

The Lisbon Declaration

Europe's Universities beyond 2010: Diversity with a Common Purpose

I. Introduction

- 1. Strong Universities for Europe:** Europe's universities have, since their foundation over 800 years ago, championed enquiry, fostered a civilised and tolerant society and prepared young people for their role in society and the economy. Europe now expects its universities to perform an even wider role, enabling civil society to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Climate change, energy issues, increasing longevity, the rapid pace of technological change, growing global interdependence and rising economic inequality both within Europe and between Europe and other continents: all these require investigation, fundamental research as well as technological and social innovation which will solve problems as they arise and ensure economic success combined with social stability in many different societies. The universities of Europe, themselves diverse, are together ready to meet these challenges.
- 2. Universities and the Knowledge Society:** The central task is to equip Europe's populations – young and old – to play their part within the Knowledge Society, in which economic, social and cultural development depend primarily on the creation and dissemination of knowledge and skills. Modern societies, much more than the agricultural and manufacturing societies of past centuries, depend on the application of knowledge, high-level skills, entrepreneurial acumen and the exploitation of communications and information technology. It is these skills which Europe's universities are good at developing, through discipline-based education as well as more professional training, all based in the fundamental research which is the particular role of the university system. Universities therefore look forward to playing a pivotal role in meeting the innovation goals set by the Lisbon Agenda and in particular through their commitment to the European Higher Education and the European Research Areas.
- 3. A diversified university system:** Universities recognize that moving from an elite to a mass system of higher education implies the existence of universities with different missions, and strengths. This requires a system of academic institutions with highly diversified profiles, based on equality of esteem for different missions. Institutions will increasingly offer different kinds of study programmes leading to a wide spectrum of graduate qualifications that allow progression routes from one institution to another and will develop research, innovation and knowledge transfer activities in line with their diverse missions.
- 4. The fundamental importance of university autonomy:** For universities, the adaptability and flexibility required to respond to a changing society and to changing demands relies above all on increased autonomy and adequate funding, giving them the space in which to find their place. The common purpose of contributing to

Europe's development is not opposed to diversity; instead, it requires that each university should define and pursue its mission, and thus collectively provide for the needs of individual countries and Europe as a whole. Autonomy implies control of major assets such as estates, and of staff; it also implies a readiness to be accountable both to the internal university community – both staff and students – and to society as a whole.

5. **Universities and an inclusive society:** Europe's universities accept their public responsibility for promoting social equity and an inclusive society. They are making great efforts to widen the socio-economic basis of their student populations; they are dedicated to ensuring access and giving opportunities to succeed to all those who are qualified and have the potential to benefit from higher education. Success in this task requires partnership with governments and other parts of the educational system.

II. Building the European Higher Education Area

6. **Refocusing on key goals:** Universities are fully committed to building the EHEA, as the immense success of the rapid introduction of a three cycle higher education structure across Europe shows. At the same time Trends V also demonstrates that one of the paradoxes of the Bologna Process reforms is that while their goal is to respond to societal concerns, there has been until now insufficient dialogue with society. Thus universities and government, while continuing to improve understanding and better usage of the different tools, need to re-engage with the overall purposes of the reform in order to ensure that a stronger student focus, employability, mobility, attractiveness and social inclusion are firmly embedded as characteristics of the emerging EHEA.
7. **A stronger student focus:** Universities are aware that additional efforts are needed to meet the challenges of the shift towards student-centred learning. This involves encouraging use of learning outcomes and being explicit about what graduates are expected to know and be able to do, but also encouraging critical thinking and the active engagement of students. A particular effort needs to be made to motivate and train academic staff to work within such a student-centred paradigm. Students and their representatives must be involved in working through the consequences of these new approaches.
8. **ECTS:** Trends V shows the effective role of ECTS in structuring learning processes, when it is used properly on the basis of learning outcomes and student workload. It provides a basis for trust within and between institutions, cycles and disciplines, thus promoting the flexible and multi-faceted mobility that is a key objective of the Bologna Process. Universities strongly urge the European Commission to build on the achievements of ECTS in the further development of proposals for a credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET). Every effort should be made to avoid the existence of two separate credit systems within one lifelong learning strategy. Universities wish to take a leading role in the further development of ECTS. EUA will take up this challenge as part of its continued support to universities in implementing the Bologna Process reforms through the Bologna Handbook and the

organisation of dedicated seminars and other events; as the Trends V results demonstrate, this process will take time.

