

European University Association (EUA): Main initiatives, events and publications in Summer 2020

1. Autonomy
2. Learning and Teaching
3. Quality assurance
4. Internationalisation
5. Inclusiveness
6. University finances & EU funding
7. Research & Innovation
8. Doctoral Education

1. Autonomy & governance

University mergers

EUA is currently feeding in further work into its upcoming report on the experience of merged higher education institutions, based on a series of interviews conducted in 2019. The release is scheduled for the second semester 2020.

TRUNAK project

The TRUNAK project (2017-20, Erasmus+) seeks to enhance university autonomy in Kazakhstan. It seeks to develop both the management and governance of Kazakh universities, as well as the capacities of national authorities to modernise their higher education systems by supporting the definition, implementation and monitoring of reform policies. As part of the project, EUA supported the Kazakh partners in conducting a state-of-play and needs analysis on the basis of EUA's University Autonomy Scorecard methodology, which paved the way for the development of an adequate model of university autonomy in Kazakhstan.

2. Learning and Teaching

EUA Learning and Teaching Activities

EUA has initiated a new round of [Learning & Teaching Thematic Peer Groups](#), which will meet several times throughout 2020 to discuss topics concerning environmental sustainability of learning and teaching; meeting employability and skills demands; and approaches in learning and teaching to ensuring equity and inclusion. As in the previous years, there will be reports summarising the work of the groups, including recommendations brought forward by them. The work of these groups will also feed in to the programme of the next [European Learning & Teaching Forum](#), scheduled for 18-19 February 2021. A call for contributions is scheduled to be launched in the summer.

Covid-19 Crisis

EUA has been closely following the ways in which learning and teaching have been affected across European higher education institutions since the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic. For example, EUA has encouraged its members to share its experiences on Twitter via the hashtag #universitiesathome. Furthermore, EUA is gathering information on how covid-19 has been impacting the situation of international and domestic students in European HEIs as well as documenting HEIs' efforts to respond to the crisis by conducting research and volunteering help to society. It has also been monitoring national responses towards the covid-19 crisis by gathering information on the following questions: challenges, closures, autumn and summer semesters, examinations, fees and recognition, autonomy, research and ministries/national agencies.

DIGI-HE

In January, EUA started the project- DIGI-HE (Erasmus+ KA3). The project aims to develop a self-reflection tool that will help European higher education institutions to enhance their strategic approaches for digitalisation. This project also comes very timely in the context of the covid19 crisis, when universities across Europe massively switched to remote teaching. The project consortium consists of EUA (coordinator) Dublin City University (DCU); Duale Hochschule Baden-Württemberg (DHBW); Jyväskylä University (JYU); and Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). Associate partners are the European Distance and E-learning Network (EDEN); the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE), and Irish Universities Association (IUA). DIGI HE is currently conducting a survey on digitally enhanced capacity at European higher education institutions, with a report expected to be issued in autumn 2020.

LOTUS

In September, EUA will start a new project, "Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities" (LOTUS) (EHEA call, 2019). The project aims to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for L&T at HEIs, and to demonstrate the potential of various actors (ministries, university associations, student and staff unions, national L&T organisations) to support transformation and innovation in L&T. The project consortium consists of the European University Association (EUA – coordinator), the Irish Universities Association (IUA), Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU), the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, the European Students' Union (ESU), European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).

MICROBOL

"Microcredentials linked to the Bologna Process Key Commitments" (Microbol) project aims for ministries and stakeholders to explore, within the Bologna Process, whether and how the existing Bologna tools can be used for or adapted to micro-credentials. The two-year project is co-funded by Erasmus+ KA3 Support to Policy reform, and, more specifically "Support to the implementation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) reforms". It is linked to the objectives of the new Erasmus+ Programme and the EHEA to increase access to continuous learning for all learners, regardless of age or experience. The project consortium consists of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training (coordinator), European University Association (EUA), the Ministry of Education and Culture from Finland, CIMEA from Italy, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

3. Quality assurance

European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)

The [2020 EQAF](#) will be organised in the form of online sessions on 12 – 13 November. This annual event is co-organised by the E4 group (ENQA, ESU, EURASHE and EUA) and the theme of the 2020 Forum is “Flexible higher education: implications for QA” and will explore whether quality assurance is fit for the flexible and dynamic environment of higher education and how it could better support higher education institutions in becoming more flexible and encourage them make the most of it. A revised call for the online Forum has been published and the deadline for submission is 27 July.

