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European University Association (EUA):

Main initiatives, events and publications in spring 2018

1. Autonomy

Autonomy Scorecard update release

At its Annual Conference in Bergen, on 6-7 April 2017, EUA presented the state of play on university autonomy in Europe, with the launch of its newly updated Autonomy Scorecard. The Scorecard online tool can be consulted [here](#). The [extensive study](#), published in June 2017, profiles and scores 29 higher education systems, and is complemented by a series of [country profiles](#). In 2017 and in 2018, the updated Scorecard continues to support national-level discussions on autonomy reforms in various European higher education systems.

TRUNAK project: university autonomy in Kazakhstan

The Autonomy Scorecard methodology also supports the implementation of the Erasmus+ [TRUNAK project](#) that focuses on improving the regulatory framework for universities in Kazakhstan (2017-2020). In 2018, the consortium undertakes an analysis of the state of play to develop recommendations to effectively enhance institutional autonomy in the country.

2. Learning and Teaching

TRENDS 2018

Following its 8th TRENDS survey to European higher education institutions, EUA is now working on the TRENDS 2018 report, which will focus on learning and teaching developments. The report is expected to be published by spring 2018. It will be submitted to the 2018 Bologna Ministerial Conference, and used in various policy and practice contexts. The preliminary results were presented in the first European Learning and Teaching Forum, in September 2017 (see below).

More information on Trends can be found [here](#).

EUA Learning and Teaching Initiative

Following the successful first European Learning and Teaching Forum organised on 28-29 September 2017, EUA published a report summarising the lessons learnt from its L&T work in November 2017. The report is available [here](#). In 2018 EUA will coordinate a new round of thematic groups. More information can be found [here](#).

European Forum for Enhanced Collaboration in Teaching (EFFECT)

The EFFECT project (Erasmus+ KA3, 2015-2018) aims at facilitating European exchanges and collaboration on teaching enhancement, identifying and developing innovative practices, supporting the institutions in developing strategic approaches, and assessing the feasibility of a sustainable structure for the enhancement of L&T at European level.

Among other activities, EFFECT has developed a set of ten [European Principles for the enhancement of learning and teaching](#) which have been launched in autumn 2017. These Principles are non-prescriptive and underpin the need to re-emphasise the education mission of the university. They are intended to serve institutional leaders working with staff, students and other stakeholders to ensure the quality, relevance and attractiveness of higher education. The EUA Council, which gathers the Presidents of 33 European National Rectors' Conferences, endorsed the Principles in October 2017. As a next step, EFFECT will connect the Principles with practice, by developing guiding questions to accompany institutions who would like to engage with these Principles, and use them as a reference document for reflecting on their institutional strategy and practices in L&T.

More information can be found [here](#).

3. Quality assurance

European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)

The 12th European Quality Assurance Forum took place in Riga, Latvia, on 23-25 November 2017. This annual event is co-organised by the E4 group (ENQA, ESU, EURASHE and EUA). More information can be found [here](#).

Enhanced Quality through Innovative Policy and Practice (EQUIP)

The EQUIP project, which is led by EURASHE, supports and promotes a consistent, efficient and innovative embedding of the ESG 2015 at grass-root level. The project identifies the challenges and works collaboratively with all stakeholders and policy-makers to propose, share and discuss the applicability of new solutions. A study on implementation challenges, solutions and policy impact of the ESG 2015 and European-level policy recommendations to stakeholders groups will be published on 27 February 2018. The same day the project partners will organise in Brussels a breakfast briefing with focus on the policy recommendations. The following day 28 February there will be a webinar presenting the key findings of the study. More information can be found [here](#).

4. Doctoral Education

Study on Doctoral Education

EUA is currently working on a Europe-wide study on the organisation of and challenges in doctoral education. The study is based on a survey to all European higher education institutions providing doctoral education, open until the end of January. A report presenting the findings will be published in summer 2018.

11th EUA-CDE Thematic workshop (January 2018)- The EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) invited academic leaders, heads of doctoral schools and doctoral education professionals to the 2018 Thematic Workshop. They reflected on key practices that have been introduced, i.e. institutional structures, doctoral supervision, transferable skills training and career development, and intersectoral collaboration and their impact on doctoral education and its outcomes. Part of this discussion considered if and how universities are building an evidence-base by monitoring and evaluating the practices and structures they have in place. More information can be found [here](#).

