

# The Role of European Universities in Regional Innovation

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**The CONTRIBUTION of the REGIONAL and LOCAL INSTITUTIONS to the  
COHESION POLICY: SYNERGIES and COMPLEMENTARITIES between  
STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2007-2013 AND THE LISBON STRATEGY”**

**ALSO FINAL EVENT**  
**Osimo (Ancona) 4-5 October 2007**

## Outline

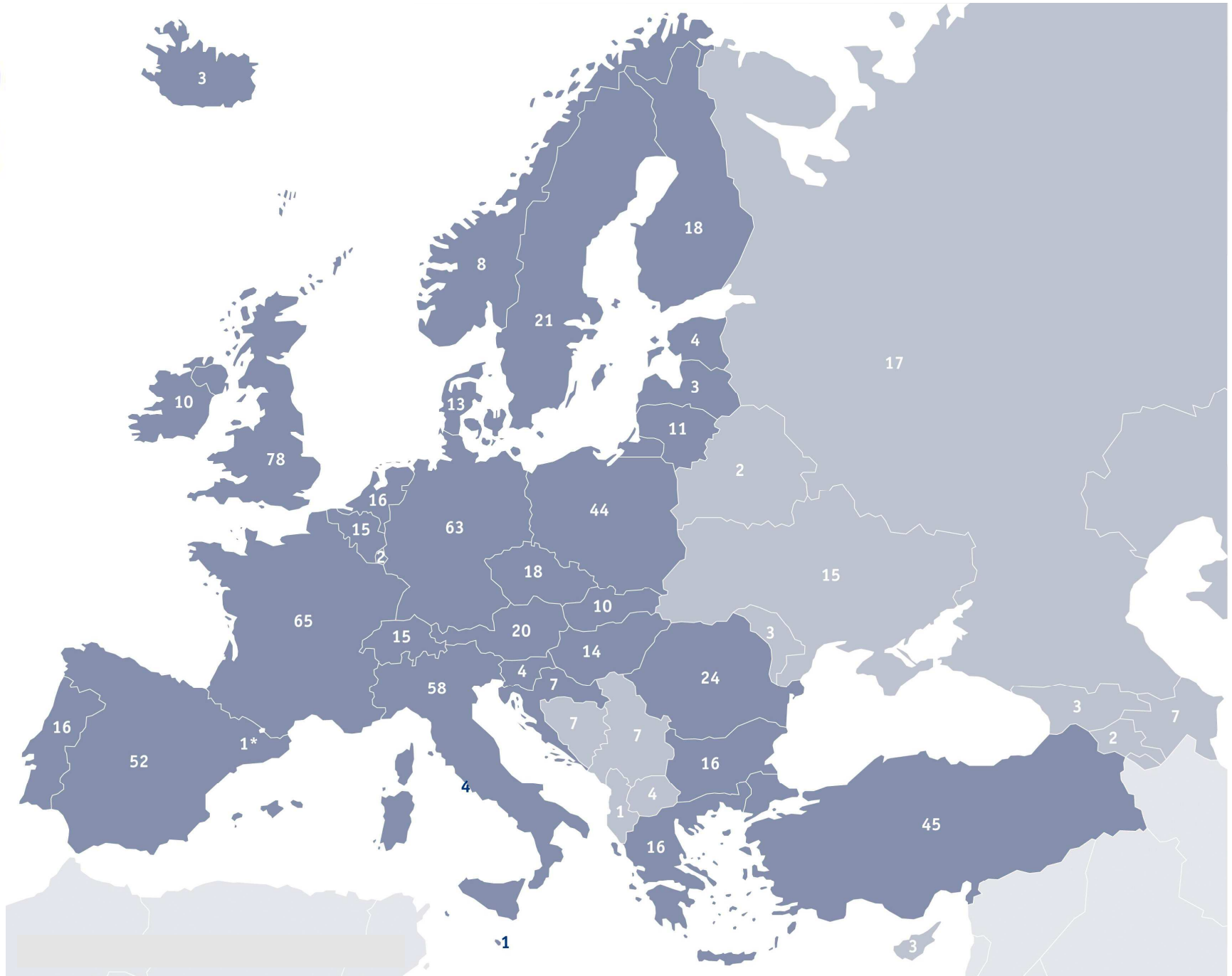
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- The European University Association (EUA): Independent Voice of Universities
- Current European Higher Education and Research Policy Framework
- Universities in Developing Regional Innovation Initiatives
- Universities Developing Institutional Strategies for Research and Innovation
- Concluding Remarks

