

Universities and competitiveness

**A big picture view on the EU's new
policy paradigm and the implications
for universities**

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Foreword

Prof. Josep M. Garrell
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Futures thinking is a much-needed strategic process in the current uncertain, rapidly changing and challenging times. It enables us to improve our personal and institutional readiness to proactively adapt to changing conditions, while staying true to our values and mission.

It is, however, a resource-intensive activity that few institutions can afford, but all need. For this reason, EUA is delighted to present this document to help our members – and the whole European university sector – to look ‘beyond the horizon’ on one very specific topic: competitiveness.

This exercise has its roots in the debate about Europe’s economic competitiveness, which gained momentum in the summer of 2024, and gained further traction after the inauguration of the second von der Leyen Commission.

The need to improve European competitiveness is not a new topic. But currently there is a shared sense of urgency due to many factors such as the need to meet the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, the clear impact of climate change, the many wars and violent conflicts across the globe, threats to democracy and human rights, and rapid changes in the geopolitical landscape, among others. “We need to act now” is the message that we all receive every single day.

Europe needs to find its own place in this new global context, while retaining the values and autonomy of our continent. Universities must be key partners in this transformation, because the challenges we face can only be solved in partnership. Universities can certainly help to shape a new future through education and knowledge. But to do this, to fully make our contribution, European universities also need the framework conditions for which we have long advocated. The recipe is not new. What is new is the speed of change and the magnitude of the current challenges.

As is the case in all futures thinking exercises, here we are talking about theoretical scenarios that may happen, or may not. A combination of the scenarios described here, or entirely different developments, can also be imagined, and could become a reality. Therefore, I encourage you to use this document as an initial “provocation”, to spark – and hopefully inspire – your own exercise, based on your own reality and institutional capacity.

There is much at stake, and we certainly need to move quickly in a good direction, always working to turn the challenges that the European university sector faces into opportunities.

Introduction

What is the place of universities in a context of multifarious emergencies? The experience of multiple crises quickly mounting one on top of the other has prompted citizens, universities and politicians alike to look for solutions that can bring stability and sustainability. This common crisis experience is at the root of this report, which:

- examines the political discourse at the European level, its focus on competitiveness and the role universities play in it;
- outlines different futures and their effect on universities; and lastly
- sketches possible paths forward for universities and their partners.

We hope that the different parts of this report can give inspiration to university leaders to meet the many challenges faced by Europe – and perhaps turn some into opportunities.

Europe and the world are facing major challenges and disruptive changes at many levels, and universities are operating in a rapidly evolving international environment.

- Geopolitically, the drift away from multilateralism to a multipolar world is accelerating.

- Russia's enduring war against Ukraine is raging at the EU's backdoor, threatening its security and testing its defence capacity.
- US President Trump's dismantling of norms in international security and trade relations is challenging the EU's political unity and its economy.
- The rapid development of artificial intelligence has opened up new possibilities, but it has also started a new race towards technological leadership and sovereignty between international superpowers.
- Climate change is accelerating, with floods, droughts and extreme heat affecting societies, economies and research agendas.
- Demographic decline and migration challenges in many European countries are increasing pressure on political and social systems.
- The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development seems increasingly hard to achieve.
- And growing political extremism in several countries is becoming a risk for liberal democracies and their values, including academic freedom.

Despite these critical developments, there is a strong will at the European level to meet these challenges and take concrete actions. Central

to this effort is the competitiveness agenda, which aims at strengthening Europe's sustainable prosperity and securing its capacity to remain competitive and relevant on the global stage. The European Commission presented the Competitiveness Compass in January 2025. The Compass serves as a guide for the Commission's work during the 2024-2029 mandate, focused on the simplifying regulations, increasing investment and reducing Europe's dependencies on other countries in key areas.

This builds on previous initiatives. The EU's Green Deal, from 2019,² aiming for climate neutrality by 2050, has been reframed by the Clean Industrial Deal,³ which prioritises industrial competitiveness, economic security and large-scale investments in clean technologies to achieve sustainable prosperity. Overall, these initiatives present competitiveness in a broader framework as a driver of transformation towards a sustainable and resilient European model.

Europe's universities are an integral part of this political framework. They are exposed to the same global challenges, and they hold and provide the knowledge, skills, talent and innovation needed to respond. To explain the framework at the policy level in detail, this report takes as its point of departure the debate in Brussels and the views expressed therein on research, education and innovation.

What led to this report

Since 2021, EUA has developed strategic material using foresight and futures thinking methodologies, putting them at the disposal of its members and affiliates. Strategic projects and initiatives such as “Universities without walls – A vision for Europe’s universities in 2030”, “Pathways to the future – A follow-up to Universities without walls” and “Universities on the future of Europe”, are resources from which universities can take both inspiration and action.

The present report continues EUA’s work on foresight and futures thinking. It distils the outcomes of an internal project that EUA conducted in the first half of 2025 to explore the role of universities in Europe’s competitiveness agenda and what this may mean for the future. The project included the following activities:

- A thought leaders workshop in March 2025 in Brussels
- An online workshop in June 2025
- Individual interviews
- An analysis of EU policy documents
- The use of collective foresight and futures thinking methodologies to develop three forecasts with alternative futures for Europe and its universities.

As part of the methodology, participants were presented with AI-generated images of different futures. Versions of these pictures are included in this report.

The overall discussions took as their point of departure the question of whether current policies for competitiveness will yield the expected results, or whether other external developments will change the course of Europe in the decade to come.

In total, the project directly involved 45 university leaders and managers from EUA member universities in 21 countries.

1 Competitiveness: the EU's new policy paradigm

“Europe will do whatever it takes to keep its competitive edge.” These were the words of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at her State of the Union speech in September 2023.¹ She announced in the same speech that she had asked former Italian Prime Minister and former President of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi, famous for the quote, “whatever it takes” during the financial crisis, to prepare a report² on the future of European competitiveness. Shortly before, the member states had asked another former Italian Prime Minister, Enrico Letta, to write a similar report on the EU's Single Market.³ Competitiveness then became the new keyword and foundation of a policy paradigm for Europe, after the focus on the digital and green twin transitions in the years before.