9. **Creating a supportive learning environment:** Aware of the importance of adapting teaching and learning processes to the needs of increasingly diverse student populations, universities will, in partnership with governments, seek to ensure that high quality student support services, in particular guidance and counselling services, are accessible to all students. Reaching these objectives requires strategic commitment on the part of institutions at the highest level and financial incentives from governments in favour of wider access.
10. **Employability:** Universities recognise that additional efforts are needed to make employers aware of the enormous efforts which are being undertaken to reform curricula. They will seek to engage more consistently in dialogue with employers, provide better information on the competences and learning outcomes of their graduates and put in place systems to track graduate employment. In conjunction with state and/or private agencies, they will address the question of how to provide more systematic career guidance support and services to their students. Both institutions and governments should translate this broadly accepted policy commitment into action. Governments are urged to adapt their own public sector employment structures to take account of the new degree structures – an issue pointed out in Trends IV, but not yet resolved.
11. **Lifelong Learning:** Universities understand the urgent need to make lifelong learning a reality in the years to come, both with regard to continuing education and training for well-qualified graduates and to initial education for disadvantaged groups. Experience shows that engaging in lifelong learning provides particular opportunities for strengthening local partnerships, diversifying funding and responding to the challenges of regional development. The Bologna tools, in particular the overarching Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area adopted by Ministers in Bergen, provide opportunities to offer more diversified programmes as well as facilitating the development of systems to enable the recognition of prior informal and work-based learning. EUA urges the European Commission in its proposals for a Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning to avoid the development of two parallel qualifications frameworks that relate to higher education as to do so will cause problems in implementation at national level and confusion among actors on the ground. EUA also calls upon the European Commission actively to involve universities in policy development on lifelong learning. This is an issue of major concern both to the higher education and the vocational training sector and thus requires initiatives that are compatible and coherent.

III. The Internationalisation of the European Higher Education Area

12. **Internationalisation and the “Bologna Trademark”:** The Bologna process is one of the great successes of Europe. It is being watched with increasing interest throughout the world and becoming a ‘European trademark’. The Bologna reforms make European HE attractive because they have an underlying philosophy and methodology

and use transparent tools such as ECTS. These principles translate well to the international environment as they communicate a general understanding of higher education as a public good and place a strong emphasis on the academic values that underpin higher education.

13. Institutional strategies for internationalisation: Universities are a major driving force in developing strategies and structures for international cooperation and exchange at institutional, national and European level. They are increasingly developing international strategies and profiles that encompass both teaching and research activities, seek to balance cooperation and competition and target specific geographic areas. Graduate education has a particular role to play in promoting internationalisation at institutional level.

14. Further developing internationalisation: Europe's universities are committed to making Europe the destination of choice for students and scholars. EUA will continue its activities by: promoting and explaining the Bologna process to international partners; contributing to policy discussions at European level; and, together with National Rectors Conferences, developing a dialogue with higher education associations in different world regions, thus laying a strong basis for long lasting partnership and cooperation. Universities, through EUA, should develop a code of conduct for international cooperation and exchanges in the EHEA. The European Commission and national governments are urged to support this internationalization process through the development of flexible funding tools enabling institutions to implement long term international strategies, and to take action to facilitate the mobility of students and scholars. In particular national authorities are urged to adapt immigration laws and visa regulations to enable these strategies to succeed. The active participation of international partners in this dialogue will also be important in reaching the goals set.

