



ESF EUROCORES Programme

Higher Education and Social Change (EuroHESC)

Highlights



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EUROCORES (European Collaborative Research)

The European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) Scheme enables researchers in different European countries to develop collaboration and scientific synergy in areas where international scale and scope are required for top class science in a global context. The scheme provides a flexible framework for national basic research funding and performing organisations to join forces in supporting forefront European research in and across all scientific areas. The national organisations support all aspects including scientific coordination, networking and research funding.

www.esf.org/eurocores

The Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS)

The social sciences study the possibilities and constraints that surround human activity. They examine and interpret human beings on different levels, from the neural foundations of individual behaviour to group processes and the functioning of entire societies. Consequently, the social sciences employ a wide variety of methods to ensure scientific rigour and the production of reliable knowledge. The Standing Committee for the Social Sciences (SCSS) funds and develops a wide range of initiatives in the fields of psychology and the cognitive sciences, pedagogic and education research, social anthropology, sociology, gender studies, economics, business and administrative sciences, geography, demography, environmental sciences, law, political sciences, communication sciences, international relations, social statistics and informatics.

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Foreword



Higher education has increasingly become the object of research. The more student enrolment grows and the quality and relevance of higher education is considered crucial for the “knowledge society”, the more systematic knowledge in this thematic area is called for. However, higher education research faces many challenges. It has to cope with adverse conditions of a small institutional basis. It has to find its way in synthesising the theories and methods of a vast range of disciplines. It has to justify its role in an arena in which many politicians, practitioners, consultants and others tend to believe that their knowledge suffices. Last, but not least, higher education research has to be successful in undertaking solid comparative research.

Higher education researchers in Europe have been very active for more than two decades in trying to seize the opportunities of their situation by embarking on intensive comparative and interdisciplinary cooperation. The decision of the European Science Foundation in 2006 to support these efforts by funding “Higher Education Looking Forward (HELF)” – a project exploring possible future developments of higher education and society as well as the challenges faced by higher education research – turned out to be a further milestone. The ideas generated formed the basis of the programme “Higher Education and Social Change (EuroHESC)” supported by ESF and national research funding bodies from 2009 to 2012 in the framework of the EUROCORES programme.

Such intensified research collaboration across European borders is timely, as simplistic views about common global challenges and trends and national policies of imitation need to be counterbalanced by better information about the complexity of the situation as well as the variety of policy options.

Ulrich Teichler

EuroHESC Scientific Committee

August 2012

About the programme



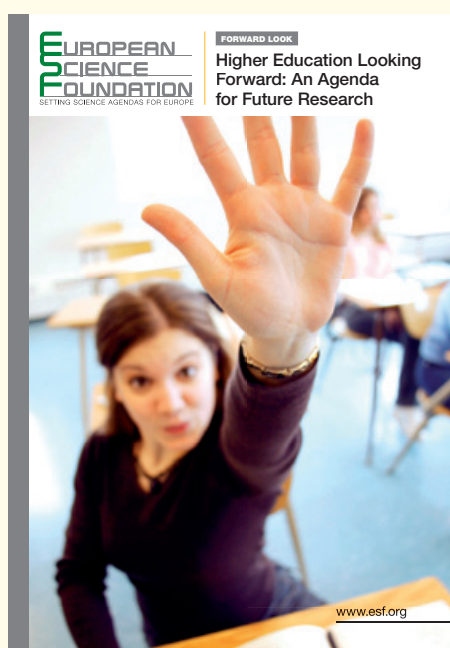
The beginning – Higher Education Looking Forward (2006–2007)

The EuroHESC programme had its origins in a Forward Look exercise of the European Science Foundation between 2006 and 2007 called “Higher Education Looking Forward: An Agenda for Future Research” (HELFF), steered by John Brennan, Jürgen Enders, Christine Musselin, Ulrich Teichler and Jussi Välimaa.

The rationale for the HELFF project was to examine higher education and research within a wider context of social science research by relating it to more general conceptual frameworks of, for example, human capital theories; theories of power, inequality and social exclusion; theories of organisations; new public management, and so forth. In so doing, the aim was to begin to address some of the larger questions concerning the changing relationship between higher education and society and to develop research agendas that would be relevant to researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

Over the course of 12 months, the research literature was reviewed and overview reports written on five interconnected themes:

- Higher education and the needs of the knowledge society
- Higher education and the achievement (or prevention) of equity and social justice
- Higher education and its communities: interconnections and interdependencies
- Steering and governance of higher education
- Differentiation and diversity of institutional forms and professional roles



The reports were critiqued by scholars from higher education research and other fields in a series of workshops and conferences between 2006 and 2007. The final synthesis report of the activity represented an agenda for future research on the changing relationship between higher education and society that would address questions of long-term strategic concern to the future of higher education.¹

1. www.esf.org/helf

Following through – the EUROCORES theme proposal (2007)

A proposal for a EUROpean Collaborative REsearch (EUROCORES) programme on the subject of “Higher Education and Social Change” was submitted to ESF in 2007 in an open competition by the following team (with affiliations at the time of application):

- Professor John Brennan, Open University, UK
- Professor Ivar Bleiklie, University of Bergen, Norway
- Professor Craig Calhoun, Social Science Research Council, United States
- Professor Jürgen Enders, University of Twente, the Netherlands
- Professor Marek Kwiek, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland
- Professor António Magalhães, University of Porto, Portugal
- Dr Christine Musselin, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), France
- Professor Michele Rostan, University of Pavia, Italy
- Professor Ulrich Teichler, University of Kassel, Germany
- Professor Jussi Välimaa, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
- Professor Pavel Zgaga, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

The project selection process (2008–2009)

An open call for Outline Proposals for international collaborative research projects in the framework of the EuroHESC programme was subsequently published in 2008. An international Review Panel was established, composed of experts nominated by the participating national funding agencies (see Annex 2). Twenty-one eligible Outline Proposals were received, of which nine were selected by the Review Panel in June 2008 to be invited through to the second round. The nine Full Proposals received were then considered by the Review Panel in September 2008 and five were recommended for funding. Joint funding decisions by the national funding agencies were concluded by June 2009. Ultimately, there was sufficient funding available at national level to launch four Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs), although each CRP lost at least one partner due to funding limitations. Most of these partners maintained involvement in the programme as unfunded Associated Partners.

