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EUA strategy and guidelines for action

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Mission and policy statement

The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe.

EUA's *mission* is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research, through active support and guidance to its members as autonomous institutions in their development of the quality of teaching, learning and research and in enhancing their contributions to society.

With reference to its aims, as contained in the Articles of Association, and to its Salamanca Message of March 2001, EUA will focus its *policies* and *service* to members on the creation of a European area for higher education and research.

Strategy and objectives

In order to support this mission, EUA's *strategy and objectives* are to develop consensus on:

- a *European higher education and research identity* based on the *shared values* of institutional autonomy, education as a social good and research as the foundation for learning;
- the *compatibility* of *European* higher education structures through commonly accepted *norms* (as expressed in the organisation of institutions and in their capacity to share a flexible qualifications framework) in order to consolidate the role of higher education in the knowledge society, be it in terms of innovation or dissemination;
- *convergence of a European higher education area and the cohesion of research networks* to strengthen further the sector's attractiveness to stakeholders in Europe and beyond.

Methods

The range of EUA activities and services to members, both individual and collective, can be grouped into two categories:

- A. Working together: EUA draws its *expertise* from its members and from key partner organisations. Since the strengthening of the European higher education community calls for shared norms and converging practice, the EUA is uniquely placed to facilitate mutual learning and support among its members through:
 - meetings *to inform members* of European trends in higher education and research;
 - studies and publications *to analyse trends* in European convergence and to highlight shared practices;
 - consultancy *to support institutions* in developing and optimising their European profile.
- B. Advocacy on behalf of members:
 - at European level *to promote common policies*;

- at international level *to increase the visibility* of European higher education and *to prepare* its members for future global trends.

EUA LINES OF ACTION

(2002-2003)

The following is organised under four headings:

1. *Europeanising higher education and research*
2. *Empowering European universities*
3. *Representing European higher education.*

Annexe on the principles of implementation

Chapter 1. EUROPEANISING HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Based on the experience gained through the activities of its collective and individual members, over the next two years EUA will support and shape convergence at system level. Priority will be placed on promoting, through mutual learning activities, the further specification of the common framework required by the Bologna Declaration, particularly in terms of degree qualifications, quality, and the social dimension of higher education. Activities at system level will also include an active contribution to the development of the European Research Area.

1.1 European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

To contribute to the policy debate following the Prague Summit of May 2001 and to prepare the Berlin Summit in September 2003, EUA will, as a priority:

1.1.1 Take full part in the discussions of the **contact and preparatory groups** set up by the governments signatory to the Bologna Declaration, in close consultation with EUA members and such partners as ESIB, EURASHE, ENQA, and the Council of Europe.

1.1.2 Draw on the expertise of its collective and individual members by identifying and co-ordinating a **team of "experts/promoters"** to facilitate the implementation of the Bologna process at system and institutional levels.

1.1.3 Monitor the **continued development of ECTS** as a mechanism to promote the emergence of common norms in credit accumulation and transfer. This will include the organisation of counselling services to 50 individual institutions per year, under contract to the European Commission, and the provision of recommendations for future action.

1.1.4 Promote European compatibility through facilitating a discussion of quality assurance at European level, bearing in mind that the current discussions on **accreditation in Europe**, the first to take place within the context of globalisation, are drawing the attention of international and national organisations and therefore could constitute the start of a global compatibility system. EUA will continue to represent its members in this debate at the European level (in co-operation with ENQA, ESIB, IAUP, UNESCO and others), in order to ensure that their requirements are met.

EUA will also

1.1.5 Continue to support actively its members in countries which are not yet formal participants in the Bologna process but which must be included in the European higher education area. EUA's current co-ordination of the **Higher Education Working Group** in the Stability Pact and the Graz Process is an example of this support.

1.1.6 Advise a network of 70 member institutions working on the **fine-tuning of curricula** in five disciplines to support the creation of European degrees that could be recognised across the

continent. EUA will participate in the dissemination of results and the extension of this process to other disciplines.

1.1.7 Contribute to **policies on lifelong learning** in view of the Berlin Summit (2003), based on the consultation of its members regarding the *EC Memorandum on lifelong learning*. EUA will continue to gather information from members in order to develop a shared vision on lifelong learning.

1.2 European Research Area (ERA)

To contribute to the development of the ERA, EUA will, as a priority:

1.2.1 Contribute actively to the discussions aimed at **shaping the new Framework Programme (FP)**, in particular the integrated projects, the networks of excellence and the co-ordination of national programmes.

1.2.2 **Provide information on the new FP**, including information on how EUA members can participate.

1.2.3 Explore the notion of a **“European Doctorate”** label, as a way to encourage postgraduate exchange and mobility across Europe and make European higher education more attractive for international research students

EUA will also

1.2.4 Draw on its members’ expertise to **monitor the development of the ERA** and the opening up of national research programmes - where EUA can help promote the universities’ role in this process.

