

Universities in the European Research Area

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Introductory Remarks

- EUA acts as an independent stakeholder for Europe's Universities.
- Based in Brussels as a non-governmental membership organisation.
- EUA membership represents 34 European Rectors' Conferences and over 850 individual research based higher education institutions across 46 countries.
- Dual-fold role:
 - I. providing a forum for debate and mutual-learning through conferences and workshops, projects and specific services for the membership, and
 - II. bringing empirical evidence from universities' experiences and activities across their missions to inform the policy-making process in developing new instruments that help their strategic development and enhance their performance in addressing social, economic and civil society needs and goals. ...2...

Reaffirming the essential link between higher education and research as a hallmark of European higher education and a determining factor of the competitiveness of Europe and Europe's universities in the future.

- Encouraging universities to develop further their own specific and varied research profiles in line with their increasingly differentiated missions
- Maintaining the momentum in the reform of doctoral education
- Developing better career opportunities for young researchers
- Removing obstacles to mobility and overcoming national fragmentation to promote European wide opportunities for teachers and researchers at all stages of their careers

EUA input to ERA Policy Development

- **EUA's core message: Universities are the key integrating environment for development of ERA.**
- **EUA's role in establishing Europe's Universities as a main stakeholder in the 'ERA Green Paper' consultation and its follow-up on the future developments of the European Research Area instruments (FPs, ERC, EIT, etc)**

Key Challenges for Universities' Successful Integration in the ERA of Tomorrow

- I.** Research and Innovation – mission diversity.
- II.** International competition and cooperation.
- III.** Building partnerships.

I. Research and Innovation - Mission Diversity

- Continued development of distinctive research profiles including regional clustering and networking at European level.
- Fostering interdisciplinary collaboration mechanisms to address 21st century global research challenges in energy, health, societal change etc.
- Ensuring high quality research environments and critical mass in terms of human resources and research infrastructure, particularly for doctoral studies.
- Developing improved career opportunities for young researchers.

II. International Competition and Cooperation

- Becoming a more strategic element of university mission.
- Building upon experiences of European cooperation in student exchange, research networking and project development.
- Fostering an international outlook and wider opportunities for teachers and researchers at all stages of their career.
- Requires removing continuing obstacles to mobility within national frameworks (pensions, social security etc)

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III. Building Partnerships

- Increasingly important in all areas of university missions, curricula development, research collaboration and innovation activities.
- ‘Open Innovation’ model of university / business cooperation.
- Enhanced employability and entrepreneurial attitudes of university graduates, inter-sectoral exchange of staff and ‘knowledge exchange’
- In research and innovation activities building partnerships requires sound project management and improved intellectual property management reflecting respective interests.

EUA dialogue with European Commission

I. European Research Council

- EUA contributed as an strong advocate of the need for a European Research Council from its 2003 position paper onwards
- EUA invited by the ERC Identification Committee to nominate prospective candidates for the membership of the ERC Scientific Council
- Dialogue established by the EUA Research Policy Working Group with ERC Scientific Council providing viewpoints / feedback on ERC strategy papers, structure of review panels and their membership, ERC grants cost model
- ERC President, Professor Fotis Kafatos, invited to EUA Lisbon Convention (March 2007) and Council for Doctoral Education Launch Conference (June 2008) to discuss ERC future policy development and its impact on university-based research careers
- EUA written input to ERC mid-term Review Panel, May 2009. Contribution to Swedish Mini-Seminar on ERC, September 2009

II. European Institute of Technology (EIT)

- EUA works as an active European Stakeholder in the development of the EIT to ensure that universities' central interests in this new research and innovation instrument are recognised.
- EUA's input has sought to ensure that:
 - ✓ Universities are recognised as essential partners in the knowledge and innovation communities (KICs)
 - ✓ Universities in KICs will be the degree-awarding partners
 - ✓ EIT Governing Board should be an independent body
 - ✓ Open procedures and calls for selection of KICs
- EUA invited by EIT Governing Board Identification Committee to provide input on membership selection criteria, and to nominate candidates for EIT Governing Board.
- EIT Governing Board Chairman and EUA President met in July 2009 to discuss further the role of universities in the EIT
- EUA contribution to Swedish Presidency Conference on 'Knowledge Triangle' September 2009

III. European Research Area Board (ERAB) and DG Research Expert Groups

- EUA was invited to also provide input to the ERAB Identification Committee on membership criteria and nominations. ERAB acts as a high level independent advisory group on research and will produce its report on “A vision for the European Research Area” (October 2009)
- EUA is represented also on the following DG Research Experts Groups:
 - ✓ Sounding Board on FP7 rules of participation
 - ✓ Assessment and Evaluation of Research – Methods/Good Practices
 - ✓ Conditions of Funding Schemes for University-based Research
 - ✓ Advisory Committee for the October 2009 ERA Conference
 - Through such participation EUA seeks to bring its members’ experiences and needs into improving European programmes for benefit of University-based researchers

How EUA is working with other main actors on its strategic goals

(I) “Developing Partnerships”

- Europe’s universities are increasingly developing partnerships in their research and innovation missions and embracing the “open innovation model” of university/business cooperation and seeking to embed this in sound project management and improved intellectual property management reflecting respective interests.
- The “**Responsible Partnering Guidelines**” cover core areas that are crucial to university/industry collaboration concerning aligning interests, professional training and skills, consortia-building, intellectual property rights and patents, and finally importantly, building lasting relationships in collaborative research.
- Recognized as a pioneering European initiative in European Commission Communications and Recommendations on improving knowledge transfer and the management of intellectual property rights, and strongly recommended for further implementation by the Aho Report on “Creating an Innovative Europe”.
- Responsible Partnering Guidelines - a “living document” currently being revised in the light of further evidence from good practices and to address new issues such as the implications of the application of the State Aid rules for university/business research collaboration. New version to be published in October 2009.

