

# EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

# EHEA and EEA structures and priorities

Michael Gaebel  
Maria Kelo

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#EUALearnTeach

# Two parallel initiatives: competition – synergy?

## European Education Area

- announced in 2017, launched in 2020
- 27 EU member states
- Other countries can participate in some actions & activities – but no formal role
- an initiative by the European Union (EU)
- EU - limited competence: "supporting, coordinating or complementary actions" (e.g. Erasmus+, European University Strategy ...)
- all education sectors
- harmonized and inclusive education system
- quality, accessibility and mobility of education and training for all citizens

## European Higher Education Area

- Started in 1998/9 – EHEA declared in 2010
- higher education
- Coordination of national policy reforms, shared instruments
- intergovernmental process
- 2020: 49 countries
- European Commission one of the members
- Consultative members: EUA, EURASHE, ESU, ETUCE/Education international, Business Europe, ENQA, CoE, UNESCO

- High overlap in participation
- Shared instruments: degree cycles, ECTS, ESG, more coordination between EQF – EHEA-QF

## Bologna Process – 1998/99 – towards a European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

- joint goals, coordination of national reforms, common instruments (ECTS, ESG)
- compatibility among European higher education systems
- Quality assurance: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA
- 3-cycle degree system (Bachelor, Masters, Doctorate) – EHEA qualifications framework
- Recognition – Lisbon Convention & ECTS – Learning outcomes
- Mobility of students and staff – interuniversity collaboration
- Social dimension & Lifelong learning

## 2010: European Higher Education Area

- unfinished business .... - Bologna Process continues
- new topics – enhanced ways of working – slowly growing membership

## 2015: unfinished business, new topics & new ways of working

- implementation of key commitment: QA, 3 cycles, recognition
- university values: Academic Freedom, Autonomy, participation of staff and students
- Learning & teaching
- Interrelation with the European Research Area (ERA)
- Improved data collection, Peer-learning, projects

# Bologna Process working methods



- 2-4 year cycles – up to the next ministerial conference
- Workplan 2020-2024 - “Rome 2020 to Tirana 2024”
- Bologna Follow-up Group
  - all 49 countries + consultative members
  - ≥ twice p.a.
  - Reports from WGs, decisions on further work
- Bologna Secretariat – by the hosting party (Albania)
- Working groups, coordination groups task forces etc.
  - WG Monitoring
  - WG on Values
  - WG Learning & Teaching

# Learning and teaching, incl. digital developments

## Yerevan Communiqué 2015:

- « Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is the main mission of the EHEA.”

## Paris Communiqué 2018: .

- “Now it is time to add cooperation in innovative learning and teaching practices as another hallmark of the EHEA”.
- “continuous enhancement of learning and teaching across the EHEA”
- “in close collaboration with the European higher education community, in full respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.”

## Rome Communiqué 2020: Recommendations to national authorities

- make student-centred learning a reality
- foster continuous enhancement of teaching
- strengthen higher education institutions’ and systems’ capacity

## Tirana Communique 2024

## Tirana Communique - 29-30 May 2024

### Value statements

- Academic freedom & integrity
- Autonomy
- Responsibility for and of higher education
- Participation of staff and students

### Tool kit for making higher institutions more inclusive

- Principles and Guidelines for the Social Dimension (2020)
- Indicators and explanatories

Commitment to more international exchange beyond Europe

Announcement of the revision of the Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA (ESG)