1.2.5 Contribute to research policy development together with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Science Foundation (ESF) and national research bodies.

The EUA Research Working Group will implement this plan in close co-operation with the EUA Board and Council.

1.3 Academic mobility

Following the *EU Mobility Action Plan*, and given the increased importance accorded to mobility in the new FP, EUA will

1.3.1 analyse the problems limiting mobility especially **short-term mobility**, and make proposals for improvement, particularly in terms of defining incentives for increased teaching staff mobility.

1.3.2 Furthermore, EUA will pursue discussions with the European Commission on the impact of the SOCRATES programme on participating institutions, taking up the question of the content of the **institutional contract**, and the role of staff mobility in this framework.

2. EMPOWERING EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

In order to promote convergence and more transparency, EUA will support its members’ institutional development through identifying good practices in four priority areas: quality assurance, management development, the use of new technologies and the dialogue of universities with their community.

2.1 Quality assurance

Through its **institutional evaluation programme**, EUA will continue to promote European quality in higher education. This programme will be **expanded** to offer the possibility of

2.1.1 evaluating a range of activities to facilitate the **European convergence** of institutions:

- 2.1.1.1 Capacity for the strategic *management of change* through internal quality audits
- 2.1.1.2 *Europeanisation* (e.g., use of ECTS, introduction of the two-tier degree structure, etc.)
- 2.1.1.3 *Internationalisation* (jointly with IMHE and ACA)
- 2.1.1.4 Development of the universities' European *research profile*
- 2.1.1.5 Organisation of *lifelong learning* activities
- 2.1.1.6 Implementation of *ICT strategies* for teaching and learning (see 2.3 below).

2.1.2 EUA's experience and expertise in these areas will be used to facilitate the **integration of its members in South East European and CIS countries** within the wider European convergence process.

2.1.3 EUA could **provide consultancy**, upon request, to QA agencies when they are being established, or will evaluate established agencies in and outside Europe, especially those agencies in countries where European higher education courses are being offered.

2.2 *Management development*

2.2.1 In co-operation with IMHE, EUA will continue to provide **training seminars** for its members' new leaders. This activity will be re-designed over the next two years to ensure that the curriculum and activities respond fully to the latest European and international developments and provide the leaders of EUA member institutions with the tools they need for adaptation to the European higher education and research areas. Moreover, EUA will provide a pool of experts available for members wishing to re-orient their institutions in that direction.

2.2.2 In addition, EUA will offer **workshops** to increase awareness of the success factors and obstacles encountered in the management of research activities at institutional level. The EUA Research Working Group, together with specialised partners (e.g., ESF, ALLEA), will develop workshops on issues such as the financial and legal implications of Intellectual Property Rights and the special needs of social sciences and humanities research.

2.3 *New technologies*

2.3.1 EUA is developing, with the *Politecnico di Torino*, an on-line **interactive knowledge base** on the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) by universities. This knowledge base, called NINEVEH, is being established in order to provide EUA members with guidance and examples of good practice in the use of ICT. NINEVEH is now functional and will become fully operational in September 2001, which is the occasion to launch an information campaign among EUA members.

2.3.2 EUA will continue to promote the effective use of ICT for teaching and learning. Central to this is the offer of **formative evaluations** on EUA members' ICT strategies, in order to assist universities with their institutional development as part of their *quality* assurance procedures (cf. 3.1).

2.3.3 Further, in order to offer universities the tools to evaluate virtual learning platforms and to improve their own virtual learning offers, EUA is part of a consortium developing a **benchmarking system for virtual campuses** (BENVIC). This system could be launched during the academic year 2001-2002.

2.3.4 Simultaneously, EUA is involved in exploratory discussions about the creation of a **European Virtual University**, i.e., an Internet Portal, which would provide access to information on and enrolment at all distance courses provided by European institutions.

2.4 *The role of universities in the community*

EUA will explore the European commonalities of the university's integration in its community by developing – in cooperation with EUA members – **indicators of economic, social and cultural integration**, assessing members' dialogues with external partners or

stakeholders. If human and financial resources allow, this will start from the results of the 1998 EU-commissioned project and as a response to the Prague Communiqué which mentions the social dimension of higher education.

3. REPRESENTING EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

EUA has an important role to play in lobbying more widely with different European and international partners on behalf of European higher education institutions, their staff and students, in order to ensure that their wider role and responsibilities are fully recognised.

3.1 *Intra-European relations*

As indicated throughout this document, EUA will work in close co-operation with a range of European partners including the European Commission, the European Parliament, national governments and key European higher education and research organisations. EUA will also continue to develop such co-operation with other European-wide partners in the economic, social and cultural fields – ESIB, in particular.

3.2 *Extra-European relations*

Work in priority areas can be furthered through linkages of EUA with extra-European partners – thus underlining the importance attached by EUA to promoting the attractiveness of European higher education and research, to students, teachers and scholars from outside Europe.

