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Moving towards a Europe-wide ranking of university autonomy? University sector to publish European “autonomy scorecard”

EUA is pleased to announce that it is leading a project to develop a scorecard aimed at benchmarking university autonomy (on the national level) across Europe.

The scorecard will be a major tool both at the national level and at the individual institutional level, serving as a reference for national governments wishing to benchmark their progress on governance reforms vis-à-vis other systems, whilst also helping to raise awareness among universities of the differences that exist in Europe. The scorecard will also help record trends and progress on a regular basis, thus effectively contributing to the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area by improving comparability and promoting modernisation of the sector.

The starting point for the scorecard will be the findings of the forthcoming **EUA Autonomy study**, an in depth comparative study of university autonomy across 34 countries based on more than 30 different indicators and focussing on four main areas of institutional autonomy:

- Organisational autonomy (e.g. academic and administrative structures, institutional leadership, governance structures)
- Academic autonomy (e.g. capacity to define study fields, student numbers, student selection, and the structure and content of degree programmes)
- Financial autonomy (e.g. the ability to raise funds, own buildings, borrow money etc)
- Staffing autonomy (e.g. the ability to independently recruit, promote and develop academic and non academic staff)

This study and the scorecard project will be officially launched in Brussels on the evening of the **30 November** at a special event at the Swedish representation to the EU.

While it is generally accepted by universities and indeed many governments that increased autonomy is necessary for universities to modernise and respond to new demands being placed on higher education, perceptions and terminology regarding institutional autonomy vary greatly in Europe. To compare systems reliably, more systematic mapping of universities' autonomy and accountability through a set of common indicators is necessary. Comparability is crucial as autonomy is often linked to concepts like institutional performance, excellence, quality, efficiency.

The Autonomy scorecard will establish a European benchmark of university autonomy and accountability. The two-year project, supported by the EC Lifelong Learning Programme, will be carried out in conjunction with EUA project partners: The German Rectors' Conference, Universities Denmark, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (CRASP), and the University of Surrey. The launch of the scorecard is due to take place at the end of the project in the **winter of 2011**.

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The European University Association, as the representative organisation of both the European universities and the national rectors' conferences, is the main voice of the higher education community in Europe. EUA's mission is to promote the development of a coherent system of European higher education and research.

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