



Breakout session 7

Alliance-ology: looking into the financial future of alliances



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National funding of EUAs: A Patchwork, Not a Masterplan

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EUA Funding Forum 2026: “A university of value”
Brno University of Technology

Main challenges for EUAs

Governance	• Complex governance structure • Diverse institutional leadership structures and cycle lengths
Policy	• Uncertainty about the future developments of the EUI • Legal and regulatory barriers; despite Bologna, still diversity in frameworks • Incompatibility of national qualification frameworks • Maintaining linguistic diversity and multilingualism
Funding	• Current model is unsustainable • Need for additional (co-)funding for development and implementation of partnership • HEIs get different levels of funding support from public sources

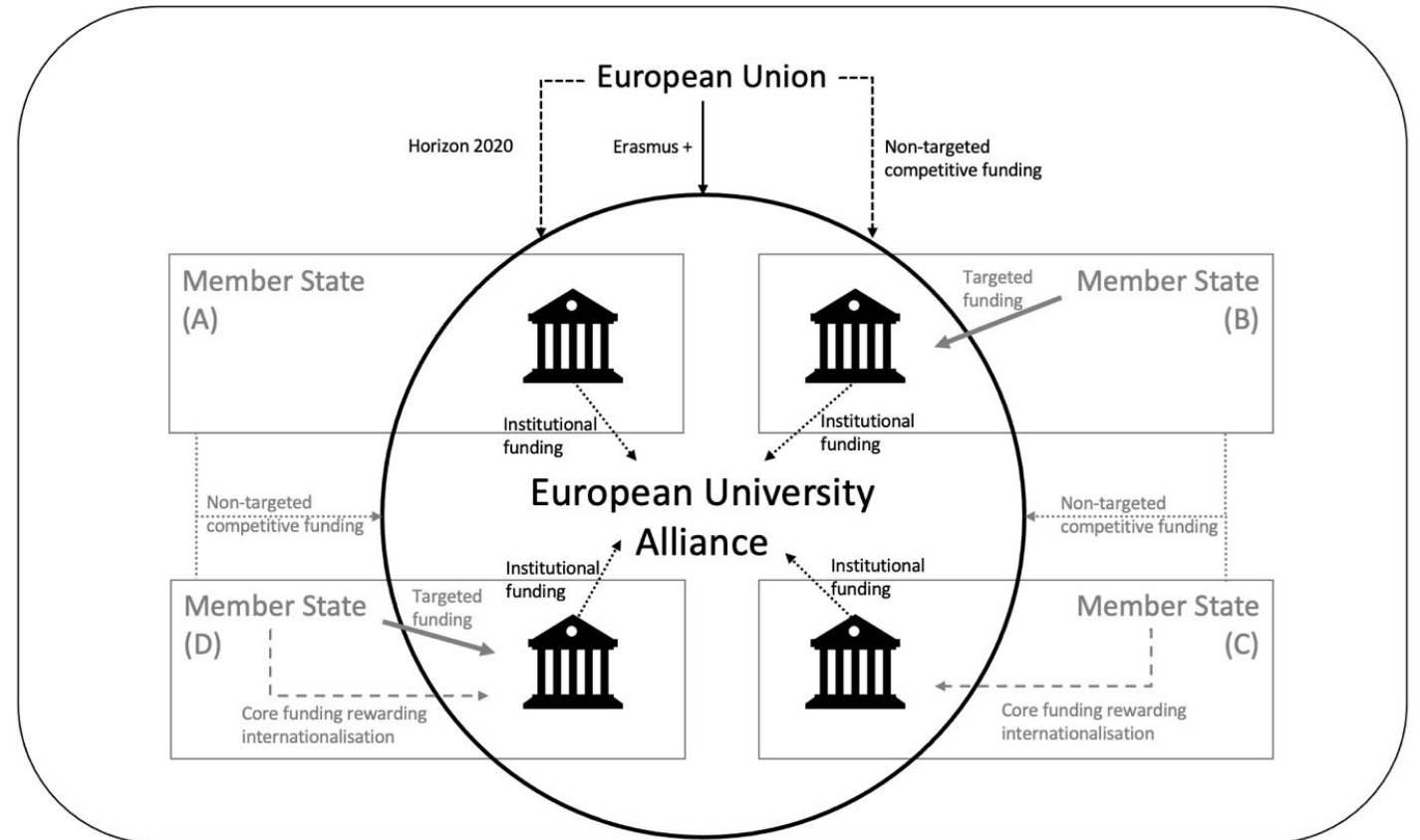
Source: [Craciun, Kaiser, Kottman & van der Meulen \(2023\)](#)

So, what does the funding
landscape of EUAs look like?