The funded Collaborative Research Projects

• Change in Networks, Higher Education and Knowledge Societies (CINHEKS)

Project Leader: Professor Jussi Välimaa, Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

• The Academic Profession in Europe: Responses to Societal Challenges (EUROAC)

Project Leader: Professor Ulrich Teichler, International Centre for Higher Education Research (INCHER), University of Kassel, Germany

• Re-Structuring Higher Education and Scientific Innovation (RHESI)

Project Leader: Professor Uwe Schimank, Institute for Sociology, University of Bremen, Germany

• Transforming Universities in Europe (TRUE)

Project Leader: Professor Ivar Bleiklie, Department of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen, Norway

The EuroHESC programme 2009–2012

The EuroHESC programme was launched formally with a meeting of the Principal Investigators in Brussels on 27–28 October 2009 in which the Project Leaders presented their project designs and objectives and discussed opportunities for synergy and cross-fertilisation across the CRPs.

An additional layer of added value in EUROCORES programmes is provided by the networking and dissemination activities supported by the participating national funding organisations. Over the course of three years, members of the four CRP teams have initiated and engaged in joint activities such as training courses, workshops, short-term visits and dissemination events. Besides enriching the research being carried out within the CRPs, these joint activities have helped to create new links and networks, build capacity in the field, contribute to the training of doctoral and post-doctoral researchers, and enhance the dissemination of findings. The programme also offered an opportunity to strengthen links between the social sciences in Europe and the rest of the world, with one research team based in the US and one in Japan. Information on the networking, training and dissemination events undertaken by the programme members is given in Annex 1.



EuroHESC Review Panel meeting, June 2008, Strasbourg:

Back row: Diane Spresser (NSF), Sverker Lindblad, William Schmidt, Jan de Groof, Miriam David, Thierry Chevaillier, Anne-Marie de Jonghe, Teresa Patricio, Craig Bardsley (ESRC). Front row: Ansgar Weymann, Heinz-Hermann Krüger, Sarah Moore (ESF), Sarah Guri-Rosenblit

Facts and figures

The CRPs comprised 21 Individual Projects, with a further eight Associated Projects closely involved. Over the course of three years, almost 100 researchers worked on the projects, from Project Leaders to temporary research assistants. The four funded CRPs mobilised more than €4.4m of research funding from 13 national funding agencies, 12 in Europe and one in the US (see Annex 2), as well as €150,000 for joint networking and dissemination activities.

Programme evaluation

The programme was assessed at two points in its lifespan, at the mid-term stage in February 2011 and finally in its final stages in August 2012. On both occasions the programme was assessed by members of the international Review Panel which recommended the CRPs for funding in the competition in 2008.

Highlights of the Collaborative Research Projects



Change in Networks, Higher Education and Knowledge Societies (CINHEKS)

Funding organisations:

AKA, DFG, ESRC, FCT, NSF

Project duration:

June 2009 – June 2012

Project team:

Finland – Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä

Professor Jussi Välimaa (*Project Leader*)

Dr David Hoffman

Dr Terhi Nokkola

Germany – International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel (INCHER), University of Kassel

Professor Ulrich Teichler (*Principal Investigator*)

Dr Anna Kosmützky

Ms Amy Ewan

Japan – Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University (Associated Project)

Professor Jun Oba

Portugal – Centre for Innovation, Technology and Policy Research, Technical University of Lisbon

Dr Hugo Horta (*Principal Investigator*)

Dr Brigida Blasi

UK – Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, Open University

Professor John Brennan (*Principal Investigator*)

Professor Mala Singh

Ms Brenda Little

US – Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Arizona

Professor Gary Rhoades (*Principal Investigator*)

Professor Jenny Lee

Professor Regina Deil-Amen

Professor Cecilia Rios Aguilar

Dr Blanca Torres-Olave

Dr Aurelia Wiktorina Kollasch

About the project

The CINHEKS project analysed the way in which higher education institutions (HEIs) are networked within distinct knowledge societies in and across Europe and the US.

The central findings of the CINHEKS study have been shaped by a re-thinking and synthesis of two key strands of sociological thought: knowledge society discourses and network logic, as they have emerged around the globe as defining features of the era in which we now live. Our iterative interaction with a data-driven CINHEKS matrix design has grounded a novel theoretical assertion: specifically, that when the focus is on the relationship between higher education and society, contemporary societies can now be thought of as *Networked Knowledge Societies*. Networked knowledge societies differ in key ways from past characterisations of society. This can be seen empirically in the ways in which power and knowledge are undergoing a highly contingent, potentially transformative morphogenesis, tapping into information and communication technology (ICT)-based knowledge production: from the overthrow of governments to market-halting currency contagions to the ways in which the daily flows of mass media are now conceptualised, packaged, delivered and consumed.