Both authors have a similar framing for their reports: Europe is in a state of emergency where, with the current structures, it will not be able to ensure its security, particularly in the face of an aggressive Russia. Also, Europe will not be able to finance its social model in the future without stepping up its economic competitiveness. They are also both in agreement that deep structural changes are needed, particularly a full realisation and deepening of the EU's internal market, to give European companies greater economic space. Both authors state that research and innovation should be strongly supported to successfully compete with technological superpowers such as the US and China.

The difference between the two reports is that Enrico Letta almost exclusively focuses on structural reforms that deepen the internal market. This includes an insistence on the fifth freedom, meaning the free movement of researchers and knowledge across the Union. Mario Draghi, instead, vehemently argues for massive public investment, including in research and innovation, to make Europe a leader in key strategic areas. He underlines the need for ambitious investments in basic research, strengthening the European Research Council and support for a more efficient market uptake of research results. All this is based on the assumption that political steering is an effective way of advancing in technological areas that will be strategically important in the long run.

1 European Commission (2023), [State of the Union](#).

2 Draghi, M. (2024, September), [The future of European competitiveness](#). European Commission.

3 Letta, E. (2024, April), [Much more than a market – Speed, Security, Solidarity: Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens](#). Council of the European Union.

1.1 THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

The strong focus on research and innovation, research mobility and basic research in both reports puts universities in the spotlight as a strategic asset for the European Union. For universities, this is both an opportunity as well as a great responsibility. It opens doors to deep partnerships on common challenges, but there is also a risk of instrumentalisation for political agendas.

In fact, the difficulty of reconciling the different logics of the political and academic systems is anything but trivial. The two systems work on different timescales, and their options for action are very different.

Universities need longer timescales for impact. They are highly complex organisations with a large degree of freedom for academic staff. Moreover, taking time is one of the hallmarks of academic pursuits; the goal of academic activities is depth and reflection, not speed and efficiency. The knowledge provided by universities is based on evidence that requires thorough investigation, which means that it takes time. How-

ever, this does not mean that universities cannot be active partners in societal transformations.

University leaders increasingly recognise their agency and the power of creating knowledge to achieve change. They believe in the need to guide both their institutions and the society they are interacting with towards transformation. Beyond being the producers, holders and promoters of knowledge, universities are active contributors to innovation or even “anchors of transformation”,⁴ and they can guide innovation by shaping policies through research and cross-sectoral dialogue.

The political landscape is challenging for universities. In recent years, governments in several European countries have ostensibly given universities more autonomy, while at the same time steering them through ad-hoc regulation.⁵ Academic freedom is under pressure in several places.⁶ Funding is a constant challenge and likely to remain so in the near future, particularly as public spending priorities are shifting, for example, towards security and defence. While some universities might see this as an opportunity, for others the shift is difficult.

Moreover, political expectations come with the risk of political steering. In fact, the second von der Leyen Commission started with an agenda for research policies which is perhaps the most ambitious in decades. This includes:

- the upcoming European Research Area Act, a unique piece of regulation on European research;
- initiatives like Choose Europe, which aims at bringing talent to Europe;
- the planned European Innovation Act;
- high expectations for European Universities alliances; and
- the Union of Skills.

These various policy initiatives have to be seen in the broader context of the Commission's political priorities, as they are also a way of translating these priorities into all policy fields, including those relevant for universities. While this does not mean detailed top-down steering of universities *per se*, these initiatives do set overall political goals and a direction for the sector, as well as making certain assumptions about the role of universities in society. As such, this report aims to explore the opportunities

4 University of Luxembourg (2024), [The Bridge Forum Dialogue - What Role for European Higher Education in a Changing World?](#), You Tube.

5 Bennetot Pruvot, Enora, T. Estermann & N. Popkhadze (2023), [University Autonomy in Europe IV: The Scorecard 2023](#), EUA, p. 91.

6 Academic Freedom Index (2025) [The state of academic freedom worldwide](#).

and challenges in this new European policy paradigm of competitiveness which gives great importance to universities in a time of emergency.

European universities undoubtedly consider their engagement with society as highly important. EUA's 2024 Trends report shows that a large majority of European universities consider societal engagement to be very important and a strategic priority.⁷ However, at the same time, they are aware that universities have unique core values. As stated in EUA's "Universities without walls – A vision for 2030", they are "places of respite and refuge to test new ideas, for lateral thinking and for creating new knowledge that still lies outside of mainstream awareness."⁸

1.2 POLYCRISIS AND COMPLEXITY

The language in Brussels policy debates is very deliberately framed in terms of an emergency that requires immediate action. This perception of constant and existential challenges is widespread across the continent as discussions with university leaders for the purposes of this report have confirmed. Rapid changes and challenges at various levels are often referred to as "polycrisis". Also, the term "VUCA world" is getting renewed traction, describing a world in which things are Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.⁹

Looking at the past 10 to 15 years, this perception makes sense. Since the middle of the 2000s, Western societies have experienced the financial crisis, the refugee crisis, the loss of a large EU member state due to Brexit, and fundamental change in the US political landscape through the election and re-election of Donald Trump. The pandemic in the beginning of this decade has had long-term societal consequences, and the ongoing full-scale war in Ukraine has resulted in one in five higher education institutions in the country being damaged or destroyed.¹⁰

In the same period, global academic exchanges have changed. Whereas exchanges with many partners in education and research were a high priority for universities in the 2010s, cooperation now needs to consider risks to security, and potentially to the reputation of universities. This has further contributed to our lived experience of a world where sudden and unexpected change is imminent and where universities, no longer passive observers of crises, are directly affected by them.

Conflict has also reshaped academic cooperation in the wider region. For example, since 2022, Russia has left the Bologna Process, suspended most partnerships with Europe and North America, redirected its ties toward China, Africa, and Latin America, and increased targets and surveillance practices for foreign students.¹¹ This rapid re-orientation shows how geopolitical events can quickly alter academic cooperation, student mobility, and research networks, as well as how universities need to build resilience to be better prepared for these unexpected turning points.

7 Gaebel, M. e.a. (2024). [Trends 2024 - European higher education institutions in times of transition](#), EUA, p. 42.

8 EUA (2021), [Universities without walls. A vision for 2030](#), EUA, p. 5.

9 LeBlanc, P. J. (2018). [Higher Education in a VUCA World](#). Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning.