Funding

- (1) European level
- (2) National/regional/
system level
- (3) Institutional level
- (4) Private funding

Closing the funding gap?



European

- Horizon 2020 & Europe
- Erasmus+
- Other targeted/non-targeted competitive funding

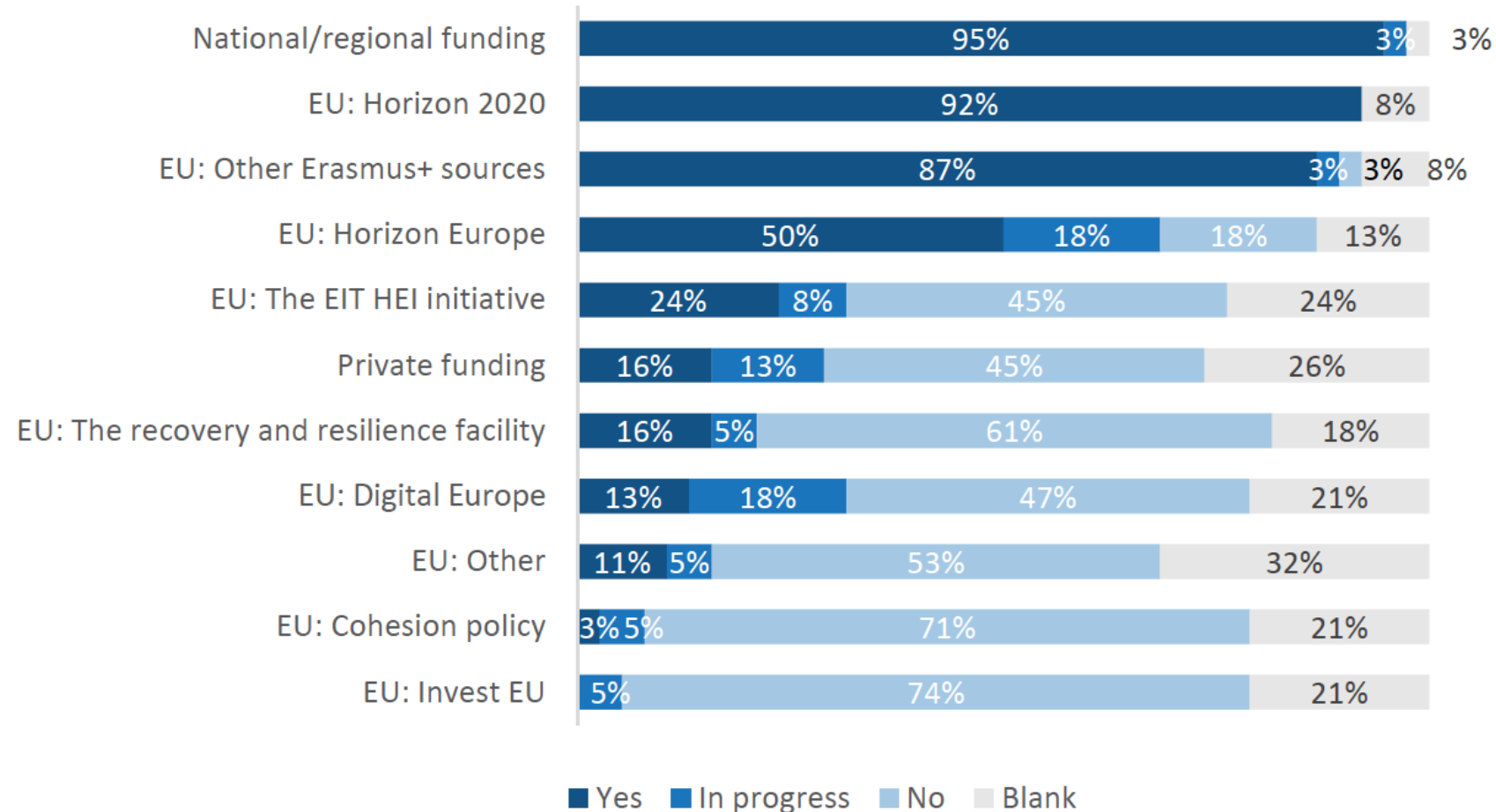
National/Regional/System

- Direct funding
- Indirect funding

Institutional

- 20% of EUA budget in application
- Alliance membership fees
- Other non-targeted competitive funding
- In kind contributions

