

Press Release

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University funding trends: EUA launches dialogue at Funding Forum

The European University Association (EUA) has kicked off the 3rd Funding Forum, “Efficient universities: Value for Society”, at the University of Porto in Portugal. At this high-level event, which runs from 6 to 7 October, EUA brings together stakeholders from 35 countries, including university leaders, national and European policy makers to explore and discuss the sector’s latest funding trends, opportunities and challenges.

In a special highlight this morning, EUA presented the findings of the 2016 Public Funding Observatory, which is laid out in [an online tool](#) and an [analytical report](#) covering 30 higher education systems in Europe. This data provided the backdrop for a unique panel discussion with three visionary university leaders from different parts of Europe: Jean Chambaz, President of University Pierre and Marie Curie, Jukka Kola, Rector of the University of Helsinki and Antonio Manuel Bensabat Rendas, Rector of Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

“We are convinced that universities are key actors in addressing the major challenges Europe is facing and they generate high added value for both the economy and society,” said Jean Chambaz. “Therefore, they need sufficient, sustainable and simple funding at the national and European levels.”

In addition to the national data analysis, EUA is also sharing some of the initial findings of its membership consultation on Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+, which will be released later this year. Participants agree that these EU grant programmes are highly effective, triggering new research and development spending, contributing to growth, creating jobs and fostering collaboration and student and staff mobility. However, they suffer from inefficiency due to low success rates and oversubscription, as well as high application and participation costs.

“It is crucial to calculate the real cost of participation. For example, we estimate the cost of all Horizon 2020 proposals made so far, both those accepted and declined, could be the equivalent to about 30-50% of all grant money allocated,” said Thomas Estermann, EUA Director of Governance, Funding and Public Policy. “The solution requires action from universities, national and European funders. In particular, funders need to identify inefficiencies and provide more money, while higher education institutions need to develop coherent funding strategies and submit only their strongest proposals.”

The consultation data also shows that grants should not be substituted by loan schemes, such as the European Fund for Strategic Investment, because universities in many systems are not allowed to borrow money and grants have a long history of providing high returns on investment.

Participation at the 3rd EUA Funding Forum also includes European and national policy makers, such as Manuel Heitor, Portuguese Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, and Patrick Child, European Commission Deputy Director-General for Research and Innovation.

For more information please contact: Jessica Carter; mobile: +32 473 74 87 85; email: jessica.carter@eua.be

For more information on the Forum, [please click here](#).

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

For more information on EUA’s campaign on sufficient, sustainable and simple funding, [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.