10 Carter, D. (2024). [One in five HE institutions damaged or destroyed in war](#). University World News

11 Molnia (2025). [Russia's selective openness comes with close surveillance](#). University World News.

There are also more fundamental and structural changes that contribute to the impression of volatility and uncertainty. Technology plays a significant role here, as rapid development, particularly of artificial intelligence, has put pressure on universities. Moreover, there is a keen awareness of the fraying of society – the gradual weakening of societal bonds in terms of trust, mutual responsibility and collective norms.¹² This trend is often seen as a background for populist or national conservative political movements that feed on distrust, fear of change and a sense of exclusion from parts of society.

Apart from the feeling that change is constant and unpredictable, there are also challenges from stable trends. For example, Europe is experiencing demographic changes, with a decline and aging of the population (unless migration accelerates) that makes the intake of young learners difficult for universities. The same is true for hiring academic and administrative staff in tight labour markets. Meanwhile, the climate crisis is both stable in the sense that global warming is steadily increasing, but also creates volatility in terms of natural disasters, floods, fires, or heat waves that have a direct impact on daily life.

The answer implied in the EU's competitiveness paradigm, perhaps most explicitly in the Draghi report, is that Europe's resilience needs to be guaranteed by a solid economic foundation. And if this is the case, there needs to be structural reforms that enhance pre-existing policy goals such as the European Single Market, alongside bigger public investments. But there is no vision of a system that is fundamentally different in its social structure or policies, nor is there a serious reconsideration of existing policy goals and instruments.

12 Department for environment food & rural affairs (2024), [Global Megatrends](#), UK government.

1.3 COMPETITIVENESS – OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES?

It is not the first time that the EU has made competitiveness the central focus of its policies.

From the 1990s onwards, there has been increased attention to how universities can contribute to competitiveness, particularly through efficiently contributing to the overall economy. Previously, the emphasis was on technology transfer, or working “from research to revenue”, as it was put by a Danish research minister in the early 2000s. This idea was to some extent boosted by academic achievements in the US, where universities had played a large role in delivering patents and creating spin-offs.¹³

In the years that followed, much of the discourse concerning universities in Brussels was about modernisation; the policy documents coming out of the European Commission were tellingly called modernisation agendas.¹⁴ Here, the assumption was that universities were stagnating and needed to professionalise and modernise their structures. This to some extent overlapped with the implementation of the Bologna Process, which can be seen as a modern-

isation agenda as well, looking to professionalise and structure quality assurance, establish professional doctoral education, and foster an educational offer that is more focused on input to the labour market or the employability of graduates.

From the latter half of the 2010s, the term “modernisation” was replaced by “transformation”. Policy makers saw universities both as institutions that need to transform as well as motors for societal transformation. With the focus on the twin green and digital transitions in EU policies since 2019, the transformational role of universities came into focus, and with that their role in steering society towards sustainability. This culminated in the European Strategy for Universities, launched by the European Commission in 2022¹⁵, whereby the reform focus shifted towards national systems that needed to become more flexible, moving universities towards transnational cooperation. The European Universities Initiative, starting in 2017-2018, has been central to this shift, as the European Commission and the universities involved have set ambitious goals to reduce the barriers still present at national levels and foster transnational cooperation.

To a certain extent, today's competitiveness discourse echoes that of previous decades, mainly because of its focus on economic growth. However, the big difference is the fact that societies find themselves in polycrisis or the VUCA world. The recognition of multiple large challenges in a very unstable environment, and particularly the existence of the climate crisis and a tense geopolitical landscape, makes this much more than an economic agenda.

As mentioned in the introduction, the impetus for more economic growth and competitiveness is framed by this emergency, i.e. Europe will not be able to sustain itself unless it reforms. Universities and the academic community at large acknowledge this emergency and try to face it with concrete actions, both within and outside academia. During the past 10 years, academics across Europe, often motivated by student movements, have been vocal about supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and managing existential challenges, particularly the environmental and climate crises.

Previously, discussion of competitiveness was confined to universities' innovation mission, such as establishing technology transfer offices,

¹³ See [Bayh-Dole Act](#) (Wikipedia).

¹⁴ For example, European Commission (2006), [Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation](#)

¹⁵ European Commission (2022), [A European Strategy for Universities](#)

science parks, spin-outs and startups. The current competitiveness paradigm includes the notion of sustainable prosperity, meaning that the challenge is much larger, taking in the aspects of sustainable environmental, economic and societal development. For universities, this means a considerably broader engagement with competitiveness and sustainable prosperity across their missions, including research, education, innovation and culture.

At the same time, universities have professionalised in recent decades. There is now more skilled support for staff and student engagement beyond the institution, for example, the technology transfer offices and science parks. This professionalisation includes the profiles of institutional leaders, which to a larger extent than before come from business and industry, but are also more technical, younger and generally more diverse.¹⁶ This development has come with overall governance reforms and the diversification of the types of universities, such as foundation universities or specialised technical universities.

“What is at stake for Europe is not just economic growth, but the future of its model. [...] Our freedom, security and autonomy will depend more than ever on our ability to innovate, compete and grow. These will be the keys to fund the EU’s technological and energy transitions. They will ensure that our distinctive social model remains sustainable. And they will provide the resources for Europe to guarantee its security and play a global role in foreign affairs. It is vital to create the conditions for businesses to thrive and where everyone has an equal chance of success.

Increasing competitiveness and productivity will go hand in hand with empowering people. The clean economy is a powerful driver for a more competitive Europe. The EU must ensure its sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, while preserving its unique social market economy, succeeding in the twin transition, and safeguarding its sovereignty, economic security and global influence. As Mario Draghi has warned, if Europe accepts a managed and gradual economic decline, it is condemning itself to a ‘slow agony’ ”¹⁷

16 Luisa Bunesco, Thomas Estermann (2021). *Institutional transformation and leadership development at universities. A mapping exercise*, EUA, p.23.

17 European Commission (2025), *A Competitiveness Compass for the EU*, p. 1

2 Looking ahead: working with alternative futures to find inspiration

In today's rapidly changing world, universities must think ahead to secure their own future, strengthen resilience and gain preparedness. This means defining their role and responding to the political drive for competitiveness, security and sustainable prosperity. To do so, universities need to take a longer-term perspective that considers how policies interplay with societal, technological, economic and environmental developments likely to shape the future of higher education, research and innovation.