## The European University Association (EUA)

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- Members: 800 universities and 34 National Rectors Conferences in 46 countries
- Non-governmental Membership-based Organisation
- Policy Focus: ERA and EHEA
- Mission:
  - ✓ Developing action lines and common positions on crucial issues
  - ✓ Representing universities in policy dialogue
  - ✓ Informing universities about relevant policy debate
  - ✓ Reinforcing governance through activities and projects based on good practice exchange and promotion (projects, workshops, conferences, web newsletter, etc.)



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## Higher Education in Europe: Cooperation and Competition

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- Bologna Process – 46 countries: A reform agenda for improving the quality of European higher education – promoting rethinking & reform jointly involving national authorities and HEIs
- Lisbon Strategy – EU27: push for excellence in research & innovation, concentration & selectivity for global competitiveness - focus on researcher careers, the ERC but also the EIT
- Limited EU responsibility for higher education
  - ✓ but growing competence in relation to research
  - ✓ and increased profile of vocational education, (LLL)

## Current European Higher Education and Research Policy Framework: An Overview

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- Bologna Process – including 3rd cycle – doctoral programme reform
- New Life Long Learning programme 2007-2013
- 7th Research Framework Programme (with longer duration 7 years, major innovations – ERC: eligible research costs contract model; further coordination between national and European research programmes through new mechanisms such as ERA-NET and Regions of Knowledge, and through established mechanisms such as Marie Curie Actions)
- European Structural and Social Funds – new emphasis on Lisbon Objectives in Research and Innovation
- European Researchers' Charter and Code of Conduct/Research Careers and Mobility
- European Institute of Technology
- Communication on Modernisation Agenda for Universities
- Improving Knowledge Transfer between Universities and Enterprises
- 'Green Paper' on Future of the European Research Area

## The Changing Context for Universities

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- The EU Lisbon agenda & a refocused strategy around research & innovation
- The importance of universities in building a knowledge society in Europe
- Globalisation, growing competition with an ever more global market for education
- More differentiation & institutional profiling
- ➔ Europe needs “strong institutions that are diverse, adequately funded, autonomous and accountable” (EUA Lisbon Declaration, April 2007)

## European Universities Contributing to the Lisbon Strategy

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### Universities play a central role, in particular:

- Developing of institutional strategies for research and innovation
- Reforming Doctoral Programmes
- Reinforcing the university-business collaboration and knowledge exchange
- Contributing to develop regions of knowledge

## Universities in Developing Regional Innovation Initiatives - Key Conditions (EUA Brno Conference 2006)

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- Clarity of institutional mission based on regional audit of strengths and weaknesses.
- Create adequate internal structures and management systems.
- Promote the 'science and society' dimension, regional as well as international. Projects should address societal needs or interests.
- Interconnection with all the actors (government, university-research centres, industry and enterprises).
- Seek creation of critical mass of manageable size.
- Political support to undertake major actions for innovation in a region (attracting world class work force, attracting investment, Structural Funds where applicable, etc.).

## **EUA Report: “The Rise of Knowledge Regions: Emerging Opportunities and Challenges for Universities”**

- Conducted to understand better the current and expected role of universities in regional knowledge development.
- Includes extensive review on the literature in the field.
- Key feature: study based on interviews with professionals involved in university-industry-government cooperation schemes to foster regional innovation. Four European regions analyzed: Barcelona, Brno, Manchester, Oresund.

