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Quo vadis EHEA:

balancing structural continuation and political variety

**The Future of Higher Education –
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The Future of the EHEA?

- **The European idea and the EHEA**
- **European collaboration and the EHEA**
- **Moving European collaboration in HE to a new more integrated level: European Universities Initiative**
- **Conclusion: Quo vadis EHEA?**

The European idea and the EHEA

Key question:

**What kind of universities
for what kind of Europe?**

The University as “the Most Magnificent Form of Cultural Institution Created by the European Mind”



*“Wir brauchen den
‘gemeinsamen Markt der
Intelligenzen’. Was entspricht
mehr der Idee und der Tradition
der Universität, die doch die
großartigste Schöpfung des
europäischen Geistes auf dem
Gebiet der kulturellen
Institutionen ist”*

(Walter Hallstein;
first President of the Commission of
the European Economic Community
1969: 258-59)

The European idea



President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen:

(10 September 2019)

“The EU needs to be more strategic, more assertive and more united in its approach to external relations”

“We must use our diplomatic and economic strength to support global stability and prosperity... and be better able to export our values and standards.”

The European idea

German Chancellor Angela Merkel:

“Europe must reposition itself to stand up to the challenges posed by its big global rivals..... This is indeed a time when we need to fight for our principles and fundamental values” (15 May 2019)

- *Economic competitiveness*
- *Science and innovation*
- *‘Science diplomacy’*

Fundamental value issue:

Technologizing humanity or
humanizing technology



The European idea



French President M. Emmanuel Macron:

(26 September 2017; Sorbonne University)

- ***“Only Europe can guarantee genuine sovereignty or our ability to exist in today’s world to defend our values and interests.”***
- ***“Strongest cement that binds the EU together will always be culture and knowledge”***
- ***“We should create European Universities – a network of universities across Europe. These European Universities will be drivers of educational innovation and the quest for excellence.”***

The European idea and the EHEA



Fundamental European values and principles currently only symbolically addressed in the EHEA, no action to uphold them

The level of academic freedom of each delegation's country by EU status at the time of the Ministerial Conference over the period 1999 until 2018

	Severely restricted	Restricted	Somewhat restricted	Few restrictions	No restrictions
Neither member nor candidate to EU or EFTA/EEA	0	10	22	46	1
EU candidate	1	1	8	28	27
EFTA/EEA	0	0	0	0	29
EU member	0	0	2	28	221

Source: *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset (version 9)*, prepared by the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Delegations from countries with restricted or severely restricted academic freedom over time

Year	Delegations
1999	0
2001	0
2003	1
2005	1
2007	1
2009	1
2010	1
2012	1
2015	2
2018	4

Source: *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset (version 9)*, prepared by the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

Mean academic freedom level in Bologna member countries at each Ministerial Conference

Scale from 0 (= severe restrictions) to 4 (= no restrictions)

Year	Number of Delegations	Mean value of academic freedom
1999	30	3.83
2001	34	3.74
2003	41	3.61
2005	44	3.57
2007	44	3.50
2009	45	3.56
2010	47	3.53
2012	46	3.46
2015	43	3.37
2018	46	3.17
Total	420	

Source: *Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset (version 9)*, prepared by the Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

“Limited interest and understanding of policy-makers in the university’s multiple roles in societal development”

“University reform documents give little attention to the important role of universities in maintain and strengthening a humanistic culture, social cohesion and solidarity, a vivid public sphere, and an inclusive, well-functioning democracy.”

(Maassen & Olsen, 2007: 9)

European collaboration and the EHEA



Traditional European collaboration in higher education through a
“Projectization” approach

Erasmus/Erasmus + & Framework Programmes

Erasmus+: Three Key Areas

**Example Key Area 2 - Strategic partnerships for higher education:
project coordinating institution, % region of origin (2014-2019).**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
East	26 %	21 %	21 %	20 %	24 %	24 %
North	13 %	17 %	15 %	16 %	17 %	15 %
South	24 %	26 %	28 %	28 %	24 %	26 %
West	36 %	36 %	35 %	35 %	35 %	36 %

- **Key Area 2: cooperation for innovation and exchange of good practices**
- **Region of origin refers to north, south, east, west categorization used in Erasmus+ funding calls, set by EuroVoc.**

EHEA in transition period

- **EHEA contribution to strengthening the European idea as a basic element in the determination of Europe's position in the world limited**
- **EHEA action plan 2018/19 neglects fundamental values and principles**
- **Situation in a number of EHEA member countries with respect to fundamental values and principles, e.g. in the area of academic freedom, is deteriorating**
- **Intra-EHEA Science Diplomacy approach is apparently not working**
- **High to moderate participation in Erasmus+ projects throughout the EHEA**

Moving European collaboration to a new, more integrated level: European Universities Initiative

Window of opportunity: moving from relatively isolated project-based intra-European HE collaboration (“projectization”), to long-term, programmatic, more integrated forms of collaboration that are more directly and effectively linked to the European idea

Innovative programme: European Universities Initiative (EUI)

European Universities Initiative (EUI)

number of coordinating institutions, per country (2019)

Country	# coordinating institutions
France	6
Germany	3
Spain	3
the Netherlands	2
Belgium	1
Hungary	1
Slovenia	1
TOTAL	17

**European Universities Initiative:
number of participating institutions per country (2019)**

Country	# institutions in alliances
France	16
Germany	15
Italy	12
Spain	11
Sweden	6
Hungary	5
Poland	5
Belgium	4
Finland	4
Netherlands	4
Greece	3
Lithuania	3
Portugal	3
Romania	3
UK	3
Austria	2
Croatia	2
Czech	2
Denmark	2
Ireland	2
Latvia	2
Norway**	2
Cyprus	1
Malta	1
Slovenia	1

- Bulgaria, Estonia, Iceland**, Lichtenstein**, Luxembourg, Rep of North Macedonia**, Serbia**, Slovakia, and Turkey** had no participating institutions

(** eligible countries which are not EU members)

Quo vadis EHEA?

Two movements:

- 1. Collaboration in higher education: From EHEA to Global Higher Education Area (GHEA)**
 - Connecting higher education institutions around the world through a focus on educational quality and the use of digital technologies.
 - Aimed at contributing to the realization of the SDGs
- 2. European integration in higher education: back to the core of EU/EFTA member states**
 - Integration instead of project collaboration
 - Following the European Universities Initiative ambitions
 - Strongly embedded in the European idea with its fundamental values and principles (incl. academic freedom)
 - In need of an agreed upon set of core values and principles all participating countries need to adhere to and an independent agency for monitoring the developments in the participating countries

What kind of universities for what kind of Europe?



Respecting the Institutional Foundation of the University

- Using the European Universities Initiative for fulfilling multiple roles in society and contributing to the adherence of fundamental European values and principles



https://www.koerber-stiftung.de/fileadm/user_upload/koerber-stiftung/redaktion/gulch/pdf/2019/GUC-Studie_Langfassung_The_Place_of_Universities_in_Society.pdf

Thank you very much for your attention!

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Research Group:

Knowledge, Learning and Governance: Studies in
higher education and work (HEDWORK)

(<https://www.uv.uio.no/english/research/groups/hedwork/index.html>)