Contextually speaking, historical and discourse

analysis of recent decades reveals patterns of overarching convergence and tensions which have shaped higher education systems over the past decades. Two twin pressures have grounded the final analysis of CINHEKS. Firstly, historically-rooted idiosyncratic tradition, linked to national and institutional traditions and the ways in which disciplines and specialties were pursued, within nations and influential HEIs. Secondly, an overarching trend of international agenda-setting, given voice and form by organisations like the OECD, WTO and UNESCO, which has found footing – albeit highly selective footing – within national governments, HEIs, basic units and individuals.

Empirically speaking, and simultaneous with historical and policy developments, distinct types of HEIs and the personnel who work in them have been at the heart of the transformation of networked knowledge societies, while other HEIs would be more accurately described as *potentially* closer or farther away from the circuits of power. This potential may or may not be mobilised within fluid network relationships, depending on tensions between continuity and discontinuity. At the same time, a transnational trend has emerged linked to the growth of global and regional-facing, interstitial organisational actors outside HEIs and the growth of a new body of professionals inside HEIs who are not instructors or researchers, nor involved in strategic leadership, but who have become powerful nodes in emerging HEI networks.

The key findings of CINHEKS take form in the conceptual and empirical illumination that explains the multiple levels of network relationships between key actors, which have the potential to *influence* the relationship between higher education and society, but no longer to *determine* that relationship to the extent once possible. These actors orient to complex tensions within HEIs, basic units and individuals and a complex distribution of resources, some of which are firmly embedded in relationships rooted in decades – even centuries – of cultural assumptions and social structures that embody these assumptions, *versus* networks which have become disembedded – purposefully or otherwise – from social structures linked to assumptions of the past.

Methodologically speaking, the challenge of CINHEKS has always been how to appraise and approach a social transformation, conceptually gain traction and empirically illuminate the novel – and not so novel – ways in which actors connected to HEIs are networked within distinct knowledge societies and the potential connected to these networks. What remains to be done is to lay the groundwork

“For us, one of the highlights of the EuroHESC programme was definitely organising the workshop on comparative higher education in Helsinki in January 2012. Although the practical organisation, administration and reporting were hard work, the positive feedback we received from the participants made it well worthwhile. And an accepted funding application, even for a seminar, is always a positive occasion in an early career researcher’s life!”



Terhi Nokkala, CINHEKS, Finland, and **Anna Kosmützky**, CINHEKS, Germany

for the further elaboration of our conceptual propositions concerning networked knowledge societies, in terms of empirical variation which was outside the original scope of our analysis, substance and geography.

Selected outputs

1. Välimaa, Jussi and Hoffman, David (Eds.). *Change in Networks, Higher Education and Knowledge Societies: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Analyses*. Forthcoming, Springer Press.
2. Kosmützky, Anna and Nokkala, Terhi (Eds.). *Challenges and Trends in Comparative Higher Education*. Forthcoming, *Higher Education (Special Issue accepted for publication)*.
3. Välimaa, Jussi. On Comparative Perspectives to Higher Education – Understanding social dynamics. Forthcoming, *Higher Education*.
4. Hoffman, David, Aguilar-Rios, Cecilia, Blasi, Brigida, Dragšić, Žarko, Ewen, Amy, Horta, Hugo and Nokkala, Terhi. Anatomy of a Blind Spot: A Self-Ethnography of International Research Team Dynamic and ICT-based Research Team ‘Collaboration’. Forthcoming, *Higher Education*.
5. Kollasch, Aurelia. 2012. Ties that Bind International Research Teams: A Network Multilevel Model of Interdisciplinary Collaboration. Doctoral dissertation. University of Arizona.

The Academic Profession in Europe: Responses to Societal Challenges (EUROAC)

Funding organisations:

CNCSIS, DFG, FWF, IRCHSS, NZZ, SNF

Project duration:

October 2009 – March 2012

Project team:

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Professor Hans Pechar (*Principal Investigator*)

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Dr Bojana Čulum

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Finland – Network for Higher Education and Innovation Studies, University of Helsinki (Associated Project)

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Dr Liisa Postareff

Mr Janne Wikström

Germany – International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel (INCHER), University of Kassel

Professor Ulrich Teichler (*Project Leader*)

Professor Barbara Kehm

Ms Ester Ava Höhle

Mr Marius Herzog

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Dr Gaële Goastellec (*Principal Investigator*)

Dr Benedetto Lepori

Dr Carole Probst-Schilter

Dr Tatiana Fumasoli

Mr Kevin Toffel

About the project

The CRP addressed in particular the topic of steering and governance of higher education. It tried to establish:

- How the academic profession in various European countries perceives, interprets and interacts in the socio-economic environment and in the organisational fabric of higher education systems and higher education institutions;
- How academics interpret and shape their professional roles under the given circumstances.

The project turned out to be an eye-opener for understanding European diversity and specific national approaches in higher education. While the public rhetoric on higher education could lead one to believe that the issues and solutions are common to all countries and situations, the opportunity for intensive international collaboration within Europe helped to produce more valid insights. The combination of multi-country perspectives and multi-country involvement as stimulated by the EUROCORES programme provides such an opportunity to overcome misleading conventional wisdom.

About two decades ago, higher education policies could have been described as a response to a triangle of factors: national idiosyncrasies, the search for the internationally most modern solutions, and specific policy options. In subsequent years, concepts of international convergence, isomorphism, global pressures, etc., spread. EUROAC is an example of a project showing that country-specific options in higher education policy continue to play an enormous role. In the light of the results, claims of global deterministic factors and isomorphism look like specific policy justifications rather than convincing concepts.