3.2.1 Activities will build on existing initiatives developed principally through regional groupings of universities, and mainly with North and Latin America.

3.2.2 Contacts with Asia/Pacific will be strengthened during 2002 and 2003, while preparing for long-term contacts with the Middle-East, the Mediterranean and Africa.

EUA, as a priority, will

3.2.3 endeavour to ensure that the goals, main issues and ongoing progress of the Bologna process are understood internationally. This will include brokering information and organising **international discussion fora** on specific issues (e.g., ECTS, Bachelor/Master structure, etc.).

EUA will also

3.2.4 develop operational activities dovetailing with the emerging priority of the EU to strengthen exchanges with partners outside Europe and to promote Europe as a centre of excellence.

3.2.5 explore the development of an Internet portal for European higher education institutions, which would present institutional information on relationships with Third Countries.

3.2.6 identify innovative practice in extra-European linkages among member institutions and promote these on the EUA web site.

3.3 *Strategic policy issues*

Representing European higher education institutions successfully will also involve shaping the debate on a number of key issues such as :

- The development of an international understanding of the **legal implications of the notion of the university** as a social and public good. This will constitute the basis for reaffirming in international political circles the special role of higher education institutions.

- The **centrality of the link between knowledge production and dissemination**. EUA will consult its members in order to develop a position supporting the essential link between teaching and research, as a basis for the European higher education and research area. EUA will also propose that the Magna Charta Observatory consider this link as a key to institutional autonomy and help reinforce it, where necessary, at both institutional and national levels.

Specific actions will include:

3.3.1 A position on the World Trade Organisation negotiations: the widespread concern that the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) constitutes a threat to the value of education as a public or social good requires EUA to take a position and to advocate for the special case of higher education as a service in the GATS negotiations. After the current membership consultation, EUA will seek to develop, if appropriate, a **common position with international academic partners** in order to strengthen this case.

3.3.2 Full support of the Magna Charta Observatory's role as a guarantor of the principles and values outlined in the *Magna Charta Universitatum*.

3.3.3 The completion of the publication of the series on the *History of the University in Europe* to highlight the continuity in shared academic values.

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ANNEX

This annexe sets out the principles of implementation for such an action plan, as it relates to EUA's business cycle, communication strategy and resource development.

With the support of EUA working groups, taskforces, or the steering committees of its larger programmes, **EUA Board members will facilitate and monitor** the implementation of projects defined by the guidelines mentioned in the strategy document (see below).

The business cycle

EUA's activities need to be decided, supported and validated by the members. EUA's representativity, its role and political weight as the voice of European higher education depends on the involvement and commitment of its members. Hence, the importance of its business cycle which includes the **annual Assembly** of all members, the three **sessions of the Council** and the **meetings of the Board**, all of which require extensive support work on the part of the Secretariat.

Communication as a strategy

As the voice of European higher education, EUA must develop a solid communication strategy – within the association and beyond – through:

- yearly **conferences** informing and consulting members on trends in European higher education – meetings which could help validate work conducted in special **members' task forces**;
- regular **surveys** asking members about their European development needs;
- an interactive **web-site** for news exchange (to be upgraded during 2002);
- pro-active **networking with the media interested in higher education**;
- focused **contacts** with regional, national and international partners about specific actions;
- **publication** of Members' *Directory* and *Annual report*, thematic *dossiers*, *guidelines for management* in priority areas of institutional development and *position papers* promoting the perspectives EUA members in specific areas.

Resource development

To implement its strategy, EUA must be able to count on expanded human and financial resources over the next two years.

... in terms of personnel,

- The **Secretariat** is being re-organised to ensure that its double location in Geneva and Brussels is an asset rather than an impediment to efficiency. Special attention will be paid to inter-office communication and to co-ordinated staff development.
- Drawing from its membership, EUA will develop **pools of experts** in order to support and represent the Association's *consultative role* among European institutions of higher education or to develop its visibility with its partners, in Europe and beyond.
- EUA will encourage the development of a network of **EUA fellows** (e.g., European university leaders, collaborators from rectors' conferences, higher education researchers) interested in spending sabbatical time on significant European issues in higher education and research.

... in terms of finance,

- To extend its membership basis, EUA will approach *potential members*, individual and collective, associate and affiliate, to encourage them to join the Association. The **membership campaign** is an opportunity to reflect on EUA's role as a focus for all institutions of higher education in Europe and on its potential as an umbrella organisation for all European bodies dedicated to higher education and research development.

- To promote the development of EUA on behalf of its members, foundations, governments, international organisations and the European Commission will be approached to **finance particular aspects of the action plan**. Priority activities for such financing will include those concerning the universities' involvement in the preparation of the Berlin Summit in 2003 which will take stock of progress in the implementation of the Bologna process.

For further action, suggestions and information,

contact the following members of the Board:

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