

University Autonomy in Europe III

The Scorecard 2017

By Enora Bennetot Pruvot
and Thomas Estermann

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Foreword



In 2007 the European University Association (EUA) started to collect data on university autonomy to provide a foundation for a Europe-wide comparable database through the analysis of certain crucial aspects of autonomy. The starting point for this was rooted in the basic four

dimensions set out in EUA's Lisbon declaration from the same year, that is to say, organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy.

The first study "University Autonomy I" released in 2009 compared 34 European countries in the four key areas of autonomy. The EUA Autonomy Scorecard, which was launched in 2011 developed for the first time a methodology to score and compare data on university autonomy. A core set of over 30 indicators was developed to offer an institutional perspective on institutional freedom.

Since then EUA has contributed to many national policy dialogues and reform processes by providing a comparative and more detailed picture of the different elements of university autonomy. EUA's work has been essential in moving the debate on university autonomy from a basic discussion on the need for more autonomy in exchange for more accountability, to a more in-depth structured and fruitful exchange that allows benchmarking and setting of concrete reform procedures on a more objective footing.

While acknowledging that there are different models and that comparing autonomy can never be completely objective, the dialogue developed through EUA's comparative approach in the last 10 years has set the basic principles and conditions which universities need to have to best fulfil their missions and tasks. We are proud that the EUA Autonomy Scorecard has become the reference in discussions and analysis of institutional autonomy in, but also beyond, Europe.

"University Autonomy in Europe III" provides a timely update 10 years after the beginning of the first data collection. With the release of 29 country profiles, it offers more qualitative information which allows a description of developments that cannot be measured or scored. It also gives the opportunity to our collective members to reflect on the current challenges and future developments.

The analysis reveals that there is no uniform trend towards university autonomy in Europe. The present update uncovers the diversity of settings in which universities evolve. Our monitoring indeed shows that the topic continues to be heavily discussed across Europe. In a tense international political environment, promoting university autonomy as a core principle continues to be highly relevant and important, as attempts to limit or undermine it can take many forms. Therefore, the EUA Autonomy Scorecard seeks to support a structured, fact-based dialogue, in partnership with the sector and public authorities.

Finally, I would like to thank the presidents and secretaries general of our national rectors' conferences and their expert staff, who have again contributed to make this update possible. I also invite all our members to make good use of the Scorecard and EUA's expertise to contribute to further reform processes in their countries.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Rolf Tarrach'.

Rolf Tarrach
EUA President

Acknowledgements

Monitoring, comparing, and measuring different elements of institutional autonomy in around 30 European higher education systems has been an ambitious undertaking from its beginning in 2007. The Autonomy Scorecard has become one of EUA's flagship tools which could only be possible through the active support of many individuals and organisations. The update in 2017 has met new challenges, not only because of the expectations, but also because of the additional complexity to compare development over time. "University Autonomy in Europe III" covers more elements than the previous editions and includes 29 country profiles next to the comparative analysis and an updated scorecard tool.

EUA is deeply grateful for the active support of its collective members. The input, expertise and commitment of the secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences and their expert staff, since the beginning of collecting data for the first report on University Autonomy, were instrumental in the success of the Autonomy Scorecard.

The many EUA Council members who made use of the Autonomy Scorecard in their national debates to improve the higher education systems in their countries have made it possible for this work to be used not only in an academic context, but more importantly in policy development to improve autonomy in Europe.

We would further like to thank the many partners, experts and individuals who have been involved in the development, dissemination and use of EUA's work on autonomy throughout the last decade. In this way, they have contributed to making the EUA Autonomy Scorecard the reference in discussions and reflections on institutional autonomy.

We would also like to thank experts and colleagues at EUA who have helped during various stages and with diverse input: Catherine Marston and Anna-Lena Claeys-Kulik for their support in the first part of the development, in particular with the interviews, protocols and country descriptions, and Christel Vacelet, Jessica Carter and Imane Benchaou for their support with regard to communication and design.

Enora Bennetot Pruvot, co-author of the reports, deserves particular acknowledgement, not only for writing and undertaking parts of the interviews, but also for her committed work on the data analysis, scoring work and engagement in the complex validation that was so crucial for delivering the update in time for the 10th anniversary of EUA's work on university autonomy in Europe.

We hope that this update will again be used extensively to support holistic and coherent reforms of higher education systems across Europe and beyond.

Thomas Estermann

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1

Introduction & methodology

This chapter describes the rationale and objectives of the Autonomy Scorecard. It provides an overview of its background and further details the methodology developed in this process. The section also reviews the challenges met and the specificities of the Scorecard 2017 in comparison with the original Scorecard published in 2011.

1. Introduction

1.1. Nature and objectives

University governance and the relationship between the state and higher education institutions are issues that have generated intense debate and reflection over the past decade. Institutional autonomy is widely considered as an important prerequisite for modern universities to be able to develop institutional profiles and to deliver efficiently on their missions. Discussions around university governance and autonomy emerged across Europe in different contexts as a response to diverse challenges. As a result, the need became manifest to develop a common terminology and structure to address such an important topic, with an increasing demand for comparability and benchmarking across borders.

The EUA Autonomy Scorecard, which was first launched in 2011, offers a methodology to collect, compare and weight data on university autonomy. A core set of autonomy indicators was developed to offer an institutional perspective on institutional freedom.

The Scorecard is based on more than 30 different core indicators in four key dimensions of autonomy.

These include:

- organisational autonomy (covering academic and administrative structures, leadership and governance);
- financial autonomy (covering the ability to raise funds, own buildings, borrow money and set tuition fees);
- staffing autonomy (including the ability to recruit independently, promote and develop academic and non-academic staff);
- academic autonomy (including study fields, student numbers, student selection as well as the structure and content of degrees).

By generating information on the current state of university autonomy and governance reforms, the Scorecard allows a more successful benchmarking of national policies with regard to university autonomy as well as the exchange of good practice. On one hand, the scorecard provides European institutions and policy-makers with data, which inform decision-making processes and feed into initiatives aimed at driving the modernisation of European higher education. On the other hand, it contributes to raising awareness in the university sector of the changes needed to create a regulatory environment favourable to university autonomy.

1.2. The added value of the Autonomy Scorecard

The original Autonomy Scorecard report and the ensuing University Autonomy Online Tool were largely welcomed and extensively used by the EUA membership, and in particular the national rectors' conferences, in the context of national policy debates. Both the report and the tool were instrumental in providing an updated overview of the state of university autonomy in Europe and allowed systems to benchmark themselves in this context. EUA contributed with tailor-made comparisons and advice in many national policy debates.

The scorecard methodology has further been used in the ATHENA project¹ to contribute to the development, reform and modernization of higher education systems in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Data has also been used by EUA to inform policy discussions at European level to provide information on what universities can do independently and where there are limitations. EUA's campaign on the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), for example, has used the information on the limited capacity of universities to take loans to inform policy-makers, which has been essential to avoid further cuts to Horizon 2020, the European Framework Programme for Research.

Since its creation, the scorecard has become the point of reference when discussing university autonomy.

1.3. From the Exploratory Study to the Autonomy Scorecard and its update

EUA's report "University Autonomy in Europe I" (Estermann & Nokkala 2009) provided an important basis for the development of the Autonomy Scorecard. This first study provided the basis for the list of indicators and sets of related restrictions. "University Autonomy in Europe II, The Scorecard" was first released in 2011, in the form of a comparative report as the result of a major data collection in 28 higher education systems². The scorecard enabled evaluation of the status of institutional autonomy in 2010. In 2011 an online tool was launched that allows users to obtain information on the scores of each higher education

system for each autonomy dimension, and to compare it with the situation prevailing in other countries. The tool also shows the relative ranking of each system per autonomy dimension.

The difficulties involved in quantifying degrees of autonomy have been acknowledged from the beginning (see section "Challenges and constraints"). However, the creation of a scorecard, which enables the benchmarking of one system's 'autonomy performance' vis-à-vis that of another, fostered a lively debate and drove positive policy developments in this area. Following the release of the report, Flanders (Belgium) was included in the online tool, in 2011, on the basis of the same methodology and processes. A specific report was also produced in 2014 focusing on Ireland, which analysed the evolution of autonomy in the country on the basis of developments reported by the Irish Universities Association between 2010 and 2014.

In 2015, considering the success and extensive use of the Autonomy Scorecard, the EUA Council (composed of the presidents of the member national rectors' conferences) decided that EUA should carry out a general update.

1.4. The Autonomy Scorecard update 2017

The experience of the use of the original scorecard, the update on Ireland in 2014 and multiple policy dialogues, showed that the scorecard has been very helpful in structuring national policy discussions, allowing for a comparative view of a system's development in relation to others as well as general trends. It became evident that the scoring itself allowed a broad comparison across Europe but that several developments could not be captured by scoring alone. A more in-depth qualitative evaluation and setting in context was therefore necessary. It was decided that a change to scoring and weights or adding new indicators and restrictions would not provide a better understanding. In order to take account of the need for more qualitative information, the decision was taken to provide more information on all participating countries, in addition to the scoring and analysis of trends in the four dimensions. The original scoring of some systems was sometimes amended to make some similar situations fit better into the same categorisation or to adapt to a different interpretation of the situation.

¹ www.athena-tempus.eu

² This work was carried out in the framework of a EU supported project (2009-2011), through the Lifelong Learning Programme (503328-LLP-1-2009-1-BE-ERASMUS-EMHE).

The data collection was organised following the original Scorecard methodology, based on questionnaires and interviews, as well as several rounds of validation with national rectors' conferences. In mid-2015 they received individual questionnaires, including the information they had fed in 2010, with interview memos included. They were invited to review each section and signal if changes were necessary, by selecting a different response option if appropriate, and comment accordingly. The only addition in the new questionnaire was the creation of a specific sheet which included more detailed questions on the composition of university governing bodies.

New questionnaires were also sent to national rectors' conferences that had not participated in the first Scorecard. Four new systems responded positively and joined the update: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

The returned questionnaires were subsequently collected and analysed by EUA. At this stage, after various exchange rounds, three countries that were previously included decided to opt out of the update (Cyprus, Greece and Turkey).

EUA organised validation interviews with all participating national rectors' conferences. No follow-up was possible at the time with the Czech Republic, which resulted in the country not being included in the present comparative analysis.

The data validation phase spanned over a year, from late 2015 to late 2016, due to the need to validate not only responses to indicators, but also a broader narrative for each system.

The present update "University Autonomy in Europe III" based on data collected and validated during 2015 and 2016, is comprised of three main parts:

- Newly available 'country profiles', which set out in detail for each higher education system the situation prevailing with regard to the four dimensions of university autonomy, including contextual information and the views from the university sector on the matter
- A comparative report providing an updated overview of the state of university autonomy and the related challenges
- An updated online tool which continues to provide detailed information in a user-friendly way <http://www.university-autonomy.eu/>

2. Methodology

2.1. For the university community by the university community

An important facet of the methodology of the Scorecard is the involvement of the broader university community, through EUA's collective members. The Polish, German and Danish Rectors' Conferences, which represent diverse higher education systems, joined EUA in the consortium that carried out the original Autonomy Scorecard project. However, all of EUA's collective members have been involved throughout. The secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences and EUA Council members in particular have closely followed the development of the methodology, tracked progress in terms of data collection and analysis, and provided the sector's views on the general direction

of the work. They also participated in the elaboration of the weighting system, which evaluates the relative importance of the individual indicators. This system is based on the results of a survey conducted among EUA's bodies (EUA Council, secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences and General Assembly) in October 2010 at EUA's annual statutory meetings.

The national rectors' conferences provided the necessary data from their higher education systems, both for the original Scorecard in 2010 and for its update in 2015-2016, through questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

2.2. The scoring and weighting

The scoring system used by the University Autonomy Scorecard is based on deductions. Each restriction on university autonomy was assigned a deduction value based on how restrictive a particular rule or regulation was seen to be. A score of 100% indicates full institutional autonomy; a score of 0% means that an issue is entirely regulated by an external authority. In many cases, the law grants universities a limited amount of autonomy or prescribes negotiations between universities and the government. For instance, a system in which universities may determine tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority receives a score of 60% for that indicator.

The Autonomy Scorecard uses weighted scores³. The weighting factors are based on a survey conducted among EUA's member national rectors' conferences and thus reflect the views of the university sector in Europe. The results of the survey were translated into a numerical system, which evaluates the relative importance of the indicators within each of the autonomy dimensions.

A detailed description of the methodology is available in Annex 1.

³ Non-weighted scores are featured on the online tool.

3. Scope and terminology

3.1. Scope

The Scorecard covers so-called public universities. Private universities are not addressed in the country profiles, regardless of their relative importance in the system. The score for a country always relates to the situation of public universities. Some countries have different legal settings for their universities or have granted part of their universities a 'foundation' status. These remain public universities and are considered, but the score seeks to reflect the situation applying to a majority of universities in the system. The country profile provides further information for special cases (e.g. the French-speaking community of Belgium or Estonia).

The geographical scope is detailed in [Table 1](#), which lists the participating higher education systems. While four countries could not provide new data, and are therefore not considered in the update (namely Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece and Turkey), the Scorecard now includes four additional systems: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia.

The data collected applied to 2016. Some exceptions exist as, in some systems, new provisions that are relevant to the analysis entered into force at the beginning of 2017.

3.2. Terminology

The present Autonomy Scorecard update seeks to strike a balance between the necessity to explain the specificities of each system and the need to preserve a level of overall comparability allowing to benchmark the different systems considered. This implies that a degree of simplification cannot be avoided. The individual country profiles therefore feature both a standardised summary section, which does not address the complexities of each case, and a more in-depth section entitled "dimensions of autonomy" which includes more information on the relevant specificities. Nevertheless, whenever possible a standard terminology is used. The following is valid for both the present report and the individual country profiles:

- The Scorecard refers to "higher education systems", sometimes shortened as "systems", rather than "countries". This is related to the fact that five of the systems considered in the Scorecard are sub-national entities (Flanders and the French-speaking community of Belgium; Brandenburg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany)⁴. The country code "UK" is used to refer to England only, unless otherwise stated. Spain and Switzerland are both

⁴ For the sake of readability, the individual profiles are called "country profiles" rather than "higher education system profiles".

treated as single systems. In these cases responses for each indicator reflect the average/most frequent case across the different sub-systems.

- The Scorecard methodology does not differentiate between a constraint which stems from a legal provision (“set in law”, “established by law”), which usually involves the country’s parliament, and constraints originating from decisions by the ministry or other types of public bodies (“by an external authority”). Decisions of the ministry are referred to as such and do not distinguish between direct interventions by the minister (in appointment validation for instance).
 - Use of “all”, “freely” and “without restrictions”: the Scorecard methodology makes it necessary to simplify highly complex situations. Questionnaire response options primarily seek to differentiate between countries where universities can broadly decide on a certain topic, where they face some restrictions, or where an external authority decides on that topic. A certain baseline is defined for each indicator because it is clear that autonomy does not mean the absence of regulation.
- An example is student selection. The baseline is the requirement that students have completed secondary education to apply to university. Therefore, this is not counted as a restriction in the scoring for this indicator. Rather, the focus is placed on whether universities have any influence on the selection (is the system based on free admission, can universities regulate admission in cooperation with external authorities, can they decide on their own?).
 - Another case is that of academic programme content design. In this area, National Qualification Frameworks and other Bologna Process related developments are not considered restrictions to the academic autonomy of universities.
 - When addressing staffing autonomy, the Scorecard methodology only refers to senior academic staff and senior administrative staff, as the employment modalities tend to be more varied at other levels, including also temporary staff. Therefore, when a country profile refers to “all staff has civil servant status”, or “universities can decide on promotions for all staff”, “all” refers to senior academic and administrative staff only.

4. Challenges and constraints

The development of the original Scorecard raised a number of challenges, both in the collection and validation of data and the establishment of a robust methodology to measure, score and weight the different elements of autonomy. In turn, the update of the Scorecard more than five years later generated some additional issues.

4.1. Data collection

Monitoring all changes in national and legal frameworks in a large number of higher education systems within a period of more than one year presented an enormous challenge due to ongoing reforms in some countries. Small changes in legislation can alter the picture markedly; conversely, large-scale reforms might not significantly affect the Scorecard indicators; therefore, continuous updating, even within the data collection period, was necessary.

Secondly, a reliable comparison of university autonomy across borders is highly challenging. Autonomy is a concept that is understood very differently across Europe; associated perceptions and terminology tend to vary quite significantly. This is due not only to differing legal frameworks but also to the historical and cultural settings that define institutional autonomy in each country. The establishment of a single set of restrictions for all indicators proved very difficult in some cases. In order to enable general comparisons, complex and diverse situations had to be simplified, which may have led to specific situations in some systems being reflected in somewhat less detail than would have been desirable.

Data collection for the 2015-2016 update led to specific challenges related to data consistency and interpretation over a significant period of time. Three particular aspects must be underlined in this regard:

- **Set of participating countries:** the original Scorecard included 28 higher education systems; in the 2015-2016 timeframe, four systems were not able to participate fully (either because they could not provide answers to the updated questionnaire or because they were not able to take part in validation interviews: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Greece and Turkey) and had therefore to be taken out of the updated analysis. Conversely, the update includes Flanders, which joined the Scorecard in 2011 after the release of the comparative report, and four additional systems: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia. Table 1 provides an overview of participating higher education systems across the different steps of the Autonomy Scorecard. The update includes in total 29 different systems.
- **Treatment of 2010 data:** having been invited to consider the responses provided in 2010 to signal changes that had occurred since then, the national rectors' conferences sometimes indicated that they

felt the need to adapt those retrospectively, as they felt that in some cases the situation prevailing then could be better reflected by selecting a different option in the questionnaire. Having been first confronted with this challenge when carrying out the special update for Ireland, it was decided that it was necessary to clearly differentiate between an adaptation of a 2010 score and a newly adapted score in the update, so that changes in interpretation and actual evolution of the regulatory framework within the period would not be confused. As a result, 2010 scores have sometimes been adapted and are indicated as such in the relevant country profiles. Follow-up interviews particularly sought to identify these different interpretations and distinguish them from actual changes in the regulatory frameworks and practices.

Table 1: Participating higher education systems

Code	Country/system	Note
AT	Austria	
BE-FL	Belgium - Flanders	Included in 2011
BE-FR	Belgium - French-speaking community	Newly included in the update
CH	Switzerland	
CY	Cyprus	2010 only
CZ	Czech Republic	2010 only
BB (DE)	Brandenburg (Germany)	
HE (DE)	Hessen (Germany)	
NRW (DE)	North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)	
DK	Denmark	
EE	Estonia	
ES	Spain	
FI	Finland	
FR	France	
GR	Greece	2010 only
HR	Croatia	Newly included in the update
HU	Hungary	

Code	Country/system	Note
IE	Ireland	
IS	Iceland	
IT	Italy	
LT	Lithuania	
LU	Luxembourg	
LV	Latvia	
NL	The Netherlands	
NO	Norway	
PL	Poland	
PT	Portugal	
RS	Serbia	Newly included in the update
SE	Sweden	
SI	Slovenia	Newly included in the update
SK	Slovakia	
TR	Turkey	2010 only
UK	United Kingdom	(England only unless otherwise stated)

4.2. Selecting, scoring and weighting indicators of autonomy

Institutional autonomy cannot be measured objectively, and it was clear from the beginning that the development of a scorecard for the four autonomy areas would be a complex and delicate task. A number of normative decisions were taken, especially in the selection of the indicators, the allocation of deduction values to individual restrictions and the design of a weighting system, which attributes different values of importance to the autonomy indicators.

The selection of indicators and restrictions reflects an institutional perspective. EUA's collective and individual members provided input which guided the choice of indicators and clarified which regulations are perceived as restrictions on institutional autonomy. Despite the diversity of higher education systems in Europe, there was a coherent view on which indicators should be included in the Scorecard.

It should also be stressed that institutional autonomy does not mean the absence of regulations. All higher education systems need to set a regulatory framework in which their universities can act. For instance, systems need rules to ensure quality standards and determine the terms of public funding. In many of these areas, EUA has developed policy positions that reflect the view of the university sector. In the area of quality assurance, for example, EUA's positions provided a starting point in determining which quality assurance measures should be considered as appropriate; measures that are in line with these policy positions were not regarded as restrictive and hence not assigned a deduction. Similarly, in the area of staffing autonomy, a country's labour law regulations were seen as a basis for university staffing policies and only specific regulations for higher education institutions or civil servants were treated as restrictions.

4.3. Rating and ranking systems

When the data for all systems is fed into the scoring and weighting system the results appear in a ranking order. The importance of the specific position of a system within the ranking should not be overrated; rather, systems are grouped or rated into four groups on the basis of their scores in order to enable a more detailed comparison and analysis of the results, per autonomy

dimension. With scores expressed in percentages, the clusters are as described in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Autonomy clusters

Score	Cluster
100% to 81%	High cluster
80% to 61%	Medium high cluster
60% to 41%	Medium low cluster
40% and under	Low cluster

4.4. Measuring accountability

The Scorecard evaluates the relationship between the state and institutions and analyses how this relationship is shaped through specific rules and regulations. This also includes accountability measures, which are established in return for increased institutional autonomy. For instance, quality assurance processes are an important way of ensuring accountability. While there needs to be a framework for appropriate quality assurance processes, associated regulations can be burdensome and restrictive. By analysing whether universities can freely choose quality assurance mechanisms and providers, the Autonomy Scorecard aims to assess whether existing quality assurance systems can be considered as appropriate.

There are additional aspects of accountability which cannot be measured through the scoring methodology but which can nevertheless represent burdensome and inappropriate measures. The country profiles with their additional description and a section with the views of the sector aims at providing additional information complementing the scoring.

Despite these constraints and challenges, the Scorecard provides detailed and comparable information on the status of institutional autonomy in 29 higher education systems.

2

The state of university autonomy in 2016

This chapter describes the state of play in the four dimensions of university autonomy in 29 European higher education systems in 2016. The structure and descriptions are based on the four dimensions of autonomy. The text follows the report published in 2011, so as to enhance comparability over time⁵. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the higher education systems included in the update are not exactly the same as in 2011.

1. Organisational Autonomy

Organisational autonomy	Financial autonomy	Staffing autonomy	Academic autonomy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection procedure for the executive head • Selection criteria for the executive head • Dismissal of the executive head • Term of office of the executive head • Inclusion and selection of external members in governing bodies • Capacity to decide on academic structures • Capacity to create legal entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and type of public funding • Capacity to keep surplus • Capacity to borrow money • Ability to own buildings • Ability to charge tuition fees for national/EU students • Ability to charge tuition fees for non-EU students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on salaries (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on dismissals (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on promotions (senior academic/senior administrative staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to decide on overall student numbers • Ability to select students • Ability to introduce programmes • Ability to terminate programmes • Ability to choose the language of instruction • Capacity to select QA mechanisms and providers • Ability to design content of degree programmes

⁵ Clarifications sometimes led to adaptations in the representation of the 2010 situation. This means that in some cases, systems where no particular change was recorded still may feature in a different category than presented in the original Scorecard.

With regard to organisational autonomy, the Scorecard focuses on the following aspects: the capacity to define its leadership model, the composition and structure of its governance, internal academic structures and the possibility to create legal entities.

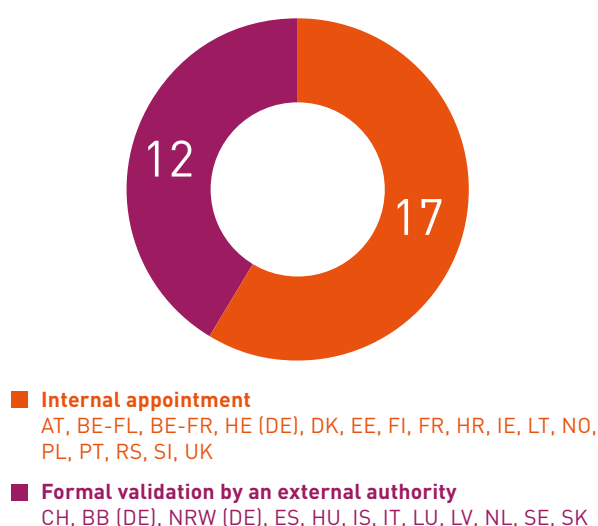
1.1. Executive leadership

Selection of the executive head⁶

The selection procedures for the rector vary from country to country. The procedures, which fall into four basic categories, are as follows:

- **Elected** by a specific electoral body, which is usually large, representing (directly or indirectly) the different groups of the university community (academic staff, other staff, students), whose votes may be weighted
- **Elected** by the governing body, which is democratically elected within the university community (usually the senate, i.e. the body that decides on academic issues)
- **Appointed** by the council/board of the university (i.e. the governing body that decides on strategic issues)
- **Appointed** through a two-step process in which both the senate and the council/board are involved.

Graph 1: Executive head appointment



The selection of the executive head may have to be validated by an external authority. This applies in more than 40% of the systems considered. In these cases, the appointment is confirmed by the ministry or minister for higher education, and sometimes by the highest public

authority (such as the President of the Republic). In most cases, however, this validation remains a formality.