The most valuable contributions to knowledge from the CRP are the insights gained into the fab-



EUROAC team meeting, Lausanne, 2010:
Ulrich Teichler, Elke Park, Gäele Goastellec, David Campbell, Marius Herzog, Kevin Toffel, Ester Höhle, Jonathan Drennan, Carole Probst

ric of the academic profession in twelve European countries in the following dimensions:

- The teaching–research relationship in the countries in the specific environments;
- Employment conditions and career structures in a comparative perspective;
- Governance structures with respect to the higher education system;
- The self-perception of the academic role that is formed from a conjunction of influences and conditions.

A comprehensive and in-depth analysis will be available in our three envisaged volumes. Summarising, the EUROAC study shows that similar challenges are experienced across European countries (e.g. new modes of steering in tune with new public management philosophy, the requirement to be visibly useful, internationalisation), but that this does not lead to similar conditions, views and behaviour of the academic profession across Europe. Rather, substantial differences between countries persist – partly as a result of national and supra-national cultural traditions and partly as a consequence of recent trends and policies. For example, striking differences exist in actual working hours, senior and junior academic roles, numbers of publications, variety of teaching modes, international experience, and the influence of academics in HE management. The findings of EUROAC suggest that regulations and pressures to define academic roles have increased in recent decades, yet academics report considerable freedom to shape their activities according to their own

views and priorities. Assessments vary substantially from country to country regarding the influence of academics on institutional policies. Only in some countries do regulations and other pressures seem to have a de-motivating effect on the academic profession.

The close link between the predecessor Changing Academic Professions project and the EUROAC project on the one hand restricted the possibility to modify substantially the range of possible factors influencing the academics’ views and activities; on the other hand, it provided the opportunity to compare data on about twice as many countries as IPs involved in the EUROAC project. Thus, the multitude of settings in various European countries can be shown more convincingly. It is important in this framework to point out that EUROAC succeeded in overcoming the widespread informal borders of research collaboration: three countries from Central and Eastern Europe participated.

Higher education research is a field in the area of humanities and social science where international cooperation of scholars is essential. On one hand, one understands national idiosyncrasies only through international comparison. On the other, international comparative work is necessary in such an area of open worldwide communication in order to understand convergences and international “cross-fertilisation”, etc. The EUROCORES programme has turned out to be very valuable in ensuring that comparison does not just focus on a few “usual suspects”, but rather on a wide range of countries. Moreover, working with scholars from multiple countries means that one is constantly

“Participating in this project (EUROAC) has brought me many benefits... however, if I had to choose the most special one, it would certainly be the educational workshops for young researchers. Besides having an opportunity to hear amazing lectures and participate in carefully thought-out and interesting workshops, these events have created an opportunity for young researchers to collaborate and prepare joint publications, and last, but certainly not least, to make new friends. I believe that the impact these



workshops have had in building a platform for cooperation among a new generation of young researchers in higher education has yet to be revealed...”

Bojana Culum, EUROAC, Croatia

confronted with illuminating “surprises”. Many members of the EUROAC team experienced intensive collaborative research of this type for the first time.

Selected outputs

1. Kehm, Barbara and Teichler, Ulrich (eds.). *The Academic Profession in Europe: New Tasks and New Challenges*. Dordrecht: Springer 2012 (in press).
2. Teichler, Ulrich and Höhle, Ester Ava (eds.). *Work Situation, Views and Activities of the Academic Profession*. Dordrecht: Springer 2012 (in press).

Re-structuring Higher Education and Scientific Innovation (RHESI): The Consequences of Changes in Authority Relations for the Direction and Organisation of Research

Funding organisations:

DFG, NWO, SNF, VR

Project duration:

January 2010 – December 2012

Project Team:

Germany – Institute for Sociology, University of Hagen

Professor Uwe Schimank (*Project Leader*)

Dr Jochen Gläser

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Switzerland – Institut d'études politiques et internationales, University of Lausanne

Professor Dietmar Braun (*Principal Investigator*)

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Netherlands – Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente

Professor Jürgen Enders (*Principal Investigator*)

Dr Grit Laudel

Sweden – Department of Business Studies, University of Uppsala

Professor Lars Engwall (*Principal Investigator*)

Dr Tina Hedmo

Dr Linda Wedlin

Mr Elias Håkansson

UK – Manchester Business School, University of Manchester (Associated Project)

Professor Richard Whitley

Dr Maria Nedeva

About the project

The RHESI Project addressed the following topics in the Call for Proposals:

- How are the changes in the balance of power between higher education's different constituencies and interests impacting upon the nature of higher education's social functions and the manner in which these are discharged?
- How do changes in the organisation of higher education institutions relate to changes in intellectual programmes, agendas and advances and their outcomes for society?
- To what extent and in what ways do national,

regional and local contexts continue to play a decisive role in determining the characteristics of modern higher education systems? What is the role played by various public authorities? How much variation is there in the extent to which universities are internationally connected or integrated and with what consequences?

- How might new forms of comparative research, involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches, be employed in order to achieve a better understanding of the interactions between higher education and society and the different forms these interactions take in different parts of Europe and more widely?

Since the empirical investigations have started and data collection is still under way, only conceptual and methodological achievements can be reported. Conceptually, the relationships between authority relations as an analytical focus and the wider context of governance research have been clarified. Authority relations are considered as both shaped by and exercised through governance. The allocation of resources and reputation were identified as the main channels through which authority relations affect conditions for scientific innovation. The allocation can be characterised in four dimensions, namely selectivity, conditionality, amounts, and control (of use). These dimensions must be applied twice. They describe the individual allocation processes as well as the 'allocation situation' of a researcher, which results from the overlap of a number of allocation processes.