Further details about the programme and registration information will be available on the [event website](#) in early September.

4. Internationalisation

EUA supports the internationalisation of its members through conferences and projects. At the same time, it engages in international dialogue, in particular with sister organisations around the world. Over the last decade, internationalisation has emerged as an issue of high importance for universities. This has generated a network of international partners that continue to convene and collaborate in different settings and on different issues. Some examples of this are:

Centralised Support for Higher Education Reform Experts (SPHERE II)

The University of Barcelona (coordinator) and EUA currently comprise the consortium SPHERE II (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts), an initiative funded by the European Commission. SPHERE II provides training and networking for Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) and National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs) in European neighbourhood countries (former Tempus countries) between January 2015 and December 2020. More information, as well as the list of upcoming events, can be found [here](#). In 2019, the SPHERE consortium conducted a [study](#) on the mobility of disadvantaged students from Partner Countries, under the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility.

Development of the Internationalisation of PhD Studies in South-Africa (Yebo!)

The [Yebo! project](#) (2017-20, Erasmus+) is focused on developing the internationalisation of doctoral education in South African universities. It will develop a web-based portal and organising thematic conferences and training sessions. The project builds on the FRINDOC framework for international doctoral education developed by EUA. Five European and seven South African higher education institutions together with EUA, the Coimbra Group and the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development are involved in the project. The University of Montpellier is the project coordinator. From 10-13 March 2020, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and the University of Western Cape hosted the last YEBO! training, entitled “Strengthen research visibility and capacity of doctoral candidates”. More information about this activity and the upcoming ones can be found [here](#).

Participation to the Asia-Europe Meeting Standing Working Group and Expert Group on Digitalisation

As part of its commitment in inter-regional dialogues on higher education, EUA takes part in the ASEM Standing Working Group working on the proposal of a vision and strategy 2030 for the ASEM Education Process, as well as in the ASEM Expert Group on digitalisation. The first meeting of these two groups started in December 2019, and the work will continue throughout 2020 and 2021. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

SPOT

The 'Spotlight on recognition' project was approved for funding under a recent Erasmus+ call in early 2020. The project aims to support university staff and enhance their capacities in terms of academic recognition procedures compliant with the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) by providing a single, dedicated space gathering documents, tools and online resources that are relevant to the implementation of a daily LRC-compliant recognition practice; by developing a sustainable, formative and easily applicable self-assessment methodology for institutional recognition practices; and by creating a recognition community-of-practice open to higher education staff and other professionals involved with academic recognition through a set of transnational peer-learning, information dissemination and training activities of various formats. The project consortium will commence its work in the summer.

EUA position and survey on international strategic institutional partnerships and the European Universities Initiative.

In early 2020, EUA conducted a survey on international strategic institutional partnerships and the European Universities Initiative that gathered responses from 219 higher education institutions from 34 systems across Europe.

[The results](#) provide a broad view on international collaborations as well as first insights into the perceptions and experiences of higher education institutions in the European Universities Initiative. Notably, the survey report outlines the sector's views and demands for the future development of the initiative. It is accompanied by an [EUA position that draws from the survey results](#), calling on the European Commission, the EU Member States in Council and the European Parliament to consider seven points for the future development of the initiative.

The survey report comes at a crucial moment as decisions are being taken on future EU funding programmes, amid the current coronavirus crisis.

5. Inclusiveness

Refugees Welcome Map

In late 2015 EUA has launched the [Refugees Welcome Map](#) campaign, to showcase the commitment of the higher education sector in welcoming refugees. The interactive tool so far has gathered around 300 initiatives that focus on the integration of refugees through a number of concrete activities, such as bridging and language courses, community outreach and research, the adaptation of recognition procedures and scholarships for refugees.