External Funding sources used by EUAs



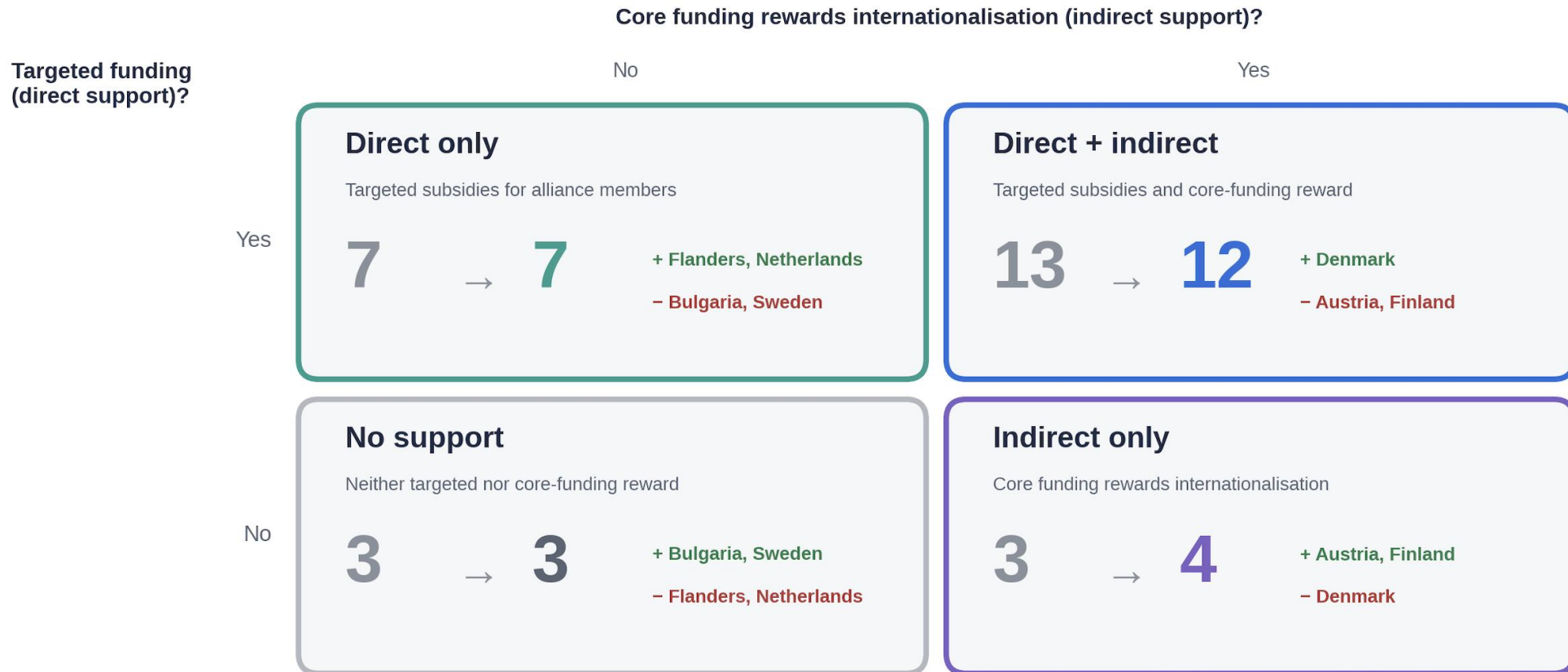
Source: [Grumbinaitė, Colus & Buitrago Carvajal \(2025\)](#)

Mapping national level funding

- 2021 vs. 2024 in EU MS, focus on universities
- Country researchers, interviews with stakeholders, case studies on 2 alliances (2021)
- Survey & key informants (national authorities, alliances, national higher education experts)

4 Ways Member States Fund Alliances

Number of national systems per model, pilot phase (2021) → 2024



Source: de Gayardon, Crăciun, Jongbloed & de Boer (forthcoming), Covering the cost: The patchwork of national funding for European University Alliances.

n = 26 (Belgium = 2 communities); DE, ES excluded.