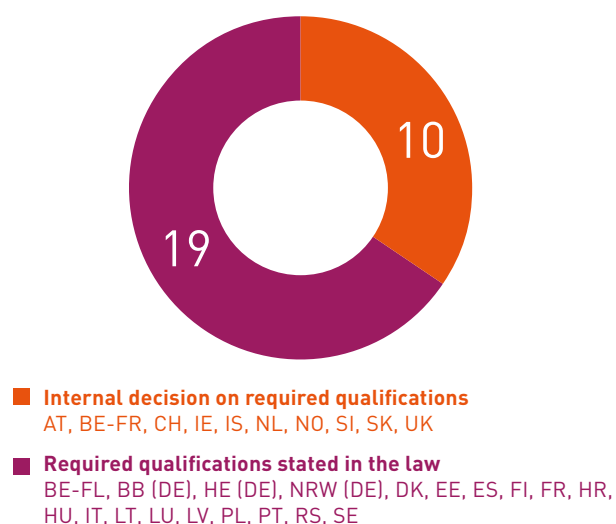
The selection procedure is an internal matter and does not need to be validated by an external authority in the remaining systems.

Changes in this regard have only been registered in North Rhine-Westphalia, where the executive head is now formally appointed by the ministry, while previously the process was purely internal.

Qualifications of the executive head

Provisions regarding the qualification requirements for the rector are specified by law in roughly two-thirds of the systems. Where universities may decide on selection criteria for their executive head, conditions for eligibility feature in the university's own statutes or stem from common practice, rather than from legal prescriptions.

Graph 2: Executive head selection criteria



The most common legal requirement, which applies in 14 systems, is the need for the rector to hold an academic position. Only rarely does the law require a doctoral degree exclusively (and not in combination with holding an academic position). In only four systems does the law explicitly request the candidates to be employed at the institution that issued the vacancy, although it tends to be a frequent practical requirement.

Italy has amended its legislation and removed that particular criterion for candidate rectors.

⁶ Rector, vice-chancellor, provost, president, principal or similar.

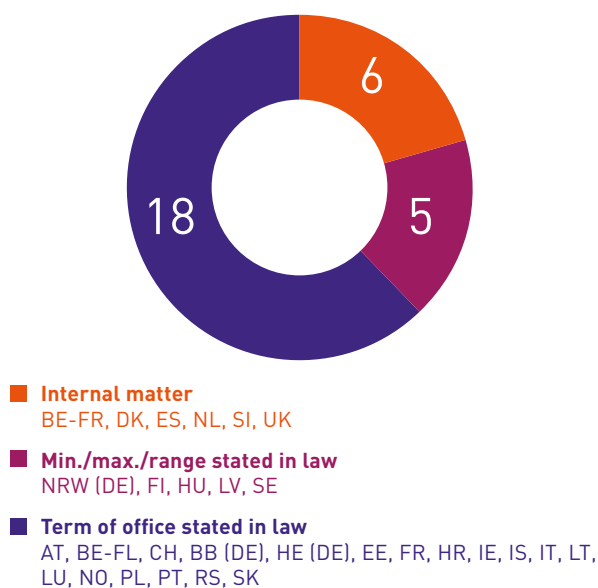
Further specifications include demonstrated managerial competencies, international experience, or age limits.

There may be different kinds of qualifications depending on the type of institution concerned. In Latvia, for example, the rector of a university must be a professor, while in other types of institutions a doctoral degree is sufficient. In Finland, a doctoral degree is required in all universities except the Academy of Fine Arts, Sibelius Academy and Theatre Academy.

Term of office and dismissal of the executive head

The rector's term of office is in nearly 80% of the systems stated in the law, either as a fixed duration or as a maximum period. The term typically ranges from four to six years and it is often renewable once. Ranges are specified in law in Finland, Hungary and Latvia. Only in a minority of countries are institutions able to freely determine the length of term of their executive leaders. The French-speaking community of Belgium is included among these cases as the majority of universities in the system are indeed free to decide on the term of office. Italy, in the reform referred to above, introduced a fixed term of office for university rectors.

Graph 3: Executive head term of office

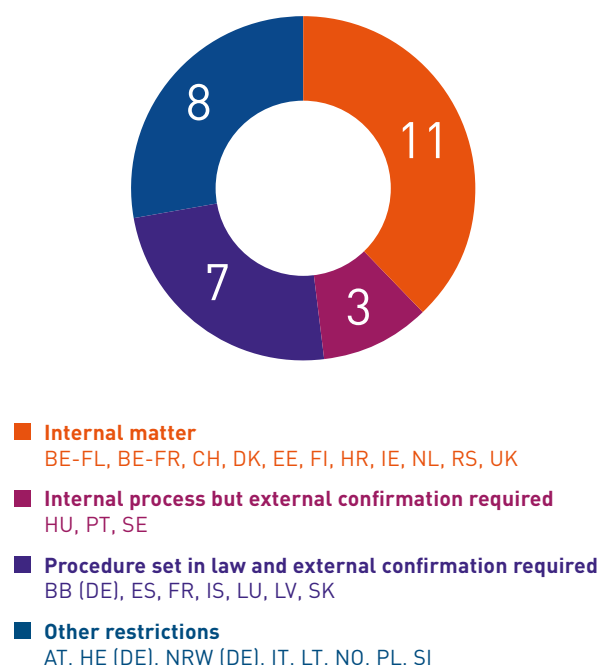


Dismissal is a key factor when assessing the rector's accountability to the institution and to other stakeholders. The law does not contain provisions regarding the rector's dismissal in a little over a third of the systems considered.

In the remaining systems, the dismissal of the executive head is more or less strictly regulated: external involvement may be limited to confirming the dismissal. However, the law may also specify the procedure to be followed.

Again, Italy has also introduced regulations regarding dismissals while the matter was purely internal before 2011.

Graph 4: Executive head dismissal



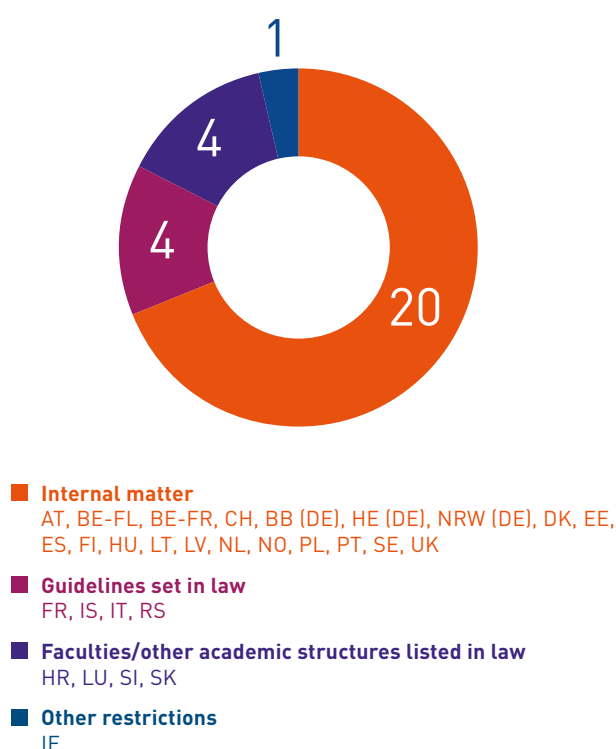
1.2. Internal academic structures

Universities are essentially free to determine their internal academic structures in more than two-thirds of the systems considered. Although in some of these systems, certain legal provisions concerning organisational units exist, these were not regarded as significant restrictions on institutional autonomy.

In four countries, universities must adhere to legal guidelines. While the law does not explicitly specify the number and name of academic units, other restrictions apply. The law may state that universities must have faculties, departments, schools or research institutes, and describe governance arrangements.

In Croatia, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Slovakia, academic units are listed by name in the law. In these systems, the universities are unable to establish new faculties and departments or restructure existing ones without amending the law. In all these cases except for Luxembourg, faculties are historically established entities that in many ways remain the reference level in relation to governance, funding and strategic decision-making.

Graph 5: Ability to determine internal academic structures



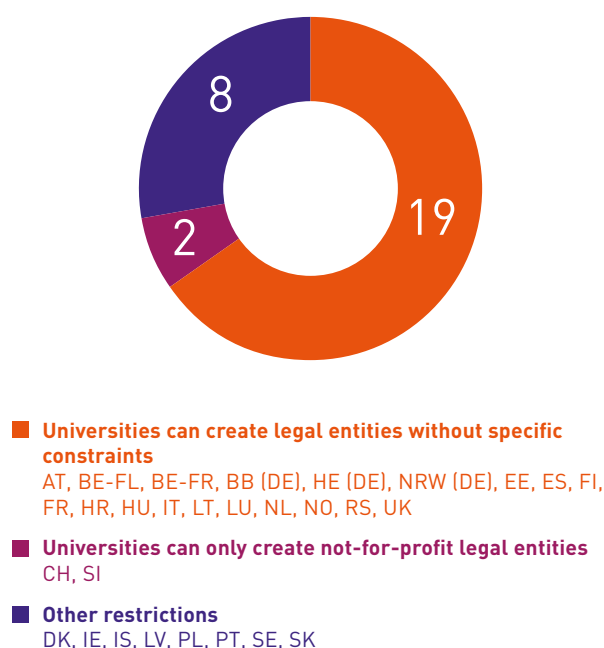
Two cases deserve particular attention: in Sweden, the law no longer prescribes that universities have faculty boards. This change was applied to all higher education institutions from 2011 onwards. This has enabled universities to completely re-order their internal organisation and decision-making structures. Conversely, Irish universities have seen their capacity to decide on internal academic structures reduced by tightened regulation over staff remuneration. Universities may not be able to hire senior staff for units such as “schools”, because this is not integrated in the remuneration regulatory framework. While this was set as a temporary measure during the economic crisis, restrictions remain.

1.3. Creating legal entities

The capacity to create independent legal entities enables universities to implement their strategies in a flexible and adequate way and hence to carry out their main missions. While all systems allow universities to create non-profit entities, about two-thirds extend this prerogative (without constraints) to for-profit legal entities.

Other restrictions may also apply, in relation to the scope of activities considered, the need to obtain ministry approval, or with regard to the procedure to be followed. Swedish universities must apply to the government, which in turn must obtain the parliament’s approval. Portuguese universities may establish both types of legal entities, on the basis of their own income but only if their object is directly related to the completion of the university’s missions. In Ireland, restrictions relate to barriers to employment of university staff by university subsidiaries. Latvian universities are also more constrained than in 2010 in this field, as the previous law governed only state and municipal companies with limited liability. The new law, which came into force in 2015, explicitly covers not only state and municipal, but all companies with limited liability established by any public institution, including public higher education institutions.

Graph 6: Ability to create legal entities



1.4. Governing bodies

Governance structures

There are two main types of governance structures: dual and unitary. Dual governance structures comprise a board or council, which is usually limited in size, and a senate. Although the terminology varies considerably, the senate is often a wider and more representative body, which includes the academic community and, to some extent, other categories of university staff. Competencies are clearly divided between the board/council and the senate.

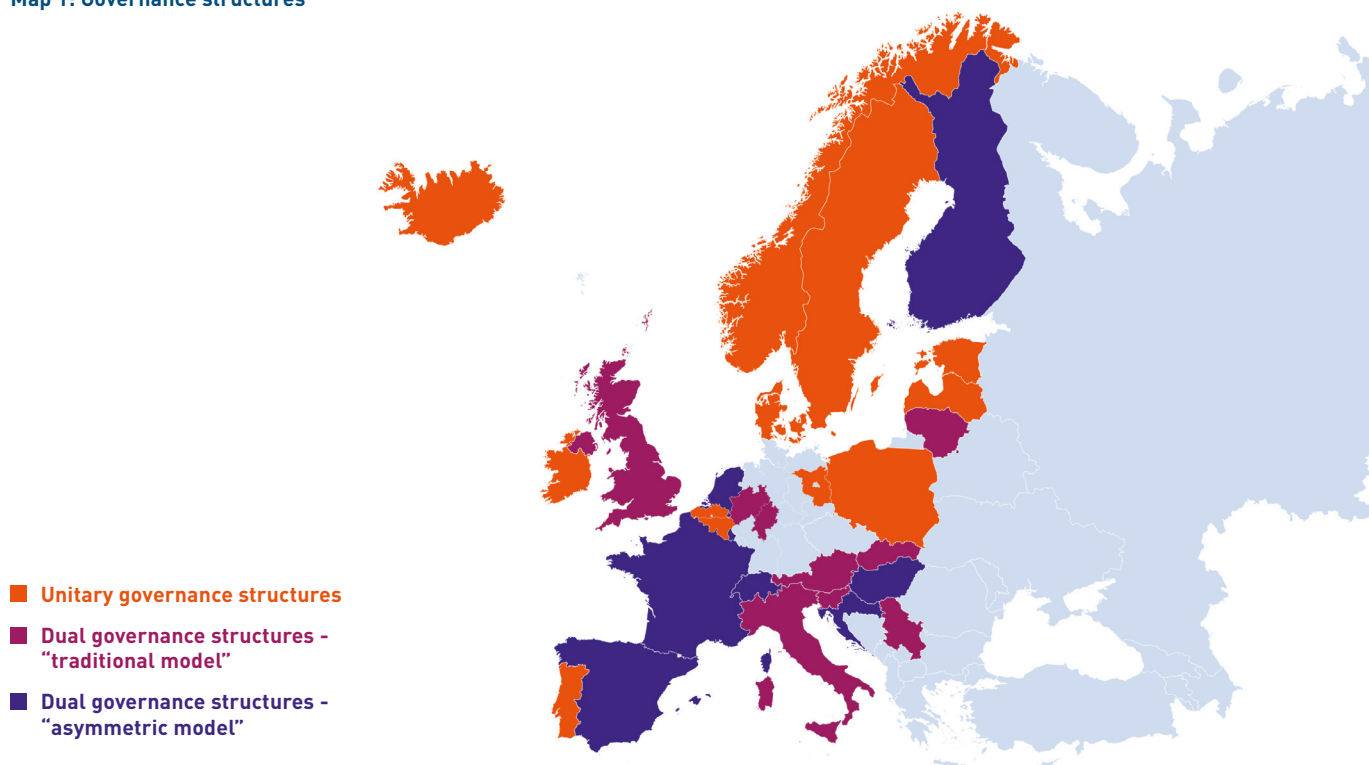
The scope and division of responsibilities between governing bodies may vary considerably between higher education systems. Two sub-types may be outlined: so-called 'traditional' dual governance structures, and 'asymmetric' dual structures.

In a 'traditional' dual structure, the board/council is often responsible for long-term strategic decisions, such as statutes, strategic plans, the selection of the rector and vice-rectors and budget allocation. The senate is entrusted with academic issues, such as curricula and degrees, as well as staff promotions, and consists mainly of internal members of the university community. Typically, it comprises representatives of all categories of academic and administrative staff as well as students.

In an 'asymmetric' dual structure, one of the bodies can be identified as the main decision-making organ, while the second one has more restricted competences and/or a narrower scope of interest. This second body is nevertheless more than a consultative organ⁷.

⁷ Where governance structures include bodies with mainly consultative functions, alongside the decision-making body/bodies, the former are not taken into account to determine the type of governance structure.

Map 1: Governance structures



An example is the evolution of university governance in **France**. A law passed in 2013 modified the distribution of competences among the governing bodies of the universities. Under the 2007 regulatory framework, the board combined strategic, management and HR competences. It was complemented by two bodies of a more consultative nature, the 'scientific council' and the 'council for academic and student matters'. The 2013 law implemented a change of competences by focusing the board's activities on strategic matters and reshaping the two other bodies into two committees (one for research and one for teaching) that together form the 'academic council'. This senate-type body now acquired a series of competences including a focus on staffing matters. It takes individual decisions relative to the hiring, assignment or career of the academic staff.

In other countries, universities have a unitary governing structure, in which there is only one main decision-making body. This organ, which is responsible for all major decisions, may be known as the senate, the council or by another name. A senate-type body exists in Brandenburg, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Poland. A board- or council-type body exists in Belgium (both in Flanders and in the French-speaking community), Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Portugal and Sweden. Higher education institutions in Brandenburg in fact share a common board, which provides strategic advice to the university leadership and puts forward candidates for the university presidency. In **Estonia**, two out of the six universities have developed alternative governance models, introducing a board-type body as the main executive organ.

Some systems, finally, present specific characteristics with regard to governance structures. In Austria, the law defines the rectorate as a collegial governing body on an equal footing with the board/council- and senate-type bodies. Dutch universities have atypical dual structures. They include an executive board as the main decision-making body, with responsibilities for strategic decisions, finances, staffing and academic affairs. The supervisory body, which is responsible for selecting the executive board, usually comprises 3 to 5 members, whose appointments are controlled by the ministry. Spanish universities also have a large 'social council', a body that supervises the economic activities of universities and the performance of its services, in addition to the board and senate. It is responsible for

approving the budget and the longer term financial plans of universities.

External members in governing bodies

The inclusion and appointment of non-university members is an important aspect of a university's governing structure. If an institution is able to include external members, the selection can be carried out by the university itself and/or by an external authority.

The ability to decide on the inclusion of external members in university governing bodies is rare. Only in Estonia and the UK are universities free to decide whether or not they wish to include them. **Italy** changed a series of provisions with regard to university governance in 2010/2011, which introduced mandatory participation of external members. In Brandenburg, Latvia and Poland, universities remain unable to include external members in their governing bodies. Universities of all other surveyed systems are required to include them.

External members of governing bodies are usually fully integrated in the decision-making process. In **France**, following the reform passed in 2013, external members can now participate in the election of the rector. In dual systems, external members are typically included in the board-/council-type body. Of the unitary systems with a senate-type governing organ, only Estonia and Ireland include external members. It is rare for senate-type bodies to include non-university members. A reform passed in 2016 allows **Lithuanian** universities to include external members in both governing bodies, with the caveat that in the case of the senate, these members must come from research and higher education institutions.

External members make for varying shares of the governing bodies in which they are present. The law may set limits or thresholds to the participation of external members. A number of systems limit their participation to roughly one-third, or less, of the main governing body (as in France or Italy), while this is the minimum external member participation in Portugal. They make up about 40% of the main governing body in Finland (threshold) or Lithuania (limit). External members account for around half of the membership in Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Estonia (for the two universities governed by different regulations than the rest of the system). A governing body may be exclusively

composed of members external to the university, as is the case in Austria, Luxembourg, the Netherlands or Slovakia.

The appointment of external members follows four main models. Universities may be free to appoint the external members of their governing bodies. External members may be put forward by the institution, but appointed by an external authority. Alternatively, part of the members may be appointed by the university, and part by an external authority. Finally, an external authority may decide on the appointment of external members.

There are often rules regarding the types of external members that may be appointed, and their distribution may also be regulated. Typically, external members include representatives of public bodies (whether local, regional or national), chambers of commerce, the business sector in general, and other research and higher education institutions. Universities that can select external members are able to attract profiles and competences that suit the strategic positioning of the institution. There does not tend to be provisions prohibiting the inclusion of foreign external members in the governing bodies, although this remains a rare practice, mostly for reasons linked to the language used in the meetings of these bodies.

Graph 7: External members in governing bodies



- **Universities can appoint external members**
DK, EE, FI, IT, LT, PT, UK
- **Universities cannot appoint external members themselves but make proposals**
NO, SE, SK
- **Universities can appoint part of the external members**
AT, BE-FR, HE (DE), FR, HR, IS, SI
- **Universities do not control the external members appointment process**
CH, ES, HU, LU, NL, RS
- **Other appointment process**
BE-FL, NRW (DE), IE
- **Universities cannot include external members**
BB (DE), LV, PL

2. Financial autonomy

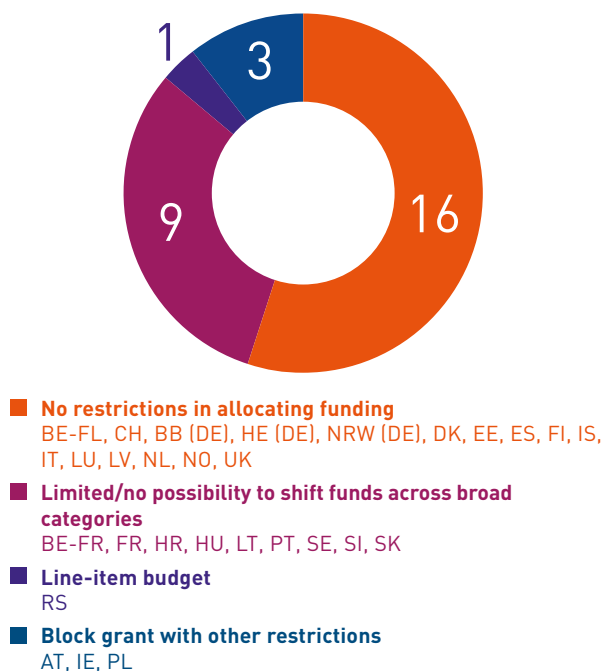
Organisational autonomy	Financial autonomy	Staffing autonomy	Academic autonomy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection procedure for the executive head • Selection criteria for the executive head • Dismissal of the executive head • Term of office of the executive head • Inclusion and selection of external members in governing bodies • Capacity to decide on academic structures • Capacity to create legal entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and type of public funding • Capacity to keep surplus • Capacity to borrow money • Ability to own buildings • Ability to charge tuition fees for national/EU students • Ability to charge tuition fees for non-EU students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on salaries (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on dismissals (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on promotions (senior academic/senior administrative staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to decide on overall student numbers • Ability to select students • Ability to introduce programmes • Ability to terminate programmes • Ability to choose the language of instruction • Capacity to select QA mechanisms and providers • Ability to design content of degree programmes

2.1. Allocation of public funding

Modalities of public funding to universities vary greatly throughout Europe; in most systems however, universities receive basic recurrent public funding to cover their core activities through a block grant. Block grants are understood as financial grants that cover several categories of expenditure, such as teaching, operational costs and/or research activities. In such a framework, universities are free to internally divide and distribute their funding according to their needs, although some restrictions may still apply. Public funding arrangements remain set in a broader framework, including funds awarded on a competitive basis, specific large-scale funding streams, and direct targeted/earmarked funding mechanisms for pre-defined purposes. Block grants nevertheless are, in most cases, the main method of distributing public funding to universities in Europe⁸.

By contrast, in a line-item budget, the ministry or parliament pre-allocate university funding to cost items and activities. Institutions are thus unable to distribute their funds, or may only do so within strict limitations. Line-item budgets are only recorded in Serbia for this update, although in some cases, block grants remain heavily regulated and subdivided in such a way that the actual margin for strategic financial management is anecdotal. In **Hungary**, in addition to the lack of internal shifting possibilities across categories, any decision with financial implications must receive the approval of the chancellor, a central figure created in universities in 2014 and appointed directly by the Prime Minister. This has an impact on the capacity of the university to decide on internal funding allocation.

8 E. Bennetot Pruvot, A.-L. Claeys-Kulik and T. Estermann, 2015, *Designing strategies for efficient funding of universities in Europe* (Brussels, EUA).

Graph 8: Internal funding allocation

Just over half of the systems allow universities to allocate their funding internally without specific restrictions. In about a third of the systems, the block grant may be divided into broad categories, such as teaching and research (Iceland, Sweden), teaching, research and infrastructure (Latvia, Lithuania), salaries and operational costs (Portugal), or investments and operational costs (France). As a rule, there are limited possibilities for the universities to move funds between these categories although situations cover a wide spectrum.

In some cases, universities receive a block grant that can be freely allocated, although specific restrictions/situations apply. In Ireland, a percentage of the block grant is earmarked for specific tasks, such as widening access for disadvantaged socio-economic groups. Institutions cannot use this money for other purposes. In Poland, universities receive a block grant for teaching, while research funding is allocated directly to the faculties.

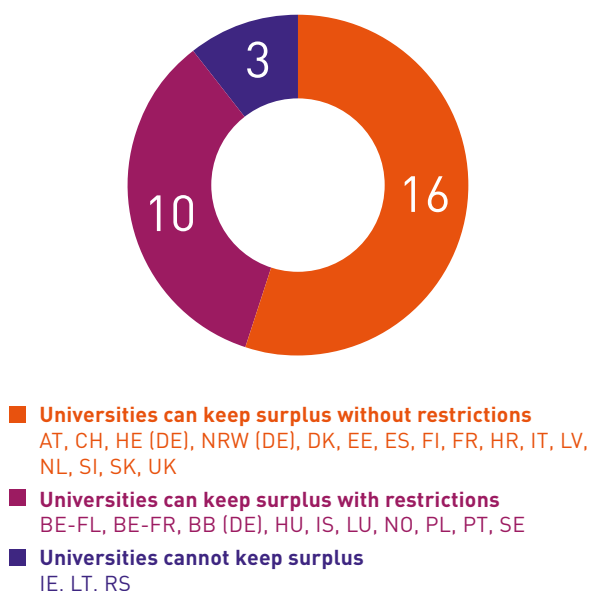
In 2011-2012, **Latvia** passed and implemented a law on budgetary organisation that shifted universities from public

institutions with very specific allocated funding to the position of budgetary institutions that are authorised to freely allocate funding internally across different areas.

By far the most common funding period remains one year. The funding period is longer only in Austria, Brandenburg and Luxembourg, as was the case in 2010. In these countries, budgets are decided upon for three, two and four years, respectively. The funding period of some universities in Switzerland may be longer than one year, but this has to be confirmed annually by the cantonal or federal parliament. In Norway, annual public funding for universities is determined in part on the basis of output criteria corresponding to the previous two years; while in this system public funding remains allocated on a yearly basis, it creates a degree of stability and enhances financial forecasting. It should be noted however that, in many countries, longer-term negotiated contracts between the ministry and universities are implemented, in which the rights and responsibilities of the institution – regarding resources and student numbers, for instance – are set down, with possible annual adjustments.