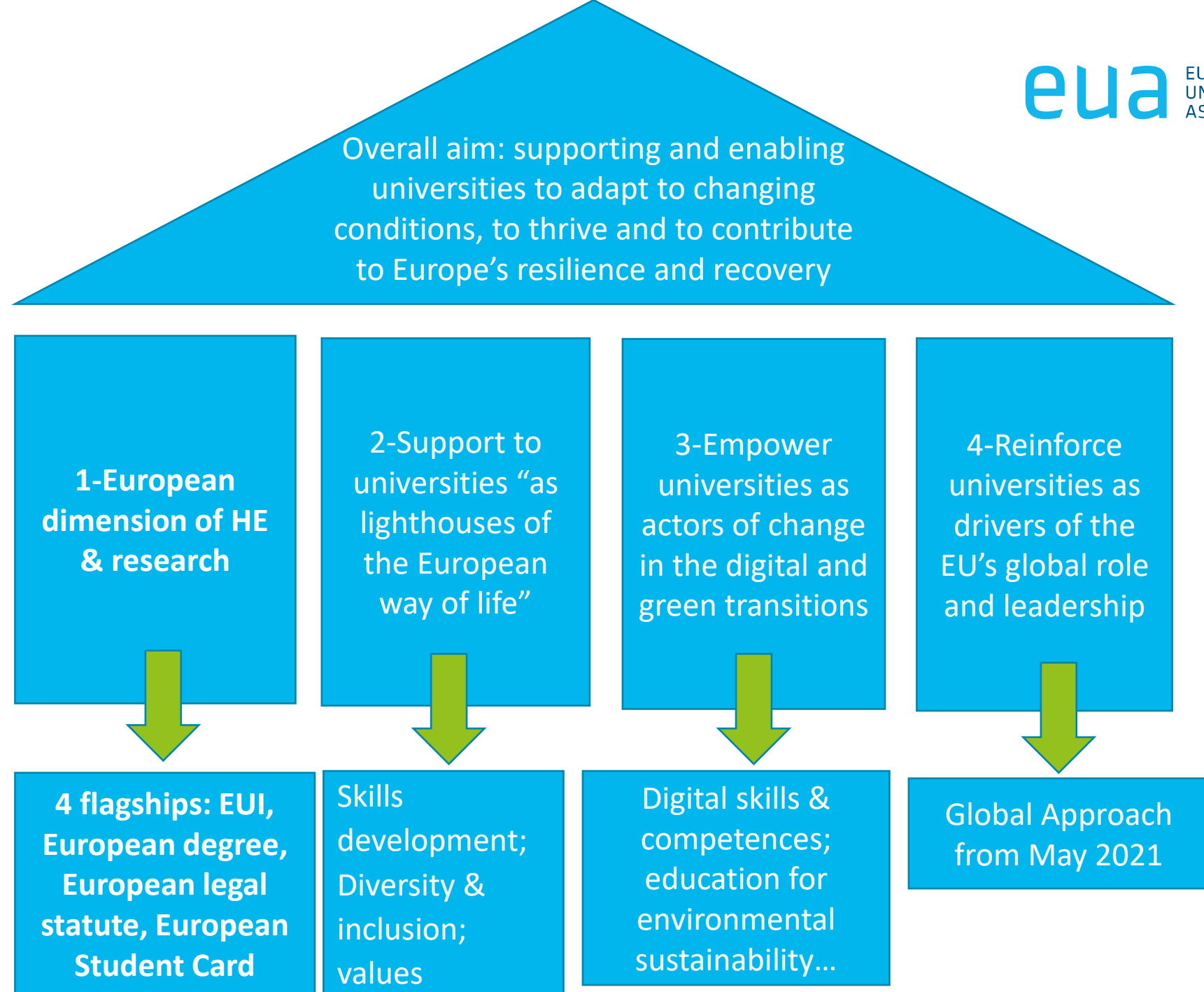
.... ???

