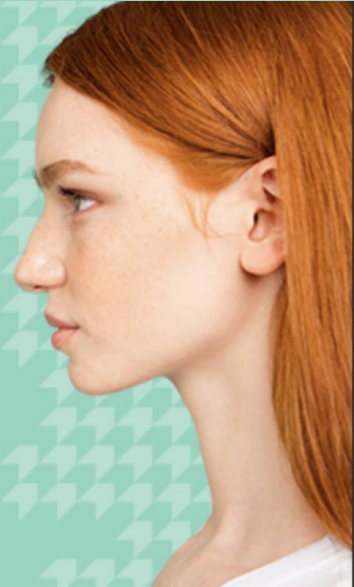


# Alliance Formation in Higher Education: a study of the European Universities Initiative

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# Introduction

This presentation explores the development of the European Universities Initiative (EUI)

- Situating the EUI in the long running supranational university debate
- Focus on the origins and rationales as its too early for an analysis of the effects of the EUI

I seek to illustrate:

- how it represents an innovative approach to alliance formation
- the importance of collaboration in contemporary higher education
- how it can be viewed as a strategic regional project of the EU
- how supranational higher education relates to both the economic and cultural dimensions of the European political project
- why this scheme succeeded where it's predecessors failed

# A Supranational University: History

- Story as old as the European political project itself
  - documented by Palayret 1996, Corbett 2005, Lehmann 2019.
- A European university was first mooted in 1948 by Alfred Müller-Armack who believed European integration would require ‘a community of the intelligence’ which could be achieved through a supranational university would act as a ‘role model’
- In 1955 the West German delegation to the European integration summit sought the “foundation of a European University to be created by the six SCSC states” aligned to the view in Bonn that integration should not just be economic but also cultural
- Franco-German disagreement: The French saw the value of a European university in the new area of nuclear energy research and training, so placed it within the Euratom Treaty – this university was never realised
- Debate around a supranational university continued but remained gridlocked owing to
  - a lack of consensus over:
    - what would be its legal and financial status?
    - would it be a nation state or supranational competency?
    - where should the supranational university be built/based?
    - what should it be for? – comprehensive or specialist?
  - strong opposition from existing universities

# A Supranational University: History

- A worked out scheme was presented in 1960
  - The European University would be a two-year postgraduate residential institution for 500 students, teaching subjects of relevance to European integration.
  - Accompanied by national research institutes which could access European funding and a structure for exchanges amongst existing institutions.
- But the lack of agreement endured and was this proposal was killed off at the Bonn summit of 1961
- The idea remained dormant for most of the decade until the Italians entered the debate advocating a new institution to be created in Italy
- In 1969 European leaders agree to fund the *European University Institute* in Florence, which opened in 1972
  - But this specialist institute wasn't the full supranational university many had called for
- In 2005 Commission President José Manuel Barroso proposed a *European Institute of Innovation and Technology*
  - This was never realised as it has no support amongst member states and existing universities

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A pro-European who calls for a 'European renaissance'  
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An overhaul of the European project including: genuine tax and social convergence, reforming institutions, joint EU budget, shared defence.

While arguing:  
“we have neglected the solidarity between us ...  
The strongest cement that binds the European Union together will always be culture and knowledge”



*I believe we should create European Universities – a network of universities across Europe with programs that have all their students study abroad and take classes in at least two languages. These European Universities will also be drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence. We should set for ourselves the goal of creating at least 20 of them by 2024. However, we must begin setting up the first of these universities as early as the next academic year, with real European semesters and real European diplomas*

# Policy Timeline

- Macrons vision was swiftly embraced by the European Commission who produced the report *Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture* presented to EU Leaders in Nov 2017—which recommended ‘creating world-class European universities that can work seamlessly together across borders’
- In December 2017, the European Council called for Member States, the Council and the Commission to take work forward with a view to:
  - “strengthening strategic partnerships across the EU between higher education institutions and encouraging the emergence by 2024 of some twenty 'European Universities', consisting in bottom-up networks of universities across the EU which will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities”
- In May 2018 the Education Committee of the Council endorsed the European Universities initiative as a flagship scheme of the EEA



# Agreed Objectives

Next step: pilot round to 'test different innovative and structural models, while supporting the 'creation of alliances, ideally composed of 5 to 8 partners'.