2.2. Keeping surplus on public funding

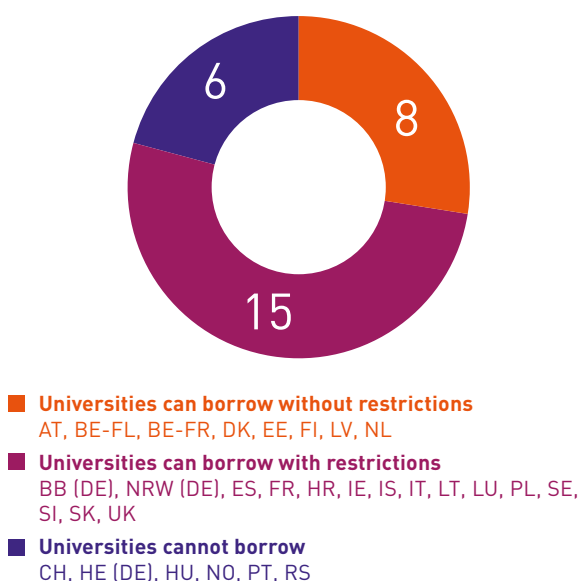
Almost all systems surveyed allow universities to keep a surplus on their public funding, although some type of restriction often applies. Restrictions typically include the need to secure the approval of an external authority (including via the integration of the surplus in the new annual budget procedure), a maximum limit, or some type of pre-determination of the type of activities on which the surplus may be spent. Only in Ireland, Lithuania and Serbia does such practice continue to be forbidden.

Graph 9: Ability to keep surplus on public funding

2.3. Borrowing money

Borrowing often remains a strictly regulated matter. Only slightly over a quarter of the systems analysed authorise universities to borrow without imposing specific restrictions. In over 70% of the cases, universities cannot borrow or face limitations. The two most frequent types of these restrictions are a pre-determined maximum percentage for borrowing, and the need to secure the approval of an external authority. Brandenburg and Sweden let universities borrow exclusively from state-owned banks. Restrictions on borrowing have been relaxed to some extent in **Lithuania** since the 2016 reform.

Graph 10: Ability to borrow money



2.4. Ownership of land and buildings

The capacity of universities to autonomously buy, sell and build facilities is linked to their freedom to determine their institutional strategy and academic profile. However, high maintenance costs or restrictions associated with historical buildings may deter universities in some systems from owning their facilities.

The large majority of systems make it possible for universities to own buildings. Exceptions include the three German states considered in the update, Brandenburg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as Hungary, Serbia and Sweden. The rule in **Lithuania** remains that universities cannot sell buildings; however, in specific cases, universities may now ask for government authorisation to transfer

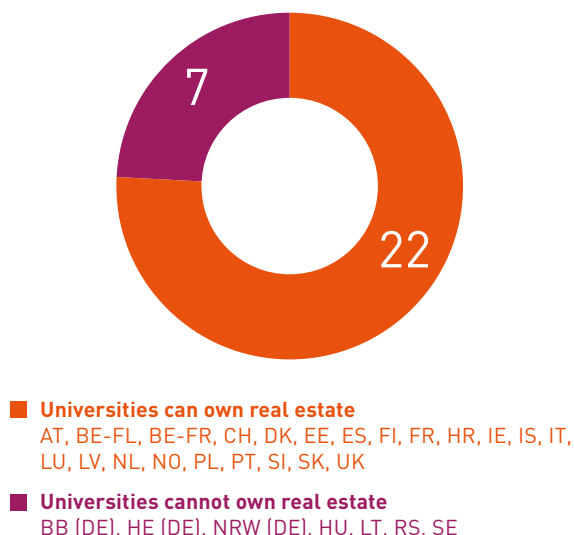
property. In this case, the income generated through the sale must be invested into core activities of the university.

There also continues to exist intermediary models, where a (semi)-public agency owns university buildings. This is still the case in Austria – where buildings may be owned by universities themselves or managed by the quasi-governmental company responsible for publicly owned real estate. In **Finland**, the state has now sold its share of the two companies that own university buildings in the greater Helsinki region. These companies are therefore now wholly owned by the universities which are the tenants of the facilities. In Sweden, universities may not own buildings, which are for 60% managed by a state-owned company (the other 40% being owned by other real estate companies on the open market).

In **France**, a pilot launched in 2011/2012 saw three universities become owners and sign a contract with the ministry, whereby the latter committed to providing a certain level of funding for maintenance purposes. Up to four other French universities are expected to follow in 2017. The majority of universities, however, still do not own their buildings.

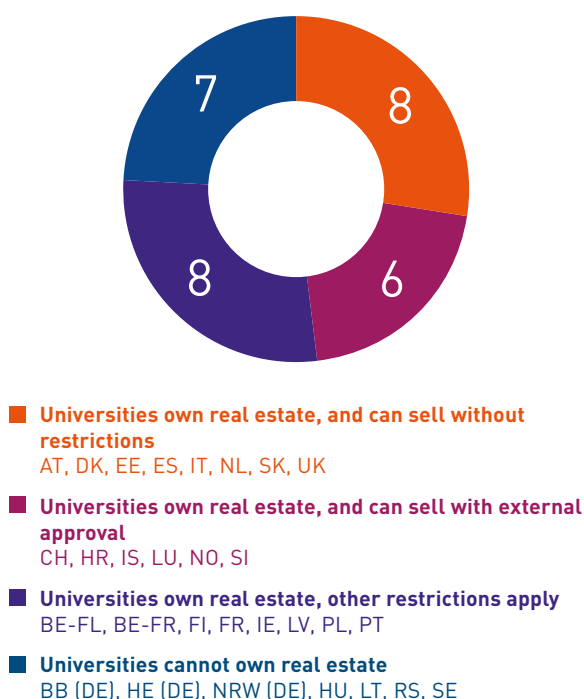
In some systems, ownership of buildings was flagged as a topic of discussion in 2010, with various types of outcomes by 2016: in **Flanders** (Belgium), an inventory was undertaken and helped clarify ownership issues; in **Denmark**, while universities may own buildings and legislation was reformed in 2015, it remains rare that universities become owners; in **Luxembourg**, the question was debated but without concrete results.

Graph 11: Ownership of university buildings



Only about a third of the systems where universities can own buildings actually allow them to sell real estate freely. Restrictions apply in all other cases, usually in the form of an external approval, or a notification to an external authority (Ireland, Portugal).

Graph 12: Capacity to sell real estate



2.5. Students' financial contributions

Students' financial contributions are considered in this study in as far as it relates to universities' financial autonomy. In some systems, this income represents a significant percentage of the university budget, and the ability to charge and set fees thus plays a central role for institutional strategies. Both so-called 'tuition' and 'registration' fees are considered, the latter when they are of an amount at least equal to the lowest 'tuition' fee charged among the systems analysed.

The following maps describe the ability to set fees for national/EU students and non-EU students in the 29 higher education systems included in the study. The first two maps refer to national students as well as EU/EEA students, when they are treated identically as national students as per EU legislation.

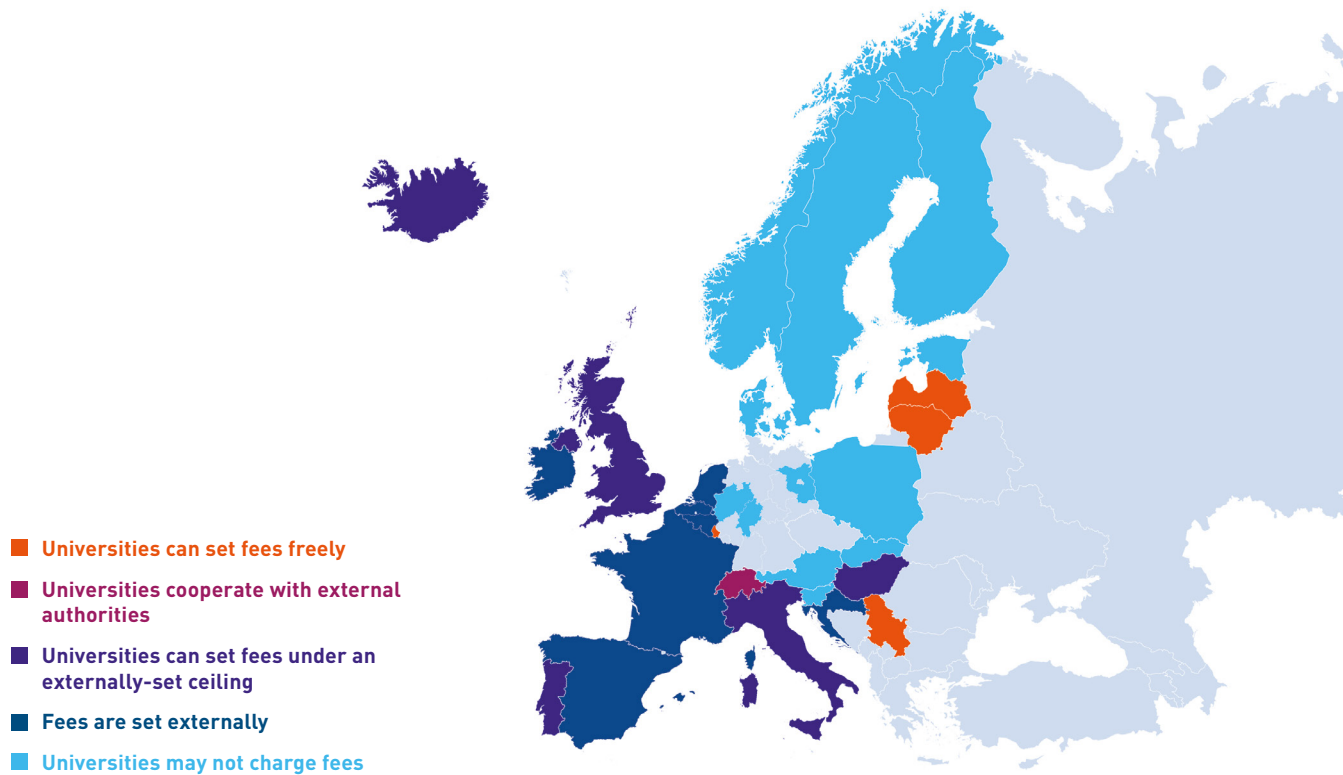
The maps refer to first-time students enrolled on a full-time basis (60 ECTS per year). They do not consider the capacity to charge and set fees to part-time students, who may nonetheless constitute a large part of the student population in some systems. For so-called split systems, the situation depicted reflects the capacity of universities to set the level of fees for students who do not benefit from a state-funded place. Aside from this basic threshold, the analysis does not consider the actual level of fees charged.

The matter of tuition/registration fees is particularly complex and challenging to compare across systems. Perceptions may be at odds with the methodology used here. For instance, in Scotland, universities technically charge (centrally fixed) fees at Bachelor level, but most national and European students are eligible to a government award which practically means that the fee is paid directly by the public authorities to the institution, requiring nevertheless that the student applies for such award each academic year. The use of income-contingent loans, whereby students repay tuition fees once they have reached a certain income level after they complete their studies (rather than upfront), also raises new questions regarding the cost-sharing model. In Ireland and Iceland registration fees are higher than tuition fees in some countries. Therefore, the Irish and Icelandic registration fees are included in the maps below.

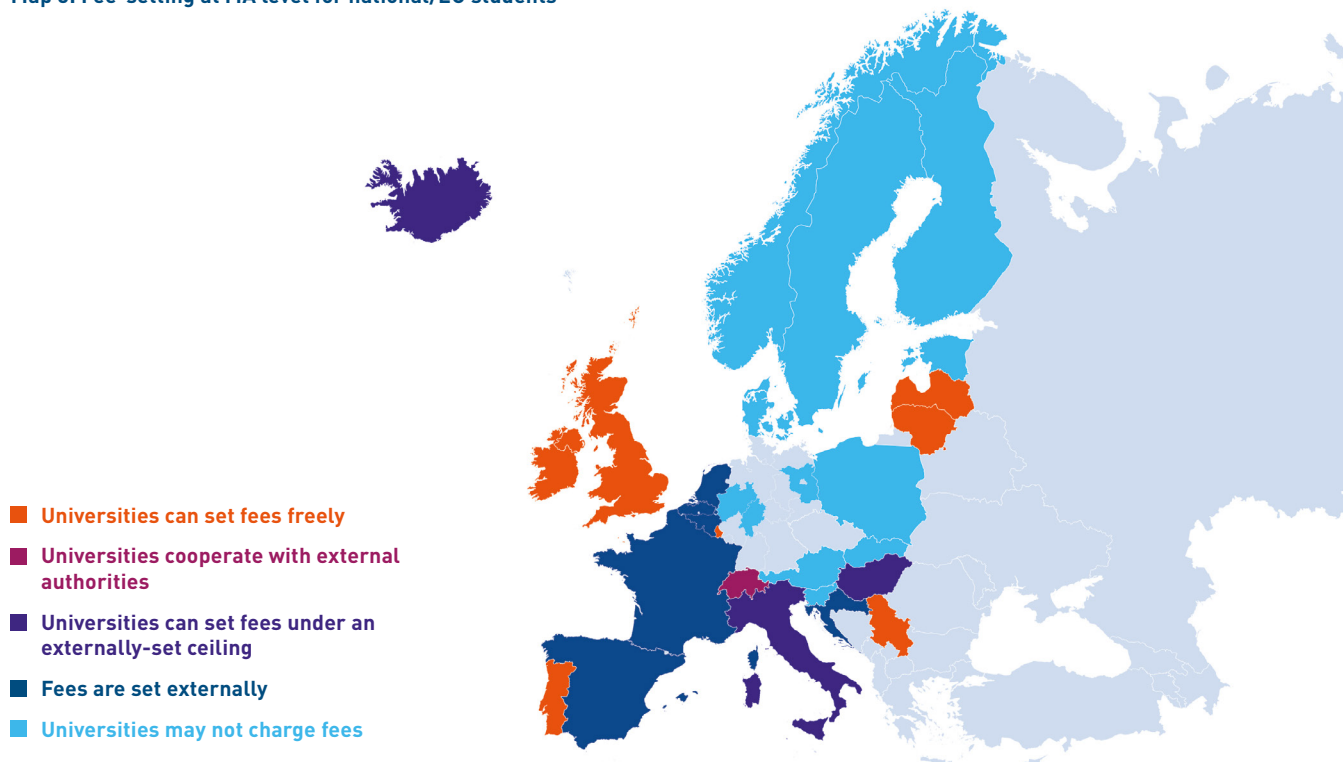
Finally, one needs to consider the type and level of student support available in the system to gain a full understanding of it.

The analysis below focuses solely on the capacity to set fees. As a simplification, it is possible to distinguish three main models that continue to exist in Europe: fees may be freely determined by the university itself, a public authority may decide on fees, or a public authority and the universities may cooperate in setting fees. The modalities of collaborative fee-setting range from genuine negotiations between universities and the external authority, to the external authority setting a ceiling under which universities may levy fees. In some systems, public authorities allocate a number of state-funded study places, while the institutions may take in additional students and set fees for them within a given framework.

Map 2: Fee-setting at BA level for national/EU students



Map 3: Fee-setting at MA level for national/EU students



The same 12 systems do not allow universities to charge tuition fees, either at Bachelor or at Master level. Only three systems differentiate between Bachelor and Master levels, in the direction of more freedom for universities to set fees at Master level (England, Ireland and Portugal). In Iceland and Italy, the 'ceiling' under which universities may set fees can be qualified as indirect. In Iceland, the registration fee collected may not exceed the administrative costs incurred by the university per student; while in Italy, the overall amount collected from regular national and EU students may not exceed 20% of the public funds received by an institution.

Developments related to tuition fees for national/EU students over the recent years include the following:

- **Austria:** universities have no longer been able to charge tuition fees to national/EU students since September 2008. Universities can, however, charge fees to students who take longer than expected to complete their studies (beyond one tolerance semester and apart from some specific situations) and in this case fees are set by an external authority.
- **England:** the level of fees applying to national/EU students rose significantly over the period considered. The cap per annum in England rose from 3 000 GBP to 9 000 GBP in 2012 and to 9 250 GBP in 2017. The expected average fee for 2017/18 was 8 966 GBP.
- **Estonia:** tuition fees were abolished for all full-time programmes taught in Estonian from 2013 onwards. However, Estonian universities may charge students who do not complete enough ECTS credits in order to partially compensate for the study costs. Each university can charge fees up to certain limits set by the government. Universities may decide not to charge fees within allowed credit margins.
- **North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany):** tuition fees were abolished at all study levels in 2011. Previously universities were able to set fees under a ceiling set by an external authority for Bachelor and Master students. Universities now receive the same amount of funding from the state as they did from fees and the government has guaranteed this replacement income.
- **Hungary:** universities may set the level of fees for Hungarian/EU students who are not allocated state-funded places in Hungary's mixed model. However, the government recently enforced more

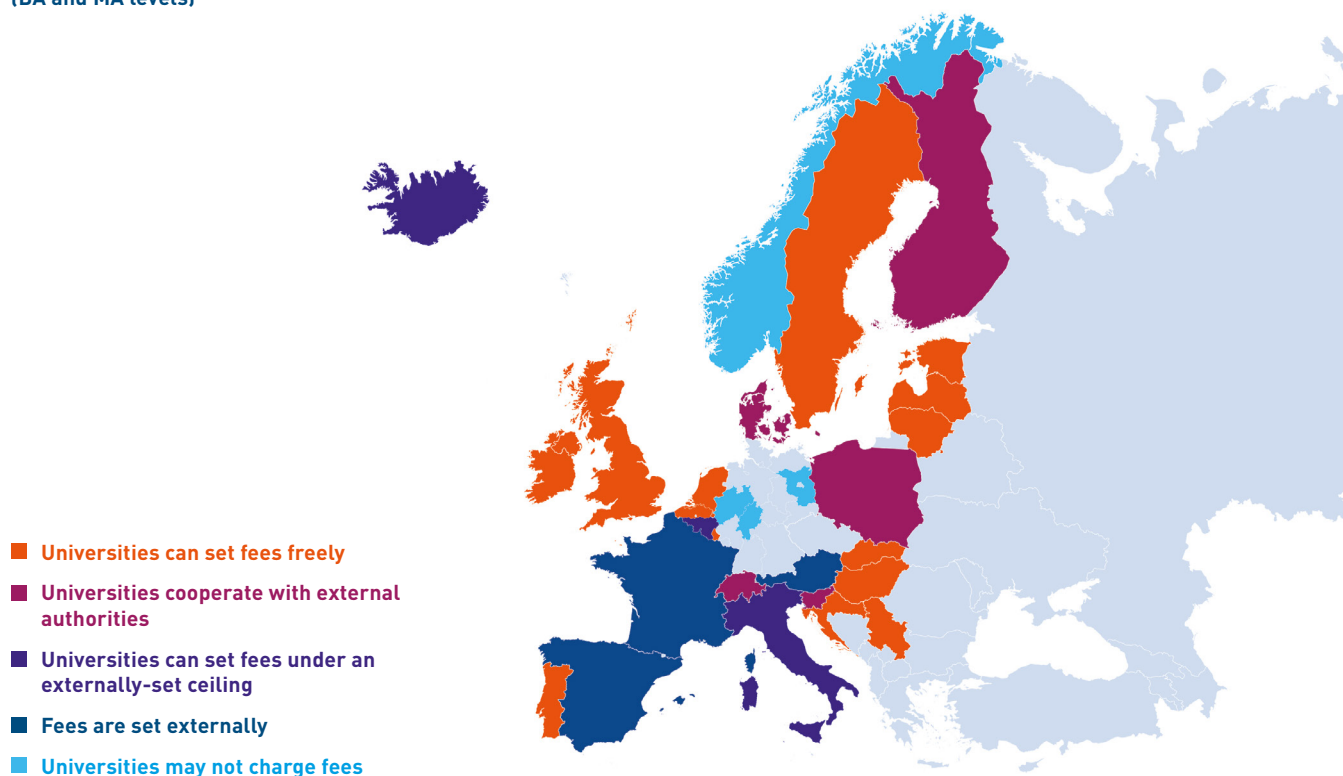
rigid restrictions in this field. Universities may not charge fees higher than the standard cost per student determined by the ministry per academic field. A minimum level also applies.

- **Ireland:** The student contribution ('registration fee') in Ireland was set at 2 000 Euros for the academic year 2011/2012 and increased to 3 000 Euros from 2015/2016.
- **Lithuania:** universities may now set the level and charge fees to students who are enrolled on a self-paying basis. Previously fees could not be set higher than the cost determined by the ministry for each study field.

Generally speaking, universities are more autonomous in setting fees for non-EU students than for national/EU students for whom fees are often either set by an external authority or not levied at all. In seven systems the principles for fee-setting always remain the same (whether for national/EU students at Bachelor level, for national/EU students at Master level, and for international students at both levels): Switzerland, where it is based on negotiation; Spain and France, where the fees are set externally; the three German states and Norway, where universities may not charge fees.

In all other systems, universities benefit from more autonomy in fee-setting for international students. Danish and Finnish universities, which are not allowed to charge fees to national students, 'negotiate' fees with the public authorities for international students, in the sense that they have to charge a minimum fee (1 500 Euros in Finland, piloted since 2016, and will be mandatory as from August 2017). Since 2016 Italy allows universities to differentiate between national/EU students and international students. Sweden, another system where no fee is charged to national and EU students, introduced fees for international students in 2011. Swedish universities are free to set the level of these fees (at Bachelor and Master levels). This led to very significant decline in the number of non-EU students at Swedish universities, with a 90% drop of international student numbers in the first year of full fees. Since then measures have been taken to restore Sweden's attractiveness as an international study destination, with the development of scholarships and more focused recruitment approaches.

**Map 4: Fee-setting for international students
(BA and MA levels)**



3. Staffing autonomy

Organisational autonomy	Financial autonomy	Staffing autonomy	Academic autonomy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection procedure for the executive head • Selection criteria for the executive head • Dismissal of the executive head • Term of office of the executive head • Inclusion and selection of external members in governing bodies • Capacity to decide on academic structures • Capacity to create legal entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and type of public funding • Capacity to keep surplus • Capacity to borrow money • Ability to own buildings • Ability to charge tuition fees for national/EU students • Ability to charge tuition fees for non-EU students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on salaries (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on dismissals (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on promotions (senior academic/senior administrative staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to decide on overall student numbers • Ability to select students • Ability to introduce programmes • Ability to terminate programmes • Ability to choose the language of instruction • Capacity to select QA mechanisms and providers • Ability to design content of degree programmes

A detailed comparison of the different elements of staffing autonomy remains a challenge due to the hugely diverse regulations concerning different categories of university personnel and the differing legal frameworks of public and private labour law, which impact on the ability to recruit, remunerate, dismiss and promote staff.

It is possible to distinguish, in a very simplified way, between those systems where a minority or no senior staff have civil servant status, and those where a majority of the senior staff have civil servant status (or similar).

The proportions are roughly equivalent, with 13 in the first category and 16 in the second. The countries where no or a minority of staff have civil servant status are mostly found in Northern Europe, in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden and the UK. In Austria, civil servant staff are now less than 30% of the university staff, and in Luxembourg they represent less than 10%. Swiss universities in most cantons, as well as the three German states considered here, have also moved away from the civil servant model.

All the others have a majority of senior staff employed as civil servants (at least senior academic staff);

Flanders, Poland, Serbia and Slovakia give near-equivalent status, usually including special protection regarding dismissals. However, the distinction between the two categories is far from clear-cut, and in systems where there is no (or not anymore) civil servant-based recruitment in universities, staff may still benefit from some specific employment modalities.

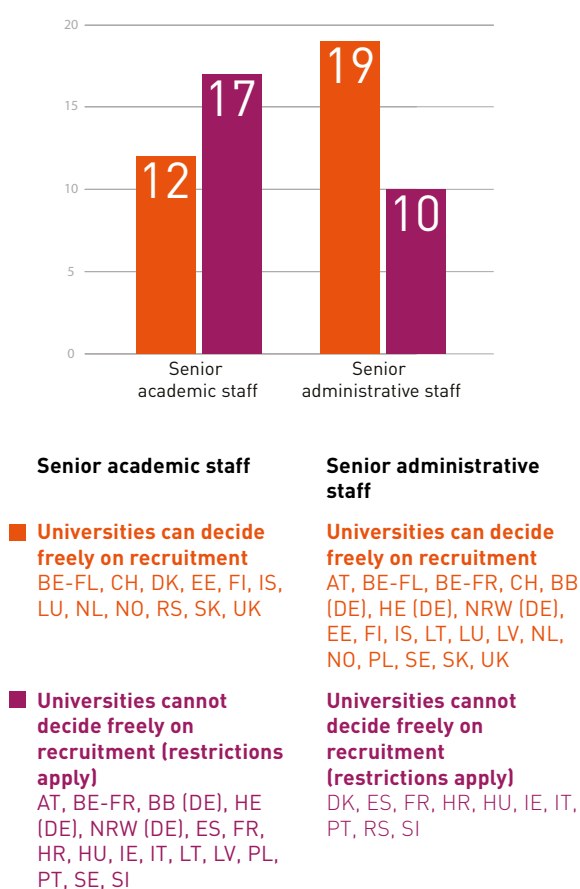
3.1. Recruitment of staff

The analysis demonstrates that there are significant differences in recruitment procedures across Europe, ranging from a large degree of independence in the recruitment of staff to formalised procedures that necessitate the approval of an external authority.