## Phases of KR Development

1. A few leaders with a vision see the region's potential, have identified opportunities for concerted action and are willing to mobilise others. A small group of key players from different sectors, public and private, join the common cause.
2. Developing a few key goals and one or two key project opportunities to jump-start the process.
3. Analysing situation, SWOT, creating internal transparency.
4. Formulating a strategy and enlisting private and public support.
5. Building on first successes, constructing visible symbols of the possible and pull effects, expanding marketing.
6. Establishing project management through key intermediaries.
7. Consolidating connectivity tissue through projects, events.



*Building the Oresund Bridge between Copenhagen and Malmö*

- A can-do attitude
- Informal direct (“no-nonsense”) communicational habits,
- easy access to relevant people without hierarchical detours
- interest and curiosity in innovation
- openness and welcoming attitudes to newcomers
- life-embracing attitude tow. culture

## An enabling collective psychology

- cultural attitudes - cultural path dependency
- common ambition of being better than others  
“common enemy effect”
- unifying perceptions of historical heritage, achievements and of recent major events
- creating an epidemic sense of the possible

*Planning the Central European Technology Institute Project & Medical Campus Extension in Brno*



## Universities Developing Institutional Strategies for Research and Innovation

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- European and national funding instruments are increasingly the main drivers of institutional research strategies.
- Individual talent remains at the heart of the research process, but team-building of critical mass in areas of university strength is necessary.
- Universities need to create a positive environment to attract talents through appropriate internal procedures and incentives.

## Universities Developing Institutional Strategies for Research and Innovation (cont.)

- Strategic management, rather than strategic planning, is viewed as a process creating the framework for opportunities.
- Increasing of research costs requires identification of priorities.
- Consortia-building and clustering between universities and other partners support regional development and innovation.
- Institutional research strategies should balance the increasing contract-based research with the basic research mission of the university.

# Responsible Partnering



- A voluntary code of conduct reflecting proven good practices for Industry-Science collaboration
- Designed by practitioners
- Endorsed by key stakeholders
- Supported by Commissioners Potočník and Verheugen
- Endorsed in Esko Aho's report on Creating an Innovative Europe

## University-Enterprise Collaboration (Responsible Partnering)

- Knowledge transfer is now recognised as one of the main missions of universities which should be taken into account in evaluation procedures.
- University-industry collaboration needs change in mindsets from both partners.
- Adequate mechanisms which enable knowledge transfer are needed, particularly for SMEs.
- Universities should invest in strategies that develop efficient practices in collaborative research with enterprises.

## Concluding Remarks (I)

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- The regional dimension encompasses all aspects of the university mission in education and training, research and innovation, and in civil society.
- There is an inherent connection with the national, European and global framework of the work of universities.
- There is no “one-fits-all” approach. Every region needs developing its own processes by analysing their own strengths and socio-economic situation.
- Universities are making increasingly major contributions through investment in knowledge transfer capacity, the development of collaborative postgraduate programmes, the production of scientific publications in applied fields, the promotion of

## Concluding Remarks (II)

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- Universities are making increasingly major contributions through investment in knowledge transfer capacity, the development of collaborative postgraduate programmes, the production of scientific publications in applied fields, the promotion of entrepreneurial culture and the development of higher education degrees to provide highly skilled professionals for new labour market needs.