EUA-CDE Annual meeting (June 2018) – Doctoral education across Europe reflects the diversity of European higher education and research systems and the changes that have taken place in the doctoral education landscape over the last decade. These include higher participation rates, continued internationalisation, the organisational variety of doctoral programmes and diverse backgrounds of doctoral candidates. This landscape offers opportunities for enhancing mutual learning and collaboration.

This year's Annual Meeting coincides with the 10th anniversary of EUA-CDE. The focus will be on exploring the ways in which embracing diversity in doctoral education contributes to promoting research excellence, innovation and improved career opportunities for doctoral candidates.

Another key element will be the presentation and discussion of the results of a major study on the organisation of doctoral education in Europe that EUA-CDE has been carrying out over the last year. Finally, given the growing importance of the internationalisation of doctoral education, we will also seek to provide an international perspective on our various European agendas.

Registrations and a call for contributions for this event will launch in February 2018. If you wish to receive updates concerning the Meeting, please do not hesitate to contact the EUA-CDE Secretariat on info@eua-cde.org. More information can be found [here](#).

5. 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:

The Arab-EU Higher Education Conference (AECHE)

AECHE is a joint endeavour with a Steering Committee comprising EUA, the Association of Arab Universities, UNICA, UNIMED, joined by other partners, among them the Union for the Mediterranean, with the University of Barcelona hosting the Secretariat. It organises biannual HE Leadership and thematic events. AECHE established a scheduled, systematic participatory dialogue and cooperation process, which offers different parties to join and integrate their initiatives and pool resources. The Process has been acknowledged in a joint memorandum of the EU and the Arab League. The last AECHE Conference, AECHE 4, took place from 24 to 26 April 2017 in Rabat. It resulted in the release of the Rabat Declaration, which can be found [here](#). More information can be found on AECHE can be found [here](#).

Centralised Support for Higher Education Reform Experts (SPHERE)

The University of Barcelona (coordinator) and EUA currently comprise the consortium SPHERE (Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts), an initiative funded by the European Commission. SPHERE 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](#).

European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU-SHARE)

EUA is involved in the project “European Union Support to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (SHARE)” (2015-2018), funded by the EU. EU-SHARE aims to strengthen regional cooperation by enhancing the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education. The SHARE workshop/symposium took place in Bangkok in August/September 2017, with further events planned for 2018. Further information about the SHARE project can be found [here](#).

ASEF Rectors’ Conference and ASEM Meeting of Education Ministers

As the representative of European universities, EUA is engaged in the Asia-Europe Meeting of Education Ministers (ASEM ME), which is organised on a biennial basis. The latest meeting took place in Seoul, South Korea, in November 2017.

EUA, together with the ASEAN University Network (AUN), actively participated to the 6th Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) Rectors’ Conference (ARC6), which took place at Singapore Management University in October 2017. In particular, EUA and AUN, together with ASEF, lead the development of ARC6 [policy recommendations](#), which were conveyed to the ASEM ME.

Modernisation of Institutional Management of Innovation and Research in Southern Neighbouring Countries (MIMIr)

Thirteen higher education institutions are participating in the MIMIr project (2015-18; Erasmus+) together with the Moroccan and Jordanian Ministries for Higher Education and Research, EUA and the Association of Arab Universities. They work together under the coordination of the University of Barcelona to develop innovation and research management capacity in the Arab world, particularly in Morocco and Jordan. More information can be found [here](#).

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.

Harmonisation and Innovation in Central American Higher Education Curricula: Enhancing and Implementing the Regional QF (HICA)

[HICA](#), driven by university associations, universities and ministries, intends to support the reform, innovation and harmonisation of higher education curricula in six Central American countries. The project will further develop and implement a regional qualifications framework for Central American Higher Education (‘MCESCA’) – proposed by the prior project [Alfa PUENTES](#) - to which EUA also contributed as a partner.

Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA Initiative)

The HAQAA Initiative supports the development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional level, national, regional and Pan-African continental level. In its first two years of implementation the Initiative, managed by the University of Barcelona, ENQA, DAAD, AAU and EUA, delivered the training course for a “common QA language” among key African QA stakeholders and disseminators, set up the Technical Working Group for drafting the African Standards and Guidelines for QA (ASG-QA), mapped the existing standards and guidelines, performed a needs assessment for standards and guidelines in QA, and completed a series of consultations with key stakeholders to endorse ASG-QA. The ASG-QA is aimed to be a continental framework for quality assurance in higher education and it is planned to be endorsed by heads of state in Africa during 2018.

6. 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.