Funding (in)stability

We see more changes in direct funding

System-level funding for alliances: volatility and scale

TARGETED FUNDING, 2021

20 / 28

higher education systems
funded alliance members
directly

CORE FUNDING, 2021

16

systems reward
internationalisation in
core funding; almost
unchanged by 2024

VOLATILITY, BY 2024

10

Member States reduced or
ended their targeted
funding

SCALE OF SUPPORT

0.4%

an illustrative €200k
subsidy as a share of
the median university
budget of €50M (2015)

A patchwork in motion: 7 out 26 systems changed funding model between 2021 & 2024



Source: de Gayardon, Crăciun, Jongbloed & de Boer (forthcoming), Covering the cost: The patchwork of national funding for European University Alliances.

Germany and Spain not classified (regional core funding).

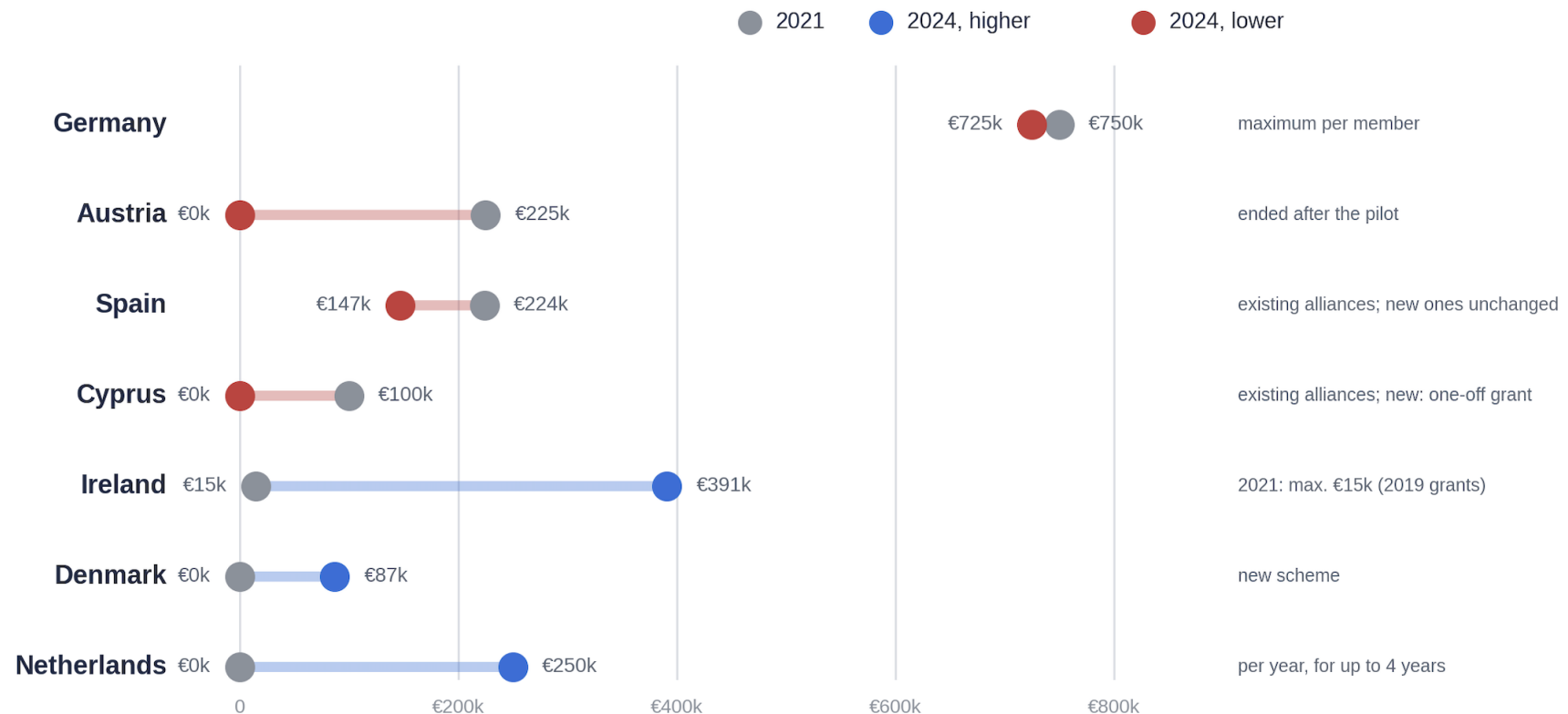
Direct funding is volatile

Change in national targeted funding for alliance members, 2021 → 2024



Some countries cut, others step up: Illustrations of changes in direct funding per alliance

National targeted funding, € thousand per alliance member, 2021 vs 2024 (systems with a fixed amount)

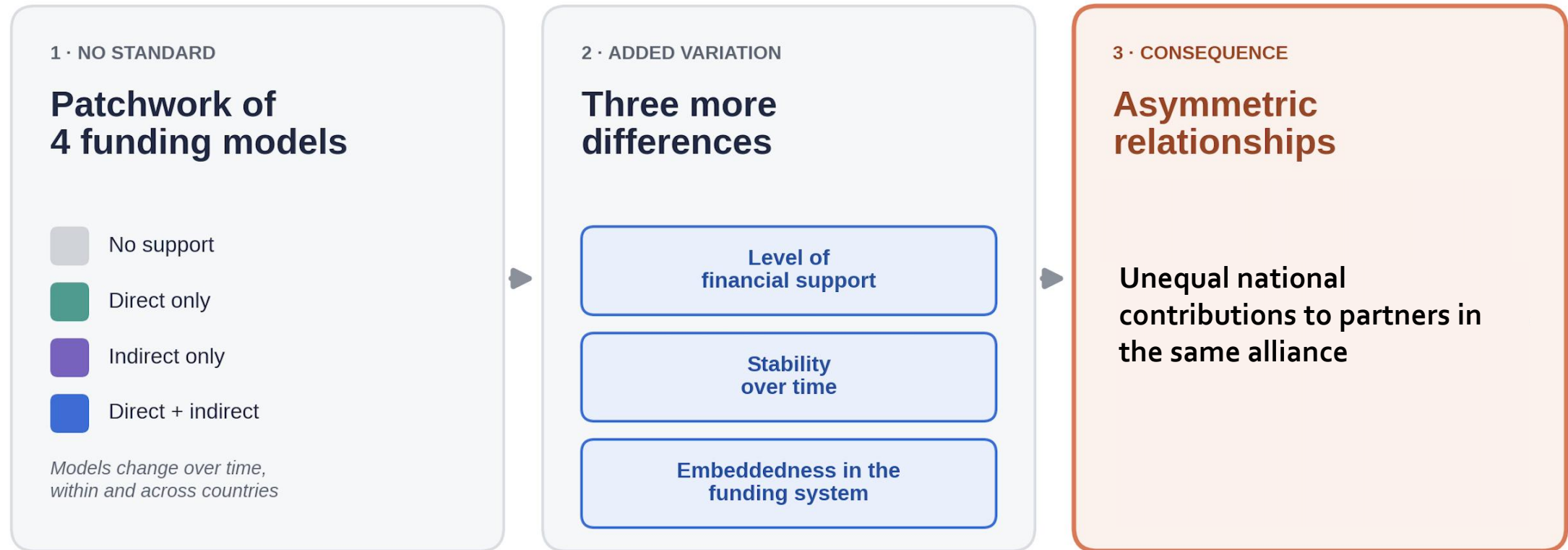


Source: de Gayardon, Crăciun, Jongbloed & de Boer (forthcoming), Covering the cost: The patchwork of national funding for European University Alliances.

Amounts are not strictly like-for-like (maxima, per-year and one-off figures).

