European Parliament elections – the impact on universities

Dr Thomas Jorgensen
Senior Policy Coordinator
European University Association

9 May 2019
What institution are we voting for?

What can the European Parliament do?

• The European Parliament approves a lot; it can propose relatively little
  No formal proposal of new rules

• Constitutional setup
  Works together with the member states in the Council and Commission

What does this boil down to for universities?
Budget

The Parliament has traditionally been a friend of spending – outdoing the Commission and Council in research and education
• 120 Billion for Horizon Europe
• 46 Billion for Erasmus

Large majorities have supported this in the present Parliament
• Erasmus popular from left to right
• Cross-cutting understanding that investments in research and innovation are necessary
Regulation

Education is a national competence, the EU can support but not regulate

Regulation is traditionally not a tool for research policy

The rules for the programmes (Horizon, Erasmus and others)
• Largely done by present parliament

Regulation that affect universities
• For example the Copyright Directive battle of the last years
• Rules about technology, state-aid etc.
‘Symbolic’ action and accountability

The Parliament can put issues on the agenda
• Resolutions about for example academic freedom
• Public hearings and events
• Questions to Commissioners
  "What is done to ensure disadvantaged students take part in Erasmus?"
  "What is done to reduce error rates in Horizon 2020?"

Evaluation of programmes
• Interim evaluations (important, but not a legal document)

Approves the Commission
What will be new about the new European Parliament?

- No ‘grand coalition’ between conservatives and social democrats
- More Eurosceptics
- ... But what will they vote (on)?
Thank you for your attention