



EUA

European University Association

The Role of Universities in Europe

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The grand history I

- Long tradition of European universities (Bologna 1088, Paris 1150), incorporating the idea of the “Greek academia”
- In the early 17th century the European concept of the university reached North America, in the late 19th century East Asia
- Today, triumph of the university idea, e.g. rapid expansion in Asia (India from about 300 in 2005 to 1500 in 2015)

The grand history II

- French revolution: “écoles spéciales” (grandes écoles; Talleyrand, 1791)
- Humboldt’s response to this radical and utilitarian challenge: “universitas litterarum”, concentration on doctoral programmes only
- The university system in the US converted to an hybrid one: on top of the medieval, still British college education, Humboldtian Ph.D. programmes were laid

Painful realities I

- Neither the French, nor the German, nor the British, but the US “hybrid” system proved to be highly successful in the 20th century: it allowed a massive expansion of student numbers (“massification”), a research intensification in the 200-300 research universities and thus a diversification of missions and profiles.
D. Ward: “Elitist at the top, democratic at the base”
- This diversification was driven by autonomous public/private universities with (nearly) no planning at the federal level but with mobility of students and staff, with the establishment of NSF, NIH

Painful realities II

- Peak performance by US universities
- E.g., mathematics (not influenced by the existence of costly infrastructure or by native languages): among the 300 most highly cited researchers 65-70% come from US universities, 6-7% from France, 6% from UK, only 2,3% from Germany

Painful realities III

- Reasons for falling behind:
 - emigration of the 1930s, dominance of English
 - US: positive scale effects; Europe: national fragmentations, ministerial bureaucracies, lack of diversification (only “one” university idea)
 - cooperative governance models in the post-1968 era which resulted in having too many committees and inner recruitment policies
 - lack of independence of early stage researchers
 - too long and intransparent study programmes (to be overcome by the Bologna Process)

Today's challenges I

- The emergence of the knowledge society
 - increasing participation rates, life long learning (from "elite" to "mass" education)
 - research intensification (does a comprehensive research university need at least 1 bio. € ?)
 - financial responses? Relative burden on the tax payer will be reduced!
 - employability of graduates

Today's challenges II

- Globalisation of higher education and research
 - driven by the increased internationalization of the economy and by technological changes
 - new forms of global universities
 - open university
 - virtual university
 - meta university (MIT OpenCourseWare Initiative 1999, Ch. Vest: "A transcendent, accessible, empowering, dynamic, communally constructed framework of open materials and platforms..."; users: 40% US, 15% EU, 25% Asia)
 - Google Books Library Project Dec 2004: Scanning of the 7,8 mio. vol. library of the University of Michigan; extension to 25 libraries

Modernization Agenda (EU Commission, 10 May 2006)

1. broaden access on a more equitable basis
2. reach out to more research excellence
3. break down the barriers surrounding European universities
4. provide the appropriate skills and competences for the labour market
5. create genuine autonomy and accountability for universities
6. reduce the funding gap so that 2% of GDP will be spent on HE by 2015; besides 3% of GDP spent on R&D) and make funding more effective

Create a European profile

1. strengthen the European dimension: Europe needs more common reference points in higher education and research. Europe needs an EHEA and an ERA. 20 years of ERASMUS (and the Bologna process as one consequence) and the strong beginning of the ERC demonstrate that European public goods have set new horizons
2. promote global themes (aging, climate change, alternative energy, water supply) and strengthen responsibility for a sustainable society
3. take full advantage of the cultural and linguistic diversity within Europe



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**EUROPE NEEDS:
STRONG UNIVERSITIES FOR A STRONG
EUROPE OF KNOWLEDGE**