Responsible Partnering



- A voluntary code of conduct reflecting proven good practices for Industry-Science collaboration
- Designed by practitioners
- Endorsed by key stakeholders
- Supported by Commissioners Potočník and Verheugen
- Endorsed in Esko Aho's report on Creating an Innovative Europe



(II) Opening the horizons of research careers and increasing the quality of mobility

Example 1: Project on Collaborative Doctoral Education: University – Industry Partnerships for Enhancing Knowledge Exchange (report published 2009)

- EUA has been examining a range of collaborative doctoral programmes across Europe conducted by universities together with industry/ business partners which have the aim of training researchers for non-academic research careers.
- Entitled “**DOC-CAREERS**” the work explored the origins of the collaborative doctoral programmes, whether government, university or industry-led, and examines the perspectives, expectations and experiences of the partners from university and industry and, not least, the doctoral candidates themselves.
- The value of the promotion and dissemination of good practices in such collaborative doctoral programmes, in particular on the inter-sectoral mobility achieved, the transferable skill components developed and the wider employment horizons opened, cannot be over-estimated in strengthening universities’ innovative capacity in the building of a competitive European Research Area.

DOC-CAREERS Project

General Conclusions

- Mobility between sectors is considered a “must” by business employing highly skilled professionals, although there are serious barriers.
- Doctoral programmes and knowledge transfer are intrinsically linked. Schemes with business participation are a strong vehicle to enhance university-business mobility and the necessary evolution in “mindset change” in all stakeholders.
- Behind the formal procedures such as joint supervision or placements in business, successful long-term university-business cooperation processes are holistic, – i.e. the soft part of the relationship is very important and continuous face-to-face experience is mandatory to build trust and durable partnerships.
- Institutions should track their doctoral graduates to become significant drivers at institutional, national and international level and to inform doctoral candidates of their potential employment options.
- Support of governments as facilitators for university-business cooperation processes and growing awareness of IPR are important structural factors.
- New project DOC-CAREERS II starting in October 2009 will concentrate on doctoral research collaboration with regional partners, both public and private.

Opening the horizons of research careers and increasing the quality of mobility

Example 2: Council for Doctoral Education

- The EUA/CDE is a major attempt in the European context to create a forum for the development of doctoral programmes and schools which performs a similar function to the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) in the United States.
- The EUA/CDE provides a forum for exchange and best practice on the full range of key issues and concerns such as enhancing quality of supervision, sharing information and data, building European clusters of collaboration across doctoral schools, creating exchange mechanisms and mobility for doctoral candidates, university staff both academic and administrative.
- EUA/CDE should be the key, visible platform for dialogue with partners from public funding bodies, European, national and regional, and private industry who could provide further financial and structural support to improve the conditions of doctoral candidates and their training and widened career prospects.

(III) Mobilising universities as research institutions to address 21st Century global economic challenges - Energy

- The EUA has recently accepted the invitation by the European Commission, (DG Research), to join as an observer, together with EUROHORCS, in the new European Energy Research Alliance (EERA) which has been launched in the framework of the EU SET-Plan and comprises of major national research institutes in energy technology research.
- EUA has decided to create a **“European Platform of Universities Engaged in Energy Research”** as a parallel mechanism for consultation and engagement by universities to that already established by the national research institutes.
- EUA hopes that this new European Platform can make a contribution to achieving the European policy goal of overcoming the fragmentation of research in this key field through bringing university-based research and postgraduate training programmes into the framework of the EERA.
- EUA sees EERA as an important pilot action in the potential development of the new instrument of “joint programming” within the “Ljubljana Process” in which university-based research needs to contribute and be strengthened.

(IV) External Research Funding Conditions: Support Costs and Cost Models

- EUA focus on challenge of financial sustainability of universities
- Requirements for financial sustainability (University Funding Project)
 - ✓ More Autonomy
 - ✓ Ability to identify the full costs of university activities and projects
- European Funding Programmes (FP7) – their conditions of cost recovery – acting as a “driver” for universities to move towards funding of research projects on a full cost basis
- Hence EUA was active in campaigning for improved funding conditions of FP7 contracts under new eligible cost model, and will review the situation in advance of the 2010 mid-term review of FP7
- Recent decision of European Commission to retain the 60% flat rate recovery for indirect research costs in FP7 until 2013

(V) ‘TAKE-UP’ by Universities of the Modernisation Agenda for Europe’s Universities

New major EUA project will focus in 2 areas

- The sustainability of university funding, financial management and development of full-costing
- The transparency and appropriateness of measurement tools for the assessment of university-based research reflecting the diversity of university missions.

Required = A varied range of European Funding Instruments

- To support Europe's Universities to meet the major challenges for the achievement of the 'modernisation agenda'
- To support the development of varied university missions across Europe and its regions.
- To help achieve the global, regional and local outreach of Europe's Universities in building partnerships to enhance their missions.
- EUA will continue to be actively engaged on behalf of Europe's Universities in providing its input and views on future developments of existing European instruments and propose new ones.
- Thanks to the CPU for this timely discussion of this crucial agenda for Europe's Universities.

Thank you for your attention

For further information visit:

www.eua.be