Higher Education Supporting Refugees in Europe (inHERE)

The information gathered in the map has been analysed through the inHERE project, co-funded by the EU and lead by UNIMED, in order to identify [good practices](#) which potentially can be upscaled or transferred to other institutions and their respective local contexts. The project will offer training to university staff on specific activities for refugee integration through a series of online events, as well as a staff training week in early 2018.

Towards Empowered Migrant Youth in Southern Europe (TandEM)

The TandEM project, co-funded by the AMIF fund and lead by the IOM (International Organisation for Migration), will carry out activities to foster the engagement of young third-country nationals (TCNs) and their peers in six Southern European Countries. The project will contribute to improving access to and integration of TCNs into higher education by conducting a comparative cross-country study aimed at understanding access-related needs, and identifying operational recommendations to remove barriers. These will feed into a pilot student mentorship scheme.

EUA focus groups diversity & inclusiveness

In late 2017 and early 2018 EUA is organising two focus groups on [diversity and inclusiveness](#) and on [public engagement](#), based on the imperative for broader participation in higher education, which opens up discussions on the social responsibility of universities and points towards a number of strategic and practical questions for institutions about how to deal with issues of diversity, inclusion, equity and access. With the focus groups, EUA aims to give interested members the opportunity for open exchange and peer learning on concrete aspects, such as institutional strategies for diversity management, policies for equal opportunities, social innovation or widening participation of underrepresented groups.

7. University finances & EU funding

In 2017, EUA disseminated the results of the consultation it carried out with its membership on the interim progress of the two major EU funding programmes for research and higher education: Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+. The aim was to develop a comprehensive view of the university sector in time for European-level discussions on the future of Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ and their post-2020 successors. The findings are presented in [two reports](#).

EUA also released its proposals for “[Ambitious funding for excellent research in Europe post-2020](#)”, where it advocates for a quantitative and qualitative leap in EU research funding, and suggests to open a discussion on a possible ring-fencing or shift of funding for R&I from ESIF or other sources for a more ambitious and well-functioning research programme.

EUA proposals for the next framework programme for research and innovation (FP9)

In November 2016, EUA published its [vision for the design of FP9](#) which identified three key thematic areas of concern for universities in the post-2020 period: 1) providing long-term policies and funding instruments for research; 2) reinforcing collaboration and minimising discrepancies across the EU; 3) seeking a stronger alignment of policies for education, research and innovation.

In view of the forthcoming negotiations for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, EUA has further defined its vision in the [position paper](#) entitled “From vision to action: EUA proposals for the next framework programme for research and innovation (FP9)” by providing a reflection on each thematic area and putting forward specific recommendations for the design of FP9 rules, programmes, instruments and criteria of participation. The position was presented at the [policy event “Excellence in research, innovation and education: The universities’ recommendations for an efficient and ambitious FP9”](#) hosted by MEP Christian Ehler at the European Parliament in November 2017. The event focused on questions such as: what does ‘more EU investment in research’ mean in practice? How can funding instruments and processes be improved to ensure FP9 delivers in the most efficient way?

‘EU funding for universities’ campaign

EUA’s work on FP9 is included in its broader campaign ‘[EU funding for universities](#)’, which also puts forward recommendations for impactful simplification and increased efficiency and value for money of EU funding programmes. In 2018, the campaign feeds into the debate leading to the adoption of the next multiannual financial framework of the European Union, and focuses on added value of EU-level investment in research & innovation.

Public Funding Observatory

EUA released in December 2017 its latest edition of the [Public Funding Observatory](#), which tracks developments in national public funding to universities. The analysis reveals that since the 2008 financial crisis, the divide between higher education systems that increase public funding, and those that reduce investment, is getting wider, and that any recovery that can now be detected is slow and fragile.

Efficient university management: USTREAM project

The [USTREAM project](#) is supported by the Erasmus+ programme and examines the measures that are in place in universities across Europe to enhance efficiency at operational level, and also analyse policies at system level that support universities in their efforts to operate more efficiently, with a view to identify good practice examples and develop recommendations for further development. The project addresses the question of operational efficiency in universities in a European comparative way. In 2018, the third and final peer-learning seminar will focus on governance and leadership (April 2018, Brussels) and will be followed by national policy dialogue events organised in the first semester (Austria, Latvia and Lithuania). The aim of the events is to bring together relevant higher education stakeholders engaged in design and implementation of efficiency, effectiveness and value for money, ranging from university leaders to funders and policy makers.