Although there is of course some variation with regard to recruitment practices for senior academic personnel, most systems follow fairly similar procedures. It is common practice to specify selection criteria at faculty level and to set up a selection committee to evaluate candidates. The successful applicant is subsequently appointed at faculty level or, alternatively, by a decision-making body at university level. The selection committee either recommends one candidate or provides the decision-making body with a shortlist of preferred candidates in order of priority. The law may contain provisions about the recruitment procedure,

specifying the need to publish open posts, the required qualifications for different categories of professors, and/or the composition of the evaluation or selection committee. Some system-specific regulations are described below.

Graph 13: Senior staff recruitment



Restrictions on recruitment of senior academic and administrative staff (the only part of university staff considered in this analysis) typically include: external confirmation of appointments, number of posts controlled externally, recruitment carried out by an external authority. These restrictions may apply to all or part of the considered staff categories. A series of other limitations, less frequent, also exist in different systems. An example is the requirement to have an annual recruitment plan approved by an external authority, which provides a framework for all the ensuing recruitments during the year (as is the case in Slovenia and in some of the universities of the French-speaking community of Belgium).

The recruitment of senior academic staff is more often regulated than that of senior administrative staff. This relates to the fact that civil servant status is more frequently found among senior academic staff than senior administrative staff.

Appointments of some categories of senior academic staff, usually full professors, need to be confirmed by an external authority in Croatia, Hungary and Poland. The number of posts for some or all senior academic staff is regulated in Croatia, France and Italy. Specific requirements apply to the recruitment of senior academic staff in Latvia, who need to have a certain proficiency level in the Latvian language.

Universities are more often able to recruit senior administrative staff independently. However, 10 countries impose various restrictions on this type of recruitment. Some appointments must be confirmed externally in Portugal, while the number of some senior administrative posts is regulated in Croatia, Denmark and Italy. In France, the recruitment of senior personnel working in libraries and central administration is carried out by an external authority through a national competition.

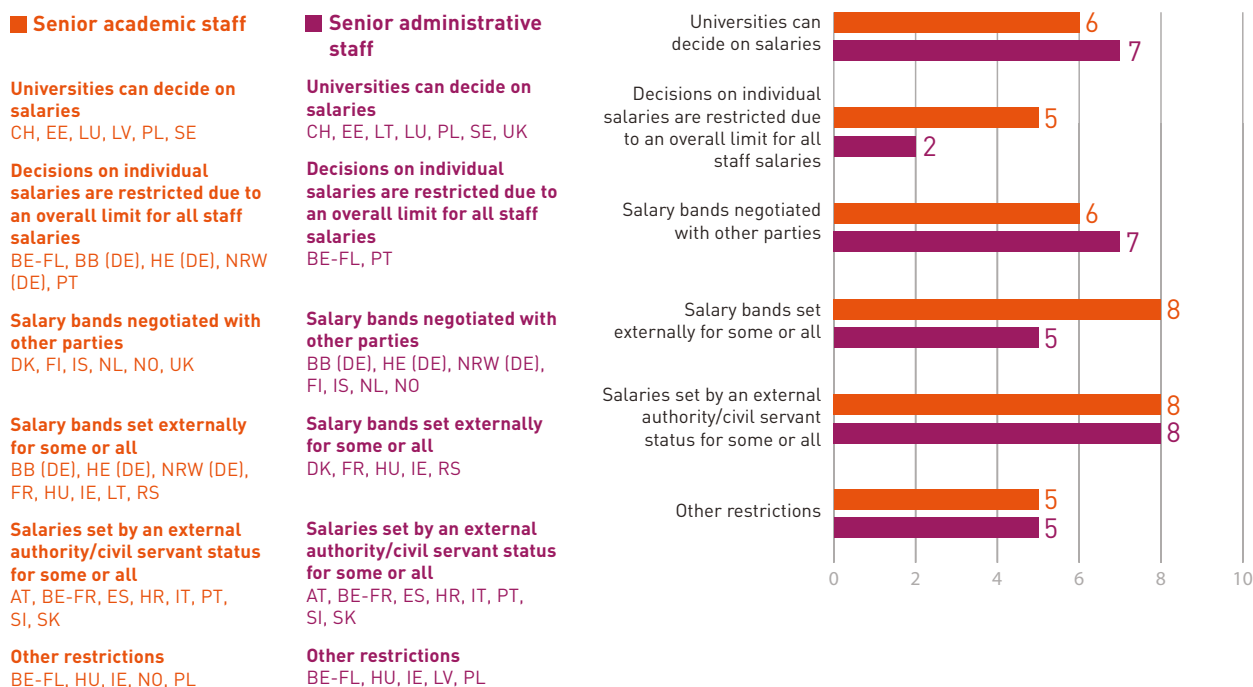
There have been particular legal restrictions for the recruitment of senior administrative staff in **Serbia** since 2014, which are due to apply until the end of 2017. Serbia is reducing the staff numbers in public services, including university administrative staff. As a consequence, Serbian universities currently cannot hire administrative staff.

Irish universities are in principle free to hire senior academic and administrative staff. However, restrictions introduced in the context of the economic crisis in the form of the Employment Control Framework continue to apply. Restrictions include a moratorium on recruitment for permanent positions. In addition, universities have to meet annual targets for headcount reduction.

3.2. Staff salaries

Universities in Europe are generally not entirely free to set the salaries of their senior academic or administrative staff members. As a simplification, it can be considered that only universities in Estonia, Luxembourg, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland can determine the salaries for both categories.

Graph 14: Senior staff salaries



(The same system may appear in different categories, reflecting the complexity of the situation).

Not all of the systems where universities are free to recruit senior staff let universities decide on salaries. The most autonomous universities in this regard are in Switzerland (average across cantons), Estonia, Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden. Universities can decide on salaries, but only for academic staff, in Latvia, and only for administrative staff, in Lithuania and in the UK.

In over half of the systems, salaries are set or framed (via salary bands) by an external authority. These tend to correspond to countries where a majority of senior university staff has civil servant status. Austria, where around 30% of senior staff retain civil servant status, therefore reports that salaries are set externally for part of senior academic and administrative staff. In Lithuania, senior academic staff do not have civil servant status, but salary bands are prescribed externally for this staff category.

In the three German states, professors appointed after 2002 are guaranteed a minimum salary, while those appointed before 2002 are civil servants whose salary

bands are fixed. The salaries for other senior academic staff in Brandenburg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia are negotiated with other parties.

The figure above confirms trends already identified with recruitment: salaries of senior administrative staff are slightly less often regulated than those of senior academic staff.

Cases entered under “other restrictions” include Flanders, where although universities may decide on salaries, employment conditions are derived from those of civil servants, including salary grids. In Hungary, although there is no technical salary band prescribed, there exists a minimum salary as well as a separate maximum pay scale for public employees; in addition, the chancellor (a recently created position appointed by the Prime Minister) needs to approve any salary decision. In Norway, salaries are negotiated annually between trade unions and the state, with no involvement of the universities.

Finally, in Latvia, restrictions on administrative staff salaries were introduced in 2010 as part of wider austerity measures. University administrators have public employee status and were included in public

sector restrictions, which consisted in setting maximum salaries.

Developments, or setbacks, in the capacity of universities to set salaries include the following:

- **Ireland:** Irish universities may set the salaries of senior academic and administrative staff within salary bands prescribed at national level per broad staff category. However, additional restrictions have effectively reduced the autonomy of universities in this area. Agreements concluded between the government and the trade unions include the use of a reduced pay scale for new entrants, who can be appointed at entry-level grade only, as well as a revised career-average pension scheme. Existing staff have also undergone significant pay cuts, which have been decided at state level.
- **Luxembourg:** the university can decide freely on the salaries of senior academic staff – while the salary bands of academic staff are still linked to comparable civil servant pay bands through a salary grid, the university is free to negotiate additional salary components such as bonuses outside the bands with new staff. There is scope under the current arrangements for some exceptions to the grid for academic staff. Combined with the phasing-out of the civil servant status, this is a development that explains the greater autonomy of the university in this matter.
- **Poland:** universities can decide on salaries for senior academic and administrative staff, with the only restriction being that minimum salary levels are set by the ministry. There have been two major changes in this area since 2010 as salary bands have been abolished and the upper limit on salaries has been removed, giving universities greater autonomy in this area.

3.3. Dismissal of staff

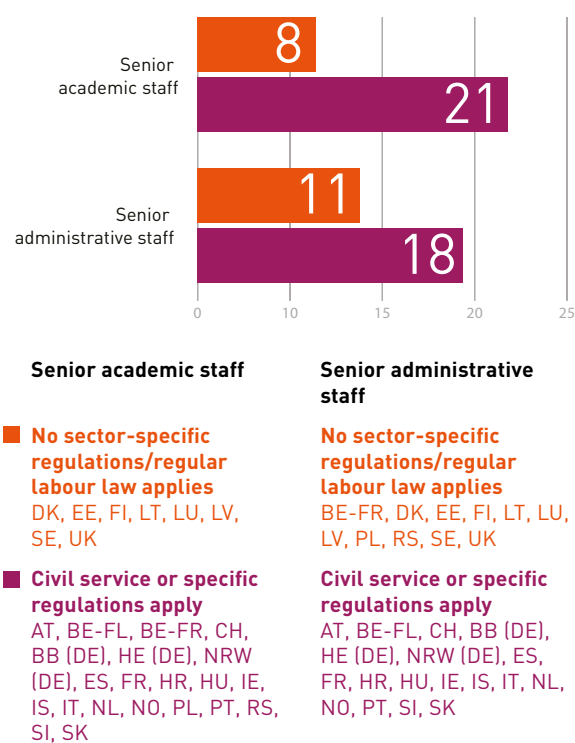
The spectrum of dismissal modalities of senior staff ranges from the absence of regulations specific to the sector (i.e. general labour law applies), to strict regulations linked to civil servant status. In between, some systems have developed particular frameworks applying to some categories of staff, with different levels of rules regarding dismissals.

Countries where no or a minority of senior academic staff are civil servants do not impose particular

regulations on dismissals, with the exception of Austria and the three German states (where civil servant regulations apply to some of the staff).

In Sweden, specific regulations apply to professors hired before 1993. In Switzerland, certain categories of staff enjoy a longer notice period. On a similar note, most full-time permanent academic staff in Poland enjoy special protection from dismissal.

Graph 15: Senior staff dismissal



Dismissal is strictly regulated for all senior academic and administrative staff in seven countries: Croatia, France, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. In addition to civil service and national labour laws, Dutch universities also negotiate separate labour contracts for the sector, which include specific rules for dismissal.

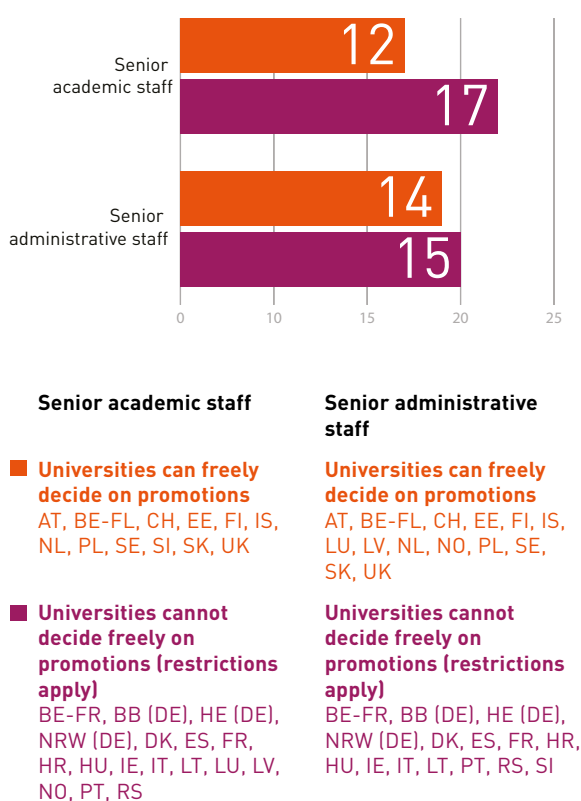
There have not been significant developments in the capacity of universities to decide on dismissals. Only Ireland, because of the above-described changes, reported increased restrictions beyond the already existing civil service regulations. Since 2010, collective agreements have been concluded between the State

Department of Public Expenditure and the trade unions, making it mandatory for universities to provide upon dismissal (in the case of voluntary redundancy or termination of a fixed term contract) payments of between two and three weeks' salary per year of employment.

3.4. Promotions

Universities in 11 systems are able to freely promote both senior academic and administrative staff on the basis of merit. In Latvia, Luxembourg and Norway, administrative staff can be promoted freely, whereas academic staff can only be promoted if there is an open post at a higher level (Latvia and Luxembourg) or there are legal provisions regarding the composition of promotion committees (Norway).

Graph 16: Senior staff promotions



For senior academic staff, staff performance is often evaluated by a promotion committee, whose composition is specified in the law. This applies in various systems, including Norway, Portugal, Serbia and Spain. Rules on the composition of committees

for the promotion of senior administrative staff are uncommon but exist in Croatia and Spain.

Various additional restrictions may also apply. In Latvia and Lithuania, for instance, all academic posts must be filled through a competition every five (Lithuania) or six (Latvia) years. In Lithuania, this means in practice that staff undergo a performance evaluation the result of which determines the renewal of their contract. Serbia operates a similar system for academic positions other than full professorships, on a five-year basis.

In France, promotion quotas are imposed by the state. For senior academic staff, half of all promotions granted are determined at the national level. The same group of academic peers that sets up the national recruitment list decides on these. The remaining promotions are allocated to individual institutions, which are then free to decide whom they wish to promote. For senior administrative staff, promotions are not usually decided by the universities, but, rather, by other administrative staff who have been elected into a committee. For non-civil servant staff, promotions are freely decided by the university. However, these cases currently make up only a minority.

In Portugal, universities are constrained in their capacity to promote staff because of the state control over the overall expenses in salaries in the budget and, between 2011 and 2015, the requirement that expenses in salaries may not exceed that of the previous year. This meant that no appointments or promotions were possible (unless posts would become available as staff retired). More recently the universities were allowed to select the most favourable of the past three years to be used as a control mark in this field.

Finally, in **Ireland**, universities can theoretically promote staff freely. However, the moratorium on all promotions imposed during the financial crisis continues to apply.

4. Academic Autonomy

Organisational autonomy	Financial autonomy	Staffing autonomy	Academic autonomy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection procedure for the executive head • Selection criteria for the executive head • Dismissal of the executive head • Term of office of the executive head • Inclusion and selection of external members in governing bodies • Capacity to decide on academic structures • Capacity to create legal entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length and type of public funding • Capacity to keep surplus • Capacity to borrow money • Ability to own buildings • Ability to charge tuition fees for national/EU students • Ability to charge tuition fees for non-EU students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on salaries (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on dismissals (senior academic/senior administrative staff) • Ability to decide on promotions (senior academic/senior administrative staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to decide on overall student numbers • Ability to select students • Ability to introduce programmes • Ability to terminate programmes • Ability to choose the language of instruction • Capacity to select QA mechanisms and providers • Ability to design content of degree programmes

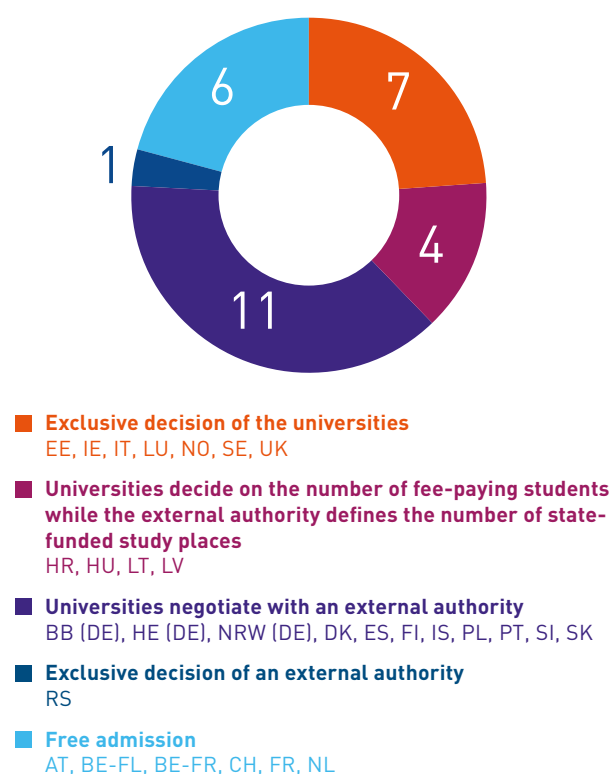
In the field of academic autonomy, the Scorecard focuses on educational activities of universities: student intake, introduction of programmes, language of instruction, quality assurance and curriculum design. Although academic autonomy as defined in EUA's Lisbon Declaration (2007) also includes the capacity to decide on areas, scope, aims and methods of research, early analysis of these aspects in 2009 showed that they may not be adequately reflected in the Scorecard scoring, in particular as it was generally perceived that universities were by and large autonomous in defining their research profile.

4.1. Overall student numbers

Different methods are used when deciding on overall student numbers. Only in a minority of systems are institutions entirely free to decide on their student intake.

An intermediate, "cooperative" model involves negotiations between the university and the public authorities, which usually happens in one of two ways. Student numbers may be negotiated with the relevant ministry (in 11 systems). Alternatively, a split system may apply, whereby public authorities decide on the number of state-funded study places and universities set the number of fee-paying students. This is used in four countries and enables universities to influence overall student numbers.

Graph 17: Overall student numbers



Student numbers may be exclusively decided by the state – this only applies in Serbia in this update.

Finally, six systems implement a model of free admission based solely on the completion of secondary education.

Even in cases where universities can freely decide on student numbers, there may be specific limitations, such as nationally set requirements on the staff/student ratio (as in Italy), or ceilings for some fields, such as medicine, dentistry or engineering (as in Sweden). Even in free admission systems, such as France, the Netherlands or Switzerland, these (and similar) fields may have a *numerus clausus*.

A series of developments in this field can be noted:

- **Austria:** although the system is based on free admission, the restrictions on student numbers that were in place in 2010 have been extended to more subject areas including business administration, pharmacology, computer sciences, biology and architecture.
- **Denmark:** universities no longer fully decide on overall student numbers, insofar as the Danish government decided in 2014 to restrict access to programmes with poor employment rates for graduates. Previously student intake was controlled by the universities, with the exception of specific fields such as medicine.
- **England:** overall student numbers are now the exclusive decision of universities, as student number controls were fully lifted from 2015/16. Controls were implemented in 2009 and then partially lifted in 2012/13 for high-achieving students with further lifting of restrictions in 2013/14.
- **Estonia:** the split system based on fee-paying and state-funded students is no longer applicable as tuition fees have been abolished. Universities can essentially decide on student numbers. In certain fields, such as medicine, the ministry specifies minimum numbers, which are outlined in performance agreements between universities and the government.
- **Poland:** universities essentially decide on the overall number of students. A new regulation was nevertheless introduced in 2011 that does not allow universities to increase the overall number of

full-time students by more than 2%, compared to the previous academic year. The approval of an external authority is needed if this limit is to be exceeded.

This regulation is designed to try to control funding fluctuations among universities, as the Polish system allocates a certain amount of funding to universities based on enrolments.

4.2. Admission mechanisms

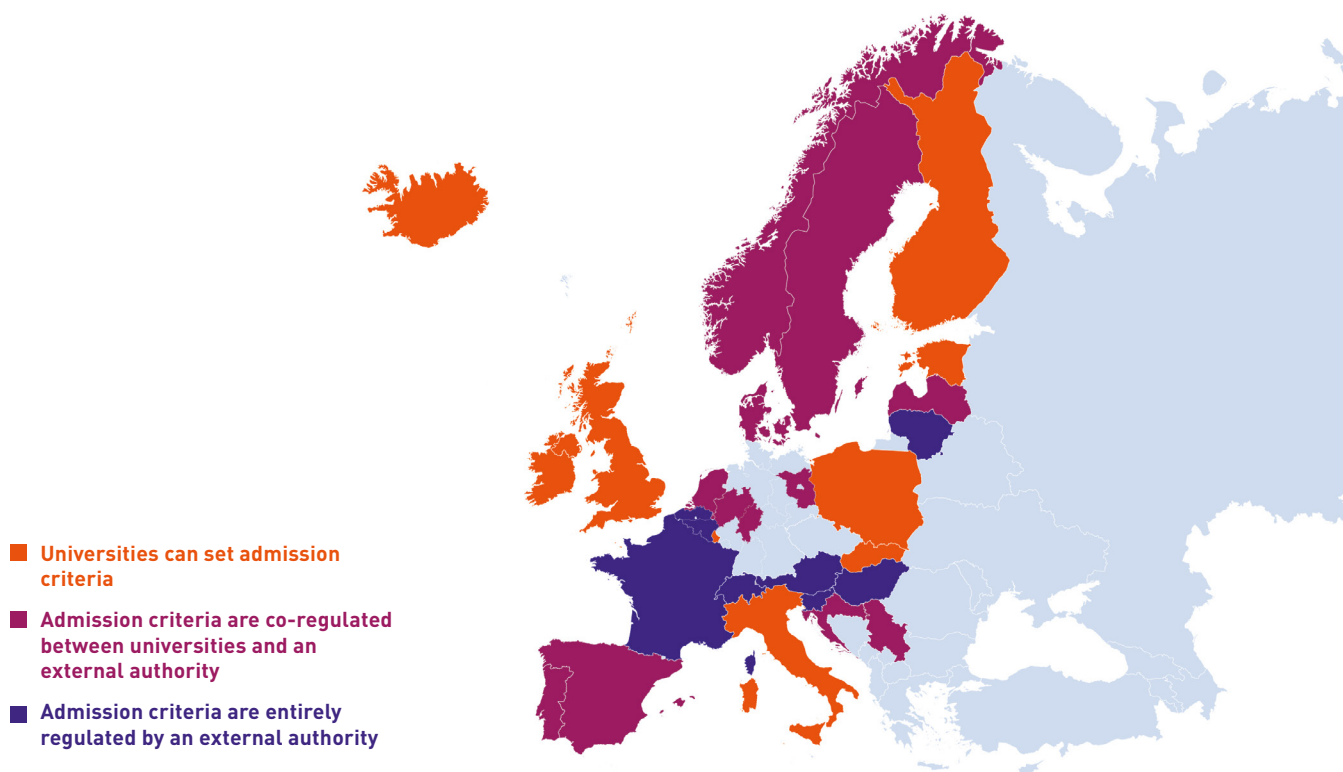
All higher education systems require that candidates hold a secondary education qualification or succeed in a general matriculation exam. In most cases, these are the basic eligibility criteria for higher education studies, which are usually specified in the national law. Admission mechanisms can be clustered into three models. Admission criteria may be set by the university, co-regulated between an external authority and the university, or admission may be regulated entirely by an external authority.

At Bachelor level, the two opposite models co-exist almost equally in Europe: universities may freely set their admission criteria in nine systems, while admissions are entirely regulated externally in eight. The latter systems are usually those based on free admission (Austria, Belgium, France, and Switzerland). However, externally regulated admission also applies in Hungary, Lithuania (split systems between fee-paying and state-funded study places) and Slovenia. While the Netherlands operates a free admission system, it allows a level of co-regulation between universities and external authorities regarding Bachelor level admission.