# Working methods and structures of the EEA – the strategic framework



- **the essential structure** of member states (government officials) , key stakeholders and social partners
  - **working groups** composed of experts nominated by member states and key stakeholders (7 in total, until 2025)
  - **peer learning activities** hosted by member states to showcase good practice and explore a particular issue with other countries
  - **peer reviews** involving a group of member states providing guidance to another on a specific national challenge
  - **peer counselling** bringing together experienced peers from a small number of national administrations to provide advice on designing or implementing a policy as a response to a specific national challenge
- to “share” and to “inspire” but also to support finding solutions to common challenges

# The European Strategy for Universities (Jan 2022)





## Flagship initiatives

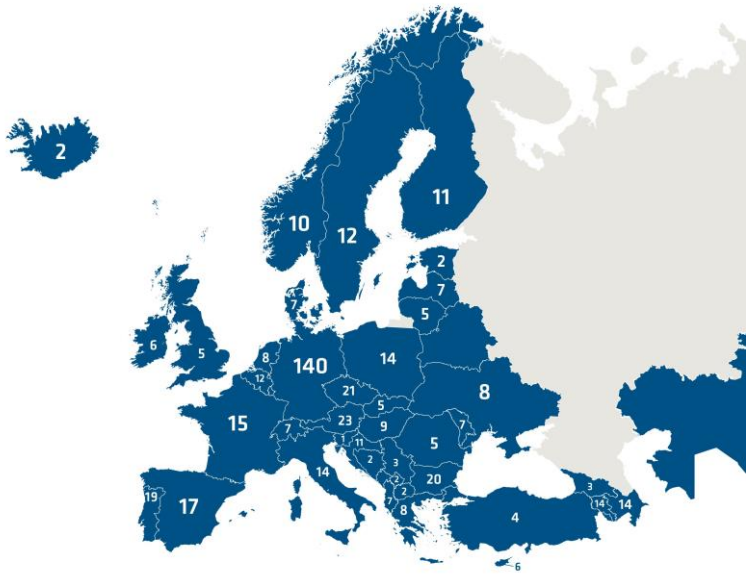
### **All flagships are under priority area 1 – European dimension:**

- Expand the European Universities Initiative to 60 alliances with more than 500 institutions by mid-2024
  - Pathway towards European degree → label piloting to be concluded
    - Minimise additional workload (combine with existing QA processes)
    - Questions about added value
    - EC: expect this to be a step towards a full degree within national QF
  - Legal statute for transnational university alliances
  - Scale-up the European Student Card
- EU HE package in April 2024:
- Council recommendation on quality assurance and recognition
  - Communication from the Commission on building blocks for the European Degree
  - Council conclusions on attractive academic careers