For this purpose, this report presents three different forecasts, or pictures of alternative futures, based on futures thinking and foresight. To identify signals and drivers of change, the authors conducted desk research and discussions with university leaders in workshops and interviews.

These forecasts are meant to inspire reflection and discussion, they by no means try to predict the future, nor do they represent a political position of EUA towards any of the scenarios discussed below.

All three forecasts are set ten years in the future: in the Europe of 2035.

2.1 EUROPE'S RESURRECTION

THE FORECAST

In this forecast, EU member states have followed the advice of the Draghi and Letta reports from 2024. By 2035:

- The assumptions underpinning these reports have proven correct: a more united Europe with a deepened Single Market has helped to overcome the sense of polycrisis experienced in the mid-2020s.
- Member states have gone through structural reforms and improved the framework conditions for companies to operate and raise capital across the continent.
- There have been massive investments in research, innovation and key technologies. And initiatives like *Choose Europe for Science*, initiated in 2025, have enabled Europe to attract top talents from across the world.



Generated using Adobe Firefly from the prompt: A man in a suit is walking through a busy city with a suitcase. There are EU flags on the buildings. Pop art style (Ben-Day dots), mostly in black and white. The general atmosphere of the picture: technocratic.

Europe has stepped up its efforts for its own defence. A defence union is in place, including a joint European army. EU enlargement has also gone further, and the Union now includes the Western Balkans, as well as Ukraine, which joined after the war ended in the late 2020s due to the exhaustion of the Russian economy.

Nationalist forces have become marginal in 2035, after they had seen a rise until the late 2020s. This is partly due to Europe's economic recovery, making it difficult for extreme political forces to depict a disastrous situation and stoke fears, and partly due to politically mainstream parties having taken up restrictive migration and security policies. Many governing parties, including some in the centre, have adopted strict migration rules, letting in only highly skilled people. The research sector is able to attract talent from around the world, but many other sectors feel pressured by the lack of labour due to demographic decline. Universities also feel this pressure, particularly when hiring administrative staff.

Nevertheless, Europe is economically stronger again and has become a world leader in technologies for sustainability. Both public and private investments have increased over the years due to a more favourable regulatory environment. While the economy is flourishing, people work long hours due to labour shortages. Although

FORECAST: EUROPE'S RESURRECTION



Political

Focus on economic policies: investment in key technologies and attraction of international top talents, otherwise restrictive migration policies.

–

Geopolitical Europe: Defence union and European army in a wider EU (Ukraine enlargement).

–

Nationalists become marginal.



Economic

European economy flourishes again: private investments are increasing, but people have to work long hours due to labour shortages.



Societal

Demographic decline can only be partially countered.

–

Pro-active immigration policies have only been developed recently as previously conservative governments had adopted a hard line on migration.



Technological

Europe specialises in key technologies for sustainability.



Environmental

Climate change remains a huge issue, but Europe is among the frontrunners for technological solutions.

technology, especially digital technologies and AI, has spread fast, it cannot compensate for the demographic decline. Services and the health care sector have been hit particularly hard.

Climate change is a huge issue as sustainability policies saw a global backlash in the mid-2020s and Europe could not stop climbing temperatures by itself. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals have not been achieved. However, the European Union is now among the frontrunners for technological solutions to deal with the consequences of climate change and mitigate further degradation.

Although technological solutions appear, there is no engagement with deeper drivers of climate change such as consumerism. The political discourse still frames the green transition as a growth strategy, whereby companies can continue to expand as long as they use green technologies and consumers can continue to consume goods in a market with green products.

This vision is not yet bearing fruit, at least at this point. The Earth has warmed beyond two degrees Celsius, extreme weather is increasingly common across Europe with the occurrence of large-scale emergencies. For instance, during heavy rainfall in the summer of 2035, the glaciers in the Alps have almost disappeared, and the environment is under severe pressure with many species close to extinction.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

How did university leaders react to this forecast?

University leaders who participated in the workshops and interviews that led to this report saw this future as promising for universities in many ways, albeit not without challenges.

Overall, this forecast resonated with them, as they recognised the challenges, particularly from political top-down decisions regarding the promotion of technologies and the steering of large amounts of funding into a few key areas, which could mean less investment in others. However, generally they saw this as a positive scenario, given the global challenges where universities could contribute significantly to common societal goals.

While universities of technology as well as specialised institutions (such as in life sciences) would likely benefit from this scenario the most, there was consensus among the university leaders involved that such a future would need very strong interdisciplinarity with the social sciences, arts and humanities working hand in hand with the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines in order to deal with societal transformations, foster innovation and initiate a human-centred approach to technology.

The university leaders that we engaged with also understood that this future would require universities to rethink their approach to defence, dual use and engagement with the military. While such a move was long a taboo in many European countries, many now see it as unavoidable, even more so if this forecast for 2035 were to become reality. Indeed, for many of our interviewees it would be a necessary path to uphold and defend Europe and its values. One leader also described the focus on defence as a major opportunity for universities to develop their innovation profile.

2.2 TECH OLIGARCHY UNDER US HEGEMONY

THE FORECAST

The second forecast paints a different future. It describes Europe's decline in political, societal and economic terms. In this future, European democracy as we know it today is replaced by authoritarian regimes.

- Extreme nationalist parties have taken over government in the late 2020s in key countries in Europe, after the same happened a few years before in the USA.
- An alliance between extreme nationalist parties and what can be called the “tech oligarchy” has emerged: US tech giants are taking over an even larger share of the market, making Europe fully dependent on their technology, notably in key fields such as digital, AI or quantum.
- Moreover, these companies strengthen their hold on essential infrastructure and services: no smartphone apps work without their technology and almost all digital communication happens via US-controlled servers. The information ecosystem is completely concentrated in the hands of a few US platforms.
- Traditional European media have been bought out or marginalised. News and

content pass through filtering and moderation algorithms modelled on US geopolitical and commercial interests.

In this context, political regimes in Europe are focused on protecting the privileges of the political and economic elites, which have control over where financing and resources go.

In the late 2020s, the US appeased Russia by imposing major territorial losses on Ukraine to end the war, and the EU is not united enough to back up Ukraine. China is a global competitor to the US, and its government remains authoritarian. Therefore, by 2035, there is no democratic world power of significance. Europe's economy as well as its security are highly dependent on the US. Technology, including for defence, is imported from the US in exchange for an open market for other European products.