InSPIREurope project

EUA participates in the [InSPIREurope project](#), a Europe-wide initiative that aims to support researchers threatened with discrimination, persecution, suffering or violence. The InSPIREurope project will forge a coordinated, cross-sectoral, Europe-wide alliance in support of researchers at risk and facilitate transnational cooperation between European and national initiatives and programmes. Funded under the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, the project brings together a diverse set of partners under the leadership of Scholars at Risk Europe, based at Maynooth University in Ireland. The project runs from 1 September 2019 until 31 August 2022.

Biannual mailing on refugee inclusion

To continue the collaboration and synergies from ongoing initiatives such as the Refugees Welcome Map and the previously completed [inHERE project](#) (Higher Education Supporting Refugees in Europe), EUA prepares a biannual newsletter (in spring and autumn) on the integration of refugees into European higher education.

This newsletter features updates from higher education projects and initiatives on the theme, as well as relevant publications, event announcements, policy news and funding opportunities. Readers are encouraged to use a [dedicated webform](#) to submit news stories from their own projects, event invitations and new publications on the theme. Subscriptions to the mailing are possible via <http://bit.ly/SubscribeEUANewsletters>

REIs2 project – Refugee Education Initiatives

The Erasmus+ [Refugee Education Initiatives \(REIs\)](#) consortium addresses inequality in access to higher education and does so through three types of activity, all centred on fostering inclusion of people of refugee status or who are forced migrants into European higher education institutions:

- Education programs designed to develop academic and language skills to prepare students for university entry
- Admissions policies and criteria as they apply to people of refugee status and asylum seekers, with a particular emphasis on how previous qualifications and learning are assessed
- Development of shared learning on inclusive pedagogic and administrative practices to foster inclusion, which would benefit not only refugees, but also other under-served people.

The consortium is currently working on producing a handbook of best practices in recognising refugee qualifications.

INVITED project

The [INVITED project](#) on “Strategies towards Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Universities” jointly conducted by EUA and the European University Continuing Education Network (eucen) and supported by ESU finished in March 2020 with an event in Brussels. The event brought together representatives from universities, national ministries and the European Commission to discuss the results of the project, the [survey and interviews with data from 159 higher education institutions from 36 European systems](#) about the state of play, the challenges, success factors and needs for further support of higher education institutions engaging in the topic. Discussions were structured around three panels, one focused on inclusiveness in learning and teaching, one on research and innovation and one on policy aspects at national system levels and European level.

The aim of the INVITED project was to support universities in developing and strategies towards equity, diversity and inclusion of students and staff from underrepresented, disadvantaged or vulnerable backgrounds. It also sought to promote dialogue between stakeholders at the system level

in order to ensure that regulatory and funding frameworks empower universities to fulfil their social responsibility. The project outcomes were also fed into the Bologna Process, notably through the Advisory Group 1 on the social dimension of higher education, where it informed the development of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA.

UNIdiVERSITY project

EUA participates in the [UNIdiVERSITY](#) project (Socially responsible university for inclusive societies in the era of migration), led by La Sapienza University, in collaboration with University of Barcelona and UNIMED. The two year project builds on the work of the [inHERE project](#) (Higher Education Supporting Refugees in Europe), continuing to foster the exchange of knowledge and practices of welcoming students with a refugee background, yet with a new focus on how these activities are embedded in the institutions overall work and strategies on inclusion and diversity. The project runs from December 2019- November 2021. Associate partners are the IOM (International Organization for Migration) and Campus France.

EUA Annual Conference (16-17 April 2020)

The 2020 EUA Annual Conference under the theme “Universities building a better Europe” was cancelled to help contain the spread of Covid-19, but a series of webinars based on selected conference sessions was organised. Recordings of the webinars [are available online](#).