No Masterplan: A Patchwork of national funding

What the comparison of 27 Member States shows about funding European University Alliances



What type of funding EUAs would like

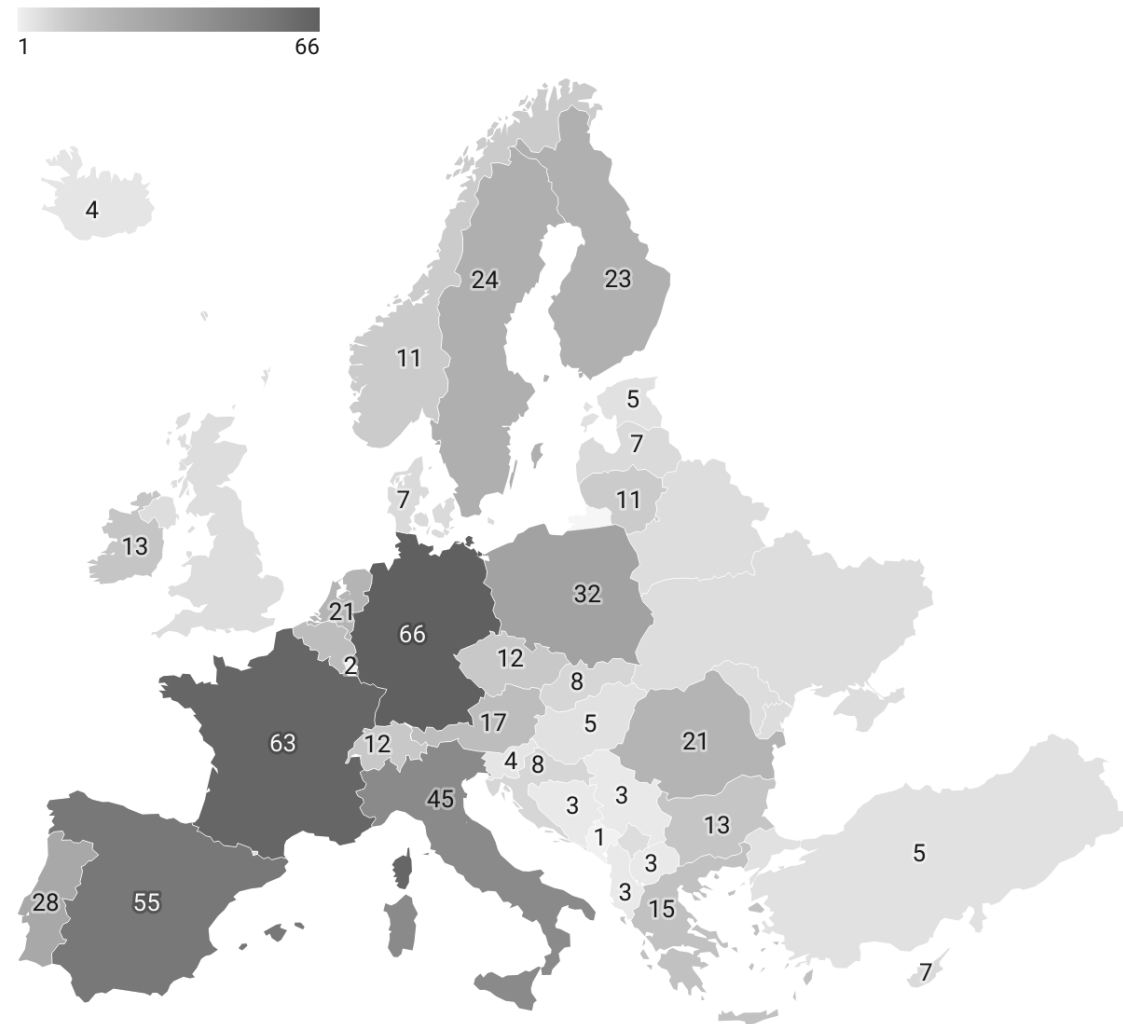
long-term

holistic

non-
directional

flexible
support

Higher education institutions/country in European University Alliances



Map: Daniela Craciun • Source: European Commission (2024) • Created with Datawrapper

Source: Hartzell & Craciun (2025)

Solving the puzzle of alliance funding

- **Combining resources and creating synergies** between funds coming from different levels and sources – avoid fragmentation
- **Legal status for alliances** (pool financial, human, technical, and academic resource) – avoid uncertainty & transaction costs
- **Removing legal, regulatory and administrative barriers** for cooperation at system level – avoid some cooperation costs

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Questions & comments
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For more details check the upcoming chapter
Covering the Cost: The Patchwork of National Funding for European University
Alliances by de Gayardon, A., Craciun, D., Jongbloed, B., & de Boer, H. (2027)