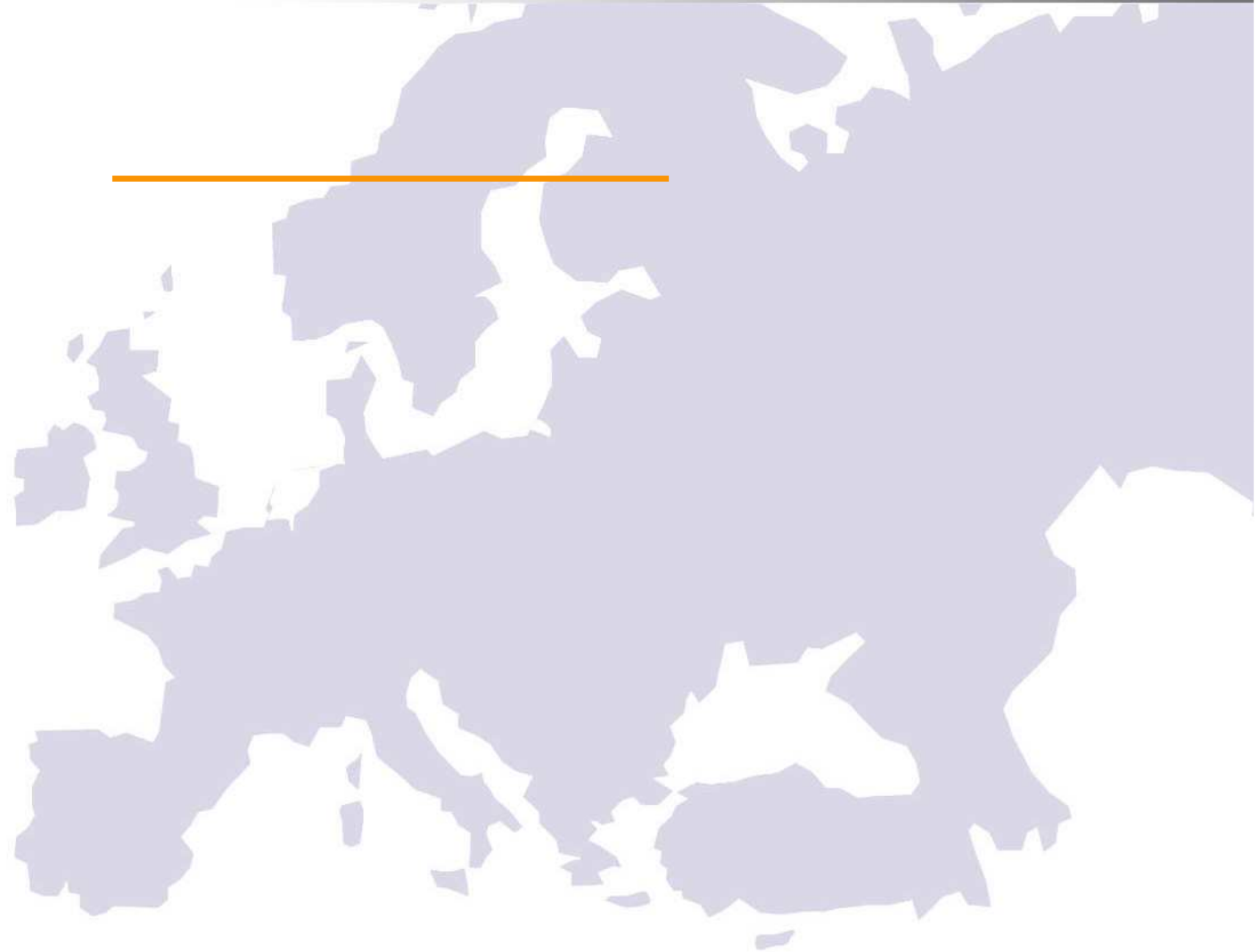
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**EUA**

European University Association



## EUA in Doctoral Programme Reform

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Doctoral education: main link between the European Higher Education and European Research Areas (EHEA and ERA).

Our projects linking Bologna and Lisbon Objectives:

- Doctoral Programmes for European Knowledge Society (2004-2005): organisation, supervision, quality, innovative practices and financing.
- Policy development of third cycle of Bologna process (From Bergen 2005 to London 2007)
- DOC-CAREERS Project (2006-2007) "From Innovative Doctoral Training to Enhanced Career Opportunities"
- EUA – US Transatlantic Dialogue on Doctoral Education

## EUA in Knowledge Transfer

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- Central plank of the “Modernisation agenda” for Universities.
- Provide input on related EC initiatives – Knowledge transfer, ERC, EIT.
- Guidelines for good practice: “Responsible Partnering” (2005). In collaboration with partner organisations from industry (EIRMA), research and technology organisations (EARTO), and university-based knowledge transfer offices (PROTON).
- Promote and Disseminate: Validation workshops with industry and university; European Business Summit, 2006 and 2007; Lisbon conference, December 2007.