

Press release: 9 April 2013

EUA Annual Conference – Ghent University (11-12 April)

Survey looks at internationalisation of higher education in European universities

Over 400 university leaders and representatives from the higher education sector will come together later this week (11-12 April) for the European University Association (EUA) Annual Conference, hosted by Ghent University in Belgium. The theme of this year's event is "European universities – global engagement".

To feed into the conference discussions, EUA has today (9 April) published the results of a survey of its member universities on the theme of higher education internationalisation. The questionnaire also asked universities about their expectations for the European Union's forthcoming strategy for the internationalisation of higher education*. A total of 180 complete responses from 175 individual higher education institutions in 38 countries were received.

Amongst the main findings of the survey are:

- 99% of institutions that replied either have an **internationalisation strategy in place** (56%), intend to develop one (13%), or have considered internationalisation in other strategies (30%). The results show that such strategies have a significant impact on universities' international activities: particularly on developing new partnerships with new regions and countries (73%), sending more students abroad (72%), growing the international student population (68%), offering international opportunities to staff (67%), offering more courses in English (67%) and developing double and joint degrees (61%).
- In order to have a better picture of institutional **priorities for internationalisation**, respondents were asked to rank a series of options. "Attracting students from abroad" was the most frequently chosen as the top priority (30%) followed by "internationalisation of learning and teaching" (19%), "providing our students with more opportunities to have a learning experience abroad" (12%) and "strategic research partnerships" (10%).
- Respondents have positive expectations regarding the **forthcoming EU internationalisation strategy for HE**. 57% thought it could help to convince leadership and colleagues about the urgent need to put more emphasis on internationalisation while 56% thought it "might inform and guide our own strategic development". Only 9% thought it would not have "any immediate impact". The majority of respondents also think that an EU internationalisation strategy could have a positive impact by contributing to the development of national strategies (59%) and by stimulating the general discussion on internationalisation (56%) in their countries.
- When asked for suggestions for **EUA's future work in the area of internationalisation**, the promotion of funding opportunities figured top of the list, followed by good practice exchange at workshops, and contribution to strategy development.
- The survey also included questions on universities' **awareness and interest in MOOCs (massive open online courses)** as they are currently attracting a lot of attention and stimulating debate about internationalisation and course delivery. It highlighted that while 58% of the respondents had heard about MOOCs, only 33% could confirm that they had already been an issue of discussion in their institution. The question of whether MOOCs should be further developed in Europe was answered positively by almost half (44%) of the respondents, and while only a few answered negatively, a relatively large group (48%) had no clear opinion on the issue. This seems also to confirm the need for further information on this issue, which has been clearly stated by 88% of respondents.

EUA's Annual Conference will provide a forum for participants to discuss the institutional policies required to meet the challenges and reap the full benefits of further internationalisation. In plenary and working group sessions, speakers from Europe and further afield will explore different drivers of the globalisation of higher education and the design and implementation of institutional internationalisation strategies. There will also be the opportunity for further discussion of **global rankings** and their impact, with EUA's second Rankings Review report to be published and presented at the event.

The survey results can be downloaded here:

http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Higher_Education/EUA_International_Survey.sflb.ashx

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

** The European Commission has announced it will be publishing a Communication on a strategy for the internationalisation of higher education in 2013. Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, is due to speak at the opening plenary of EUA's Annual conference on Thursday 11 April.*