IV. Promoting Research and Innovation

15. Linking higher education and research: the provision of research based education at all levels is a particular strength of Europe and Europe's universities. Institutions offering research based higher education should ensure that a research component is included and developed in all cycles thus allowing students to acquire research experience and encouraging an interest in research as a possible career. This also applies in relation to the acquisition of a broad range of transferable skills that should be included not only at doctoral level but in curricula at all levels, thus promoting a new generation of leaders able to integrate multiple perspectives and be responsive to the needs of rapidly changing labour markets.

16. Embedding high quality doctoral programmes in universities: EUA adopted 10 basic principles for doctoral programmes in Salzburg in February 2005. These have since constituted the framework for discussion on doctoral programmes in Europe and have been further developed in a report prepared for the forthcoming Bologna Ministerial meeting in London. This report underlines once more that original research has to remain the main component of all doctorates. Building upon the

outcomes of this Report, EUA will establish a permanent framework for the further development, cooperation and exchange of good practices between doctoral programmes and schools across Europe's universities. Recognising that the attractiveness of a future career in research is determined largely at the doctoral stage, universities furthermore need to engage actively with national research councils and other funding agencies (including the European Commission) to improve the conditions of the financing of doctoral candidates and programmes, and the future career development of researchers in both academic and non-academic sectors.

17. **Developing institutional strategies for research:** Encouraged by the creation of the European Research Council, universities will work to strengthen further their institutional research strategies with a view to introducing strategic management approaches. These will reinforce the pooling of research expertise within the university and create working processes that maximise the opportunities offered by European and national research funding instruments (as the main element of university external research resources). While individual talent remains at the heart of the research process, team-building of critical mass in areas of university strengths and the optimisation of the creation and use of research infrastructures will remain crucial to success. The increased costs of research (including scientific infrastructure) will intensify the need to identify priorities.
18. **Promoting innovation capacity:** Universities will seek increasingly to enhance their research and improve their innovation capacities by further developing partnerships with external partners, by professionalising their processes of knowledge transfer and by looking for synergy between regional, national and European research policy initiatives. Consortia-building and clustering in specific research domains between universities and other partners will continue to develop as a major feature of innovation, including regional innovation. For its part, EUA will promote the need for greater linkage between FP7 and national research funding and the European Structural Funds in support of research and innovation, and necessary infrastructure. Working with its National Rectors Conference members, EUA will seek to engage with regional partners to work towards this goal of securing more funds for research and innovation activities from the EU Structural Funds.
19. **University-enterprise collaboration:** For many years, universities have fostered extensive and successful collaborations with business enterprises – such good practices have formed the basis of the widely-recognised “Responsible Partnering Guidelines”. University-business collaboration is a process of “Co-Innovation” with knowledge transfer seen as a core mission of universities. EUA will continue to work to improve the university-business dialogue including, for example, in relation to doctoral programmes and in helping to develop the EU-proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT).
20. **Cost accounting of research activities:** Universities are moving steadily towards the full cost accounting of their research activities and therefore expect European and national research funding agencies and programmes to provide full cost support to research contracts and grants. As a follow-through to its successful efforts in achieving improved indirect research costs support in the new FP7 eligible research

costs model, EUA, in cooperation with its members, will monitor the progress of the implementation of this model up to the mid-term review in 2010.

21. **More flexible legal and regulatory conditions:** EUA will work with its National Rectors Conference members to discuss with national governments the need for more flexible and favourable legal and regulatory conditions (concerning remuneration, portability of pensions etc) for university-based researchers. This is necessary if Europe is to gain the potential full benefits from the new opportunities offered, for example by the funding schemes of the European Research Council.
22. **Open Access:** Universities and the EUA, through its Working Group on Open Access, will continue to work towards realising “open access” principles in relation to the dissemination of research results. Universities wish to preserve their public role and responsibility as “guardians” of research knowledge as a public good – and hence strengthen the University-Society dialogue through optimum use of the benefits of digital technology.