Also within this forecast, Europe cannot counter demographic decline through immigration due to mainstreamed anti-immigration policies, which also make it almost impossible for universities to attract global talent. This challenge is further aggravated by brain drain, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe, where many high-skilled graduates and researchers have moved abroad, weakening the domestic knowledge base. Also, national policies aimed at fostering higher birth rates have not helped

in catching up. AI and technology are used wherever possible to replace people, but without much care for human well-being. Human rights are restricted.

Meanwhile, climate change is accelerating as international climate goals were abolished some several years ago. This has led to a deepening agricultural crisis due to droughts and floods, but also a severe lack of people in rural areas. Social inequalities are rising. A privileged urban elite prospers, while many jobs have been replaced by AI and automation, forcing people into lower paid services jobs where there is demand.

In this forecast, universities are under pressure, albeit to different extents depending on their profile. While certain subject areas are in demand to deliver on the immediate needs of the regime, others have been abolished as unwanted critical reflection. Universities see their autonomy and academic freedom limited and under constant threat due to their instrumentalisation by the autocratic regime.

In addition, political and economic elites have taken over university leadership by appointing rectors or external members of boards. They continue to support universities, albeit under stricter control.



Generated using Adobe Firefly from the prompt: A man in a dark suit making a speech. He is guarded by two soldiers. Modern setting. Pop art style (Ben-Day dots), mostly in black and white. The general atmosphere of the picture: autocracy.

The academic community might be split, with parts focusing on those areas of technology most valued by the political and economic elite, very likely digital technologies and other STEM fields. On the other hand, the parts of the academic community where critical thinking about political, societal and economic issues is a core value might leave established academia and form an ‘invisible college’ or ‘guerilla university’ of decentralised and half-hidden communities. This might include fields such as climate science, which continues to work through informal structures. (In 2025, there are already signals that point in this direction, e.g. individual academics moving their cancelled courses online or outside universities, or saving data from public servers, where they risk being deleted.¹⁸)

There is also a conceivable third option, whereby another part of the academic community might, under pressure, conform to the regime’s demands to ideologise fields such as the social sciences and humanities, turning them into instruments that legitimise authoritarian narratives.

¹⁸ For protecting data, see [Protecting Science: TIB builds Dark Archive for arXiv](#) and for moving a course outside the university see [Columbia Canceled My Course on Race and Media. I’m Going to Teach It Anyway](#)

FORECAST: TECH OLIGARCHY UNDER US HEGEMONY



Political

European decline with the end of liberal democracy.

–

Extreme nationalist parties are in government in key countries.

–

Europe has become a vassal state of the US. The US has appeased Russia by imposing the end of the war on Ukraine.



Economic

The European economy is fully dependent on the US.



Societal

Demographic decline cannot be countered by immigration due to nationalist policies, but AI/technology replaces people wherever possible (e.g. health care sector).

–

Human rights are restricted.



Technological

Technology is imported from the US in exchange for an open market.



Environmental

Climate change is accelerated as international climate goals were abolished and a deepening agricultural crisis is ongoing.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

How did university leaders react to this forecast?

When presented with this future, many university leaders who participated in this project saw it as transitional and took a dual approach to this scenario. While trying to ensure the survival of their institution by focusing on those areas where universities can continue to meet immediate societal needs, they would also aspire to freedom and prosperity. Some university leaders that we interviewed envisioned that certain parts of the academic community would be part of a kind of underground resistance.

One of the main worries among university leaders when picturing this scenario was the lack of international cooperation and severe limits to mobility, both for academics and students. There was a general consensus that these limits would be very damaging to the overall quality of university activities. The same goes for public funding, which would largely be tied to universities following – or at least not openly going against – the regime.

However, almost all university leaders involved assumed that universities in this scenario would retain a base of academic and pluralistic values as far as possible. The strategies described were generally focused on protecting universities from outside control, while at the same time trying to ensure their survival as institutions.

2.3 FRAGMENTED SOCIETY

THE FORECAST

In this third forecast, we see a further fragmentation of societies and countries across Europe due to a lack of political and economic cohesion. Political institutions remain in place but are paralysed and too weak to govern, unable to take impactful decisions over the most pressing societal issues. Neither democratic nor extreme forces manage to stay in government for long and when they do, they lack the majorities to lead.

- Alternative models of local self-governance emerge, and people organise in cooperative and local communities around topics of daily concern such as child and elderly care, food production and energy supply, mobility and transport.
- Where governments cannot offer solutions, local volunteers step in. They, for example, provide public transport (in 2025 there are already signals of this¹⁹).
- There is a fragmentation of decision-making between politicians, big tech firms and these local communities. Public and traditional media lose influence, and every local community retreats into its own “information echo chamber”.

19 <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/frivillige-bag-rattet-borgere-koerer-selv-ny-busrute-paa-landet>

Universities and competitiveness

A big picture view on the EU's new policy paradigm and the implications for universities



Generated using Adobe Firefly from the prompt: A child is looking at a street with potholes. There is a storm cloud in the sky. Pop art style (Ben-Day dots), mostly in black and white. The general atmosphere of the picture: unstoppable climate change.

Generated using Adobe Firefly from the prompt: A group of people casually dressed is sitting in front of a house in the suburbs – they are talking. There is a computer in the background. Pop art style (Ben-Day dots), mostly in black and white. The general atmosphere of the picture: community.

In addition, public social security systems are too weak to cover the needs of people, public pensions are not sufficient, and many people have more than one job. Crypto currencies are on the rise while trust in government-backed money declines. Public education is focused on primary and secondary education, and public budgets are scarce.

In 2035, there are also big social inequalities. Those who can and have the socio-economic capital from their family and background invest in higher education and skills development. They are the “happy few”. They know how to use digital technologies and connect with people across the globe in online communities. Large parts of society rely on further education provided by companies and what is available on the market. Things are generally very volatile.

Climate change remains a great challenge, without much intervention or support beyond the local community when disaster strikes. There are local initiatives for resilience (cooperatives, local energy production, car sharing etc.), but nothing to combat the challenges at a global scale.