6. University finances & EU funding

EUA Briefing “The impact of the Covid-19 crisis on university funding in Europe. Lessons learnt from the 2008 global financial crisis”

In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, and its expected economic impact, EUA published a [briefing](#) to explore the possible implications for university funding in Europe in the short to medium term. Based on a wealth of data collected under the EUA Public Funding Observatory over more than a decade, this EUA briefing focuses on lessons learnt from the 2008 global financial crisis. It analyses the pitfalls of past policy and institutional responses to the global financial crisis, which proved to be ineffective or even risky in the longer term. The EUA briefing presents a series of recommendations on how to avoid repeating mistakes and how to move ahead at a stage in which policymakers and institutional leaders are searching for solutions to the economic recession expected to be triggered by the Covid-19 crisis.

2020 EUA Funding Forum (21-22 September 2020)

In view of the Covid-19 situation and related travel restrictions, the [2020 Funding Forum will be held online](#). The fifth edition of the Forum will explore models for *driving and funding institutional transformation in universities*. The event will also provide a space for structured dialogue and exchange of experience to enrich the perspectives of both institutional leaders and policymakers engaged in funding reforms and more broadly in change management. Day 1 will feature a Leadership roundtable and a series of breakout sessions dedicated to various aspects of crisis management and university’s response to the Covid-19 challenge. Day 2 will be dedicated to a dialogue with national and European policy makers on university funding in times of crisis and the future of research and education in Europe. The programme will be published online in late June and the registration will be open before the summer break.

Next generation of EU funding programmes

EUA's work on Horizon Europe and on the future Erasmus programme is included in its broader campaign '[EU funding for universities](#)'. EUA continued to monitor the Multiannual Financial Framework developments during Spring and advocate for adequate funding levels. As the Commission published a new proposal on 27 May, [EUA called](#) on member states to be ambitious and support long-term recovery through a higher commitment to research, innovation and education.

In parallel, EUA continued to promote its Simplification agenda for the European Funding programmes, including an efficient and effective Model Grant Agreement, on the basis of the [position](#) released in December 2019. EUA coordinated its efforts with other umbrella organisations in Brussels on several specific issues such as ways to calculate personnel costs.

Synergies

Building synergies between education, research and innovation and the related EU and national funding programmes is another important element of EUA's work. With its policy input paper "[Building synergies between education, research and innovation by aligning the EU funding programmes](#)" released in February 2020, EUA contributes to the ongoing debate on synergies and complementarities with a focus on the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Erasmus+, European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and funding programmes at the national level.

7. Research & Innovation

EUA proposals for the next framework programme for research and innovation (Horizon Europe)

As a key stakeholder, EUA has been closely following the developments of Horizon Europe since 2016. Its views and recommendations, supported by the EUA Research Policy Working Group chaired by Prof. Paul Boyle, are detailed in position papers, including on the Horizon 2020 mid-term review, the European Commission's proposal for Horizon Europe, the design of the European Research Council (ERC) and of mission-oriented research. Following the conclusion of the trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, Council, and Commission in spring 2019, EUA expressed a positive reaction to the agreement on Horizon Europe in a [new statement](#). It subsequently participated in the co-design of the framework programme by providing input to several rounds of online consultations, which led to the finalisation of an implementation strategy for Horizon Europe in April 2020. EUA welcomed the European Commission's work to mainstream Open Science in the next framework programme and is willing to contribute to the management of a smooth transition to Open Science. In a letter to Kostas Glinos, Head of Unit Open Science at DG RTD, the Association expressed its main views on several open questions about Open Science in Horizon Europe, namely Open Access to publications, research data management, the implementation of mainstreaming Open Science in project proposals, and the need for supportive measures to build capacity and infrastructure for the transition to Open Science.

The future of the European Research Area (ERA)

As the ERA is about to celebrate 20 years of its implementation, an ERAC ad hoc Working Group has been mandated to advise the European Research Area and Innovation Committee (ERAC) on options for a new narrative/paradigm on the future of the ERA and possible future ERA priorities, with a view to preparing a Communication from the European Commission. This resulted in the ERAC Opinion adopted on 17 December 2019.