## Policy processes + calls

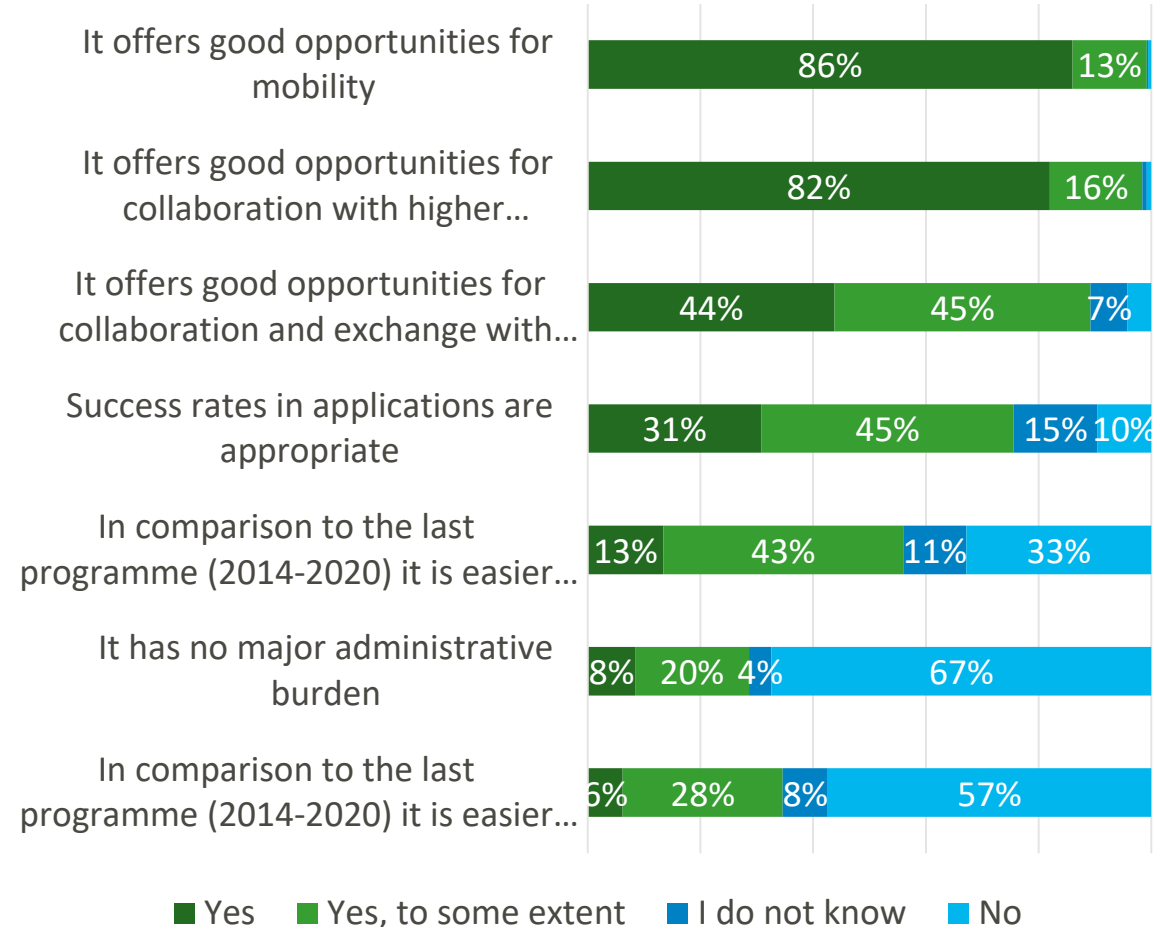


# Erasmus+ Midterm review 2023-2024



## Survey on Erasmus+

*Responses from 500 HEI – across Europe & internationally*





18 Recommendations - Nov 2023



1. Positive attitude towards the Erasmus+: Relative high-level of overall satisfaction - continued interest
2. Priorities highly relevant – but could be enhanced
3. Top-up for mobility & greening
4. Problems with management & admin
  - Develop reliable and tested digital instruments & processes
  - Enhance EACEA – foster service culture
  - Consult and work with the sector
5. More attention to some of the cooperation actions
  - Enabling more exchanges among project initiatives
  - international programmes

### Erasmus+ Priorities

- inclusion & diversity,
- democracy & civic engagement,
- Digital transformation
- environment & climate

- EUA reaction
- Overall **positive and supportive** narrative towards universities: many initiatives, instruments and proposals are known from EEA and ERA Communications
  - New momentum for transnational cooperation (→ **EU added value**), new attention to existing and persisting obstacles → **need to have wider benefit!**
  - New EU tools will **need to prove fitness for purpose** and be developed with stakeholders and member states, not to create extra bureaucracy
  - Several questions about the '**whys**' and '**hows**' are still open
  - National level reforms, including **implementation of Bologna tools and instruments remains crucial**



#### THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA (EHEA): ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

The European University Association (EUA), as the representative of the European university sector and an active member of the Bologna Process, will on 19 November join the European ministers responsible for higher education and other higher education sector representatives and stakeholders at the EHEA Ministerial Conference. The event will be hosted by Italy and will be the first ever to take place online. The