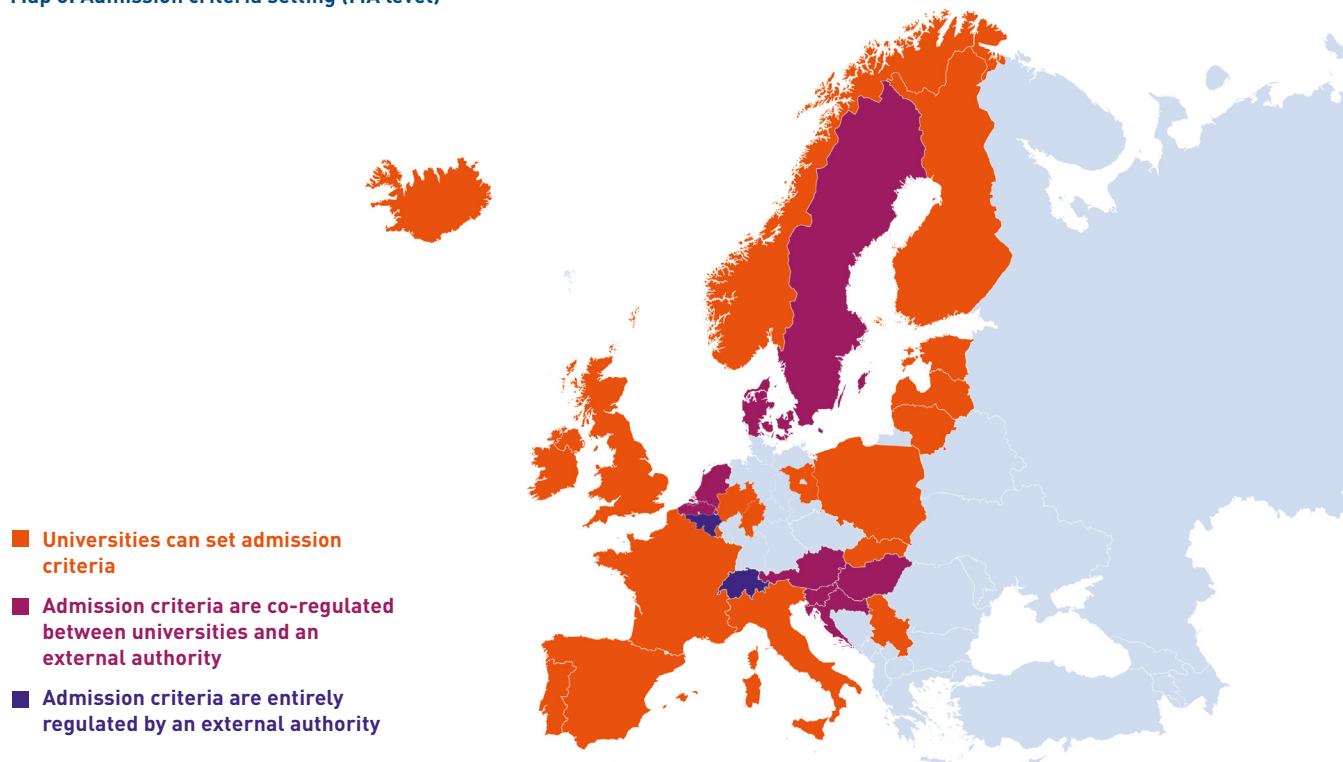
The most frequent model remains that of co-regulated admission, with 12 systems among the 29 considered.

Noticeable changes in Bachelor level admission occurred in **Denmark**: since 2013 there has been a change in the government's regulation of admission criteria at Bachelor level with a move from external regulation to greater co-regulation. One set of criteria is established in law (the government quota criteria) and one set of criteria is now fixed by the universities themselves. The proportion of the intake that is chosen according to the criteria set by universities ranges from 10% to 50% but in most cases remains on the lower end of the scale. This change has given universities more freedom to recruit students and to achieve a more diverse intake.

Map 5: Admission criteria setting (BA level)



Map 6: Admission criteria setting (MA level)



In the **Netherlands**, as of 2017/2018 universities will be able to select students themselves for programmes until now concerned by a *numerus clausus*, and the lottery admission system will be discontinued. This decentralised selection, combined with a student-matching process, will be run for all subjects with fixed numbers such as medicine and health-related subjects. University faculties will have to decide whether to set fixed numbers or not.

At Master level, admissions are regulated by the state only in the French-speaking community of Belgium and in Switzerland, showing elsewhere the greater freedom for universities to recruit students. Various degrees of co-regulation apply in eight systems, with more or less latitude for universities to decide on selection criteria.

In Croatia, 'co-regulation' is meant to simplify a situation whereby admission is centralised and based on results of a state examination as well as on additional admission criteria developed by universities.

Ongoing developments in **France** should lead to more autonomy for universities to select students at Master level. Until now, the universities' capacity to recruit students at this level only applied to admission in the second year of Master's programmes. A reform passed in 2016, and with effect from September 2017, enables universities to select students for Master's programmes at entry level. The reform also confirms a student's right to undertake further studies after completing a Bachelor's degree.

4.3. Introduction and termination of degree programmes

In general, the introduction of new academic programmes requires some sort of approval by the relevant ministry or another public authority. However, the specific procedures vary considerably across Europe.

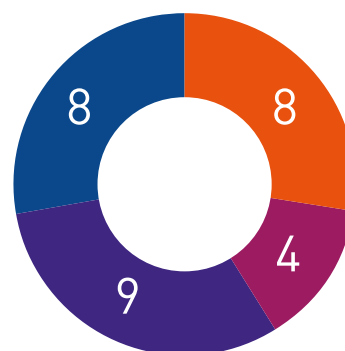
In at least four systems, the state determines the academic field, or educational remit, of universities. In Flanders, Estonia, Finland and Iceland, universities can therefore open new programmes relatively freely within their pre-determined fields of study. However, due to the national or regional allocation of educational responsibilities, opening programmes in certain fields may be more difficult if the discipline is already well catered for in other parts of the country.

Alternatively, new programmes may need to be negotiated with the responsible ministry. Often, such negotiations are closely related to the financial impact of the programmes. Some may also require a specific professional accreditation.

At Bachelor level, universities in eight countries can introduce degree programmes without prior accreditation. However, even in these countries, the establishment of programmes may still follow particular regulations. For instance, although universities can open degree programmes independently in Austria, they must have been agreed upon in a performance agreement with the ministry, if they are to receive public financial support.

In nine systems, all new Bachelor programmes must undergo accreditation to be introduced. In Croatia, France, the Netherlands and Spain, degrees must be accredited in order to receive public funding.

Graph 18: Introduction of new degree programmes (BA and MA levels)



■ **Universities can open degree programmes without accreditation**
AT, CH, IE, LU, NO, PL, SE, UK

■ **All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded**
ES, FR, HR, NL

■ **All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced**
BE-FL, BE-FR, HU, IT, LT, PT, RS, SI, SK

■ **Other restrictions**
EE, BB (DE), HE (DE), NRW (DE), DK, FI, IS, LV

Significant developments in the capacity of universities to introduce new degree programmes include:

- **Flanders (Belgium):** Due to budgetary restrictions, the current government decided to put a temporary hold on the introduction of new degree programmes (2015-2017). The system is also under transition: until 2015 all programmes had to be accredited every eight years through an evaluation procedure. From 2016 onwards, institutional reviews have been introduced as the main element of the future quality assurance system.
- **French-speaking community of Belgium:** In case a university wishes to open a new degree programme not included in the list of approved programmes contained in the 2013 law, it must secure accreditation from the federation of all higher education institutions of the Belgian French-speaking community. However, this process is only possible for 'joint programmes' (whereby at least 15% of the credits are delivered by a second institution).
- **Brandenburg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany):** Universities that have undergone a so-called 'system' accreditation successfully are now able to accredit their own study programmes. Universities may also choose to retain programme accreditation.
- **Denmark:** The Danish quality assurance system is in transition, evolving from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation. Currently, half of the universities in the system have secured institutional accreditation and are able to introduce new programmes without prior accreditation. The first processes to introduce institutional accreditation began in 2014. In addition, in 2013, the government introduced a new 'pre-qualification' requirement to ensure all new programmes are relevant to the employment market.
- **Latvia:** In 2013, study field accreditation replaced programme accreditation but did not remove licensing requirements for new programmes. In practice, introducing a new programme belonging to a study field for which a university is not previously accredited, is difficult. In this case, the authorisation of the government to "open" the study field at the institution is necessary, followed by licensing of the new programme, with a subsequent study field accreditation within two years of the introduction of the programme.
- **Poland:** The National Qualifications Framework introduced in 2011 has had its greatest impact on the ability of universities to introduce degree programmes. Previously there had been a set list of study fields and any degree programme proposed with a subject not included in the list of study fields involved a considerable bureaucratic process. Since 2011 many Polish universities are now free to offer any degree programmes they wish to offer without requiring prior accreditation.

In most countries, procedures for opening new degree programmes at Master level are more or less identical to those at Bachelor level. However, in a third of the systems analysed, procedures regarding the introduction of doctoral programmes differ from Bachelor's and Master's programmes. This may be because of the greater capacity of universities to introduce these programmes (as in Denmark, the German states, or the Netherlands) or to the contrary because of more stringent requirements for introduction (Croatia, France, Spain). In Lithuania, the science council decides whether universities meet the necessary requirements to offer doctoral programmes.

In **Poland**, large universities, which account for the vast majority of students, are free to introduce degree programmes at all levels. For doctoral programmes, the new rules that were introduced in 2011 at the same time as the National Qualifications Framework, in practice create restrictions mainly for smaller regional universities.

Changes in this area happened in **Italy**, where universities are now also required to submit new doctoral programmes to prior accreditation before they can be introduced, while this requirement used to apply only to obtaining funding.

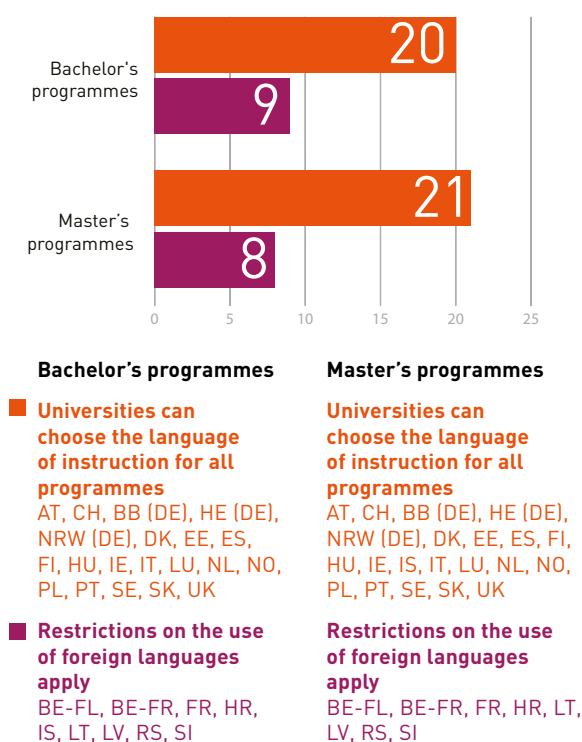
Universities in Europe are more autonomous with regards to the termination of existing programmes. Some countries nevertheless foresee specific conditions, which in this analysis have been likened to 'negotiations' between universities and relevant external authorities. Austria, Brandenburg and Finland reported such specific conditions – for instance, Finnish universities must guarantee a place for students who would be affected by the termination of the programme. In Austria, closing a programme could entail

renegotiating the framework contract with the ministry. Universities in all other systems can freely decide on the closure of degree programmes. They may nevertheless have to provide students with adequate alternatives to continue their studies in the same academic field, whether in the institution or not.

4.4. Capacity to choose the language of instruction

Universities in Europe are often free to choose the language of instruction at different degree levels. Only in Iceland does the situation differ between Bachelor and Master levels, with restrictions on the use of foreign languages in Bachelor's programmes.

Graph 19: Capacity to choose the language of instruction



In a minority of systems, some restrictions may pertain to all or some degree levels. In France, the general rule is that universities may only offer Bachelor's degrees in the national language. Lithuania only allows universities to choose other languages of instruction for certain programmes, at both levels. In Flanders and Latvia there is a limit to the number of degree programmes or courses that can be offered in other languages; in the French-speaking community of Belgium and Slovenia programmes in other languages must also be available in the national language. Finally, Croatian and Latvian

universities will not receive funding for programmes taught in foreign languages.

4.5. Capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms and providers

It is rare for universities to be able to select quality assurance mechanisms freely and according to their needs. This is the case only in the **three German states** included in the Scorecard update, as the law now allows universities to apply for institutional accreditation (referred to as 'system accreditation' in Germany). Institutions that successfully undergo system accreditation are able to accredit their own study programmes, although they may also retain programme accreditation. Universities can therefore choose internal quality assurance mechanisms, which is an evolution compared to 2010.

Iceland and **Switzerland** have also implemented changes in this field. Switzerland has set up a new system of mandatory institutional accreditation as part of the law on the funding and coordination of the Swiss higher education sector, passed in 2011 and implemented in 2015. Previously, mandatory institutional audits did not carry legal consequences for universities. In Iceland, universities are now also subject to mandatory institutional accreditation, which must be carried out by the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education established in 2011.

In all other systems, the situation remains the same and institutions are unable to choose quality assurance mechanisms. There are however developments in a series of systems towards institutional external quality assurance, moving away from accreditation on a programme basis. Switzerland and North Rhine-Westphalia are currently implementing this transition, which can also be detected – albeit to varying extents – in Flanders, Denmark, Poland, Portugal and Sweden, and is under preparation in Slovenia.

In the **Netherlands**, a change to the quality assurance system was proposed in 2011 and a new law was passed to move from programme accreditation to institutional accreditation. The change to institutional accreditation was however not implemented, and a subsequent attempt in 2015 to pilot accreditation on institutional level, failed. Eventually a different approach was adopted, and a new law was passed (in December 2016),

consisting of accreditation at programme level in a lighter form. Once implemented, the accreditation organisation will look at only two standards (proposed learning outcomes and actual learning outcomes) instead of four.

With regard to the capacity to select the quality assurance agency, the higher education systems fall into two categories. In eight systems, universities can use a quality assurance agency of their choosing; they may also select an agency from another country. In Germany, universities may select agencies that have been accredited by the German Accreditation Council.

Changes in this field took place in **Hungary**. Since September 2015 the law permits universities to select accreditation bodies internationally for Bachelor's and Master's programmes. Courses can be accredited either by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee or by any organisation member of ENQA, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

In all other systems, universities are not able to choose the quality assurance agency. However, in a number of them, institutions may seek complementary, external quality assessments in addition to the mandatory accreditation/evaluation carried out by the national agency.

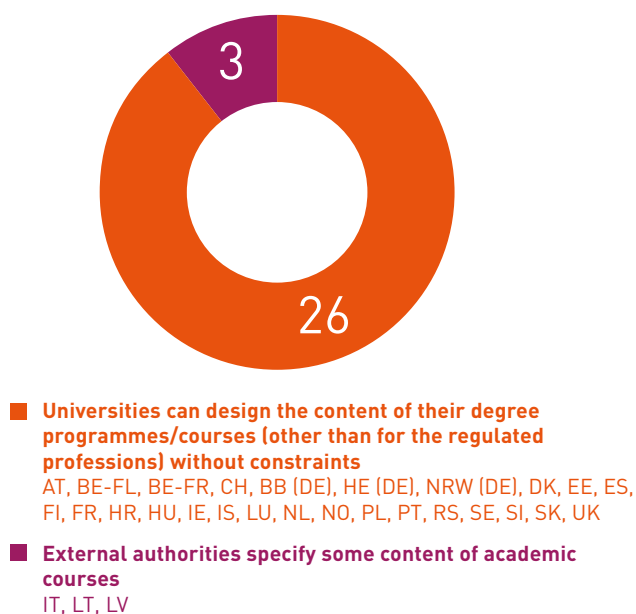
Graph 20: Capacity to select quality assurance providers



4.6. Capacity to design the content of studies

In a large majority of systems, universities are free to determine the content of degrees other than for the regulated professions, such as medicine.

Graph 21: Capacity to design academic content



In Italy, universities may design academic degrees if they adhere to the guidelines set by a framework decree, which circumscribes the general structure of the academic system and defines the educational activities, objectives and learning outcomes for each programme.

In Latvia, universities have to follow the "standard of academic education" and the "standard of professional higher education", which contain general guidelines and determine certain aspects of study, such as the minimum duration of practice periods in professional programmes. In addition, they prescribe certain modules, for instance on entrepreneurial skills for all degrees. Finally, in Lithuania, the quality assurance agency determines some content as part of the accreditation process. Universities perceive this as a considerable hindrance to diversification, innovation and competitiveness.

Polish authorities do not prescribe the content of academic courses any longer. The National Qualifications Framework has given universities greater freedom to design the content of programmes. Previous ministerial regulations for programme content are now limited to general requirements on learning outcomes (except for some regulated fields of study, such as medicine) but content can differ, which is contributing to the increase of diversity in the system.

3

The Autonomy Scorecard

This chapter presents the scorecards for the four areas of institutional autonomy. By closely examining the restrictions and combinations of restrictions that apply in each higher education system studied in the context of the project, it aims to describe how scores and ranking positions came about.

In order to facilitate such a comparison, the field of investigated systems is split into four clusters:

- a high group of countries scoring between 100% and 81%
- a medium high group scoring between 80% and 61%
- a medium low group scoring between 60% and 41%
- a low group scoring between 40% and 0%.

It is important to note that this chapter presents the weighted results. The methodology used for scoring and weighting systems' autonomy performance is described in detail in [Chapter 1: Introduction & methodology](#).

The analysis of each of the following scorecards focuses on the changes in scoring of the systems concerned, and their potential change of cluster⁹, rather than on their rank itself, as it should be borne in mind that four systems were removed and four other systems were added in the present update. The maps in each of the

following sections show the clusters (first map) as well as the evolution per system (second map). The country profiles released as part of this update of the Autonomy Scorecard include a comparative view of each system's previous (possibly revised) scores, new scores, and explanations on any related change. They also provide the relevant information to get a better understanding of the reasons why a system features in a specific group.

⁹ Adaptations in the 2010 scores may have led to changes in clusters, which are detailed in the country profiles and not described here.

1. Organisational autonomy

Map 7: Organisational autonomy clusters

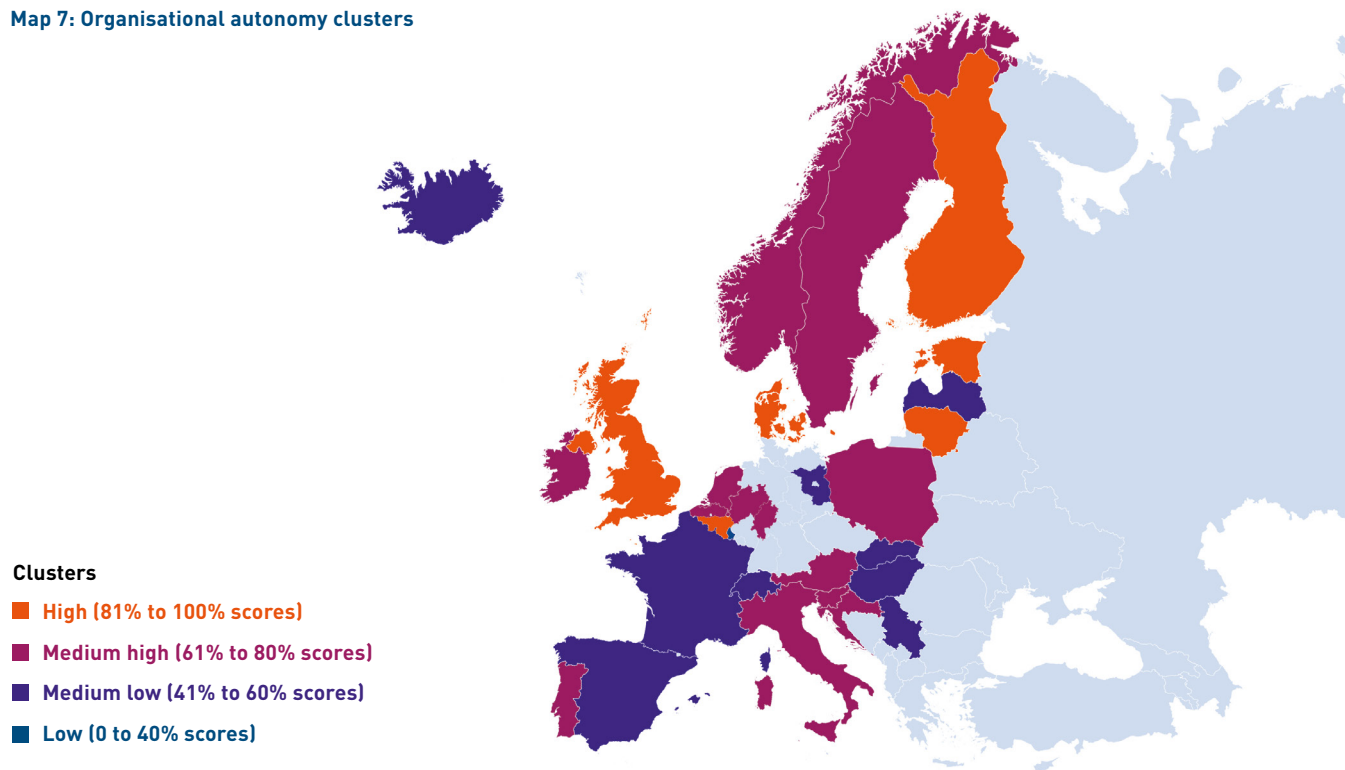


Table 3: Organisational autonomy ranking

Rank	System	Score: organisational autonomy
1	United Kingdom	100%
2	Denmark	94%
3	Finland	93%
4	French-speaking community of Belgium	90%
5	Estonia	88%
	Lithuania	88%
7	Portugal	80%
8	Austria	78%
	Norway	78%
10	Hesse (DE)	77%
11	Ireland	73%
12	Flanders (BE)	70%
13	The Netherlands	69%
14	North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)	68%

Rank	System	Score: organisational autonomy
15	Poland	67%
16	Italy	65%
	Slovenia	65%
18	Croatia	62%
19	Sweden	61%
20	France	59%
21	Brandenburg (DE)	58%
22	Latvia	57%
23	Hungary	56%
24	Spain	55%
	Switzerland	55%
26	Serbia	51%
27	Iceland	49%
28	Slovakia	42%
29	Luxembourg	34%

As in 2010, the UK leads in the area of organisational autonomy: its higher education system scores 100% on all indicators, meaning that it can decide without state interference on all aspects encompassed by this autonomy area.

Denmark, Finland and Estonia also remain in the **top cluster** of highly autonomous systems (with scores above 80%), with elevated and stable degrees of organisational autonomy.

Two newcomers join the top cluster: the French-speaking community of Belgium, previously not included in the Scorecard, and Lithuania, previously included in the medium-high cluster. In the case of the French-speaking community of Belgium, the score reflects the high organisational autonomy of four of the six universities in the system, which are significantly less regulated because they are not directly governed by the community government.

Lithuania's entry into the top cluster is the result of changes implemented as part of the 2016 reform. In organisational terms, these include the selection of the external members by the universities in their governing bodies, and the removal of the need to secure external approval to dismiss the rector.

The **second (medium high) cluster**, which includes countries scoring between 61% and 80%, has increased in size, to accommodate 13 systems. While Lithuania moved up to the high cluster, two newcomers joined this cluster, namely Croatia and Slovenia. Other changes include the downgrade of both North Rhine-Westphalia and Ireland, which previously belonged to the top cluster. The former is due to the fact that university executive heads are now appointed by the ministry. In Ireland, the Employment Control Framework affects the universities' capacity to decide on academic structures and on the creation of legal entities.

Italy, previously featuring in the medium low cluster, moves upwards to this cluster following the implementation of a reform passed in 2010, with a series of consequences on university governance. Although the rector's term of office and dismissal procedure are now stated in law, there is no longer the requirement for candidate-rectors to be employees of the university;

and universities are now able to appoint external members onto their boards.

Sweden also now appears in this cluster, upwards from the medium low cluster, because of the lifting of restrictions on the capacity to decide on internal academic structures.

Latvia is no longer part of this second cluster, having been demoted to the medium low group.

To sum up, universities operating in systems in the medium high cluster are in majority autonomous in deciding on academic structures and establishing legal entities. Almost all include external members in their governing bodies, although they are significantly less free in appointing them: external authorities usually become involved at this stage. Regarding the executive leadership, the situation is less clear-cut: in a majority of medium high systems, universities remain free to decide on the appropriate selection process and criteria for their rectors. By contrast, the dismissal procedure and term of office are set down by law in nearly all systems contained in the second cluster.

The **third (medium low) cluster** includes systems with a score between 41% and 60%, and consists of nine systems, seven of which already featured in this cluster in 2010 (Brandenburg, France, Hungary, Iceland, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland). Out of these, only Hungary shows changes in the scoring, recording a small decrease linked to the introduction of additional selection criteria for the rector. Other qualitative changes in organisational autonomy, related to the recent appointment of a chancellor (directly appointed by the Prime Minister) in Hungarian universities, cannot be captured in the Scorecard methodology.

Serbia, a newcomer in the Scorecard, joins this third group. Latvia on the other hand moves downwards from the medium high cluster. This is due to the impact of further specified constraints on the creation of legal entities for universities. While the change in score is rather minor, it is enough to change cluster as the 2010 score made Latvia feature at the very bottom of the second cluster.

Italy and Sweden no longer feature in the third group, having moved upwards to the medium high cluster.

Although the specific national or regional circumstances within the medium low cluster are highly heterogeneous, it can be said that universities in a majority of these systems face heavy regulatory constraints in all areas of organisational autonomy. In deciding on the appointment, term of office and dismissal of the executive head, universities in medium low systems hold little freedom of action. On a similar note, the appointment of external representatives to university governing bodies is heavily regulated in all systems contained in the group. Importantly, the “type” of external members included in governing bodies (representatives of different parts of society/the economy or public authorities representatives) is not reflected through the scoring methodology. The least heavily regulated aspect of organisational autonomy in the medium low group is the establishment of legal entities.