The difference between this forecast and the forecast describing a technological autocracy is that there is no hegemonic power that tries to monopolise knowledge or suppress certain types

FORECAST: FRAGMENTED SOCIETY



Political

Political institutions remain in place, but are too weak to govern.

–

Neither democratic, nor extreme forces have managed to remain in power.

–

Alternative modes of governance develop in parallel.

–

Decision-making is fragmented between politicians, big tech companies and local councils.



Economic

Crypto currencies flourish as a parallel system.

–

Alternative forms of working are common.

–

People rely on themselves to compensate for a lack of social security and pensions as the public system is too weak and reduced to a minimum.

–

Heightened volatility.



Societal

Many people focus on local forms of self-organisation and use digital technologies to connect globally with people with common interests.

–

Demographic decline in Europe continues.



Technological

Besides the big private providers from the US/China, alternative, open source etc. technologies flourish among those who have the skills/knowledge to use them.



Environmental

Climate change remains a huge challenge.

–

Local initiatives for resilience are developing (such as cooperatives for local energy production, car sharing).

of knowledge. It is rather the case that where there are resources and an interest in promoting academic knowledge or higher education-level training, academic communities are formed, although they are not particularly accessible.

In terms of governance and autonomy, these communities or institutions would be very different from the traditional university. There would be much less accountability towards the state, as the state is weak and probably not funding great parts of higher education. There would also be a strong element of cooperation, whereby power is distributed between different groups and institutions. This could also mean that priorities within these groups may change very quickly depending on who manages to dominate these networks.

THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

How did university leaders react to this forecast?

University leaders that we engaged with for this project had different perspectives on this forecast. While they all shared the concern about public funding for higher education and research in such a future, their ideas of the relatively small role universities could play ranged from serving the “happy few” as communities

of intellectual curiosity to being the major provider of research that big tech companies would not be able to produce themselves. Only a minority raised the question of whether universities would even continue to exist as institutions in this scenario.

The fundamental uncertainty inherent in this scenario, particularly when it came to imagining the future of academia (with or without universities) made it at times difficult to reach conclusions. What was clear, however, was the challenge of conceptualising higher education and research in a context without well-working state structures. This challenge arguably demonstrates just how dependent universities, as institutions, are on public structures and a functioning state.

In this scenario, access to academic learning and to the whole academic tradition is a difficult topic. University leaders involved in this project pointed out that universities (if they exist at all) will no longer be equalisers where learners can get access to knowledge. Instead, access would depend on a mix of social, cultural and financial capital where local communities have members that are active either as academics in those structures that exist or members of informal communities that keep the academic tradition alive.

Regarding the concern about funding, the challenge would be to find the sources that are different and much more diversified than today. This could be largely private funding from companies, but there could also conceivably be philanthropic funding. Private companies could, for instance, have higher education offers as an investment in the skills that they think they need.

2.4 A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT THE THREE FORECASTS

In each forecast, universities' role in and relationship with society is the changing element. In forecast 1 and 2, research, innovation and education are considered important by those in power, albeit for achieving two fundamentally different societal and political visions.

- In forecast 1, universities benefit from comparatively high autonomy in a democratic political system, although public funding is steered towards research and innovation in key technologies. They are seen as key contributors to Europe's competitiveness.
- In forecast 2, universities are perceived as important to control and used to support an autocratic regime.
- In forecast 3, universities lose their broad societal relevance. Without the support of a functioning state, the academic community shrinks in size and influence to serve just a limited number of people, who do not have much capacity to initiate broader societal progress due to a lack of cohesion.

While forecast 1, "Europe's resurrection", might be the most attractive future of the three for many in the European university community, it does also have drawbacks. Notably, these drawbacks come from the impact of longer-term trends that Europe has not managed to tackle alone, such as combatting climate change and labour market shortages caused by demographic decline. These are areas that require international cooperation as well as different internal policies in areas such as migration, integration, labour market and support for children and families.

It is important to note that, as with any forecast, none of these three are predictions. They have been developed based on drivers of change and signals identified in the present, then given different ways to play out in the future. These alternative futures are tools to inspire reflection and action in the present. As such, universities can strengthen their preparedness and resilience for an unknown future by focusing on what they can influence today.



Political dimension

Europe's resurrection

Focus on economic policies: investment in key technologies and attraction of international top talents, otherwise restrictive migration policies

–
Geopolitical Europe: Defence union and European army in a wider EU (Ukraine enlargement)

–
Nationalists become marginal.

Tech oligarchy under US hegemony

European decline with the end of liberal democracy.

–
Extreme nationalist parties are in government in key countries.

–
Europe has become a vassal state of the US. The US has appeased Russia by imposing the end of the war on Ukraine.

Fragmented society

Political institutions remain in place, but are too weak to govern.

–
Neither democratic, nor extreme forces have managed to remain in power.

–
Alternative modes of governance develop in parallel.

–
Decision-making is fragmented between politicians, big tech companies and local councils.



Societal dimension

Europe's resurrection

Demographic decline can only be partially countered.

–
Pro-active immigration policies have only been developed recently as previously conservative governments had adopted a hard line on migration.

Tech oligarchy under US hegemony

Demographic decline cannot be countered by migration due to nationalist policies, but AI/technology replaces people wherever possible (e.g. health care sector).

–
Human rights are restricted.

Fragmented society

Many people focus on local forms of self-organisation and use digital technologies to connect globally with people with common interests.

–
Demographic decline in Europe continues.



Economic dimension

Europe's resurrection

European economy flourishes again: private investments are increasing, but people have to work long hours due to labour shortages.

Tech oligarchy under US hegemony

The European economy is fully dependent on the US.

Fragmented society

Crypto currencies flourish as a parallel system.
–
Alternative forms of working are common.
–
People rely on themselves to compensate for a lack of social security and pensions as the public system is too weak and reduced to a minimum.
–
Heightened volatility.



Technological dimension

Europe's resurrection

Europe specialises in key technologies for sustainability.

Tech oligarchy under US hegemony

Technology is imported from the US in exchange for an open market.

Fragmented society

Besides the big private providers from the US/China, alternative, open source etc. technologies flourish among those who have the skills/knowledge to use them.



Environmental dimension

Europe's resurrection

Climate change remains a huge issue, but Europe is among the frontrunners for technological solutions.