As one of the initial members of the ERA Stakeholder Platform, EUA provided input to the deliberations of the ad hoc Working Group and several concerns and needs for a better ERA have been taken onboard by the ERAC Opinion, which explicitly acknowledges the Association's research and innovation priorities (e.g. Open Science, career assessment) as part of the new narrative. The Association published [its position](#) on the final ERAC Opinion on 5 March 2020.

Related to the discussion on the future of the ERA, the "Opinion on future Open Science and Open Innovation priorities in the European Research Area (2020-2030)" was adopted on 1 April 2020 by ERAC and will feed into a planned revision of the "The European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers". The EUA Secretariat has reached out to the people in charge of this revision, i.e. Marc Vanholsbeeck, Chair of the ERAC Standing Working Group on Open Science and Innovation and Cecilia Cabello Valdés, Chair of the ERAC Standing Working Group on Human Resources and Mobility, and discussed with them a role for EUA in the revision process. A joint task force will be set up within ERAC to guide this process and is keen on consulting with EUA and other stakeholders.

Open Access/Open Science

As one of the leading actors in the transition to Open Science, EUA is developing a comprehensive approach to this paradigmatic shift, with the support of the Expert Group on Science 2.0/Open Science, chaired by Prof. Jean-Pierre Finance. By carrying out regular university surveys and commissioning studies, EUA has built a shared knowledge base on the most pressing implications of Open Science, as Open Access policies for research publications and data, the financial cost of access to scholarly publications (Big Deals), research/career assessment practices, innovative publishing practices (such as Read and Publish agreements) and other key Open Science issues, as open science skills and education or citizen science.

EUA has been [supporting 'Plan S' since its inception](#) in September 2018. Plan S is an ambitious plan by research funding organisations to accelerate the transition towards Open Access by 2020. EUA provided further input to the 'Implementation Guidance' of Plan S in [February](#) and [June](#) 2019.

The fourth edition of the [EUA Open Access Survey Report](#) (published in April 2019) tracks European universities' progress towards Open Access by looking at the degree to which they have implemented institutional policies and practices in the field. This survey focuses on Open Access to research publications, research data management and the openness of research data.

Another focus area are negotiations of large-scale contracts for scientific publications with publishers. Work in this area is led by the EUA High-Level Group on 'Big Deals' since 2016. The [2019 EUA Big Deals Survey Report](#) published in May provided an updated mapping of major scholarly publishing contracts in Europe. This contributes to reframing the debate on the costs of the scholarly publishing system.

A [follow-up report](#) published in October 2019 helps decrypting the Big Deal landscape. It combines country-level publication numbers with country-level Big Deal expenditures, in a comparative analysis of 26 European countries. It aims to support universities and consortia with better market insights and comparative data to make the transition to Open Access publishing (cf Plan S) financially sustainable, in particular in negotiations with large scholarly publishers.

To further support the work of the negotiating consortia, EUA, together with 26 NRCs and consortia commissioned a [study on future scenarios and implications of so-called read-and-publish agreements](#) with scholarly publishers. The study is currently being carried out by Technopolis Group (Amsterdam, NL) and results are expected in June 2020.

EUA is also core partner of the project '[Fostering a FAIR research culture in Europe](#)' (FAIRsFAIR) since March 2019. FAIRsFAIR aims to supply practical solutions for the use of the FAIR principles for research data. Emphasis is on fostering FAIR data culture and the uptake of good practices in making data FAIR. EUA's role in the project is to provide evidence-based support to universities in following the FAIR principles in their research and teaching activities. For this purpose EUA has implemented a university survey (results available [here](#)) and organised two Focus Groups at the University Carlos III of Madrid (30 Oct 2019) and University of Amsterdam (19 Nov 2019), respectively. The next outputs under lead of EUA are a competence framework for FAIR data skills, as well as a report analysing existing training and competence frameworks for research data management.