V. Quality

23. **Quality processes and institutional mission:** quality processes should encourage a culture of risk-taking which attaches greater importance to success than to failure, in order to produce an institutional milieu favourable to creativity, knowledge creation and innovation. Universities reconfirm their commitment to continuous quality development and improvement in all aspects of their institutional mission. Institutional quality processes should be based on and adequately reflect institutional values and mission. External and internal quality systems should take into account these aspects as starting points of any evaluation.
24. **The link to external accountability:** Universities fully embrace the responsibilities derived from their commitment to quality; they recognise the importance of complementing an internal quality culture with external accountability processes. External quality mechanisms should be linked to but not duplicate internal processes, so as to ensure their wide-spread acceptance within the university, benefit from synergies and keep bureaucracy at a minimum. To this end, institutions should play an active role – through their rectors’ conferences and in a dialogue with their governments and QA agencies – in designing their external accountability systems in line with institutional quality processes.
25. **The European dimension of quality:** Similarly, the European QA dimension should be developed in a partnership with higher education institutions, students, QA agencies and governments. The proposed governance of the European Register of QA agencies – based on a partnership of stakeholders that ensures a system of checks and balances – will provide the basis for trust and transparency and thus increase the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area. Ministers are urged to adopt the proposals elaborated by the E4 group – ENQA, ESIB, EUA and EURASHE - over the last two years, thus demonstrating trust in the responsible stakeholder partnership underlying these proposals.

VI. Autonomy and funding

26. **Autonomy:** Governments are urged to endorse the principle of institutional autonomy so as to accommodate diverse institutional missions and to include academic autonomy (curricula, programmes and research) financial autonomy (lump sum budgeting), organisational autonomy (the structure of the university) and staffing autonomy (responsibility for recruitment, salaries and promotion). Autonomy should be founded on adequate public funding and should also facilitate the strategic management of public and private income and endowments (from philanthropists, companies, alumni and students) by the universities themselves. Governments are urged to benchmark progress against target levels set in relation to both autonomy and funding of universities. Universities will strive to reinforce further leadership and strengthen professional management.
27. **Increasing and diversifying funding streams:** EUA continues to be committed to identifying supplementary revenue streams for universities and to promoting modes of governance that support optimal transparency in financial management. The data collected by the EUA funding working group demonstrate the huge diversity of public funding mechanisms to be found across Europe. They vary enormously in volume, legal base, methodology, policy thrust, and in the degree to which central authorities control institutional budgets. EUA will continue its investigations to the point at which it can reliably profile European universities on the basis of an agreed template and elaborate a general costing methodology. This requires more comprehensive mapping of current public funding models, of their legal and financial environments, and of the supplementary income streams available; it therefore touches directly on key features of both the Bologna Process, such as the social dimension (access, equity in student support, and affordability), the international dimension (attractiveness and competitiveness) and mobility (the portability of student support) and the Lisbon Strategy. The EUA supports the European Commission's goal of increasing investment in higher education to at least 2% of GDP within a decade and urges all partners to work together to ensure that this target is met.
28. **Private contributions to higher education:** EUA calls on governments to reaffirm that higher education is predominantly a public good. However, in the context of university funding and in response to the growth in student numbers and the high cost of maintaining excellence in a global context, EUA will continue to engage in the debate on the public-private partnership in funding higher education and will specifically address the issue of tuition fees. For example, lifelong learning requires funding models to be far more flexible than the older systems designed to address the needs of traditional full-time students. EUA will therefore work together with its members to study policy alternatives on the private (student or graduate) contribution to the cost of higher education taking into consideration the various national contexts.

VII Conclusion

29. **Strong Universities for Europe:** Europe's universities are a major force in shaping the Europe of Knowledge. They accept the responsibilities which this brings and, in

return, ask that governments, and civil society in general, should recognize their responsibility to enable universities to secure the resources which will permit them to fulfil their mission not just well, but with excellence and in a way which allows them to compete with the higher education systems of other continents. Not just Europe, but the whole world, is becoming a “Knowledge Society” and the Lisbon Strategy, the creation of the European Higher Education and Research Areas, together with the efforts of national governments, will require constant reconsideration in order to meet the challenge which this presents. These are exciting times for universities as they contribute to innovation through teaching and learning, research and knowledge transfer. Europe’s universities welcome the opportunity which this gives them to help to shape Europe’s future.

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