Tech oligarchy under US hegemony

Climate change is accelerated as international climate goals have been abolished and a deepening agricultural crisis is ongoing.

Fragmented society

Climate change remains a huge challenge.
—
Local initiatives for resilience are developing (such as cooperatives for local energy production, car sharing).

3 Implications for universities today

These reflections about alternative futures may inform the choices universities have to make in the present. They may also help shed light on what is at stake when universities themselves within the EU's new competitiveness paradigm.

Throughout the workshops and interviews undertaken for this report, a very strong consensus emerged among the university leaders on the current competitiveness discourse at the EU level. However, the answers differed when it came to reflecting on universities' role within the new policy paradigm and more specifically in relation to the three forecasts.

Leaders reflected on the implications for universities from two different angles. Firstly, their role in society and their engagement with policies for competitiveness (external perspective). And secondly, the expected impact of these policies at the institutional level (internal perspective).

3.1 STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE COMPETITIVENESS PARADIGM

The external perspective focuses primarily on strategic positioning, how leaders want their university to be perceived outside the campus. In some cases, there is a wish for a more competitive higher education system, which is able to respond to the most urgent societal challenges. In this context, external communication is a tool for showing added value, securing societal support and, more broadly, defending the university's existence is considered very important. Here, external credibility creates trust, policies are evidence-based, and evidence-driven information drives societal debates.

When looking into the three forecasts, leaders acknowledged the pressure on the university to fulfil its mission of serving society. This concept of "serving society", as expressed in EUA's "Universities without walls", is based on the idea of open, pluralistic and democratic knowledge so-

cieties. However, in a future where these foundations are eroding or disappearing (such as in forecast 2 and 3), the relationship between universities, society and the political system will fundamentally change, impacting what universities can do and questioning the very idea of universities as we know them. When the latter is perceived to be under threat, leaders respond with a proactive approach, such as strategic recruitment, creating bridges with society, and efforts to reconnect with universities' values. Here, universities are not only seen as producers of knowledge, but also as trustworthy and resilient institutions. Part of this resilience building is the stronger engagement with values, both those fundamental to the academic community, such as academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as well as democratic values that serve as a moral anchor in society.

There are opportunities in the competitiveness paradigm, particularly in a context that is geopolitically and financially unstable. Some of these are connected to the identity of the individual university and its missions mentioned above.

For instance, accepting that defence plays a larger role in such a geopolitically unstable environment can help connect the university to the industries and investments that come with a big defence sector. Recognising a university as part of the “military-industrial complex” could be a way to safeguard basic research, making the strategic value of new knowledge clear.

Similar strategies for individual universities are possible by focusing on the sustainability agenda. The link between the university and industry would be fundamental discoveries for clean technologies in sectors related to the university's innovation ecosystem. There was general consensus among university leaders that only the interdisciplinary co-creation of technologies, with full awareness of societal, psychological, health and other implications, would lead to the desired outcomes. This was seen as an opportunity to build new types of partnerships with different actors from business to civil society.

Smaller, more specialised institutions might have an advantage, as they already have a focused profile. For other universities, and perhaps especially for large, comprehensive universities, focus and profiling would risk the loss of institutional identity. Here, the explicit contribution to competitiveness needs to be balanced with the question about what needs protection

within the university. Looking at the possible scenarios for the future, strengthening institutional resilience becomes key, which includes balance between responding to rising challenges and societal needs, while standing strong on university core values.

Some see an opportunity for universities to shape the future, also at the European level. Universities, while politically anchored in national or regional regulatory systems and funding frameworks, are a European asset. Through the unique European model of deep cooperation between institutions, often through the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe programmes – and particularly highlighted through the European Universities Initiative – universities can promote a European identity to staff and learners, and even foster further European integration, as they increasingly find the national context constraining. This push for integration could come through overcoming differences in national frameworks that hinder cooperation, typically issues regarding programme accreditation but also differences in reporting practices, data collection and regulations or rules concerning the language of instruction, for example.

3.2 THE CONDITIONS NEEDED FOR UNIVERSITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMPETITIVENESS AGENDA

Although the competitiveness agenda has been formulated by the EU institutions in Brussels, the challenge is recognised and shared by universities. In preparation of this report, university leaders' acknowledgement of the challenges that Europe faces was clear, both in terms of the today's context and the forecasts that were presented. During the interviews, there was also a broad readiness to actively engage because the broader goal was shared: universities want a strong, independent and sustainable Europe.

This alignment is a political opportunity. It allows universities to articulate their contribution on their own terms and according to their own values. It is important to move forward in a way that is true to the spirit and identity of universities.

Where universities become active partners for competitiveness, there needs to be respect for the academic tradition. It is not always the case that everything produced by a university is immediately ready for use, and academic reflection is a value in itself.

This being said, universities will become full partners in Europe's competitiveness and sustainable prosperity with the right framework conditions. These framework conditions include fundamental principles that EUA has long advocated for, and that now prove to be ever more relevant.

These include institutional autonomy, which universities need to create a distinct profile and prioritise their activities in ways that fit their identity and the ecosystems they contribute to. Following the methodology of the EUA Autonomy Scorecard, this means the ability to take decisions in key areas, for example:

- Universities need to manage their organisation and their governance models. Here, the ability to create legal entities has proven particularly important for the innovation mission.²⁰
- Universities need financial autonomy for long-term planning and to set priorities, not least for managing their infrastructure.
- Staffing autonomy is important for hiring professional staff in management and to support academic activities.
- And academic autonomy is important for

creating study programmes that speak to common challenges, including interdisciplinary and joint programmes.

In general, autonomy is central to engaging in partnerships for competitiveness at different levels, and universities are best placed to choose their partners. Universities are aware of their potential and the specific role that they can play, depending on their profile. Some will be working close to applied solutions, while some will have established long-term cooperation with industry, and some will engage in social innovation. All need the space and resources to play their role. Funding, at European and national levels, needs to be sufficient, sustainable and accessible for universities with different profiles.

Being partners for competitiveness also requires external communication. Universities must be clear about the role they intend to play and engage in dialogue with the relevant stakeholders in governments (national or regional) and partners in industry and civil society. Their message should also make clear that they come with their own agenda and identity. Universities will not become mere knowledge and skills machines aimed at economic gain, nor will they

give up their cultural role and belief in knowledge for its own sake. Economic growth and academic values are not mutually exclusive. In fact, delivering knowledge, research and innovation for competitiveness requires time, resources and space for serendipity, which is at the heart of what universities do.

