

Attention: news desks/science and education correspondents

For immediate release

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EUA Statement on the recent developments in Romania regarding the research policy framework

The European University Association is worried about the latest developments in Romanian research policy. Universities thrive and contribute to their societies when they can build on research excellence in an open exchange across borders. The current changes taking place in Romania will pose serious obstacles to the ability of Romanian universities to fulfil their role domestically as well as internationally.

Over the years EUA has been very active in collaborating with its many Romanian members, EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme having conducted institutional evaluations of 70 universities in Romania. The resulting report setting out 10 major recommendations for boosting the Romanian higher education, one of the most important of which was to enhance increase universities' research capacity.

We are deeply concerned by the recent developments concerning the dissolution of the former independent Research Councils, without due process, and the introduction of 2 new state controlled bodies. We also understand that there have been no new calls for competitive research projects recently and that other calls have been delayed.

Major changes, it appears, are also being made in the selection of evaluators. Under the new rules, the agency will search for foreign evaluators "only if there is no specialist available at the national level in a certain field." Also, each foreign evaluator will have to be approved on a case-by-case basis by the research agency, which can only be seen as backward step.

This initiative to limit international exchange is also a most worrying development, as it is well known that many Romanian researchers work outside Romania while maintaining close contacts and collaboration with universities in the country.

All in all, it seems very likely in the present situation that cooperation will become more difficult at a time when Romania needs to boost its research efforts, as a way to support prosperity and growth.

Hence EUA supports the calls being made by some of Romania's strongest universities to remedy this situation.

Further information:

For further information, please contact: Christel Vacelet, +32 2 743 11 58; mobile: +32 485 52 30 60; press@eua.be

The European University Association (EUA) is the representative organisation of more than 800 universities in 47 European countries and 33 national rectors' conferences (NRCs). EUA works closely with its members to ensure that the voice of European universities is heard.