

EUA KEY PRIORITIES 2018-2019

The coming two years will be crucial for higher education and research in Europe. The next EU programmes for research, innovation and education will be designed, the European Commission will start to develop a European Education Area, and the Bologna Ministerial Meeting in Paris (May 2018) will set future priorities for the European Higher Education Area. On top of this, in 2019, elections for the European Parliament will take place, a new Commission will enter into office, and the UK is scheduled to leave the Union. These developments will have a significant impact on higher education policy in the coming decade.

Against this backdrop, Europe must continue to seek solutions to challenges involving social and educational inequality, demographic change, rapidly-evolving labour markets and new migration patterns. Moreover, populism presents a constant threat, undermining scientific arguments and common values. Universities have a pivotal role to play in this context given their mission to generate knowledge, enable and support learning, develop intercultural understanding and foster civic engagement.

In this scenario, EUA has identified the following priorities for 2018-2019, on which it will work with its members, while supporting them in fulfilling their individual missions.

1 Promoting the value of universities for society and for Europe

EUA will strengthen its efforts to promote and reinforce universities as key societal actors and to increase understanding between universities and their stakeholders. This theme will be explored in detail at the [2018 Annual Conference](#). The 2019 Annual Conference will focus on the role of universities in regional innovation ecosystems and will feature the results of a dedicated project conducted in 2018. EUA's work will focus on reinforcing the synergies between research, education and innovation, supporting lifelong learning and public engagement.

The Association will also work to promote inclusiveness in European higher education, especially in terms of diversity and equity, by supporting university integration initiatives for migrants. Furthermore, EUA will step up efforts to demonstrate universities' important contribution to society and its relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals.

EUA will continue to be active in the Bologna Process and relevant EU processes, in particular the recently proposed European Education Area, which will be an opportunity to strengthen links between research, innovation and education. EUA will work to ensure that these processes address issues of added value for European universities and society.

2 Ensuring the quality, relevance, and inclusiveness of learning and teaching

In the next two years, EUA will work to further the development of learning and teaching in Europe and to promote its relevance to personal development, active citizenship, and the employability of graduates.

These goals will be pursued through a variety of activities, especially the [Learning & Teaching Initiative](#), which will continue to facilitate the sharing of good practice across the continent through the Learning & Teaching Forum and thematic working groups. EUA will also promote the [European Principles for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching](#) as a tool for self-reflection and strategic development for universities. In addition, the [EFFECT project](#) will produce a feasibility study on teaching enhancement at the European level and EUA will adopt its [first major policy position on learning and teaching](#) in early 2018.

3 Strengthening research and innovation at Europe's universities

EUA will continue to provide input to EU research and innovation policies through its [Research Policy Working Group](#) and other Expert Groups. It will focus on the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP9) and the European Research Area, promoting excellence, multidisciplinary and Open Science. Open Access to research publications and data will be a key area of EUA's work, in addition to research assessment and citizen science. EUA will also increase its focus on research ethics and integrity and on promoting gender equality

Regarding the design of FP9, EUA will address the need to reduce discrepancies in research and innovation within Europe through supporting activities in smart specialisation and partnerships. Policy development for university-business collaboration will be strengthened through activities with the European Industrial Research Management Association.

The Association will continue its work on the role of universities in energy research and education in the energy transition and environmental issues, building on the "[Action Agenda for European Universities](#)", published early in 2018.

These priorities will also feature in the work of the [EUA Council for Doctoral Education](#), which will publish a Europe-wide study on the status of doctoral education.

4 Advocating for improved framework conditions for European universities

EUA will argue strongly for coherent and efficient frameworks, policies and funding instruments that fully respect and guarantee institutional autonomy (which is monitored via [EUA's Autonomy Scorecard](#)) at both European and national levels.

Through the [EUA's Funding Campaign](#), the Association will continue to provide evidence-based input to the negotiations on the future EU programmes and engage relevant actors in Brussels. In addition, the [USTREAM project](#) will look at the efficiency, effectiveness and value for money of university activities and supporting frameworks at the system level, also feeding into the 2018 EUA Funding Forum. EUA will also continue to report on national and European trends in university funding.

In early 2018, EUA will publish the [EQUIP project](#) findings and recommendations on how to further enhance the quality of European higher education. It will continue to organise the [European Quality Assurance Forum](#) to facilitate the sharing of good practices among EUA members and other stakeholders regarding internal and external quality assurance.

Moreover, EUA will carry forward its collaboration with the national rectors' conferences, for example to improve framework conditions for negotiations of Big Deals with scientific publishers, aiming to lower publication costs and promote Open Access.

5 Promoting university values in Europe and beyond

The continued protection of university values, especially academic freedom and institutional autonomy, is of paramount importance. Over the next two years, EUA aims to further establish itself as an important contributor to discussions on university values. The Association's activities will focus on exploring different kinds of university values and how they are challenged, and identifying actions that European universities can take to defend them. This would include external threats as well as upholding the values of ethics and integrity in all university activities.

EUA will also engage members in a debate on the challenges faced when interacting and cooperating with scholars and universities in countries where democratic traditions and academic freedom are under threat. In developing these activities, EUA will draw on its expertise in institutional autonomy and on its partnerships with some of the key actors in the field, including Scholars at Risk and the Magna Charta Observatory.

6 Positioning European higher education in a global context

EUA will continue to build relations with partners around the globe, emphasising close collaboration with and between those in European Neighbourhood countries. In this regard, the Association will support institutional-level capacity building and seek to promote the role of universities in "soft diplomacy" as places for people-to-people contact through student and staff exchange and research collaboration.

EUA also will be an active partner in university-focused global policy processes. This includes responsibility for the higher education and research components of the EU-CELAC Policy Dialogue with Latin America, dialogue with the Arab countries through the AECHE platform, and through the ASEM Education Process with Asia. For the continued exchange with North America, EUA will host the 2018 Transatlantic Dialogue.

The "[Support to Higher Education Reform Experts](#)" project will provide opportunities to collaborate with members and partners in Neighbourhood countries, and for strengthening the European Higher Education Area and its international dimension.

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of universities and national rectors' conferences in 47 European countries. EUA promotes cooperation between universities and plays a crucial role in the Bologna Process and in influencing EU policies on higher education, research and innovation. Thanks to its interaction with a range of other European and international organisations, EUA ensures that the independent voice of European universities is heard, wherever decisions are being taken that will impact on their activities.

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