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New report: Portuguese Higher Education: A view from the outside

The European University Association has today published a new report on the Portuguese higher education system, which has been prepared by a team of European experts. This report was carried out at the request of the Portuguese Rectors' Conference (CRUP), with a view to appraising the Portuguese HE system, identifying challenges and making recommendations.

The publication focuses on two issues which have been the object of discussion for some time, but which the recent international rescue package and its attendant austerity measures have brought to the fore: the re-structuring of the higher education (HE) system and the rationalisation of the national course portfolio.

The expert team visited Portugal in October 2012 and consulted a wide range of stakeholders. It discussed the effects on HE of the current financial crisis, as well as the long-standing difficulties brought about by demographic decline and the migrations from the interior to the coast.

The team underlined the importance of investment in higher education in Portugal and its role in sustainable economic development as the country looks to achieve the EU 2020 education targets. It also concluded that it is important to reverse the trend in falling student numbers, by widening post-secondary participation, expanding lifelong learning provision, and recruiting international students. Equally, it is essential to facilitate cooperation between universities and polytechnics, so that targeted interventions can be made in regions in decline.

The expert team makes a number of recommendations designed to render the Portuguese binary system more dynamic and effective. These include the creation of separate funding councils for public universities and polytechnics, as well as the empowerment of the Coordinating Council for Higher Education to the point at which it can both elaborate a long-term strategy and oversee its delivery by the institutions.

The full report is available on the [website of EUA](#) and [CRUP](#).

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Notes for editors:

The report will be presented at a special meeting taking place (today) at the National Council for Education (Conselho Nacional de Educação) in Lisbon on 19 February.