Two main objectives for the EUI were set:

1. Promoting common European values as enshrined in article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and a strengthened European identity by bringing together a new generation of Europeans, who are able to cooperate and work within different European and global cultures, in different languages, and across borders, sectors and academic disciplines.
2. Reach a substantial leap in quality, performance, attractiveness and international competitiveness of European higher education institutions and contributing to the European knowledge economy, employment, culture and welfare by making best use of innovative pedagogies and striving to make the knowledge triangle a reality. 'European Universities' will be key drivers to boost the quality of higher education and where possible to strengthen its link to the research and innovation landscape in Europe and its outreach towards the society and economy.

# Criteria and Applications

Three 'key elements' of a successful alliances by 2025.

1. a shared, integrated, long-term joint strategy for education with links to research and innovation and society at large
2. a European higher education inter-university 'campus', where all students and staff can move seamlessly (physically or virtually) between any of the partner institutions who have embedded mobility at all levels and deliver new joint and flexible curricula
3. European knowledge-creating teams of students, academics, and other parties of relevance to the alliances, to address societal and other challenges in a multi-disciplinary approach.

54 applications first round of pilot funding assessed against five criteria: relevance of the proposal, geographical balance, quality of the proposal and implementation, quality of the alliance cooperation arrangements, and sustainability and dissemination

# The Selected Networks

- June 2019: 17 European Universities, involving 114 HEIs from 24 countries were selected to receive up to €5m over three years.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. UNA Europa   | 9. European Digital UniverCity  |
| 2. The 4EU+ Alliance  | 10. European Partnership for an Innovative Campus Unifying Regions                          |
| 3. ARQUS European University Alliance   | 11. Alliance for common fine arts curriculum  |
| 4. CHARM European University (Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based, Mobile) | 12. European University Alliance for Global Health  |
| 5. CIVICA - The European University in social sciences                              | 13. European Universities Transforming to an Open, Inclusive Academy for 2050               |
| 6. CIVIS - a European civic university alliance                                     | 14. Fostering Outreach within European Regions, Transnational Higher Education and Mobility |
| 7. European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability                       | 15. The European University of the Seas   |
| 8. ECIU University of Europe  | 16. University Network for Innovation, Technology and Engineering                           |
|   | 17. Young Universities for the Future of Europe   |

- November 2019: second call opened backed by more money. Around 24 new alliances to be funded in July 2020.
- The number of alliances after the second round will be far greater than the goal of 'at least 20' in Macron's Sorbonne speech.

# Example

Germany

Freie Universität Berlin

Italy

Alma Mater Studiorum  
Università di Bologna

Poland

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w  
Krakowie

UK

The University of Edinburgh

Finland

Helsingin Yliopisto

Belgium

KU Leuven

Spain

Universidad Complutense de  
Madrid

France

Université Paris 1  
Panthéon-Sorbonne



# University Alliances

- Why do organisations enter into partnerships/ alliances/ networks/ consortia?
- The Association of Commonwealth Universities is a longstanding alliance dating back to 1913
- Moodie (2010) notes the “number of international associations of universities has exploded since the 1970s. In the 35 years from 1972 to 2007 at least 38 international associations of universities were established, more than one each year. Neither is the pace slackening.”
- Collaboration at a time of heightened competition is a curious phenomenon



# The Art of Alliances

Kanter's work considers:

- i. the characteristics of successful alliances
- ii. how organisations seek out and select new partners
- iii. the different types of integration achieved

*Collaborative advantage* is the mutual benefit, or symbiotic advantage, yielded from the synergy of creating new value together.



Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter  
Harvard University

# An Age of Alliances

- The late 1980s – collaboration between competitors emerges as a fashion
- Early 1990s – Rosabeth Moss Kanter undertook a “worldwide quest for lessons about productive partnerships, especially but not exclusively those intercompany relationships that spanned two or more countries and cultures”
- Produced the seminar work *Collaborative Advantage: The Art of Alliances* (1994) – based on the business world



Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter  
Harvard University

# University Alliances

Gunn and Mintrom (2013) applied Kanter's work to global university alliances and found it highly relevant to HE and useful when analysing the current wave of 'strategic' collaboration between institutions

A study of The Association of Pacific Rim Universities, Universitas 21, and the Worldwide Universities Network identified five factors which shape the ability of alliances to create collaborative advantage for their members.

1. the alliance's strategic intent

2. the comparative status of member universities

3. the opportunities created for mutual learning among members

4. the salience of the alliance inside member universities

5. the on-going relevance of the alliance and its capacity for change

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## **Global university alliances and the creation of collaborative advantage**

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The past two decades have seen the development of many global university alliances. Some alliances have taken a bilateral form, others are multilateral. In a period of increasing competition among universities, such alliances represent a curious form of cooperation. They have become more common just as global competition for academic talent has been increasing, rankings of universities have become more sophisticated, and universities have sought to attract high fee-paying international students. When does cooperation make sense? What opportunities and risks do alliances present to their members? These questions are considered with reference to three global alliances: The Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU), Universitas 21 (U21), and the Worldwide Universities Network (WWUN). We conclude that multilateral, global university alliances represent valuable resources for ambitious, change-oriented university leaders.