'Authority relations' as an analytical tool for comparing governance systems have been complemented by the concepts 'protected space' and 'flexibility of access to resources' as analytical tools for the comparison of opportunities for researchers to develop the innovations. Protected space refers to a researcher's autonomous control of the research capacity in the time horizon that is necessary to change research practices. Flexibility refers to the funding opportunities for building protected space. The two concepts have both a micro-level application, where they describe situations of individual researchers, and a macro-level application, where they describe the scope of protected space(s) that a national science system provides for its researchers and the flexibility of standards in career and funding decisions.

A third major conceptual and methodological step was the selection of innovations to study. We preliminarily defined scientific innovations as research results that alter research practices of many researchers in a field. The fields and innovations

listed in the project proposal had to be reconsidered in the context of the conceptual framework. For their emergence and diffusion to be susceptible to authority relations, scientific innovations need to require significant investments by researchers including resources, learning time (which delays publications), or reputation (if the innovation contradicts the majority opinion of the community). The screening of the four major discipline groups (natural sciences, life sciences, engineering, humanities, social sciences) led to a selection of four major innovations to be studied and two additional innovations which might be included if the opportunity arises.

The project methodology was further developed by deriving empirical research questions from the major variables. The empirical research questions outline the data that must be collected in order to answer the project's theoretical question. Interview guides for interviews with researchers and university managers were developed on the basis of these empirical research questions.

The collection of empirical data focused on the reconstruction of governance changes that led to the alteration of authority relations. Time periods to be analysed were individually defined for each country by identifying the starting point of major governance changes. The secondary analysis of the published literature demonstrated that the 'authority relations' perspective is indeed new to governance research. Publications on governance rarely include analyses of authority relations and therefore were of limited use for the task at hand. Data collection thus moved to the collection of data about funding programmes, career patterns, and the dynamics of the allocation of reputation.

First results demonstrate that the conceptual tools indeed enable the required comparisons. For example, in the case of one innovation large grants in Sweden proved to be the functional equivalent to investment by universities in Switzerland; and the complementary roles of universities and state-funded public research institutes in the development of two innovations in Germany could be established. The Netherlands appears to provide difficult conditions for developing innovations because there is little protected space for academics below the professorial level, and because access to grants is not only restricted but also tightly controlled by the national scientific elites. In Switzerland there are few tenure positions below the professorial level, but the funding agencies and some academic actors are key actors for additional and flexible resources in order to increase the possibility of developing

innovative research activities. All these findings are preliminary because the case studies are not yet completed, and comparisons have just begun.

From the CRP's current perspective, the EuroHESC programme has demonstrated the necessity of complex approaches to higher education research, i.e. approaches that integrate organisational sociology, the sociology of science, and the governance perspective. It has shown that such an integration of approaches leads to interesting theoretical questions and insights.

Selected outputs

1. Whitley, Richard, Gläser, Jochen and Engwall, Lars (eds) 2010, *Reconfiguring Knowledge Production: Changing authority relationships in the sciences and their consequences for intellectual innovation*. Oxford University Press.
2. Engwall, Lars, Hedmo, Tina and Ramuz, Raphaël. "Institutional and Disciplinary Conditions vs. Innovation: Corpus Linguistics in Sweden and Switzerland". Paper for the International Conference on Intellectual and Institutional Innovation in Science, Berlin, 13–15 September, 2012.
3. Benninghoff, Martin and Håkansson, Elias. National science policy, university structure, and new research domains: evolutionary developmental biology research activities in Switzerland and Sweden. Paper for the International Conference on Intellectual and Institutional Innovation in Science, Berlin, 13–15 September, 2012.
4. Gläser, Jochen and Laudel, Grit, 2012. "How does governance affect the likelihood that new fields are born?" International Conference "The Local Configuration of New Research Fields. On Regional and National Diversity", Lucerne, Switzerland, 14–16 June 2012.

Transformation of European Universities (TRUE)

Funding organisations:

DFG, ESRC, FCT, NWO, RCN, SNF

Project duration:

October 2009 – October 2012

Project team:

Norway – Department of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen

Professor Ivar Bleiklie (*Project Leader*)

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Netherlands – Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS), University of Twente

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Ms Elke Weyer

Norway – NIFUSTEP

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Professor Barbara Kehm (*Principal Investigator*)

Mr Žarko Dragšić

Mr Peter Kretek

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Dr Amélia Veiga

Professor Rui Santiago

Ms Sofia Sousa

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UK – ICHEM (International Centre for Higher Education Management), School of Management, University of Bath (Associated Project)

Professor Jeroen Huisman

Dr Paulo Botas

**France – Centre de Sociologie
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(Associated Project)**

Dr Christine Musselin

Italy – CERIS-CNR (Associated Project)

Dr Emanuela Reale

Dr Giulio Marini

About the project

The TRUE CRP addresses principally the topic of governance and steering from the EuroHESC call for proposals. The focal point is the university or the higher education institution (HEI), higher education systems, and the transformation of steering and governance arrangements that regulate them since the 1980s. These changing arrangements are seen in the context of: 1) national and European policies, governance structures and steering arrangements, 2) institutional governance and how it relates to academic work, academic disciplines and HE communities, and 3) development and differentiation of HE systems.

Highlights are based on early conceptual work (Bleiklie *et al.* 2009, 2011, 2012) and further developed in parallel with initial data analyses collected by TRUE relating to the main topics of TRUE on the following topics (Seeber *et al.* 2012).

Topic 1. Universities as organisations

A first idea regarding changes in universities as organisations is that universities have become more ‘complete’ organisations characterised by stronger hierarchy, formal rationality and clearer organisational identities. A preliminary finding is that there are cross-national as well as cross-institutional variations.

