

**HIGHER EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE SDGS: BUZZWORDS
OR OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE?**

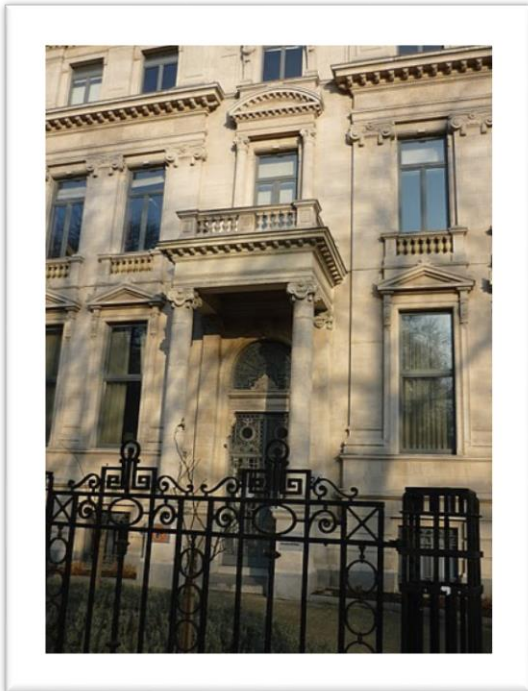
Universities as Partners for Sustainable Development

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EUA



- **Established in 2001**
- **Non-governmental membership organisation**
- **More than 800 individual university members**
- **34 National Rectors' Conferences Members**
- **47 countries**
- **Independent voice of the university sector**
- **Forum for exchange, peer learning for members**

EUA and sustainable development

SDGs is a fast growing concern for the university sector

- **Growing number of members base their strategies on the SDGs**

EUA promotes the role of universities for the Goals in general

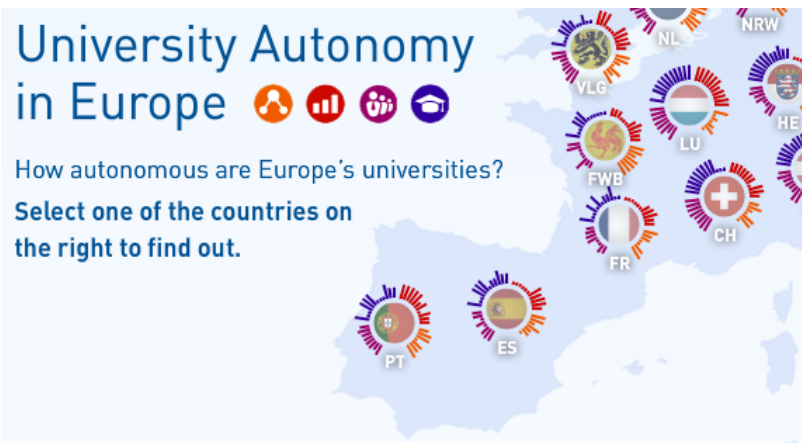
- **Education, research, and innovation facilitate achieving the goals**

EUA takes part in the EU SDG Stakeholder Platform

- **Contribution to EU policies**



Strong institutions for strong partnerships



There is a clear link between Goal 16 and 17

- In order to have meaningful partnerships, strong institutions are needed

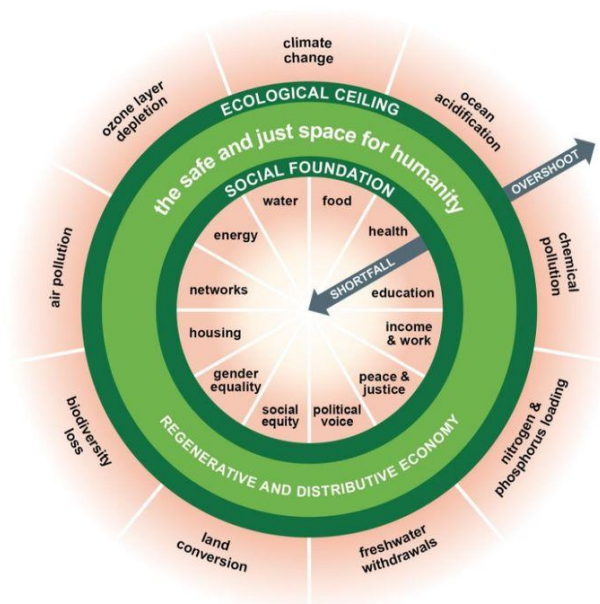
Going beyond strong state institutions

- Universities in Europe are both (often) public institutions and part of civil society
- They have institutional autonomy (to a varying degree)
- Academic freedom - Speaking truth to power
- ... And resources to implement their own strategies

Universities as civil society partners

Universities play a varied role in pluralistic societies

- Gathering robust evidence about the state of the planet
- Training next generation of professionals
- Technological research – new technical solutions
- Social science and humanities – new societal solutions



Universities as partner in innovation ecosystems



Universities play a vital role in innovation beyond technical solutions

Shape and reproduce values (such as sustainability)

Facilitates co-creation

- Empowering citizens – citizen science
- Facilitating up-take of social and technical solutions by companies and authorities

Universities as global partners

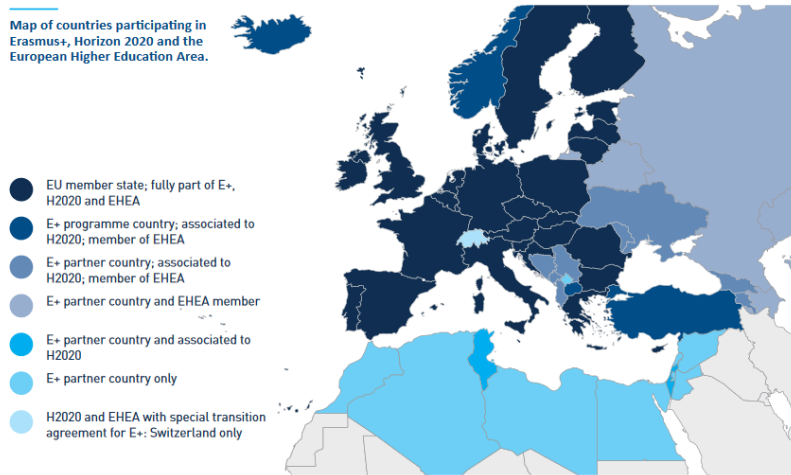
Science is traditionally international

- More so in an age of big science and high complexity

Universities can play a role as channels of contact

- People to people contact (student mobility)
- Science diplomacy
- Institutional cooperation – also with a capacity-building aspect
- Common action for achieving the SDGs globally
 - ✓ Common action for quality education (Goal 4)
 - ✓ Strengthening institutions together (Goal 16)
 - ✓ Developing knowledge-based solutions

Map of countries participating in Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and the European Higher Education Area.



Summary

Knowledge needs to be acknowledged as a key facilitator for sustainability

Universities play a key role as (co-)producers of knowledge

... and they play a key role as powerful non-state actors with a global reach

... Which is probably why universities are becoming increasingly engaged



Thank you for your attention