8. Research & Innovation

Open Access/Open Science

Given the increasing importance of ease of access, fast circulation and valorisation of research results and data in the transition to a more open scholarly communication system for the benefit of science, the economy and society at large, EUA has developed a series of aims and recommendations to further assist European universities and National Rectors’ Conferences in moving towards open access to research publications and data. In 2017, EUA published its [recommendations on Open Access to research publications](#) (June), [recommendations on Research Data Management and Text & Data Mining](#) (October), as well as the [EUA political statement on Open Science](#) (October) with key messages from the university sector addressed to EU institutions and national governments. The documents were guided by the results of the [Open Access survey 2016-2017](#) and the work of the [EUA’s Expert Group on Science 2.0/Open Science](#). The package of the 2017 Recommendations illustrate the increasing and considerable work and engagement of European universities in the transition towards a more open scientific system. These efforts will continue throughout 2018 with particular attention to three priority areas: research assessment; citizen science; open science skills and education.

Smart specialisation (RIS3)

In March 2017, EUA issued its [response](#) to a European Commission public consultation on Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3) aimed at finding a fresh approach to European growth and jobs through regional innovation strategies. EUA's response addresses the importance of political support, transparency and convergence of innovation policies and the need for more synergies between EU instruments and programmes. It also underlines that human talent acts as a fundamental driver of innovation and proposes to provide greater flexibility of cohesion fund use in order to further improve the responsiveness of regions to new emergent areas of research and innovation. In addition, in October EUA organised in collaboration with Universities Estonia and Universities Finland the latest [edition](#) of its annual workshop series on RIS3 that took place back-to-back with a meeting of the [EUA Expert Group on RIS3](#). The goal of the event and the subsequent Expert Group meeting was to develop a series of recommendations for actions to improve the effectiveness of European regional research and innovation funds, both at governance and operational levels. It also served as a forum to strengthen the strategic role that role of universities play in their regional innovation ecosystems, and to contribute to the shape of RIS3 beyond 2020. As an outcome of the workshop and Expert Group meeting EUA will publish in February 2018 a position paper on maximising the effectiveness of smart specialisation strategies for regional development post-2020.

UNiversities in the SET-Plan (UNISSET) project

Co-ordinated by EUA, the FP7 UNI-SET project (2014-2017) aimed to mobilise European universities to contribute to the European energy goals spelled out in the European Energy Union, the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan) and the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. UNI-SET has mapped existing energy-related Master, Doctorate and Research programmes at European universities and collected empirical data about the range of university activities in disciplines and scientific fields related to the SET-Plan. It has also been active in monitoring the skills and professional profiles needed in the current and future European energy sector. Results from these two activities informed the discussions at the UNI-SET Energy Clustering Events held between 2015-2017. In addition, the UNI-SET consortium provided [input](#) to consultations by the European Commission on the SET-Plan since 2015, published its [Roadmap](#) for European Universities in Energy in December 2016 and is currently preparing a report entitled "Energy Transition and The Future of Energy Research, Innovation and Education - An Action Agenda for European Universities", which seeks to stimulate new innovative approaches to learning, teaching and research at universities. Moreover, the project partners will release their findings from the UNI-SET Universities and Employers Surveys, providing insights from more than 230 universities and 120 companies respectively, in the first quarter of 2018. More information can be found [here](#).

The European Platform of Universities in Energy Research & Education (EUA-EPUE)

In 2018, the European Platform of Universities in Energy Research & Education ([EUA-EPUE](#)) will continue its work on the role of universities in energy research and education, focusing on the energy transition, and expanding the platform's multidisciplinary remit to include environment and climate change. In addition, a new website and additional Energy Clustering Events throughout 2018 will allow members to continue their engagement in the energy transition and other developments in EU energy R&I policy. In 2018, EUA-EPUE will publish a joint position paper with the European Energy Research Alliance ([EERA](#)) on the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation ('FP9') with a particular focus on energy-related issues. Other partners such as [InnoEnergy](#) will also be involved in the joint position paper.

9. Other upcoming events

EUA 2018 Annual Conference (April 2018)

The EUA Annual Conference will build upon EUA's work with its members on various topics linked to the societal mission of universities. It will provide participants an opportunity to explore how universities across Europe demonstrate their social responsibility by ensuring that their activities contribute to shaping society at large. The conference will include examples of institutional practices, national and European policies and initiatives that bear evidence of today's engaged and responsible universities. More information can be found [here](#).

The EUA [Fourth Funding Forum](#) and the [13th European Quality Assurance Forum](#) will take place respectively in October and November 2018.