Three patterns were identified on the national level:

- a) British and Portuguese universities in general resemble the most ‘complete’ organisations in the above sense.
- b) Norwegian, Swiss and German universities have lower scores on the indicators but there is a clear difference between ‘generalist’ universities and specialised technical universities, as the latter score higher on some of the indicators.
- c) Italian universities in general have the lowest scores.

On the institutional level, three ideal types can be identified:

- a) The ‘classical’ universities, which are the less complete organisations. Generalist HEIs in

‘continental’ countries belong to this group. Italy, Norway, Germany and Switzerland are systems not particularly affected by managerialist reforms (Paradeise, 2009).

- b) The ‘managerial’ university is strongly hierarchical and, most of all, rationalised. Generalist HEIs in the UK belong to this group, but also universities in Portugal.
- c) The ‘specialist’ universities score high on indicators of identity and hierarchy, and lower on rationalisation. Specialised universities in Germany and Switzerland belong to this group. Other technical universities lack some (in Norway) or all (in Italy) of these features.

A second idea regarding changes in universities as organisations is the concept of ‘penetrated hierarchies’: we argue that although the power of academics within universities may have been reduced, academics enjoy considerable influence on international and national bodies that make decisions on research funding, quality assurance and academic careers. These bodies make decisions that have a deep impact on universities. Recruitment to these decision arenas tends to depend on national and international academic networks.

The influence of individual academics therefore increasingly tends to be based on network position rather than their formal position within individual institutions. We argue that academic power has been reconfigured rather than reduced. Furthermore, we argue that although academic institutions may have become more centralised, with hierarchical decision structures that look less like loosely coupled, organised anarchies than before, the hierarchies are increasingly penetrated by national and international networks of academics and stakeholders. The argument about ‘penetrated hierarchies’ and the ‘reconfiguration of academic power’ is being further developed and operationalised in a common paper by Bleiklie, Enders, Lepori and Musselin which is in the process of being completed.

Topic 2. Higher education landscapes

The point of departure for studying higher education landscapes is that the forces that shape them – the links between environmental change and organisational responses – are still poorly understood. The analysis has two main contributions. Firstly, by elaborating the environment–organisation relationship and analysing how environments “enter into” strategising in organisations, the micro-foundations of institutional theory can be strengthened. Secondly, by reinterpreting the estab-

“Ideas are not agents that do things. People are. Higher education research clearly demonstrates the value of engaged people and the need to engage people. In line with this, I would like to highlight that the EuroHESC programme brought together many researchers with different educational and research trajectories and that was the highest value offered by this opportunity, which I have to link to the notable effort made by ESF to support all the training and networking activities that happened during these three years. Those workshops were definitely the most relevant aspect of the project as they enabled the training, the networking and the interpersonal experiences needed to refresh and innovate on higher education research. Both in terms of personal and professional development, being a member of TRUE allowed me to sustain a more clear vision on what working and networking globally is, isn't and can still be. Through the programme I got to know people, learn new tools and increase my understanding of how I can play an active role to increase the link between real knowledge and HE research.”



Filipa Ribeiro, TRUE, Portugal

lished knowledge on transformations of European higher education in light of institutional theory, an integrated framework for studying and analysing higher education systems and organisational change can be developed.

Topic 3. Structural conditions for higher education policies

Systematic comparison of structural conditions offered by national political systems for higher education policy-making has not been undertaken before. In a paper by Bleiklie and Michelsen (2012) such an analysis is undertaken, outlining five dimensions for classifying politico-administrative systems: state structure, nature executive government, actor constellations, administrative traditions and diversity of policy advice. The approach was tested empirically based on available data on the level of reform activity in seven TRUE countries. The results demonstrate that there is no straightforward unequivocal relationship between politico-adminis-

trative structures and reform activity. Nevertheless, the approach helps clarify how structural conditions may have deep implications for policy outcomes in a much more flexible and ambiguous way than one might have expected if the goal had been to identify one-to-one relationships between structure and outcome. Thus the next step is to link agency and reform.

The results indicate that structural characteristics offer different conditions for reform processes that may limit or be exploited by actors who may want to promote, slow down or simply prevent reforms from being introduced. Thus there are different paths to high reform scores, one based on the ability of actors to implement swift and sweeping reform (England, Netherlands) and another on the ability to keep up a relatively steady incremental process over a broad range of issues (France, Norway). Similarly there seem to be two main roads to low reform scores, one characterised by federal structures and many veto points (Germany, Switzerland), the second on decentralised structures with a reform focus on legal and procedural issues and a relatively strong separation between formal procedure and informal practice.

Selected outputs

1. Bleiklie, Ivar, Enders, Jürgen, Lepori, Benedetto & Musselin, Christine, 2011. “New Public Management, Network Governance and the university as a changing professional organisation” in T. Christensen & P. Læg Reid (eds.) *Ashgate Research Companion to New Public Management*, Aldershot: Ashgate: pp. 161–176.
2. Frølich, Noline, Huisman, Jeroen, Slipersæter, Stig, Stensaker, Bjørn and Botas, Paolo (forthcoming). A reinterpretation of institutional transformations in European higher education. *Higher Education* (Special issue on Transforming Universities in Europe).
3. Bleiklie, Ivar, Enders, Jürgen, Lepori, Benedetto and Musselin, Christine, 2012. External penetration and organisational control in public-sector organizations. A case study on European universities. To be submitted.
4. Seeber, Marco, Lepori, Benedetto, Bleiklie, Ivar, Enders, Jürgen *et al.* European universities as complete organizations. Commonalities and differences. To be submitted.
5. Bleiklie, Ivar, Enders, Jürgen, Lepori, Benedetto (guest editors). *Higher Education* (Special issue on Transforming Universities in Europe).