Closely related, EUA has been co-chairing the [Working Group on Skills & Training](#) of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) since January 2020. The Working Group has a mandate until December 2020 and aims to provide a framework for a sustainable training infrastructure to support EOSC in all its phases and ensure its uptake, addressing digital skills and capabilities of researchers and research performing organisations.

EUA has been invited to join the UNESCO Open Science Partnership and the process towards the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science. Following the Association's participation in [UNESCO's global online consultation on Open Science](#) for developing the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science and an exchange of ideas with UNESCO staff members, it has been agreed that EUA will be involved in some of the thematic and regional consultations in 2020 to discuss the outcomes of the online consultation.

Academic career assessment

EUA activities and events on academic career assessment in the transition to Open Science follow the '[EUA Roadmap on Research Assessment in the Transition to Open Science](#)'. This roadmap commits the Association "[...] to raise awareness and support institutions in the development of research assessment approaches that focus on research quality, potential and future impact, and that take into account Open Science practices."

Firstly, EUA has gathered and shared information on this issue in '[Reflections on University Research Assessment. Key concepts, issues and actors](#)', a briefing published in April 2019, and '[Research Assessment in the Transition to Open Science. 2019 EUA Open Science and Access Survey Results](#)', a survey report published in October 2019. Both have been widely disseminated, including in the press, and have become a central part of the discussion on this issue. The survey data is [available](#) on the Open Access repository Zenodo. Country reports with national-level results are being prepared and will be sent to the National Rectors' Conferences.

The survey report provides a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the current state of research assessment at European universities. Based on the findings, EUA recommends:

- Expanding the range of academic activities that are being incentivised and rewarded by universities and move to a less limited set of evaluation practices.

- A broad dialogue between universities and other actors, acknowledging that reviewing research assessment is a shared responsibility and requires a concerted approach.

Secondly, EUA started a dialogue between universities and other actors by organising a [workshop on career assessment on 14 May 2019 in Brussels, Belgium](#) and signing a [joint statement with Science Europe](#), an association of public research performing and research funding organisations, in May 2019. EUA also co-organised with the Dutch National Rectors' Conference (VSNU) a [conference on recognition and rewards systems for academics](#) in Rotterdam, the Netherlands on 15 November 2019. This dialogue has continued to expand with a [workshop on early-stage research careers](#) in Tbilisi, Georgia on 23-24 January 2020 and a [webinar series](#) in collaboration with the Norwegian National Rectors' Conference (UHR) on academic career assessment from Monday, 18 May 2020 to Wednesday, 20 May. Pre-recorded presentations and webinar recordings are available on the ["Academic Career Assessment" playlist](#). A webinar co-organised with the Spanish and Portuguese National Rectors' Conferences is being prepared for early July 2020, further connecting the work of EUA to national-level developments.

Innovation Ecosystems

EUA has given a lot of attention to the role of universities in smart specialisation in the past four years but has recently also taken a broader interest in their contribution to regional innovation ecosystems in general. In 2019, the activities of the new Expert Group on Innovation Ecosystems have built upon EUA's expertise gathered through the [Innovation Ecosystems project](#).

To set the scene for its focus on these new topics, EUA organised a conference on [Universities as drivers of European innovation ecosystems](#), hosted by the European Committee of the Regions on 6 November in Brussels.

This was followed in early 2020 by a teleconference of the Expert Group and by a [webinar](#) on European digital policies, offering universities an overview of how they can benefit from the EU's digital agenda. In addition, an [online Focus Group](#) on Student Entrepreneurship will be offered on June 18. The half-day event is aimed at university leaders with experience in developing and implementing strategies to strengthen the university's innovation mission who would like to share their experience with European colleagues.

Finally, EUA is developing a comprehensive response to the European Commission's Industrial and Digital Strategies (expected in June). It will outline the contribution from universities to these strategies in the areas of curiosity-based research, innovation ecosystems, data and skills and education.