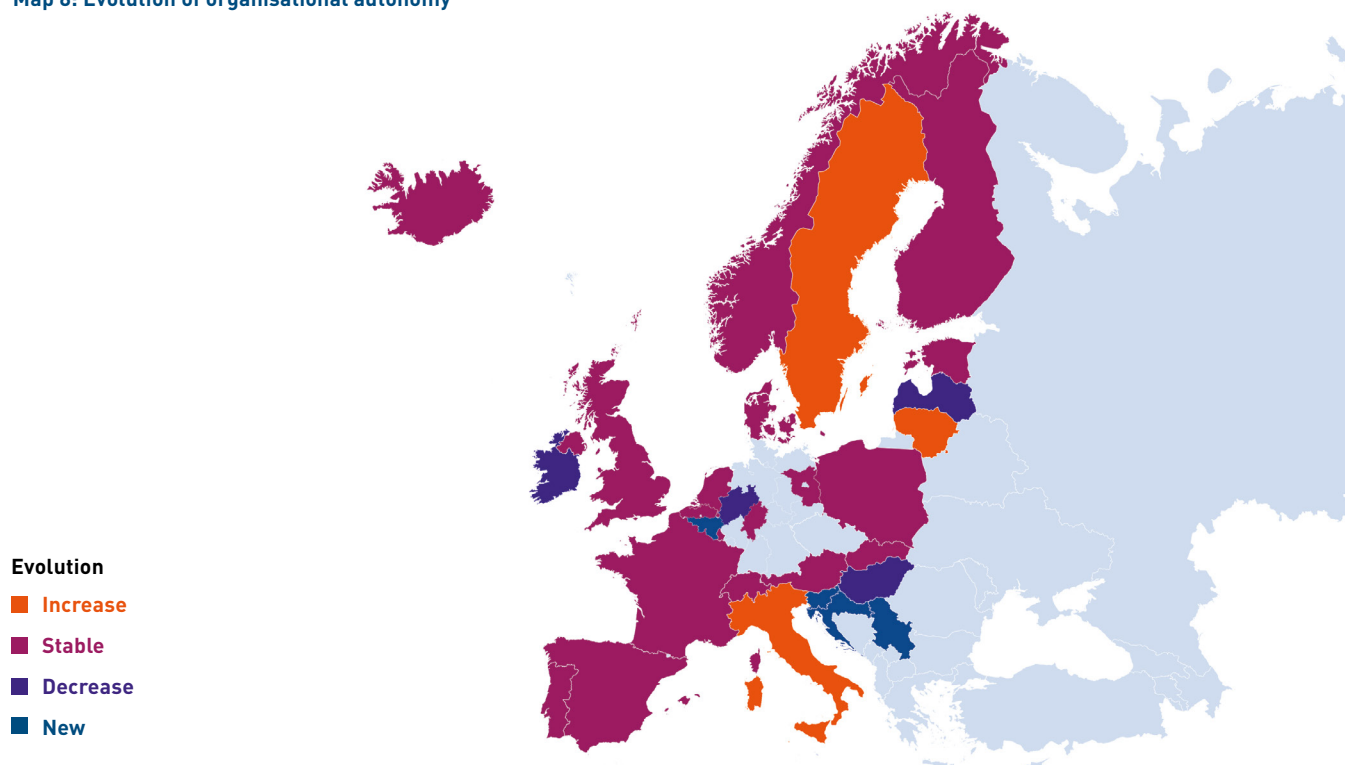
The **fourth (low) cluster** contains higher education systems with scores of up to 40%, i.e. only Luxembourg, in the present update. Luxembourg remains a specific

case, being a system centred on a sole university. This explains the comparatively high degree of involvement of the government in governance and organisational matters, while the university benefits from high autonomy in all other dimensions considered in the Scorecard. The University of Luxembourg faces external regulation in nearly all areas of organisational autonomy¹⁰, only maintaining a certain degree of independence in the creation of legal entities.

There is no clear-cut trend in the organisational autonomy scorecard, as the various changes described above show. Four systems registered downward evolution (Hungary, Ireland, Latvia and North Rhine-Westphalia), while three countries improved their score (Italy, Lithuania, Sweden). In the cases of Italy and Lithuania, the new scores are the result of the implementation of governance-related reforms, in 2010/2011 in Italy, and more recently in 2016 for Lithuania.

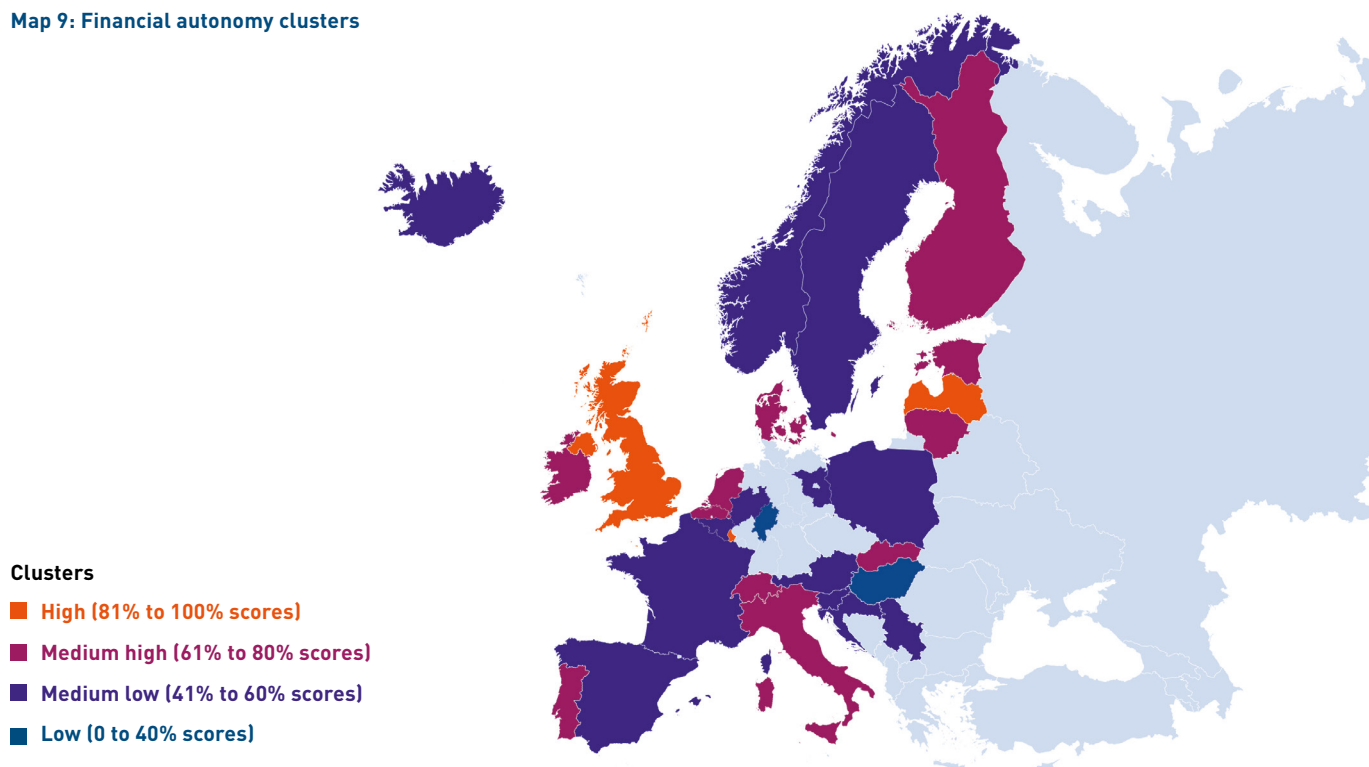
¹⁰ A new legislation, addressing organisational matters, was under development at the time of writing.

Map 8: Evolution of organisational autonomy



2. Financial autonomy

Map 9: Financial autonomy clusters



Clusters

- High (81% to 100% scores)
- Medium high (61% to 80% scores)
- Medium low (41% to 60% scores)
- Low (0 to 40% scores)

Table 4: Financial autonomy ranking

Rank	System	Score: financial autonomy
1	Luxembourg	91%
2	Latvia	90%
3	United Kingdom	89%
4	Estonia	77%
	The Netherlands	77%
6	Flanders (BE)	76%
	Italy	70%
7	Portugal	70%
	Slovakia	70%
10	Denmark	69%
11	Finland	67%
12	Switzerland	65%
13	Ireland	63%
14	Lithuania	61%
15	Croatia	60%
	Iceland	60%

Rank	System	Score: financial autonomy
17	Austria	59%
18	Slovenia	57%
19	Sweden	56%
20	Spain	55%
21	Poland	54%
22	French-speaking community of Belgium	52%
23	Serbia	46%
24	France	45%
25	Brandenburg (DE)	44%
26	North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)	43%
27	Norway	42%
28	Hungary	39%
29	Hesse (DE)	35%

In the area of financial autonomy, the **top cluster** includes three countries, which are considered to be highly autonomous (with a score above 80%): Luxembourg, Latvia and the United Kingdom. While Luxembourg and the United Kingdom already featured at the top in 2010, Latvia moves upwards from the medium high cluster. The improved score results from legal changes implemented in 2011/2012, leading to the lifting of restrictions on internal funding allocation, on retaining surpluses, and on borrowing.

The UK's score primarily reflects the situation of universities in England; while it appears stable, it should not hide very significant changes in financial terms over the period, with a major decrease of almost 70% in public grant funding for teaching in England (between 2011 and 2017), as tuition fee ceilings increased for Bachelor/undergraduate students.

Estonia on the other hand no longer features in the top cluster, following the abolition of tuition fees for full-time students in 2013, effectively removing any capacity for universities to decide on the matter themselves.

The **second (medium high) cluster**, which includes countries scoring between 61% and 80%, covers 11 systems. Now accommodating Estonia, this cluster also registers the lower score of Ireland (within the cluster), linked to the impact of the expanded practice of 'top-slicing' from the block grant, which weakens the capacity to allocate funds internally.

Two upward evolutions can be noted: Finland and Lithuania, both previously among the 'medium low' countries, record significant increases in their financial autonomy scores. This is due to the newly acquired capacity of Finnish universities to set the level of fees for international students, and in the case of Lithuanian universities, the removal of restrictions in setting the fees for self-funded study places (no more ceilings).

To sum up, universities operating in countries that offer medium high financial autonomy generally enjoy relatively flexible public funding modalities and may most often own buildings. In most systems, borrowing money and keeping surplus is also allowed. Most of the systems in this cluster do not authorise universities to set the level of fees for national/EU students, but in

a majority of cases this possibility exists in relation to international, non-EU students.

The **third (medium low) cluster**, which includes systems scoring between 41% and 60%, consists of 13 systems, including the four systems newly included in the Scorecard: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

This group remains otherwise stable; the only exception is the lower score of North Rhine-Westphalia (within the cluster) following the abolition of tuition fees at all levels in 2011.

Summing up, even systems with medium low financial autonomy universities tend to enjoy fairly flexible public funding modalities. There is no homogeneous set of characteristics regarding financial management capacity (borrowing and keeping surplus, ownership of buildings). However, these systems leave very limited to no role for universities in setting tuition fees. The systems considered here either do not allow universities to charge fees (at Bachelor level) or set the level of fees only via an external authority. These systems also tend to differentiate less between national/EU students and international students in terms of fee-setting mechanisms, so universities do not have a greater say in these matters either.

The **fourth (low) cluster** includes higher education systems with scores of up to 40%, i.e. Hesse and Hungary. Hesse remains in this cluster, having registered no improvement in the universities' capacity to decide on financial matters. Hungary, on the other hand, records the most dramatic fall in this dimension of autonomy (and the greatest negative difference in points among changes in all autonomy dimensions). Indeed, Hungary previously featured in the medium high cluster. The impact of the role of the chancellor, appointed by the Prime Minister, whose authorisation is needed for internal funding allocation and therefore use of surpluses, is part of the explanation for such a lowering in the score. In addition, Hungarian universities now have restricted capacity to set the level of fees to national and EU students enrolled on a fee-paying basis (under a set ceiling).

The final cluster contains higher education systems whose level of financial autonomy is perceived to be low.

3. Staffing autonomy

Map 11: Staffing autonomy clusters

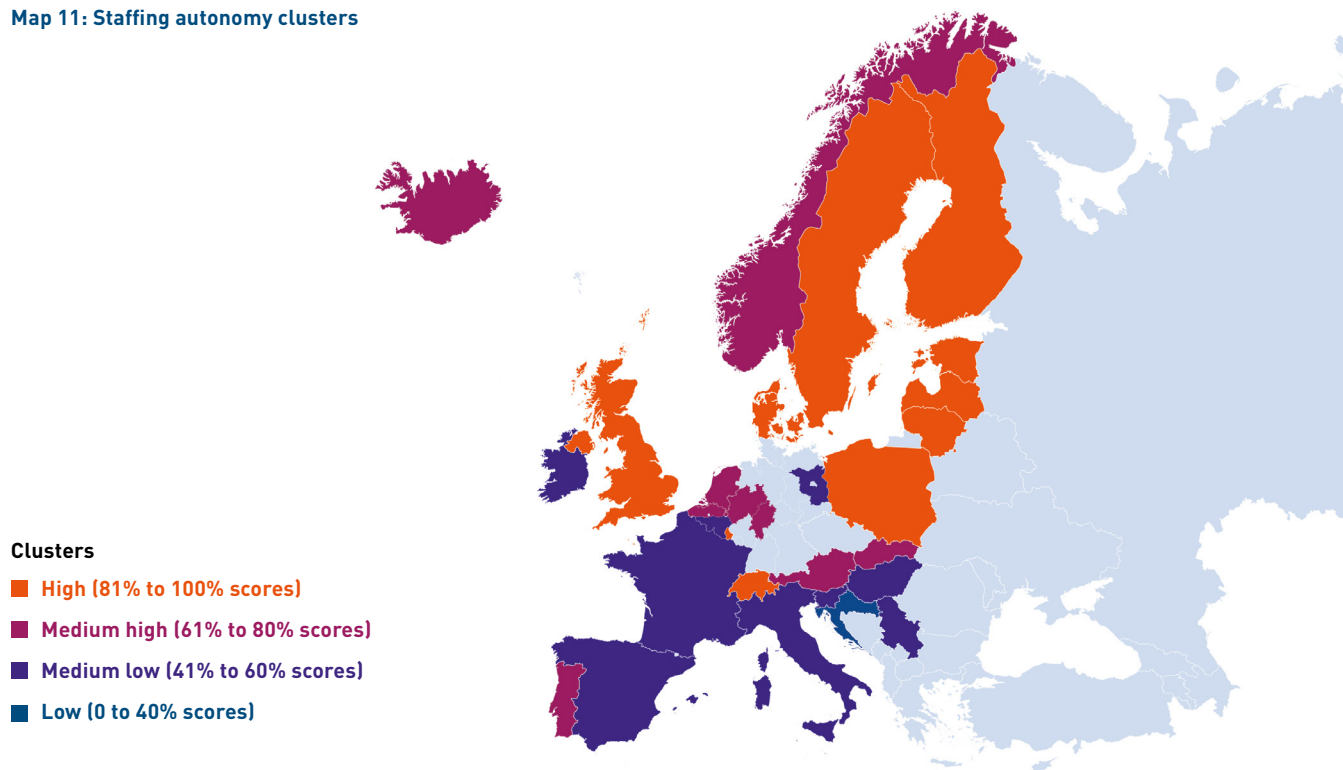


Table 5: Staffing autonomy ranking

Rank	System	Score: financial autonomy
1	Estonia	100%
2	Sweden	97%
3	United Kingdom	96%
4	Switzerland	95%
5	Luxembourg	94%
6	Finland	92%
7	Latvia	89%
8	Denmark	86%
9	Poland	84%
10	Lithuania	83%
11	Flanders (BE)	76%
12	Austria	73%
	The Netherlands	73%
14	Iceland	68%
	Hesse (DE)	63%
15	North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)	63%
	Norway	63%

Rank	System	Score: financial autonomy
18	Portugal	62%
19	Slovakia	61%
20	Brandenburg (DE)	58%
	Serbia	58%
22	Hungary	50%
23	Spain	48%
24	French-speaking community of Belgium	44%
	Italy	44%
	Slovenia	44%
27	France	43%
	Ireland	43%
29	Croatia	37%

In the area of staffing autonomy, the largest number of higher education systems falls in the **top cluster**, with 10 scoring above 80%. As in 2010, Estonia receives a score of 100%, indicating that universities there can freely decide on all aspects of higher education staffing, including recruitment, dismissal and promotion procedures as well as staff salaries.

All systems included in the top cluster already featured there in 2010, with the exception of Poland, which previously scored slightly lower. Its new position is due to the fact that salary bands have been abolished and the upper limit on salaries has been removed, giving universities greater autonomy in this area.

Two other countries register improved scores in the top cluster. For Luxembourg, this is explained by the phasing out of restrictions linked to civil servant status and by the capacity to set salaries above the prescribed salary bands. In Sweden, regulations passed in 2010 have given greater freedom to universities in this area, with the removal of a series of detailed provisions regarding academic positions. A particular feature of the new system is the 'nomination route', allowing universities to use a faster, simplified recruitment process for highly rated academics.

Countries included in the top cluster enjoy a high level of autonomy in staffing matters. Where limitations apply, they do not significantly constrain institutions in their freedom of action. Recruitment procedures and salaries tend to be more heavily regulated than dismissal and promotion processes. Finally, though sector-specific regulations do exist in the top-cluster countries, these are not due to the civil servant status of university employees.

The **medium high cluster** covers systems scoring between 61% and 80%. It includes nine systems, which all were previously already in the same cluster, and which record no changes in scores. However, Hungary and Ireland no longer appear in this cluster, moving downwards to the medium low cluster.

Although systems in the medium high cluster face more restrictions than those in the first group, they do retain autonomy over certain aspects of staffing. Generally speaking, recruitment procedures and promotions are less heavily regulated than salaries and dismissals.

Contrary to the first cluster, some of the systems included grant civil servant status for some or all senior university staff.

The **third (medium low) cluster**, which includes systems scoring between 41% and 60%, also consists of nine systems, with significant adjustments since 2010. Firstly, three out of four new systems included enter this cluster: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Serbia and Slovenia. Second, the medium low cluster now accommodates both Hungary and Ireland, two countries whose scores significantly dropped with regard to financial autonomy.

Hungary's lower score reflects the impact of the central role of the chancellor (a new position appointed by the Prime Minister with extensive decision-making powers) whose authorisation is needed for recruitment, salaries and promotions. In the case of Ireland, the score is affected by the impact of the Employment Control Framework and moratorium on recruitments and promotions, as well as by the collective agreements on salaries and dismissal modalities, established after 2010.

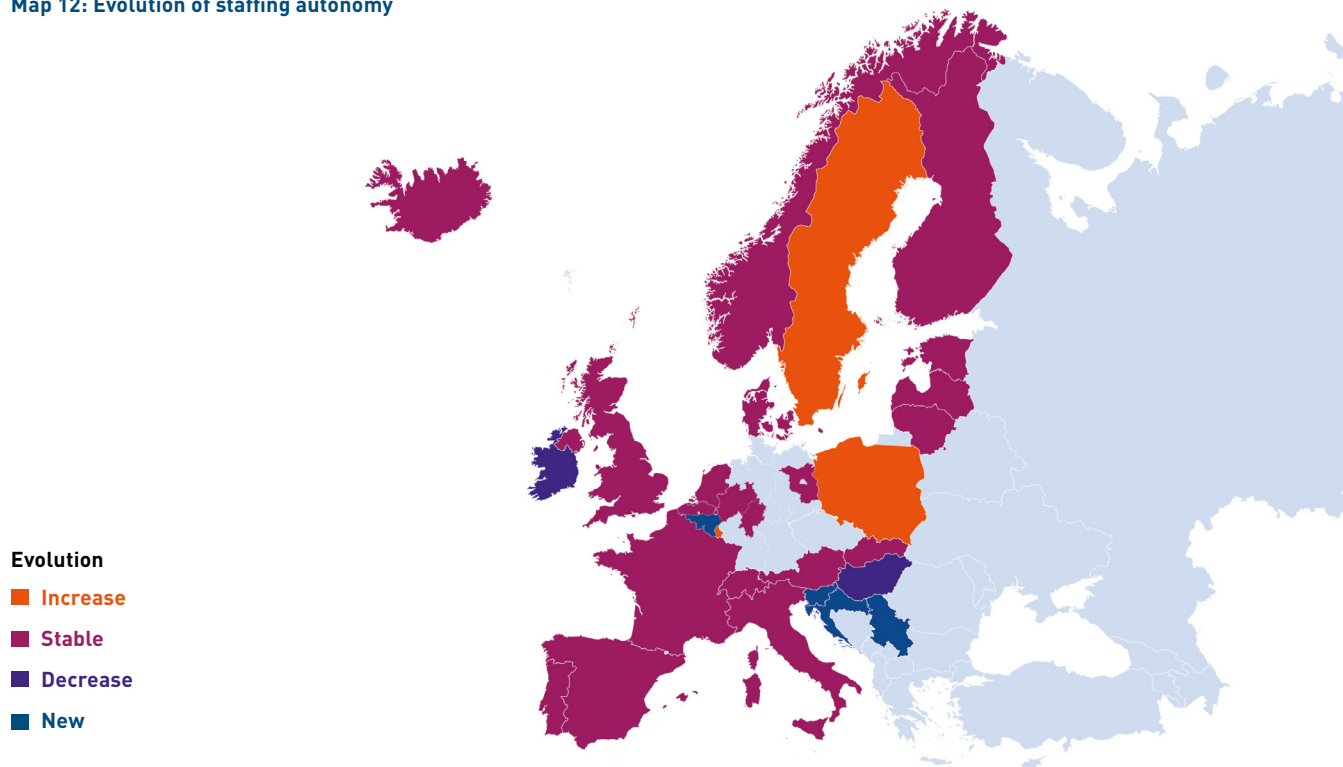
Universities operating in countries or regions in the third cluster, whose autonomy is seen to be medium low, face restrictions on a majority of staffing indicators and for both staff profiles. Institutions in this group are least constrained in hiring staff, and most systems maintain some freedom to determine recruitment procedures, either for academic or administrative staff.

Scoring below 41%, Croatia is the only country where staffing autonomy is **low**. Strict ministerial control over civil servant staff means universities have no option to decide on salaries and careers, and little scope for strategic recruitment policies.

The area of staffing autonomy registers the least changes of the four autonomy dimensions included in the Scorecard. Reforms in this area tend to take place over the long term. Phasing-out phenomena, as in Austria, cannot be fully captured by the Scorecard methodology, but indicate that these systems have already engaged in transformations that will increase staffing autonomy. Stability therefore prevails, with some changes towards more autonomy in systems already comparatively highly autonomous (Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden).

The downward developments experienced in some countries in staffing matters can be related to the significant linkages that exist between the different dimensions of autonomy. Ireland is a telling example: acute financial constraints in the wider setting have led to tighter regulations in the staffing area which, importantly, have persisted over time. In Hungary, changes in governance have led to lower autonomy scores both in financial and staffing matters.

Map 12: Evolution of staffing autonomy



4. Academic autonomy

Map 13: Academic autonomy clusters

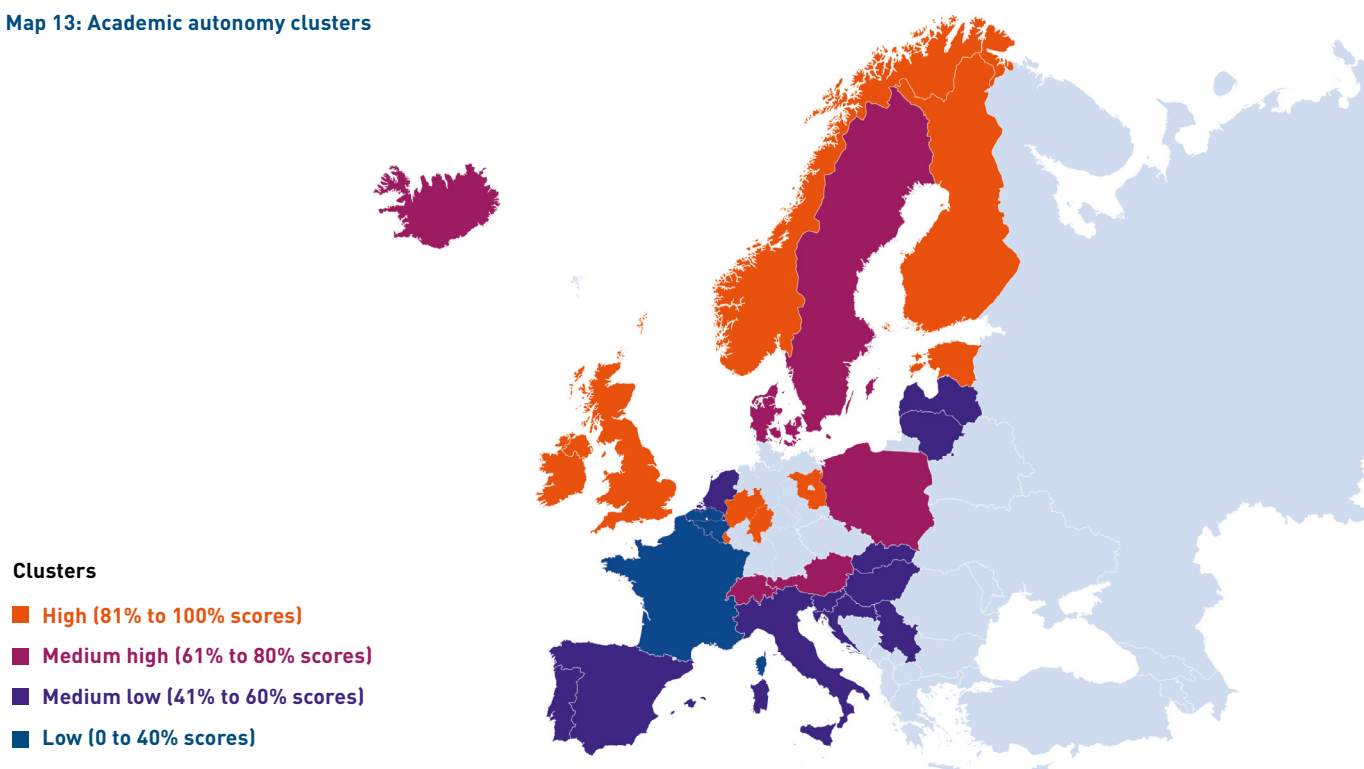


Table 6: Academic autonomy ranking

Rank	System	Score: academic autonomy
1	Estonia	98%
2	Finland	90%
3	Ireland	89%
	Luxembourg	89%
	United Kingdom	89%
6	Hesse (DE)	88%
	North Rhine-Westphalia (DE)	88%
8	Brandenburg (DE)	87%
9	Norway	83%
10	Iceland	78%
11	Denmark	75%
12	Austria	72%
	Switzerland	72%
14	Poland	68%
15	Sweden	66%

Rank	System	Score: academic autonomy
16	Hungary	58%
17	Spain	57%
18	Italy	56%
	Slovakia	56%
20	Portugal	54%
21	Croatia	50%
22	The Netherlands	48%
23	Latvia	46%
	Serbia	46%
25	Slovenia	44%
26	Lithuania	42%
27	France	37%
28	Flanders (BE)	35%
29	French-speaking community of Belgium	32%

In the area of academic autonomy, nine systems are included in the **top cluster** and can thus be considered as highly autonomous. Estonia leads with a score of 98%, only hampered by the fact that academic fields in Estonian universities are pre-determined. The country has increased its score, as universities can now essentially decide on student numbers. Already part of the top cluster in 2010, the UK also improves its score, following the lifting of student number controls in England since 2015/16.