Afterword: Looking ahead



The academic profession has sometimes been called ‘tribal’. ESF’s EuroHESC programme and the Forward Look which preceded it have shown the higher education research tribe to good effect. As more and more members of society engage with higher education at some stage in their lives and as more and more other institutions of society use or are affected by the activities of higher education institutions, the need for serious study of the workings of higher education systems and institutions increases proportionately. This need has been addressed by the ESF programmes. In particular, they have given opportunities to broaden the focus of research beyond the sometimes narrow local policy-based concerns which can shape research in purely national contexts. Comparative research methods can be a rich tool with which to both investigate existing research themes and to develop new ones. And while the higher education research ‘tribe’ is still only quite modest in size, international comparative projects provide valuable opportunities for researchers to interact with each other, to develop new perspectives, to test out new theories and methods, and to apply them in a range of different contexts.

The ESF work has also allowed the higher education research ‘tribe’ to grow and to integrate many new members from across Europe and beyond. The challenge now is to provide the opportunities for further research, especially comparative studies, which can build on the achievements of the ESF projects. Without new projects and research opportunities, researchers have to seek their futures with other academic tribes. This of course is to be welcomed because knowledge benefits from crossing boundaries, with cross-sector studies complementing cross-national studies as potentially important

sources of innovation and new perspectives. Indeed, higher education has only rarely been studied comparatively alongside other social institutions. We await the comparative studies of universities, hospitals and prisons, for example.

One of the original aims of the EuroHESC programme was to ‘open up’ the field of higher education research to broader groups of social scientists, researchers who had developed their work in other fields and who might be expected to bring new perspectives which would enrich the higher education research field. This has happened only to a limited extent. And perhaps something to aim for in the next phases of research into higher education is for the field to become a little less tribal. If, as those of us who have been engaged in researching higher education over many years would maintain, universities and similar institutions are increasingly important, impacting on societies in so many ways, so their study and investigation should become a central concern to social scientists more widely. This itself will pose new challenges. There is a corpus of knowledge which has been developed by the higher education researcher tribe through the ESF projects and by other means which needs to be widely shared so that it can be built on by new generations of researchers.

John Brennan

EuroHESC Scientific Committee

August 2012

Annex 1. Networking and Dissemination Activities

Launch conference

27–28 October 2009, Brussels

Organiser: ESF

The EuroHESC launch conference brought together Project Leaders and Principal Investigators from all four funded Collaborative Research Projects to present their project designs and objectives and to discuss opportunities to develop synergy through joint networking and dissemination activities.

Workshop: Case studies

16–17 June 2010, Kassel

Organisers: Professor Barbara Kehm (U. Kassel) and Professor Jürgen Enders (U. Twente)

Forty-two participants from all over Europe and from the US assembled for this first networking event at the University of Kassel to deepen the collaborative activity and coordinate future work involving case studies of higher education institutions.



The first EuroHESC workshop, Kassel, 2010: Barbara Kehm, John Brennan, Jussi Välimaa



The first EuroHESC workshop, Kassel, 2010

The central aims of the workshop were (1) to help avoid duplication in the selection of case studies or subjects in the four CRPs, (2) to bring consistency and coherence to the methodologies employed, (3) to foster joint case studies and data sharing to the extent that was fruitful and possible (4) to benefit the junior project members in terms of research design and methodology, (5) to help integrate the junior project members properly into the greater EuroHESC programme. Junior researchers used this network event to share project work experiences, get to know each other's research focus more and benefit from intensive discussions with senior project members. After the workshop, EuroHESC PhD candidates and junior researchers took the opportunity to share and exchange ideas on their experiences and research themes, methodologies and approaches of their dissertations.

EuroHESC Special Session at the Consortium for Higher Education Research (CHER) Annual Conference

10 June 2010, Oslo

Organiser: Dr David Hoffman (U. Jyväskylä)

The aims of this special session at the CHER conference were to (1) introduce the four funded CRPs of the EuroHESC programme, (2) give an in-depth presentation of the work of the CINHEKS CRP, (3) disseminate detailed written information on the four CRPs and ESF, and (4) exploit the opportunity to deepen cross-CRP collaboration and dissemination.

A general overview of the origins and evolution of EuroHESC was first provided by the session chair, Mala Singh. Following this, Jürgen Enders (RHESI), Ulrich Teichler (EUROAC), Barbara Kehm (TRUE) and David Hoffman (CINHEKS) presented their CRPs. In the second part, Jussi Välimaa chaired a panel on “Institutional Profiles in a Mixed-Methods International Comparative Study”, the first step in the CINHEKS project.

A cross-CRP team of early-stage researchers from CINHEKS, EUROAC and TRUE produced and distributed several hundred project flyers during the CHER conference.

Annex 1. **Networking and Dissemination Activities**

Workshop/training course:

Interviewing Informants

5–6 July 2010, Enschede

Organisers: Dr Jochen Gläser (Technical University Berlin) and Dr Grit Laudel (U. Twente)

The workshop on “Interviewing Informants” was offered by Jochen Gläser and Grit Laudel because all four EuroHESC CRPs were using qualitative interviews to obtain data, in many cases with researchers from the sciences, social sciences and humanities. This group of informants poses additional problems because interviewing requires an understanding of the life-worlds of the informants. The main aim of the workshop was thus to enable the participants to prepare and conduct interviews with informants in general and specifically with researchers.

The workshop succeeded in providing a common background understanding of semi-structured interviews with informants for EuroHESC researchers with diverse academic backgrounds. The workshop also succeeded in alerting participants to many methodological and practical problems that may occur when this kind of interview is conducted.

