

2020 EUA Annual Conference

Universities building a better Europe

16-17 April 2020, hosted by Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland

Universities play a crucial role in creating knowledge and fostering democratic and sustainable societies. Their impact on wellbeing and the development of a thriving, competitive Europe stems from educating future leaders, professionals, researchers and citizens. It equally comes from curiosity-driven research aimed at identifying and meeting the broad challenges we all face and outreach to local and global industry and governments to foster much-needed innovation. Yet demonstrating and communicating universities' impact at the societal level is a challenge in itself. Universities need strong leadership, a focused strategic approach, as well as coordinated efforts across Europe and beyond. The 2020 EUA Annual Conference will provide a platform to explore how universities are making a difference, how their impact can be maximised and how to give visibility to their key role in addressing broad challenges.

The 2020 EUA Annual Conference will feature a mix of plenary and parallel sessions, including interactive audience participation, encouraging a rich exchange of experiences and good practices.

The event is of interest to university leadership and other university staff working at the management and strategic level, as well as academics. It also welcomes students, policymakers and other stakeholders in higher education, research and innovation.

Draft programme (as of 4 December 2019)

Wednesday, 15 April (pre-conference meetings)

The pre-conference meetings are by invitation only to EUA Board and Council members and the secretaries general of national rectors' conferences. The Leadership Roundtable is for rectors only.

- 09.00-13.00 **EUA Secretaries General Meeting**
- 10.00-13.00 **EUA Board Meeting**
- 13.00-14.00 Lunch for EUA Board and Secretaries General
- 14.00-16.00 **EUA Council Meeting**
- 16.00-16.30 Coffee break
- 16.30-18.30 **Leadership Roundtable**
- 18.30-19.30 **Leadership Meet & Greet**

Thursday, 16 April

- 08.00-09.00 Registration for EUA General Assembly
- 08.00-18.00 Registration for EUA Annual Conference
- 08.30-09.15 EUA in a nutshell

An introductory session to EUA newcomers interested in a quick overview of the association's work.

09.15-09.30 Break to move to the General Assembly

09.30-12.30 **EUA General Assembly, Part I**

Attendance by invitation only (limited to EUA members)

The first half of the morning will be dedicated to a reflection on the Association's history and the legacy of EUA Secretary General Lesley Wilson.

A coffee break will be included.

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 **Official Opening and Plenary Session I: A central role for universities in the Europe of the future – how do we get there?**

Europe is at a crossroads, with major societal, economic and technological developments taking place and more are yet to come. Moreover, recent challenges such as Euroscepticism, post-factual politics and anti-academic movements, which often confound a university background with elitism, have consolidated concerns about the future. This session will look into the direction Europe is taking and provide reflections on how universities can contribute to building the future in a way that nudges policymakers to listen and take action.

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-16.15 **Breakout Sessions, Round I**

16.15-16.30 Break to move back to the plenary room

16.30-17.30 **Plenary Session II: Head in the sand or ahead of the game? Approaches to future-proofing higher education**

Rapid societal changes impacting current and future labour markets make it essential to scrutinise and re-evaluate how university education is responding to these transformations. This session will engage the audience to reflect on whether universities are equipping their students and staff with the right skills in the face of technological advances such as artificial intelligence. It will explore how universities prepare students to work and be active citizens in this context. The session will also ask what university leaders in particular can do to keep their institutions up to speed.

19.30-22.30 Networking Reception and Gala Dinner

Friday, 17 April

09.30-11.00 **Breakout Sessions, Round II**

11.00-11.30 Coffee break

11.30-12.45 **Plenary III: Strength in numbers – can university alliances change the game?**

Strategic transnational collaboration between universities is becoming increasingly prevalent in higher education. The European Commission's European Universities Initiative, for example, has captured widespread interest by establishing bottom-up networks allowing students to obtain a degree through cross-border studies in several participating universities. This session will look into what cooperative models are in place to date, what kind of benefits and challenges they bring, and whether and how such collaboration will allow universities to increase their impact.

12.45-13.00 **Conference closing and invitation to the EUA Annual Conference 2021**

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.30 **EUA General Assembly, Part II: EUA's future strategy**

EUA members, upon invitation only, will have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Association's future strategy through a moderated discussion. Participants will receive a draft strategy, formulated through a six-month formal process, and a guide to the discussion. They will be asked to contribute to the document's final version before implementation.