The most noticeable evolution concerning the top cluster is the inclusion of the three German states (Brandenburg, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia), previously featuring in the medium high group. The transition towards a system whereby universities can select their external quality mechanisms, choosing between programme and institutional accreditation, explains this upward move.

Iceland, previously included in the most autonomous systems, has been demoted to the medium high cluster.

The second (medium high) cluster includes systems scoring between 61% and 80%, and consists of a reduced group of six countries. Iceland's lower score in this dimension reflects the fact that a national agency responsible for quality assurance was established, in the sense that universities no longer have the possibility to choose among quality assurance providers. The introduction of mandatory institutional accreditation does not affect the country's score.

Two countries record improved scores within the cluster: Denmark and Poland, because of the development of institutional accreditation in both cases, as well as the greater say of universities in student selection in Denmark, and the greater freedom to design the content of academic programmes in Poland.

Systems with medium high academic autonomy thus retain near-complete freedom in choosing the language of instruction and designing the content of degree programmes. By contrast, nearly all face limitations when deciding on overall student numbers and admission mechanisms. These are systems promoting institutional external quality assurance, with some in transition away from programme accreditation. While none of the systems included allow universities to

choose external quality assurance processes, at least two systems allow institutions to select providers.

The **third (medium low) cluster**, which includes systems scoring between 41% and 60%, is the largest and includes 11 systems. Three out of four newly included countries enter the Scorecard in this group (Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia). Italy registers a minor decrease linked to the fact that new doctoral programmes now require accreditation prior to introduction (while previously this was a requirement only if additional funding was sought).

The most significant evolution in scoring in this cluster is that of Hungary. Since 2015, it has become possible for universities to obtain accreditation (at Bachelor and Master levels) from any organisation member of ENQA.

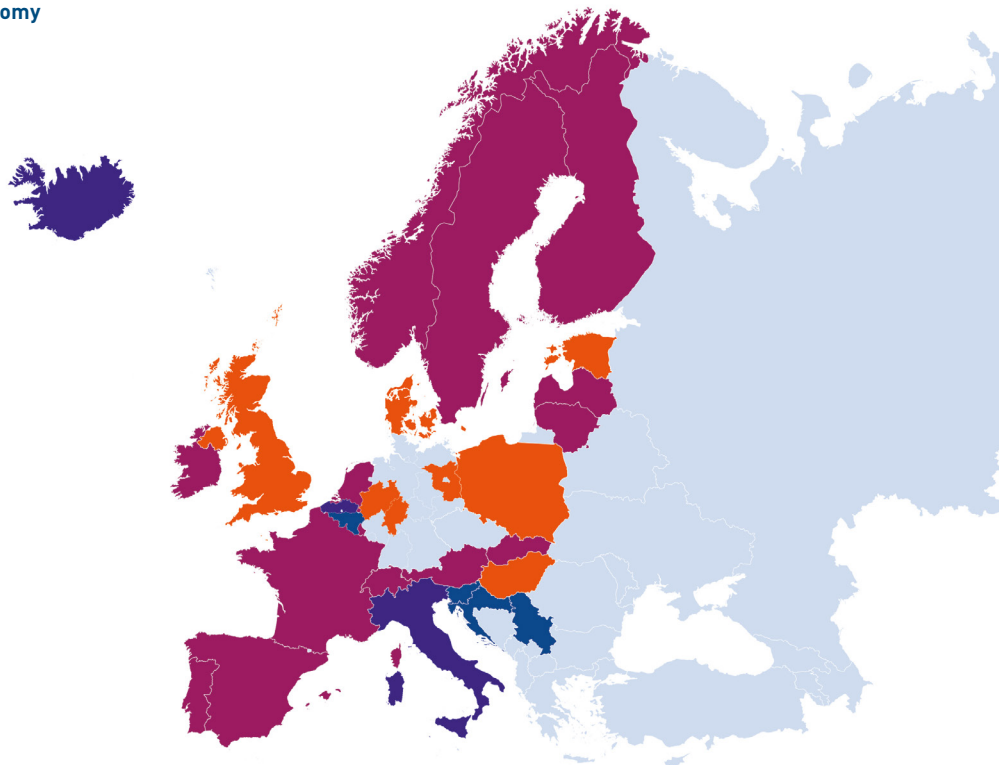
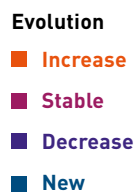
The countries of the medium low group include those operating mixed models, whereby universities have more autonomy in deciding on the intake of fee-paying students. Admission is almost never in the hands of universities at Bachelor level, although the trend is reversed at Master level. Most systems included have mandatory programme accreditation. Universities cannot select quality assurance providers in almost all cases. This group also features the three countries where universities are not autonomous in designing the content of academic programmes and courses.

France and Belgium (both Flanders and the French-speaking community) are included in **the low group**, which consists of countries scoring below 41%. While this is a stable position for France, and a new entry for the French-speaking community of Belgium, Flanders records a decrease linked to the ban on the introduction of new programmes valid for the period 2015-2017.

The fourth cluster contains those higher education systems whose level of autonomy is perceived to be low. The countries in this group face heavy restrictions in nearly all areas of academic autonomy. Crucially, however, they remain free to develop their own academic programmes.

The dimension of academic autonomy records the most upward moves, which are often linked to changes in accreditation models. Downward changes tend to be of a more technical nature and do not result from significant setbacks in academic autonomy. The introduction of (semi-)bans on opening new academic programmes, even in systems already well catered for, is nevertheless in contradiction with this trend.

Map 14: Evolution of academic autonomy



4

Trends

This chapter reviews and summarises a series of trends identified in the respective dimensions of university autonomy. It also discusses cross-cutting developments that have an impact on the capacity of universities to develop adequate institutional profiles.

1. Trends in the different dimensions of autonomy

Organisational autonomy

Many governance reforms have affected universities' organisational autonomy. In several countries, their legal status has changed. Due to the diversity of national legislative frameworks, individual organisational forms are difficult to compare. However, the new status usually offers greater freedom from the state and, in most cases, goes hand in hand with increased participation of external members in the university governing bodies.

Different governance models continue to co-exist, sometimes within the same systems. More systems carry out policy experimentations in the field of organisational autonomy, allowing selected universities to gain greater freedom in re-designing their governance (as in Estonia), testing new appointment models for executive heads (in Norway), or granting more institutions recently developed legal statuses (in Portugal and Sweden).

Recent changes in this field include developments in Estonia, Italy, or Lithuania. In these countries, reflection on the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies brought about the introduction or re-design of board-type bodies, in all or some universities of

the system. This usually was combined with a more noticeable presence and role of external members in these bodies.

In a majority of European universities, external members participate now in the most important decisions in the institutions' governing bodies. In some cases, they have now gained fully equal rights in the board with internal members (as in France). Selection and nomination processes have also been revised to the advantage of the university (Italy, Lithuania and Sweden). The 'type' of external members involved in university governing bodies remains an issue in some systems. When they come from public authorities, their involvement may be seen as a way for the state to gain greater influence over internal decision-making processes, thus reducing institutional autonomy, or conversely as a practical way to clear potential subsequent hurdles.

In most Northern European countries, universities are able to freely select their external members, although in some of these countries, an external authority formally appoints external members who were put forward by the university. In a majority of systems, the

government continues to partly or completely control the appointment of external members.

Most universities are free to decide on their internal academic structures and can create legal entities. In a number of cases, institutions gain more autonomy if they carry out certain additional activities through such distinct legal entities.

The executive leader is always chosen by the institution itself, but this requires the validation of an external authority in about half of the surveyed systems. This is a formality in most, though by no means all, cases: in some systems, the external authority may carry considerable weight in the selection process. The length of term is almost always specified in the law, as a fixed duration or a minimum/maximum range.

The analysis of the updated Scorecard also shows, importantly, that there is not a single linear progress curve, with systems inexorably allowing more autonomy to universities. While there is noticeable progress recorded in the field of organisational autonomy, there are also a series of setbacks, with different kinds of meaning for higher education in general. Although this is an isolated case, developments in Hungary show that there can be direct interventions of the state aimed at re-asserting more control over university activities. In other cases such as Ireland, it is the continued constrained financial conditions that consolidate a less autonomous environment for universities over the medium term, even for matters not directly related to financial capacity.

Financial autonomy

Financial autonomy is crucial for universities to achieve their strategic aims, which is why restrictions in this area are seen as particularly limiting. In almost all countries, universities receive their core public funding through block grants. Line-item budgets are now extremely rare. Nevertheless, in many of the systems that use block grants, internal allocation possibilities continue to be limited by law. This ranges from a division into broad categories with no or limited possibility to shift funds between them to the earmarking of certain parts of the grant for specific purposes. Here again, earmarking, top-slicing and other comparable practices have expanded in the recent years, in direct connection to decreasing budgets in a

series of countries throughout Europe. Such shifts in the nature of public funding to universities were already detected in EUA's Public Funding Observatory. In the same vein, critical underfunding situations make the formal autonomy of universities to carry over surpluses, or even to borrow money, quite theoretical, as in these cases surpluses are not generated and universities cannot offer the guarantees necessary to borrow significant amounts.

Restrictions regarding financial management remain rather stable; a majority of systems allow universities to borrow money under some conditions, and most often let universities keep surpluses. Ownership of buildings remains a complex issue, with nevertheless some qualitative progress in this area in Finland, France, Latvia and Lithuania.

Tuition fees may be the most volatile element of financial autonomy, as it has a direct connection to wider political choices made by governments. Accordingly, trends differ to a large extent throughout Europe. The general rule remains that universities are seldom in a situation where they control tuition fees for the main Bachelor student population, with slightly more margin for manoeuvre at Master level. None of the systems surveyed introduced tuition fees at either level during the period considered. At least two systems chose to abolish tuition fees (Estonia and North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany) while some others endorsed significant increases in tuition/registration fees (England, Ireland). The capacity for universities to decide on fee levels was enhanced in Lithuania and curtailed in Hungary.

Universities are typically granted more autonomy in setting tuition fees for international students. This particular part of the student population is discussed differently, with less emphasis on the social and societal dimensions. It is therefore rather rare that universities are not able to charge fees for these students (only Norway and the German states considered in the analysis). They are more often free to decide on fee levels (in 14 systems both at Bachelor and Master levels, compared to four systems at Bachelor level and seven systems at Master level when looking at national/EU students). Although only Finland introduced regulatory changes during the period considered, with a mandatory threshold for fees to international

students (Sweden allowed universities to charge and set fee levels for this student population in 2011), there are discussions in other systems (such as the French-speaking community of Belgium and Switzerland) around possible developments towards greater autonomy for universities to set fee levels (typically under an elevated ceiling).

Although most universities continue to receive public funding on an annual basis, more systems resort to multi-annual financial programming, sometimes in the context of performance contracts between the university and the ministry. This is a welcome evolution insofar as it provides a more long-term, stable financial environment for the institutions and allows for the development of more flexible strategies.

Again, there have been both upward- and downward-types of changes with regard to financial autonomy. Part of it relates to changes in tuition fee policies, which are highly visible in the scoring as soon as they are implemented.

But there are also deeply worrying cutbacks in financial autonomy which are connected with the state's eagerness to allocate resources that are scarce and guarantee 'return on investment' for the tax payer's money. This materialises in increased earmarking or segmenting of public funds, budget cuts reducing the universities' scope for strategic financial management, and in a case such as Hungary, re-introduction of a more direct state involvement in all financial decisions by the university. Systems in difficult financial situations may also choose the opposite policy option and relax restrictions on university financial management in order to 'equip' them to seek funding elsewhere. Here a strong word of caution is necessary, as EUA's work on financial sustainability has consistently showed that reliable public funding is irreplaceable to guarantee universities' long-term financial sustainability and capacity to fulfil their missions.

As already identified in the original Scorecard, austerity measures have had an adverse effect on several dimensions of university autonomy, and continue to do so in different places. The early observations of tighter controls and more direct steering of university budgets in 2010-2011 are unfortunately still valid in 2016-2017 and in some systems, such as Ireland, they have

contributed to re-shaping the regulatory and financial frameworks.

Staffing autonomy

Staffing autonomy remains highly stable throughout Europe. There is a great variety of rules and restrictions applying to recruitment and salary setting but few developments, partly because these modalities largely relate to the civil servant status of university staff in many countries. In this respect, phasing out of this status continues in Austria, the German states and Luxembourg, the last of which now only has around 10% of civil servant staff in the system. Senior academic staff continues to be a more regulated staff category than senior administrative staff.

Three systems have recorded progress in staffing autonomy, namely Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden, with greater freedom for universities to recruit and set salaries.

A small majority of systems allow universities to set salaries, or negotiate salary bands with other parties. In the remaining systems, salaries, or salary bands, are regulated externally (or negotiated but without the involvement of the universities themselves).

Less than a third of analysed systems do not include specific regulations (or civil service regulations) for university staff dismissals, with again a slight difference between senior academic staff and senior administrative staff, the latter being less often subject to special rules.

Universities can decide on promotion procedures for academic staff in less than half of the systems considered, and only barely more in the case of administrative staff. In most other countries promotions are only possible when positions at a higher level exist, since there is still frequently a form of control over the overall number of publicly-funded posts by the state.

Academic autonomy

The continued transition process in a series of systems, away from programme accreditation and towards institutional external quality assurance (institutional accreditation, audits or reviews), is contributing to enhanced academic autonomy. Most countries impose some regulations on the overall number of students, and three basic models can be found. Roughly a quarter

of systems operate on the basis of free admission for everyone holding the basic qualifications. No system moved away from free admission during the period considered. However, pressures on this model continue to be tangible; in some systems the number of academic fields, where a *numerus clausus* applies, is increasing. At the opposite end of the spectrum, about a quarter of systems leave it to universities to decide on the number of study places, usually (but not systematically) also granting them control over admissions. In between those two models, half of the systems privilege mixed approaches, where there is a certain degree of negotiation or split in the decision-making competences between universities and the state.

The selection of students at Bachelor level is carried out independently by the university in a minority of the surveyed countries (about a third), but it is common practice at Master level (two-thirds of cases).

The introduction of new degree programmes usually requires some form of approval from a public authority. In approximately a quarter of the surveyed countries, universities are able to open Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes without prior accreditation. It is only slightly more common at doctoral degree level. In most of the remaining systems, universities require prior accreditation for programmes to be introduced or publicly funded. The practice of institutional external

quality assurance is nevertheless expanding, and some systems actually make it possible for universities to choose external quality assurance mechanisms. However, only just over a quarter of systems make it possible for universities to select quality assurance providers. Several systems maintain pre-determined academic profiles for their institutions, in the framework of which universities may introduce programmes without requiring accreditation (Estonia, Finland, and Iceland).

Universities in most countries have full authority to close programmes. Only in a small number of systems do they need to negotiate this with a public authority. In more than two-thirds of the countries studied, universities can choose the language of instruction. In the remaining countries, there are varying restrictions which are seen as a competitive disadvantage when trying to attract international students and staff.

Academic autonomy differentiates itself from the three other dimensions in terms of evolution. There have been both more systems moving upwards and less cases of lower scores in this field, while the three other dimensions record more evenly spread changes in both directions. This positive development should be acknowledged and welcomed. As more systems move towards institutional external quality assurance practices, it is likely that this trend is further strengthened.

2. Cross-cutting trends and developments

In all dimensions of autonomy, it is important to consider that other elements than those captured through the indicators may affect university autonomy.

Funding

There exists a great variety across Europe as to funding models for higher education in general, and universities in particular. Importantly, the characteristics of the funding system have an influence on many aspects of university autonomy. In most European countries, universities are largely funded via the state, with the associated expectation that they fulfil a series of societal missions. This in turn tends to come with

higher degrees of regulation– a typical example in this regard is state regulation on tuition fees for the main Bachelor level student population.

Other funding-related trends are discussed throughout this report, as chronic underfunding of universities in some systems, preventing institutions to actually make strategic use of their formal autonomy.

The impact of the financial crisis has been profound: in some cases, previously granted autonomy has been reduced. In a number of systems, national governments have once again resorted to more direct steering

mechanisms, while tighter public budgets have produced heavier reporting procedures. Public authorities need to find ways of steering the university system as a whole, through an adequate balance of performance and incentive mechanisms, rather than through excessively burdensome and unsuitable reporting requirements. In some countries, short-term reactions to the crisis have also translated into drastic public funding cuts, putting strong pressure on universities.

Although institutional autonomy is crucial, its full benefits cannot be reaped without a firm commitment to stable and sufficient university funding. In this context, the sector must promote a much deeper understanding of the contribution and impact of universities in their socio-economic environment.

Concentration processes

The challenge to institutional autonomy may also lie with the agenda of large-scale concentration and 'rationalisation' of the academic offer at regional or national level, which some systems have initiated in an effort to improve the overall efficiency of the system. If implemented in a top-down manner, and by being prescriptive about new governance modalities, such measures risk to run against the organisational and academic autonomy of universities. It is paramount to give institutions the space to develop relevant cooperation and, if desirable, concentration strategies that fit their institutional profile and 'parameters'. EUA analysed success factors and pitfalls of university merger and concentration processes and issued a series of recommendations, notably with regard to the relationship with the state. In particular, EUA highlighted the following:

- Care should be taken to ensure there is a productive relationship with public authorities in planning and implementing the merger; public authorities and higher education institutions should seek synergies between the system-level political vision and institutional strategies.
- When public authorities are involved in the process, the principle of institutional autonomy should be respected, with universities being given as much freedom as possible within the regulatory framework to negotiate with merging partners without constraints.
- Public authorities should recognise the costs associated with merger processes and provide

additional funding to support them, in particular when mergers and concentration processes are part of the political vision for the system.

Regulatory framework, practices and reform implementation

There also remains a frequent gap between formal autonomy – autonomy "on paper" – and a university's actual ability to act independently. As mentioned before, significant increases in accountability measures have frequently curtailed university autonomy, highlighting the importance of striking a balance between institutional freedom and adequate accountability tools. The Autonomy Scorecard focuses on regulatory frameworks; it is based on the assumption that practices do not diverge significantly from these frameworks and is limited in its ability to take full account of such potential cases.

The statement, already made in the previous Autonomy Scorecard report, that one of the key challenges of governance reforms lies in the practical implementation of regulations, remains valid and highly relevant. This update has shown cases where legal frameworks were formally amended, but not implemented (for instance in the field of accreditation models). EUA has consistently called for an increased focus on reform implementation and follow-up. Some countries included in the Scorecard actually passed several reforms within a relatively short period, raising questions about the quality and speed of implementation as well as the stability of the regulatory environment for universities.

The mapping of the various reforms passed and implemented across the 29 systems under scrutiny shows the importance of the interlinking between the different dimensions of university autonomy. Reforms may tackle organisational, financial, staffing or academic issues separately, and most often only address one of these dimensions. Several types of developments may be identified:

- a. A minority of systems have implemented changes in more than one dimension – Lithuania with recent reforms addressing both organisational and financial matters, and Sweden with changes both to organisational and staffing aspects.

- b. Systems which feature rather high in some dimensions have prioritised 'weaker' areas. For instance, Finland, which records high scores in all dimensions except financial autonomy, focused on that particular aspect. In parallel, the country has been reducing funding to the sector since 2014, which has a substantial impact on a system that is highly dependent on public funding. In addressing academic autonomy, Denmark also tackled the dimension where it grants comparatively lower autonomy to its universities. In these cases, a structured approach to university autonomy exists, characterised by regular evaluation and comparative studies, and supported by a continued dialogue among stakeholders. At the time of writing, Luxembourg was developing new legislation addressing organisational matters, where the system scores the lowest in terms of university autonomy.
- c. The priority given to one or the other dimension of autonomy also depends on a series of contextual elements, including the financial situation and the characteristics of the system. For instance, the three German states analysed in the study have effectively addressed academic autonomy while keeping comparatively low scores in financial autonomy. The latter might not be seen as a priority given the comparatively more satisfying financial situation in the system – nevertheless, financial pressure is increasing as a result of rising student numbers.
- d. Larger centralised systems, as for instance in France, Italy or Poland, face particular challenges when seeking to design and implement reforms enhancing university autonomy. While there is significant activity in the field, sometimes leading to new legal frameworks, clear-cut changes are more difficult to implement. While the Scorecard may not register noticeable evolutions through the scoring, a series of developments are nevertheless ongoing and supporting system modernisation.
- e. When considering the past 10 years, it is possible to observe that a challenging economic context negatively impacts on university autonomy, as was the case in Portugal or Spain, and continues to be problematic in Ireland. With regard to Ireland, the knock-on effects of reduced public funding on different dimensions of university autonomy are apparent, as documented in this report.
- f. However, the approach towards university autonomy in systems characterised by substantial underfunding may be different, with authorities granting universities notably more autonomy in financial matters, giving them freedom to pursue other funding streams – as for instance, and to some extent, in Latvia. In such cases the sector must remain vigilant as it remains a core responsibility of public authorities to guarantee a sustainable funding framework to universities.
- g. Steering by the state is increasingly expressed through funding modalities (more frequent use of performance-based funding, multiannual contracts) or via accountability requirements. An illustration of this is England, where universities face little to no regulatory restrictions, but whose funding and accountability frameworks are in deep transformation. Nevertheless, there remain exceptions where more direct control by the state is re-instated, as is the case in Hungary through the creation of a 'chancellor' position with important responsibilities for staffing and finances, in the context of a dire economic situation. While governing bodies may include representatives of public authorities in other systems (as in Belgium or Luxembourg), the degree of control in Hungary's case is not comparable, with a veto right on all decisions with financial implications.
- This situation makes it necessary to promote a holistic approach to the concept of university autonomy. **The objective should remain to meaningfully enhance the institutions' ability to build strategic profiles – through the development of their academic offer, supported by proper financial management capacity, adequate HR strategies and a reflection on the governance model.**
- In addition, successful reform implementation requires adequate resources, enabling universities to mobilise new expertise to respond to the challenges that come together with enhanced autonomy. The lack of commitment of the state in terms of resources has in some cases brought discussions to a stalemate, halting for instance the process of real estate devolution. Transfers of responsibilities in all fields, including for example student selection or tuition fee setting, must be engineered in such a way that universities have both the necessary time and resources to fulfil these new tasks in the most appropriate way and to the benefit of their core missions.

Crucially, the updated Autonomy Scorecard exposes the fact that there is no natural trend towards increased autonomy for universities across Europe. Instead, it uncovers part of the complexity of this issue, rooted in the characteristics and structure of each higher education system and linked to other framing aspects such as the availability of resources. Increased autonomy only results from continued commitment and an active dialogue between the sector and public authorities. Where there is both trust among stakeholders and a shared objective to improve the framework for university activities, the EUA Scorecard can successfully support this process. Promoting a holistic view of developments in governance and funding, the Scorecard allows efficient benchmarking at a European scale and assists in identifying priorities for action. Supporting a structured, fruitful policy dialogue remains EUA's core goal with the present analysis and related work.

5

Annexes

Annex 1: Note on methodology

Developing the Autonomy Scorecard

An important facet of the methodology of the Scorecard is the involvement of the broader university community, through EUA's collective members. The Polish, German and Danish Rectors' Conferences, which represent diverse higher education systems, joined EUA in the consortium that carried out the original Autonomy Scorecard project.

The first stage was dedicated to developing and refining the autonomy indicators and describing the elements that represent restrictions as seen from the perspective of higher education institutions. Between October 2009 and April 2010, the EUA secretariat, in close collaboration with the steering committee and the secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences, established a list of indicators and restrictions (Annex 2: [List of indicators and restrictions](#)). Based on this list, a questionnaire was designed to collect data from the individual higher education systems. The questionnaire was then tested by the project partners with data from their higher education systems (April to July 2010) and adaptations were made in summer 2010 to reflect the comments and experiences from this trial.