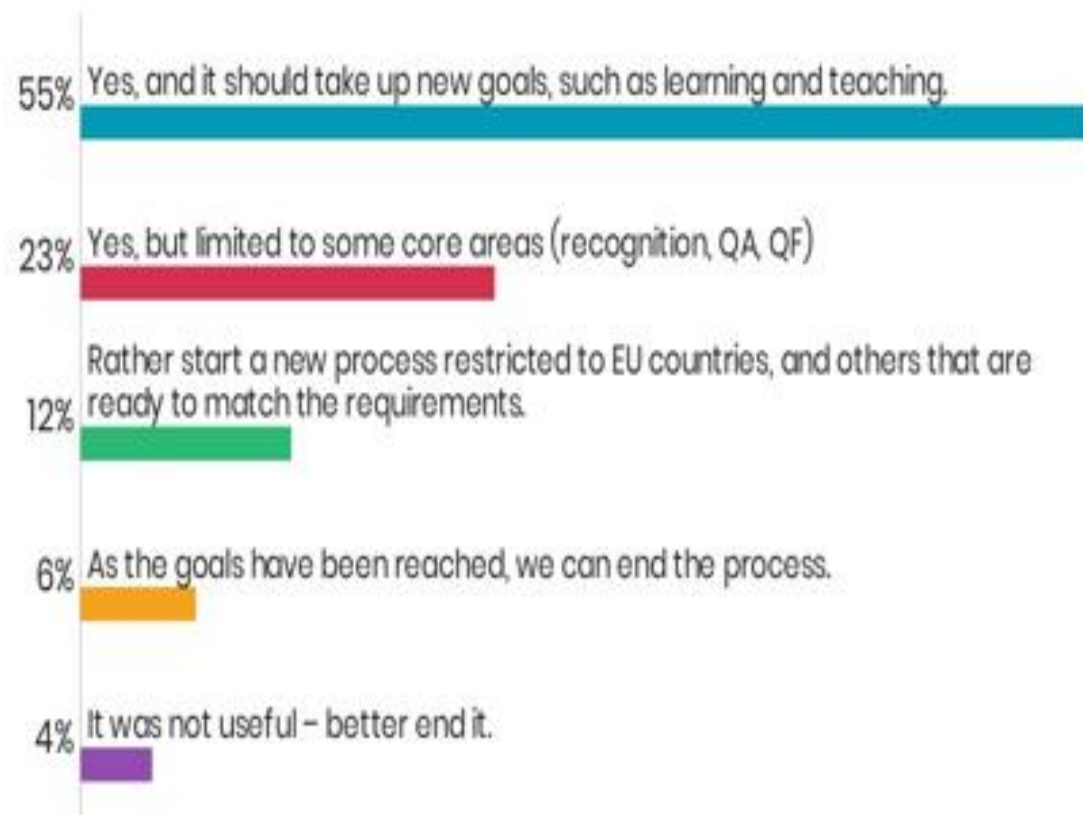
**“The Bologna Process must continue to address challenges and shortcomings and find ways to overcome them.”**

- **reflect upon and set out new goals and concrete actions**
- **lifelong learning**
- **Sustainable Development Goals, carbon-reduction and greening.**
- **more systematic involvement and participation of higher education institutions and their communities**
- **enhance implementation, build trust, resilience**

# Sector responses



## Should the Bologna Process continue? (EQAF 2017)



## University leadership (2015)

The realisation of the EHEA was

Positive	Mixed results	No difference	Negative
• 59%	• 30%	• 5%	• 0%

# Rome Ministerial Meeting – 19/11/2020



## Rome Communiqué

### European Universities

"The alliances formed under the **European Universities Initiative** constitute one important way of exploring deeper, larger scale systemic cooperation, which can prove helpful for detecting and overcoming the obstacles to closer transnational cooperation by higher education institutions in the future."

### European Student Card

"We ask the BFUG to map existing and find new solutions to enhance the interoperability of digital systems and the exchange of student and institutional data in full respect of privacy and security, taking into account the experiences of the European Student Card Initiative..."

### Microcredentials

"We ask the BFUG to explore how and to what extent these smaller, flexible units, including those leading to microcredentials, can be defined, developed, implemented and recognised by our institutions using EHEA tools."

## Outlook

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EHEA, EEA and ERA - enable synergies – avoid unnecessary differences

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Issues re governance & participation

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Importance of HE sector representation & participation

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Trend towards topics which are in the responsibility of the institution (learning & teaching)

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European HE in a global perspective

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Political risks

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# Thank you for your attention