In this vein, facilitating interdisciplinary research and learning is crucial for competitiveness. Challenges that are by nature complex and ambiguous do not lend themselves to be addressed by just one discipline, or even within one faculty. There needs to be cooperation from many traditions of knowledge, including full involvement of the social sciences, arts and humanities.

Complex problems are different to complicated problems. Complicated problems can be solved by experts that understand all the different parts and how they work together. Complex problems have elements that work together in non-linear and ambiguous ways, for example, the economic, social, cultural and health-related elements of demographic decline.

Here, the social sciences, arts and humanities must be included in the academic approach to

20 Bennetot Pruvot, E., T. Estermann & N. Popkhadze (2023), [University Autonomy in Europe IV: The Scorecard 2023](#), EUA, p. 24

understanding the issue at hand. An academic approach to demographics that excludes results and ideas from gender studies will, for instance, not get very far in understanding contemporary families, nor will an approach without biochemistry that looks at environmental factors for fertility. There needs to be funding for these broad approaches, moving away from looking at individual skills or individual disciplines alone as problem-solvers (such as an exclusive focus on STEM). These approaches also clearly need appropriate career assessment that values interdisciplinary work, which is less visible in discipline-based high-ranked journals. Also, academic links to society need to be valued in academic careers.²¹

One key framework condition is international openness. When discussing rather grim futures such as the authoritarian systems in forecast 2, university leaders highlighted the lack of access to international talent as being especially damaging to the functioning of universities. Research and higher education need to be part of international flows of knowledge, where discussions and new ideas flow freely across borders. Universities will have difficulties working in any future Europe that relies exclusively on its own knowledge, or only shares it with a restricted

circle of like-minded or friendly countries. This does not mean abandoning safeguards to the sharing of knowledge – stepping up knowledge security is a logical consequence of conflictual geopolitics – but openness must remain the default option.

As the European institutions embark on new legislation for higher education, research and innovation, as well as a long-term budget focused on competitiveness, several topics should be on the table and discussed together with university sector representatives:

KEY CONDITIONS

- Universities need an adequate level of institutional autonomy to take decisions in key areas such as organisational, staffing, academic and financial matters.
- Sufficient and sustainable core public funding at European and national level is needed to ensure that universities can deliver on all their missions and across subject areas.
- European funding focused on competitiveness must be accessible, flexible and manageable for universities, and take account of different practices within institutions.
- Interdisciplinarity needs to be facilitated at European as well as at system and institutional level.
- International openness must remain the default, while stepping up necessary knowledge security.

21 See EUA (2025), [Key principles for attractive and sustainable academic careers](#), EUA and the [commitments of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#)

3.3 EMBRACING THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

In the workshops and interviews that informed this report, university leaders also thought about the impact that the competitiveness paradigm and alternative futures would have inside universities and their communities. Here, values, traditions and internal community dynamics come to the fore. Also, the question about the core identity of a university becomes relevant, and to what extent this exists or can exist independently of societal and political circumstances. In this perspective, the emphasis is on tradition and continuity, rather than reactivity to external developments.

Many university leaders saw a particular responsibility in focusing on trust-building within the academic community through internal communication and space for open debate on critical issues. As leaders, they need to effectively work both internally as well as externally to position their institution for the future, and this often means working towards reconciling different perspectives.

Looking at universities as communities of people, what is important for building that resilience from within is to foster trust and a sense of belonging. For university leaders, emotional intelligence and relational skills as well as the

capacity for self-regulation (especially when it comes to taking decisions in a VUCA world that sometimes requires quick decisions, but also calm reflection) become important in navigating through uncertain times.

Furthermore, almost all leaders involved expressed a sense of optimism, while being well aware of the challenges, risks and dangers. They all showed confidence in universities' capacity to navigate challenges as a community. This sense of optimism is key to dealing with challenges proactively, focusing on what can be done, and then acting. As such, values grounded in the universities' mission and purpose are becoming an important compass for decision-making. In times when things change quickly, plans are overtaken by the next crisis and often time to develop complex strategies is lacking. Here, values are key – how they are lived eventually defines what a university is and whom it serves.

Outlook: navigating universities in times of uncertainty

European policies may sometimes appear far away from universities' daily reality.

However, political shifts, such as a move towards a renewed focus on competitiveness, have long-term consequences for universities. This starts with how much future EU funding will be available for research, innovation and higher education. As funding frameworks and priorities will all be framed under this overarching policy paradigm, there is also the question of how universities will be able to access that funding.

However, as this report shows, the questions at hand go much deeper than the financial implications – they go to the heart of what a university is, seen internally and externally, by society and policy makers. The “competitiveness paradigm” must be considered in the much larger context of an increasingly Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous world.

The key questions in dealing with this are:

- How can universities build resilience both as communities and as institutions when engaging with the outside (policy makers and society) as well as the academic community from within?
- How can universities anticipate, prepare for, respond and adapt to both expected and unexpected changes and disruptions?
- What will enable them to survive, recover or even thrive in a volatile environment?

Eventually these questions have to be answered by each university in its specific context. The following questions for reflection might help in guiding these reflections:

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES

- What is our purpose/mission (independently of the external circumstances)? How do we make sure to create knowledge and not just deliver skills and research outcomes expected from external entities?
- What are our core values? Not just those that we proclaim in papers, but those that are non-negotiable, that define our community at its best and that we use as a compass to make hard decisions.
- What are the opportunities and risks of focusing on competitiveness for our university and its specific profile?
- Which areas of our activities are particularly impacted by this focus on competitiveness (both in the positive and in the negative sense)?
- What are the external developments that will have an impact on how we pursue our mission in the short-, mid- and long-term? What is the impact of plausible alternative futures concretely on our university?
- What are the needs of our community/ institution to continue to fulfil our mission in a rapidly changing environment (VUCA world)?
- What do we need to change (who, when...) to continue to fulfil our mission in the short, medium and long term?
- What can we change? Who can change what and when?
- Whom can we empower (internally) and with whom can we engage (externally) to enhance the resilience and the competitiveness of our university and the system as a whole?



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