

**Attention: news desks/science and education correspondents**

**Press Release**

Brussels, 5 October 2016

### **Universities under pressure: EUA releases new data on funding trends**

The European University Association (EUA) is pleased to present the findings of the 2016 Public Funding Observatory. The data captures the very latest funding trends in Europe and offers the most up-to-date information on 30 different higher education systems. It is presented in an [online tool](#), and [a report summarising the key findings](#).

As public finances are under increased pressure, policy makers are revising university funding models with a view to rationalise expenditures, generate greater added value and increase efficiency in the sector. At the same time, it is becoming highly relevant for the university sector to show and quantify its contribution to society, in both social and economic terms.

The Public Funding Observatory data reveals that capital funding and investment in infrastructure for universities are decreasing. Student aid is declining and costs are being passed on to students. Meanwhile, staff layoffs and hiring freezes at universities are further consequences in some systems. More specifically, the Public Funding Observatory shows that although public funding to universities increased in 11 countries between 2008 and 2015, rising student numbers translated into a funding decrease per student in seven of these. In 13 systems, meanwhile, public funding fell in the same period, including in seven where student numbers went up.

“This data proves that almost all of Europe's higher education systems are feeling the heat,” said Thomas Estermann, EUA's Director of Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development. “The Public Funding Observatory also demonstrates widening funding gaps between national systems, translating into a huge challenge to the creation of unified European Higher Education and Research Areas.”

Cuts in national funding also result in increased competition for EU grants as some countries expect European funding to fill the holes. However, according to the EUA analysis, this does not work. Universities with a stronger national funding base are more likely to win EU funding grants than those with low or declining budgets.

The new data, covering these topics and more, will be presented on the occasion of the 3rd EUA Funding Forum, “Efficient universities: Value for society,” which will take place on 6 and 7 October at the University of Porto in Portugal.

*For more information, please contact:*

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*Notes:*

To see the 2016 Public Funding Observatory online tool, [please click here](#).

To read the Public Funding Observatory report, [please click here](#).

*The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of more than 800 universities in 47 European countries and 36 national rectors' conferences (NRCs). The Council of EUA is comprised of the President, the members of the Board, and of the presidents of all of Europe's NRCs. EUA works closely with its members to ensure that the voice of European universities is heard.*