The EUA Energy and Environment Platform (EUA-EPUE)

The EUA Energy and Environment Platform (EUA-EPUE), guided by its *Ad hoc* Steering Committee chaired by [Dr Douglas Halliday](#) (Durham University), serves as the voice of universities in EU energy and environment policy since 2008. In June 2020, EUA submitted a response to the European Commission's consultation on the European Climate Pact, one of the many initiatives planned under the Green Deal. EUA's input was based on the expertise of the EUA-EPUE and the advice of Dr Douglas Halliday.

8. Doctoral Education

Development of the Internationalisation of PhD Studies in South-Africa (Yebo!)

Please see “Internationalisation”

EUA-CDE online sessions: Doctoral education and the coronavirus crisis (3-12 June 2020)

To discuss the impact of the current crisis on doctoral education and the functioning of doctoral schools and similar structures, EUA-CDE has invited its members to share their good practices and reflections on Twitter via the hashtag #DocEdtogthr.

The EUA-CDE Secretariat is also organising online discussions within the community **on the following topics:**

- Online assessment and doctoral dissertation defence
- Online skills training
- Supporting doctoral candidates’ mental health and wellbeing
- The effect on collaborations and funding of doctoral education

The aim of this activity is to provide our members with the possibility to share their experiences with regard to the four proposed topics, explore possible solutions to the current challenges and reflect on the future implications for doctoral education. A detailed description of these online sessions can be found [here](#).

EUA-CDE Annual Meeting (25-30 June 2020)

In the light of the current coronavirus crisis, the 2020 EUA-CDE Annual Meeting, originally scheduled to be held at the University of Manchester, was cancelled. In replacement to the onsite event, EUA-CDE will organise a series of online sessions and a public webinar, focusing on the original theme: The role of doctoral education within Europe’s universities.

On 25 June, EUA-CDE will host a webinar entitled “Disciplines and interdisciplinarity in doctoral education”. This webinar will focus on the role that single subject fields and interdisciplinary play in doctoral education today, a topic that is now more important than ever, as the Covid-19 crisis has shown the importance of collaboration between different scientific fields. This online activity is open to anyone with an interest in doctoral education.

Additionally, EUA-CDE will organise several online sessions between 26-30 June featuring the contributions received from the EUA-CDE members for the original 2020 Annual Meeting. These will be presented and discussed among the [EUA-CDE community](#). The online sessions will discuss issues such as the participation of early-career researchers in the development of policies in doctoral schools, various aspects of the role of doctoral schools within universities and how doctoral education serves in building the institutional profile. More details about these activities and on how to register can be found [here](#). Further questions can be directed to info@eua-cde.org.

EUA-CDE Thematic Peer Group on “Career Development and Tracking”

In the course of 2019, a group of 15 Universities came together to discuss the issue of career tracking and how career tracking can support career development of doctoral candidates. During several meetings they shared knowledge about institutional practices and national tracking systems and developed a classification of different approaches to career tracking of early career researchers. Some

preliminary results have been presented to the EUA-CDE community during the 2020 EUA-CDE Thematic Workshop in Tbilisi, January 2020. A final report will be published in summer 2020.

EUA-CDE Thematic Peer Group on “Co-tutelles and Joint Doctorates”

Co-tutelles de thèse have become quite popular among doctorate-awarding institutions in Europe. Aware of the opportunities that these agreements offer to doctoral candidates to acquire international training and skills, many universities have included joint doctorates as a component of their doctoral education structures. In response to this growing trend, EUA-CDE is currently establishing the second Thematic Peer Group (TPG) on “Co-tutelles and Joint Doctorates”. Representatives from 25 European universities have been selected to participate to the second Thematic Peer Group following a call for participation among EUA-CDE members. This working group will be chaired by Professor Laurinda Leite, Vice-Rector of the University of Minho and the first meeting is expected to take place in November in Murcia, Spain. The main aim of this working group will be to analyse the different approaches that have been applied in Europe in this area and to collect innovative practices and alternative forms of collaboration. This TPG will also address the main challenging issues associated with such agreements and how institutions can cope with them. A final report will be available in Summer 2021.