The questionnaire was submitted to the 26 participating national rectors' conferences in August 2010 ([Table 1](#)). The secretaries general completed it themselves or passed it on to other experts from the same or a collaborating organisation. These responses then formed the basis for face-to-face or telephone interviews with all respondents. This allowed for the collection of more qualitative data and missing information and for the clarification of any remaining ambiguities. The interview memos were sent to the interviewees for validation and returned to the project team between October 2010 and January 2011. In the early months of 2011, a final validation round was conducted with more than half of the surveyed higher education systems, for which further explanations were required on some selected autonomy indicators.

In parallel, the work on developing a scoring and weighting system was taken up in spring 2010. The scoring system for the Autonomy Scorecard is based on evaluations of how restrictive particular regulations were perceived; the weighting system evaluates the relative importance of the individual indicators within each dimension of autonomy.

A technical structure for the scoring and the weighting system was subsequently developed, which was combined with the main data collection questionnaire. This made it possible to translate the collected data immediately into a score. Various rounds of comparison and validation were conducted to ensure the comparability of the collected data and scores. A more detailed description of the scoring and weighting methodologies follows below.

The data collection for the update in 2017 was organised following the original Scorecard methodology, based on questionnaires and interviews and several rounds of validation with national rectors' conferences. In mid-2015 they received their individual questionnaires, as completed in 2010, with interview memos included. They were invited to review each section and signal if changes were necessary, by selecting a different response option if necessary, and comment accordingly. The only addition to the new questionnaire was the creation of a specific sheet including more detailed questions on the composition of university governing bodies.

New questionnaires were also sent to national rectors' conferences that had not participated in the first Scorecard. Four new systems responded positively and joined the update: the French-speaking community of Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

The returned questionnaires were subsequently collected and analysed by EUA. At this stage, after various exchange rounds, three countries previously included decided to opt out of the update (Cyprus, Greece and Turkey).

EUA organised validation interviews with all participating national rectors' conferences. No follow-up was possible with the Czech Republic, which as a result is not included either in the update.

The data validation phase spanned over a year, from late 2015 to late 2016, because of the need to validate not only responses to indicators, but also a broader narrative for each system.

The scoring system

The scoring system of the Autonomy Scorecard is based on deduction values. Each restriction on institutional autonomy was assigned a deduction value indicating how restrictive a particular regulation was perceived to be¹¹. Special care was taken to ensure the consistent application of comparable deduction values to similar restrictions across different indicators and national or regional systems.

For example, for the indicator "capacity to decide on the overall number of students" deduction values were assigned as follows:

Table 7: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students - deduction values

Indicator: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students	
Restriction	Deduction value
Independent decision of universities	0 points
Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students, while an external authority decides on the number of state-funded students	2 points
Negotiation between universities and an external authority	2 points
Exclusive decision of an external authority	5 points
Free admission	5 points

¹¹ In those cases where respondents ticked "other restrictions", a deduction value was individually assigned, based on the explanation provided by the respondents.

The maximum or total possible deduction value for the capacity to decide on the overall number of students is the highest deduction value for the indicator, i.e. 5 points. A system's score is calculated as a percentage of this

total. For instance, if the overall number of students is decided through negotiations between universities and an external authority, that system scores 0.4 or 40% – 2 out of 5 points – for that particular indicator.

Table 8: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students – calculation of score

Indicator: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students			
Restriction	Deduction value	Score	Percentage
Independent decision of universities	0 points	0/5	0 = 0%
Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students, while an external authority decides on the number of state-funded students	2 points	2/5	0,4 = 40%
Negotiation between universities and an external authority	2 points	2/5	0,4 = 40%
Exclusive decision of an external authority	5 points	5/5	1 = 100%
Free admission	5 points	5/5	1 = 100%

In the case of cumulative deductions, the total possible deduction value is the sum of the deduction values of each possible restriction. This is illustrated by using the indicator “capacity to keep surplus of public funding”, where the maximum deduction value is awarded when surplus cannot be kept. If it can be kept with other types

of restrictions, all restriction values that apply simultaneously are summed up. The following example shows a case in which universities can keep a surplus up to a certain percentage and with the approval of an external authority.

Table 9: Capacity to keep surplus – calculation of score

Indicator: Capacity to keep surplus			
Restriction	Deduction value	Score	Percentage
Surplus cannot be kept	10 points		
Surplus can be kept without restrictions	0 points		
Surplus can be kept up to a maximum percentage	2 points	2/10	0,2 = 20%
Surplus can be kept but approval of an external authority is needed	2 points	2/10	0,2 = 20%
Surplus can be kept but its allocation is pre-determined by an external authority	2 points		
Surplus can be kept with other types of restrictions	2 points		
Total score		4/10	0,4 = 40%

Where only a specific combination of restrictions is possible, the total possible deduction value is the sum of the deduction values of all simultaneously possible restrictions.

Using this approach, a score is calculated for each indicator. Once a score for an indicator or autonomy area is obtained, it is ‘reversed’, in the sense that a score of 5%, which indicates a high level of autonomy, becomes 95% (i.e. $100 - 5\% = 95\%$).

The weighting system

The weightings of the autonomy indicators are based on the results of a survey undertaken during EUA's Annual Conference and statutory meetings held at the University of Palermo in October 2010. The representatives of the national rectors' conferences were asked to complete a survey on the relative importance of the autonomy indicators. They were asked to decide whether they considered the indicators included in the autonomy questionnaire to be ‘very important’, ‘fairly important’, ‘somewhat important’ or ‘not important’. 30 representatives from 18 countries participated in the survey.

The two sets of surveys yielded very similar results, indicating that the relevant stakeholders broadly agree on the relative importance of the autonomy indicators. The analysis revealed that the indicators were consistently perceived as relevant by both EUA's Council and the secretaries general of the national rectors' conferences. Almost all indicators were regarded as 'very important' or 'fairly important'. Diverging views were principally expressed concerning tuition fees, which doubtless reflects different cultural backgrounds and national traditions with regard to this issue.

These results were used to develop a system to weight the autonomy indicators: as a first step, the responses were counted for each autonomy indicator – for instance, out of 30 respondents, 21 considered the ability to decide on the overall number of students as 'very important', 7 as 'fairly important', 1 as 'somewhat important' and 1 as 'not important'. Points were then assigned to the

different response options: 3 points for 'very important', 2 points for 'fairly important', 1 point for 'somewhat important' and 0 points for 'not important'.¹²

The number of respondents who had ticked one of the four response options for a particular indicator was multiplied by the appropriate number of points assigned to that particular response option. This resulted in an indicator's so-called total 'importance value'. For example, in the case of the indicator "ability to decide on the overall number of students", 21 responses for 'very important', 7 for 'fairly important', 1 for 'somewhat important' and 1 for 'not important' were multiplied by 3 ('very important'), 2 ('fairly important'), 1 ('somewhat important') and 0 ('not important'), respectively (table 5).

¹² Voids were assigned 1, rather than 0 points, in order to avoid distorting the results for a particular indicator towards a lower weighting factor than warranted.

Table 10: Ability to decide on the overall number of students – calculation of 'importance value'

Ability to decide on the overall number of students	Number of responses	'Importance value'
Very important	21	63
Fairly important	7	14
Somewhat important	1	1
Not important	1	0
Total	30	78

This calculation was carried out for each indicator, and the 'importance value' of all indicators within each autonomy area summed up. In a final step, the 'importance value' of each individual indicator was expressed as a percentage of the sum of the 'importance

values' for all indicators within one autonomy area. For example, by dividing its 'importance value' of 78 by the total 'importance value' for academic autonomy (543), the indicator "ability to decide on the overall number of students" received a weighting factor of 14%.

Table 11: Academic autonomy – 'importance values' and weighting factors

Indicator – academic autonomy	'Importance value'	Weighting factor
Capacity to decide on the overall number of students	78	14%
Capacity to select students	78	14%
Capacity to introduce and terminate degree programmes	87	16%
Capacity to choose the language of instruction	70	14%
Capacity to select QA mechanisms	80	15%
Capacity to select QA providers	61	11%
Capacity to design the content of degree programmes	89	16%
Total	543	100%

Table 11 sums up the weighting factors thus developed for the indicators relating to academic autonomy. Weighted scores are obtained by multiplying

non-weighted scores with the respective percentage values (Table 12).

Table 12: Academic autonomy - non-weighted and weighted scores

Non-weighted/weighted scores - academic autonomy			
Indicator	Non-weighted score	Weighting factor	Weighted score
Capacity to decide on overall number of students	100%	14%	14%
Capacity to decide on admission mechanisms for Bachelor's degrees	100%	7%	7%
Capacity to decide on admission mechanisms for Master's degrees	40%	7%	3%
Capacity to decide on the introduction of Bachelor's degrees	20%	4%	1%
Capacity to decide on the introduction of Master's degrees	20%	4%	1%
Capacity to decide on the introduction of doctoral degrees	20%	4%	1%
Capacity to decide on the termination of degree programmes	40%	4%	2%
Capacity to decide on the language of instruction for Bachelor's degrees	0%	7%	0%
Capacity to decide on the language of instruction for Master's degrees	0%	7%	0%
Capacity to select QA mechanisms	0%	15%	0%
Capacity to select QA providers	0%	11%	0%
Capacity to decide on the content of degree programmes	0%	16%	0%
Total score	28%	100%	29%

It is important to note that the different autonomy areas – organisational, financial, staffing and academic autonomy – are not weighted against each other. It was decided that, due to the various and intricate connections between the different autonomy areas, it would be impossible to weight the importance of financial autonomy against that of staffing autonomy, for example. The perceived importance of a particular indicator is therefore only compared with the perceived importance of the other indicators in the same autonomy area.

Annex 2: List of indicators and restrictions

Organisational autonomy

Selection procedure for the executive head		Selection of the executive head is not validated by an external authority
		Selection of the executive head is validated by an external authority
Selection criteria for the executive head		Selection criteria for executive head are not stated in the law
		Law states that the executive head must hold an academic position
		Law states that the executive head must hold a doctoral degree
		Law states that the executive head must come from within the university
		Other restrictions
Dismissal of the executive head		Procedures for the dismissal of the executive head are not stated in the law
		Confirmation of dismissal by an external authority but the procedure is decided by the university
		Dismissal by an external authority but the procedure is decided by the university
		Confirmation of dismissal by an external authority and the procedure is stated in the law
		Dismissal by an external authority according to a procedure stated in the law
		Other restrictions
Term of office of the executive head		Length of the executive head’s term of office is not stated in the law
		Maximum or range of length is stated in the law
		Minimum range of length is stated in the law
		Exact length is stated in the law
External members in university governing bodies	Inclusion of external members in university governing bodies	Universities cannot decide as they cannot include external members
		Universities cannot decide as they must include external members
		Universities can decide to include external members
	Selection of external members in university governing bodies	University can decide freely on external members
		Proposal by university and appointment by an external authority
		Part of the members appointed by the university and part appointed by an external authority
		Appointment completely controlled by an external authority
		Other appointment process
Capacity to decide on academic structures		Universities can decide on their academic structures without constraints
		Guidelines exist in the law
		Faculties/other academic structures are listed in the law
		Other restrictions
Capacity to create legal entities		Universities can create legal entities without constraints
		Universities are only allowed to create not-for-profit legal entities
		Universities are not allowed to create any type of legal entity
		Other restrictions

Financial autonomy

Length and type of public funding	Length of public funding	More than one year
		One year
		Less than one year
	Type of public funding	Line-item budget
		Block grant and there are no restrictions on the allocation of funding
		Block-grant is split into broad categories and there are no or limited possibilities to move funds between these
		Block grant but internal allocation possibilities are limited by law
		Other restrictions
Ability to keep surplus	Surplus cannot be kept	
	Surplus can be kept without restrictions	
	Surplus can be kept up to a maximum percentage	
	Surplus can be kept but approval of an external authority is needed	
	Surplus can be kept but its allocation is pre-determined by an external authority	
	Surplus can be kept with other types of restrictions	
Ability to borrow money	Universities cannot borrow money	
	Universities can borrow money without restrictions	
	Universities can borrow money up to a maximum percentage	
	Universities can borrow money with the approval of an external authority	
	Universities can borrow money from specific banks (designated by an external authority)	
	Universities can borrow money with other types of restrictions	
Ability to own buildings	Universities are not allowed to own their buildings	
	Universities can sell their buildings without restrictions	
	Universities can sell their buildings with the approval of an external authority	
	Universities can sell their buildings with other types of restrictions	
	Universities are not allowed to sell their buildings	
	Other restrictions	
Ability to charge tuition fees	National and EU students (at BA, MA and doctoral level)	Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees
		Universities and an external authority cooperate in setting the level of tuition fees
		Universities can set the level of tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority
		Only an external authority is allowed to set the level of tuition fees
		There are no tuition fees
	Non-EU students (at BA, MA and doctoral level)	Universities are free to set the level of tuition fees
		Universities and an external authority cooperate in setting the level of tuition fees
		Universities can set the level of tuition fees under a ceiling set by an external authority
		Only an external authority is allowed to set the level of tuition fees
		There are no tuition fees

Staffing autonomy

Capacity to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	Recruitment is done freely by universities
	Appointment needs to be confirmed by an external authority for some staff
	Appointment needs to be confirmed by an external authority for all staff
	Number of posts regulated by an external authority for some staff
	Number of posts regulated by an external authority for all staff
	Recruitment carried out by an external authority for some staff
	Recruitment carried out by an external authority for all staff
	Other restrictions
Capacity to decide on salaries (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	Universities can freely decide on staff salaries
	Decision on individual staff salaries is restricted due to an overall limit for all staff payments
	Salary band is negotiated with other parties
	Salary band is prescribed by an external authority for some staff
	Salary band is prescribed by an external authority for all staff
	Salary is set by an external authority/civil servant status for some staff
	Salary is set by an external authority/civil servant status for all staff
	Other restrictions
Capacity to decide on dismissals (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	There are no sector-specific regulations concerning dismissals (national labour regulations apply)
	Dismissal is strictly regulated due to civil servant status for some staff
	Dismissal is strictly regulated due to civil servant status for all staff
	Dismissals are subject to other regulations specific to the sector
Capacity to decide on promotions (senior academic/senior administrative staff)	Universities can freely decide on promotion procedures
	The law states who has to be included in the selection committee
	Promotion only if there is a post at a higher level
	Other restrictions

Academic autonomy

Capacity to decide on overall student numbers		Exclusive decision of the university
		Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students while an external authority determines the number of state-funded study places
		Universities negotiate with an external authority
		Exclusive decision of an external authority
		Free admission
Capacity to select students (at BA and MA level)		Admission criteria set by the university
		Admission criteria co-regulated by an external authority and universities
		Admission entirely regulated by an external authority
Capacity to introduce and terminate degree programmes	Capacity to introduce programmes (at BA, MA level)	Universities can open degree programmes without prior accreditation
		A minority of new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced/funded
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced
		Other restrictions
	Capacity to introduce programmes (at doctoral level)	Universities can open degree programmes without prior accreditation
		A minority of new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced/funded
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded
		Only some universities/academic units can open new degree programmes
		All new degree programmes/courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced
		Other restrictions
	Capacity to terminate programmes	Universities can terminate degree programmes independently
		Termination of degree programmes requires negotiation between universities and an external authority
		Termination of degree programmes occurs on the initiative of an external authority
		Other restrictions
Capacity to choose the language of instruction (at BA and MA level)		Universities can only offer degree programmes/courses in the national language
		Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes
		Universities can choose the language of instruction for certain programmes
		The number of degree programmes/courses taught in a foreign language is limited by an external authority
		Universities can choose the language of instruction only if the programme is also offered in the national language
		Universities can choose their language of instruction, but will not receive public funding for foreign-language programmes

Capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms and providers	Capacity to select quality assurance mechanisms	Universities can select quality assurance mechanisms freely according to their needs
		Universities cannot select quality assurance mechanisms
	Capacity to select quality assurance providers	Universities can choose quality assurance agency freely according to their needs (including agencies from other countries)
		Universities can only select between national quality assurance agencies
		Universities cannot choose the quality assurance agency
Capacity to design content of degree programmes	Universities can freely design the content of their degree programmes and courses (other than for the regulated professions)	
	Authorities specify some content of academic courses	
	Authorities specify all of the content of academic courses	
	Other restrictions	

Annex 3: Weighting factors per indicator

Organisational autonomy

Selection procedure for the executive head	14%
Selection criteria for the executive head	14%
Dismissal of the executive head	12%
Term of office of the executive head	9%
Inclusion of external members in university governing bodies	12%
Selection of external members in university governing bodies	12%
Capacity to decide on academic structures	15%
Capacity to create legal entities	12%

Financial autonomy

Length of public funding	14%
Type of public funding	13%
Ability to keep surplus	14%
Ability to borrow money	9%
Ability to own buildings	12%
Ability to charge tuition fees for national/EU students	17%
Ability to charge tuition fees for non-EU students	21%

Staffing autonomy

Capacity to decide on recruitment procedures (senior academic staff)	13%
Capacity to decide on recruitment procedures (senior administrative staff)	13%
Capacity to decide on salaries (senior academic staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on salaries (senior administrative staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on dismissals (senior academic staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on dismissals (senior administrative staff)	12%
Capacity to decide on promotions (senior academic staff)	13%
Capacity to decide on promotions (senior administrative staff)	12% ¹³

Academic autonomy

Capacity to decide on overall student numbers	14%
Capacity to select students	14%
Capacity to introduce and terminate programmes	16%
Capacity to choose the language of instruction	13%
Capacity to select QA mechanisms	15%
Capacity to select QA providers	11%
Capacity to design content of degree programmes	16% ¹⁴

¹³ The weighting factors do not add up to 100%, since digits had to be rounded to calculate the weighting factors.

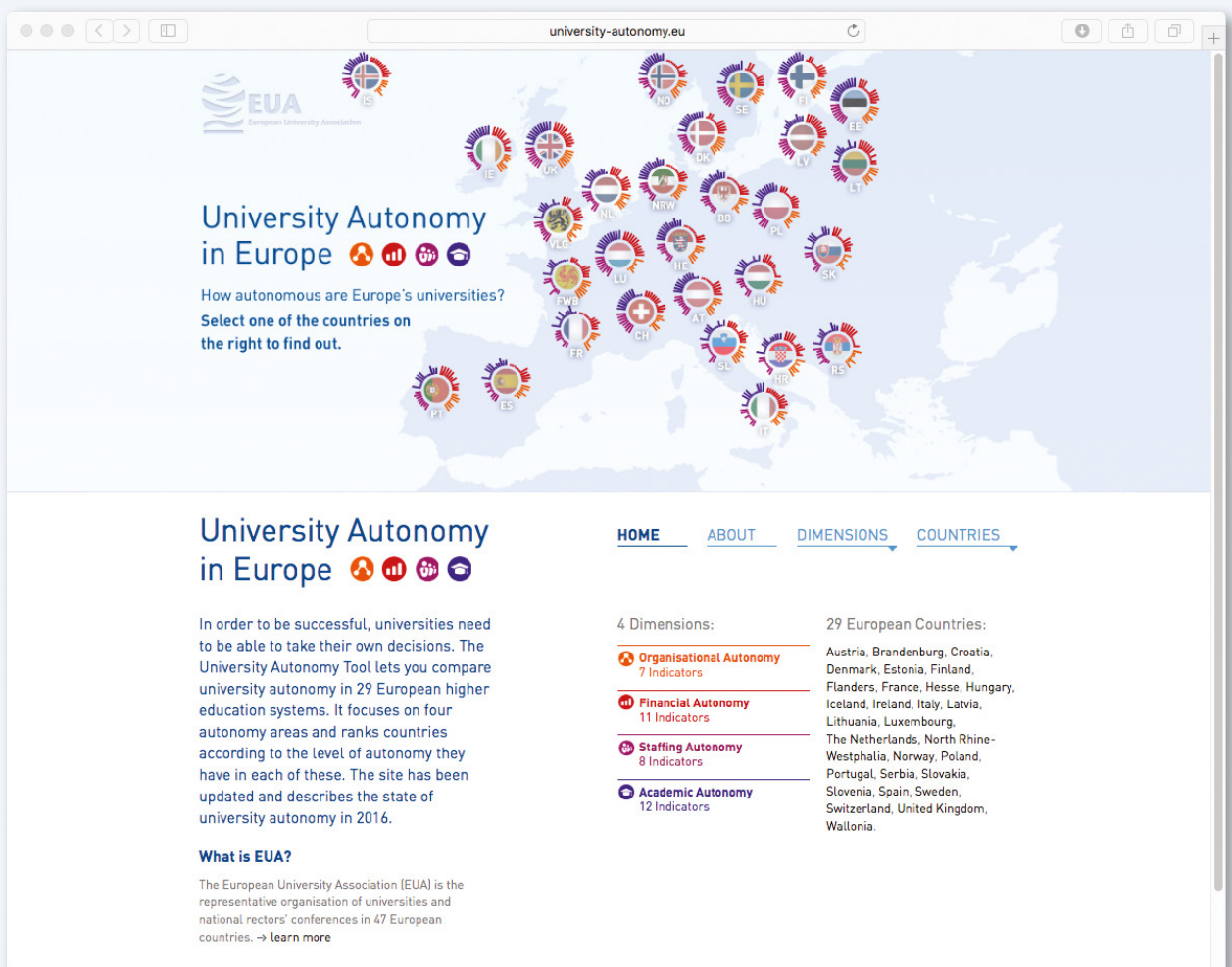
¹⁴ Ibid.

Annex 4: Contributors to the study

Contributors from the National Rectors' Conferences (questionnaire, interviews, validation)

Austria	Universities Austria: Elisabeth Fiorioli (Secretary General), Wolfgang Nedobity and Nadine Shovakar
Belgium – Flanders	VLIR: Rosette S'Jegers (Secretary General) and Steven van Luchene
Belgium – French-speaking community	CREF: Elisabeth Kokkelkoren Universities: Nathalie Alen (UCL), Evelyne Goujon (ULg), Anne-Michèle Lepers (USL-B) and Philippe Lizin (UNamur)
Croatia	Croatian Rectors' Conference: Pero Lucin (President; Rector of the University of Rijeka) and Paula Pavletić (Secretary General)
Denmark	Universities Denmark: Nikolaj Helm-Petersen and Peter Dalby Larsen
Estonia	Universities Estonia: Hanna Kanep (Secretary General)
Finland	Universities Finland: Leena Wahlfors (Secretary General) and Marko Niemi
France	CPU: Jean-Pierre Finance and Eric Foucher
Germany	HRK: Brigitte Göbbels-Dreyling (Deputy Secretary General) and Henning Rockmann
Hungary	HRC: Zoltán Dubécsi (Secretary General), Orsolya Heuer and Petra Perényi
Iceland	University of Iceland: Jenny Bara Jensdottir and Gudmundur R. Jonsson
Ireland	IUA: Ned Costello (Chief Executive), Michael Casey and Lewis Purser
Italy	CRUI: Marina Cavallini Universities: Michele Meoli, University of Bergamo
Latvia	Latvian Rectors' Conference: Jānis Bernāts (Secretary General)
Lithuania	Lithuanian Universities Rectors' Conference: Kęstutis Kriščiūnas (Secretary General)
Luxembourg	University of Luxembourg: Massimo Malvetti (Secretary General of the Board of Governors) and Anne Christophe
Netherlands	VSNU: René Hageman and Han van Yperen
Norway	UHR: Hege Bolstad Pettersen (Deputy Secretary General)
Poland	KRASP: Andrzej Krasniewski (Secretary General)
Portugal	CRUP: Joao Melo Borges (Secretary General)
Slovak Republic	SRK: Maria Cikesova (Secretary General)
Slovenia	Slovenian Rectors' Conference: Ivan Svetlik (President; Rector of the University of Ljubljana) and Mihaela Bauman Podojsteršek
Serbia	KONUS: Miodrag Popovic and Ana Jakovljevic (Secretaries General)
Spain	CRUE: Carlos Martínez Tomás Universities: Francisco José Mora (Rector) and José Antonio Pérez, Universitat Politècnica de València
Sweden	SUHF: Marianne Granfelt and Anders Söderholm (Secretaries General)
Switzerland	Swissuniversities: Axel Marion
United Kingdom	Universities UK: Lisa Bungeroth, William Hammonds, Jovan Luzajic and Peter Mason

Visit the Autonomy Scorecard tool online:
<http://www.university-autonomy.eu>



University Autonomy in Europe

How autonomous are Europe's universities?
 Select one of the countries on the right to find out.

University Autonomy in Europe

In order to be successful, universities need to be able to take their own decisions. The University Autonomy Tool lets you compare university autonomy in 29 European higher education systems. It focuses on four autonomy areas and ranks countries according to the level of autonomy they have in each of these. The site has been updated and describes the state of university autonomy in 2016.

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4 Dimensions:

- Organisational Autonomy**
7 Indicators
- Financial Autonomy**
11 Indicators
- Staffing Autonomy**
8 Indicators
- Academic Autonomy**
12 Indicators

29 European Countries:

Austria, Brandenburg, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Flanders, France, Hesse, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, North Rhine-Westphalia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Wallonia.

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