**Keywords:** collaborative advantage; collective action; competition; global alliances; globalisation; knowledge economy; university management

Since universities first began, higher education has had a strong transnational dimension. For centuries, shared second languages – Latin, then German, now English – have served to advance scholarship and promote the movement of academics and students across national borders. This has accelerated in recent decades. Changes in the ease and cost of international travel, combined with increasing recognition of the economic value of higher education, have stimulated unprecedented growth in international education (Stevenson, 2007; Wildavsky, 2010). Within this context, many new kinds of university alliances and partnerships have emerged (Boerkin, 2002).

To take one example, Monash University, based in Melbourne, Australia, has been highly entrepreneurial in expanding its international operations, using a variety of organisational approaches. Monash currently has campuses in Malaysia and South Africa, and centres in Prato, Italy and Mumbai, India. In partnership with China's Southeast University, it has created a purpose-built campus to deliver advanced postgraduate education near Shanghai. Monash has also forged an alliance with the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom, designed to establish both as 'globally networked universities'. This partnership was proclaimed as a way of helping meet student, industry and government demand for universities to produce graduates with a global education, and generate research tackling strategically-significant problems that no single institution could address. During this period of extensive global outreach, Monash has significantly improved its position in the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Academic Ranking of World Universities (hereafter

# Policy Success

Why has the EUI succeeded while previous attempts at a European University failed?

1. The 'network or networks' approach overcomes several difficulties all at once:
  - a) It locates the scheme and its beneficiaries in a wide range of locations without favouring one particular country
  - b) Eliminates disagreements over what form the institution should take as multiple forms of higher education can take place across different networks
  - c) Removes the expense of building a new physical campus and the difficulties of launching a new entity in a sector where history, esteem and status are paramount
  - d) Turns a threat into an opportunity. A new university would be seen as a rival by existing universities and their funding nation states who have spent money nurturing them through excellence initiatives

# Policy Success

Why has the EUI succeeded while previous attempts at a European University failed?

2. Changes within European universities (driven by EU, nation state and universities themselves) have made the EUI more feasible:
  - a) The Bologna Process has resulted in greater harmonisation and improved understanding of the processes needed to achieve this
  - b) Greater institutional autonomy means universities are free to invest, innovate and enter into alliance negotiations
  - c) Universities are expected to be more self-financing meaning they are very enthusiastic about new sources of funding to bid for
  - d) The internationalisation agenda has produced more outward looking institutions that are more likely to collaborate with foreign partners
  - e) National excellence schemes have produced better resourced institutions which are strategically well placed to enter into alliances with similar counterparts



# Concluding Key Observations

The European Universities initiative:

1. is about linking together existing institutions through alliance formation—not creating a new one
  - The ‘network of networks’ approach is a novel way to achieve alliance formation in higher education
  - This helped overcome the political and practical obstacles of the schemes suggested over the preceding 70 years
2. is a state initiated scheme (driven by the EU) — it did not organically emerge from within the higher education community
  - Reminding us of the underlying political purpose of the EUI

# Concluding Key Observations

The European Universities initiative:

3. is an explicitly ***regional*** project— not a truly international one
  - Where a region, Europe, is responding to a changing global order and the dynamics of heightened connectivity and competitiveness
  - Competitiveness of European economies in the global knowledge economy and the competitiveness of European universities in the context of the global rankings comparisons and international competition for students and staff
  - Here, Europe sees China not only as a trade rival but as ‘a systemic rival’ (European Commission, March 2019) offering a competing model of the state and economic management. And Europe must rise to this challenge from a rival region



# Concluding Key Observations

The European Universities initiative:

4. illustrates the long running debate over the purpose of the European political project —is it about economics/trade or culture/social solidarity?
  - Where supranational higher education can serve both functions
  - a) the economic rationale has endured but changed overtime
    - Understanding the nuclear age has been replaced with the narrative of the global knowledge economy
    - Catch up with the United States has been succeeded by competing with the 'systemic rival' of China
  - b) the cultural/social role was marginalised is now given greater status
    - A passionate promotion of European languages and cultures is an explicit feature of Macron's renaissance



**Thank you very much**

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