue to stand up for these vital principles within and beyond Europe and support its members in addressing the major societal issues of the day in close collaboration with governments and other stakeholders. In doing this, it will focus its attention on the following points in 2019.

1. STRENGTHENING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AT EUROPE'S UNIVERSITIES

EUA will provide timely and proactive input to the development of the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation and EU Structural Funds as well as the links between them. Open Science will continue to be a key priority, with activities addressing open access to research publications and data, EU digital legislation and big deals with scholarly publishers. The EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) will support and encourage exchange between its members as well as focus on the societal dimension of doctoral education, research assessment, career development and inter-institutional collaboration.

Research assessment and research ethics and integrity will gain more attention in EUA's work on research and innovation. The Association will also monitor and work to influence EU developments in several thematic areas such as health, artificial intelligence, energy and climate, the latter in the context of the EUA Energy and Environment Platform. The general principles that will underpin EUA's policy development include the promotion of excellence in research, multidisciplinary and Open Science. EUA will provide input to EU and ERA research and innovation policies in close collaboration with EUA's members and through its Research Policy Working Group and other expert groups.

2. ENSURING THE QUALITY, RELEVANCE, AND INCLUSIVENESS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

EUA will work to further the development of learning and teaching in Europe and to promote its relevance to the personal development, active citizenship and employability of graduates, as outlined in the policy position on learning and teaching adopted by the EUA Council in 2018.

These goals will be pursued through a variety of activities, such as the European Learning & Teaching Forum and thematic peer groups, which facilitate the sharing of good practices across the continent. EUA will also review and promote the European Principles for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching as a tool for self-reflection and strategic development for universities, as well as publish a feasibility study on teaching enhancement at the European level resulting from the work of the EFFECT project. EUA's work on learning and teaching will also be reflected in its policy initiatives towards the European Commission and in the context of the Bologna Process.

3. HIGHLIGHTING THE VALUE OF UNIVERSITIES FOR SOCIETY

EUA will highlight the role of universities in society and their contribution to economic growth, well-being and the protection of the environment. EUA will give more attention to the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of universities in promoting sustainability in 2019. EUA will continue to raise awareness of its members' contributions to sustainability in various policy processes, including the Bologna Process, the European Education Area and the European Research Area. The EUA Annual Conference in Paris will focus on various aspects of innovation and its potential to address global challenges. The Association will also highlight the role of universities in promoting regional innovation ecosystems, with an extensive report on this topic.

EUA will give increased priority to universities' efforts to promote diversity and inclusion by disseminating the results of a European-wide survey on the topic and by organising several targeted events in 2019. Finally, as academic freedom and institutional autonomy are essential for universities to remain strong and to fulfil their societal missions, EUA will step up its efforts in these areas in 2019, highlighting threats to these values, and working with a range of partners to counter growing pressures.

4. ADVOCATING FOR IMPROVED FRAMEWORK CONDITIONS FOR EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

EUA will argue for and provide advice on coherent and efficient frameworks, policies and funding instruments that respect and guarantee institutional autonomy at both European and national levels. Through EUA's Campaign "EU Funding for Universities", the Association will provide evidence-based input to the negotiations on the future EU programmes and engage relevant actors in Brussels. In addition, EUA will promote an innovative and structured approach to efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of university activities based on the findings of the USTREAM project. EUA will also continue to report on national and European trends in university funding. The role of university leadership in this context will be a focus of analysis.

EUA will carry on with its advocacy work for fit-for-purpose quality assurance frameworks. In addition, the Association will continue to organise an annual European Quality Assurance Forum to facilitate the sharing of good practices between EUA members and other stakeholders regarding internal and external quality assurance.

Moreover, EUA will carry forward its collaboration with the national rectors' conferences, including in the collection of data for benchmarking purposes and improved framework conditions. This will include facilitating EUA's work in supporting negotiations of Big Deals with scientific publishers and in formulating comparisons of national funding situations through EUA's Public Funding Observatory.

5. ADVANCING THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AREA IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

The development of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area take place in a broader global context. EUA will work towards ensuring that this international dimension is clearly reflected in both the strategic elaboration of the post-2020 EU funding programmes and the next round of the Bologna Process.

EUA will nurture and promote relations with partners in Europe and around the globe, drawing on joint initiatives for systems' development and capacity building in Latin America, Asia and the European Neighbourhood region. The "Support to Higher Education Reform Experts" initiative (SPHERE) supports capacity-building for higher education in countries neighbouring the EU, while at the same time strengthening the European Higher Education Area and its international dimension.

EUA will also promote the role of universities in institutional-level capacity building, development cooperation and "soft diplomacy" through people-to-people contact in the form of student and staff exchange and research collaboration. EUA will continue to collaborate with its sister organisations and regional partners, such as the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Association of African Universities (AAU), and contribute actively in bi-regional policy dialogues, such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the EU-China High-Level People-to-People Dialogue and the EU-CELAC process with Latin America and the Caribbean.

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