

Attention: news desks/science and education correspondents
For immediate release
Bergen, Norway, 6 April 2017

University autonomy in Europe: EUA launches full update of Scorecard

The European University Association (EUA) has presented the state of play on university autonomy in Europe with the launch of its newly-updated [Autonomy Scorecard](#). The extensive study, marking ten years of EUA work on university autonomy and more than five years of mapping, profiles and scores 29 higher education systems and is a central reference in discussions and analyses of institutional autonomy – both in Europe and beyond.

[The presentation](#) took place at the [EUA Annual Conference](#), “Autonomy and freedom: The future sustainability of universities,” hosted by the University of Bergen in Norway on 6 and 7 April 2017. The event launches a timely debate on how university autonomy and academic freedom are linked to addressing current political, economic and societal challenges in Europe.

“In a tense international political environment, promoting university autonomy as a core principle continues to be highly relevant and important, as attempts to limit or undermine it can take many forms,” said EUA President Rolf Tarrach. “Therefore, with the Autonomy Scorecard, EUA seeks to support a structured, fact-based dialogue, in partnership with the sector and public authorities.”

While [EUA’s analysis](#) shows improvements, it also reveals new restrictions in several areas as well as a lack of a global view on university autonomy. More specifically, the findings indicate that university autonomy is affected both by legal restrictions and factors such as stronger accountability measures and micromanagement. The challenging economic context impacts autonomy in financial management, staffing matters and organisational aspects. In addition, public authorities exert stronger steering through funding mechanisms, while concentration processes, like mergers, raise new questions for university autonomy.

“Autonomy is widely considered as an important prerequisite for modern universities to be able to develop institutional profiles and to deliver efficiently on their missions,” said Thomas Estermann, EUA Director of Governance, Funding and Public Policy Development, and the main expert behind the study. “It provides European institutions and policy makers with data that inform decision-making processes and it contributes to raising awareness in the university sector of the changes needed to create a regulatory environment favourable to university autonomy.”

The EUA Autonomy Scorecard is based on a core set of more than 30 indicators and is rooted in four dimensions: organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy. This latest edition features more enhanced information on [the profiled countries](#), and a reflection on the current challenges across Europe as well as foreseen developments in the future.

For more information please contact:

Jessica Carter, tel: +32 2 743 11 59; mobile: +32 473 74 87 85; email: jessica.carter@eua.be

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of approximately 800 universities in 47 European countries and 33 national rectors’ conferences (NRCs). The EUA Council is made up of the president, the members of the Board, and of the presidents of all of Europe’s NRCs. EUA works closely with its members to ensure that the voice of European universities is heard.