Workshop: Data Analysis

21–22 February 2011, Lugano

Organisers: Dr Jochen Gläser (Technical University Berlin) and Dr Grit Laudel (U. Twente)

An informal workshop on data analysis organised for the RHESI researchers was opened up to the participation of several members of the other CRPs. The main purpose of the workshop was to enable the participants to analyse their data and to use them in the construction of theoretical explanations.

Workshop: Applications of Organisation Theory in Higher Education Research

23–25 February 2011, Lugano

Organiser: Dr Benedetto Lepori (U. Lugano)

The main objectives of this workshop were (1) to provide early stage researchers with a selective introduction to some of the theoretical strands of organisation theory (OT) in its relevance to higher education research, (2) to engage in a debate on

the organisation nature and on the specificities of universities by discussing how recent advances in OT may provide new insights on this topic and may suggest new approaches or empirical analysis. Each session included a discussion of applications to the field of higher education research, and presentations by early stage researchers. In all, 25 students from all four CRPs attended the course, as well as several senior researchers from the CRPs, guest speakers and members of the Review Panel in Lugano for the mid-term evaluation of the programme.

Short-term visit, Sofia Sousa

24 March – 2 April 2010, London

Sofia Sousa (member of TRUE and associate member of CINHEKS) visited John Brennan at the Open University’s Centre for Higher Education Research and Information in London. The work accomplished during the 10-day visit concerned both substantive research questions and methodological issues linking the two projects. It was guided by the question of whether different forms of university governance/organisation (the TRUE focus) affect the role which a university plays within the ‘knowledge society’ (or vice-versa) (the CINHEKS focus). The theme of ‘networks’ was a particular focus of discussion during the visit as it was a major link between the two projects. Methodological issues discussed concerned both the operationalisation of the ‘networks’ concept and the exploration of approaches to institutional case studies. A short paper based on the work undertaken during the study visit was prepared, primarily for circulation within the EUROHESC Scientific Committee regarding future work and cross-CRP activities.

Workshop and training course:

Understanding Transformation in Relationships between Societies and Higher Education: A Network Approach

20–22 June 2011, Reykjavik

Organisers: Dr David Hoffman (U. Jyväskylä), Professor Cecilia Rios-Aguilar (U. Arizona), Dr Anna Kosmützky (U. Kassel)

This workshop aimed to show how theoretical, methodological and empirical considerations of networks provide a powerful supplementary or

Annex 1. Networking and Dissemination Activities



Evening in Reykjavik: Brigida Blasi, Blanca Torres, Giulio Marini, Aurelia Kollasch, Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, Jenny Lee, Filipa Ribeiro, Jussi Välimaa, Peter Kretek, Žarko Dragšić



EuroHESC posters at ChER 2012

alternative approach to several overarching topics under consideration in EuroHESC CRPs: specifically, the transformation of HEIs and the societies in which they are embedded and the implications this has for governance and the production, transmission and transfer of knowledge. The workshop provided a critical overview of key approaches to the study of networks and an opportunity to contrast network-based approaches with other theoretical/methodological approaches, while considering their application to the EuroHESC CRPs and the empirical work still to be done. Sixteen members of the EuroHESC programme and one invited speaker, Professor Roger King, participated in the workshop.

Anna Kosmützky also exploited the conjunction of this event and the ChER 2011 conference to help launch a new network for early career researchers in higher education. The extra-curricular meeting co-organised by Anna attracted 25 early career researchers from both inside and outside EuroHESC and resulted in the formation of the Early Career Higher Education Researchers' Network (EChER).

Special sessions at the Consortium for Higher Education Research (ChER) Annual Conference

23–25 June 2012, Reykjavik

Organisers: Dr David Hoffman (U. Jyväskylä), Dr Anna Kosmützky (U. Kassel)

David Hoffman and Anna Kosmützky coordinated a special EuroHESC session within the ChER conference programme, which featured presentations from EUROAC, TRUE and an inter-CRP study, and the display of three posters from the CINHEKS,

EUROAC and TRUE projects in the cafeteria used by ChER participants.

Panel: Sub-theme 45: Reconstructing Universities as Organisations: Increasing Authority with Limited Strategic Capabilities, 27th EGOS Colloquium, Reassembling Organisations

7–9 July 2011, Gothenburg

Organiser: Dr Jochen Gläser (Technical University Berlin)

A sub-theme of the EGOS 2011 Colloquium, 'Reconstructing Universities as Organisations: Increasing Authority with Limited Strategic Capabilities' was organised by researchers participating in the EuroHESC programme. The aim of this sub-theme was to provide a forum for the integration of perspectives on the operation of universities from organisational sociology, the sociology of science and higher education research. Twenty-six EuroHESC programme members, including several early career researchers, were authors or co-authors of 14 of the 22 papers presented during the three-day panel. The concluding discussion identified three common themes of the contributions. First, universities are unable to hierarchically steer the content of their core technologies, i.e. teaching and research. Second, universities can nevertheless influence their core technologies by 'portfolio management', i.e. by differentially allocating resources to the research areas and courses they 'host'. Third, even this portfolio management is precarious because it depends on the mobilisation of knowledge about the relative merits of the different areas. How this knowledge is generated and utilised has not yet been systematically investigated.

Annex 1. Networking and Dissemination Activities

Workshop: Challenges in Comparative Higher Education Research – Comparing Higher Education Systems, Organisations and Individual Academic Behaviour

26–27 January 2012, Helsinki

Organisers: Dr Terhi Nokkola (U. Jyväskylä),
Dr Anna Kosmützky (U. Kassel)

This workshop focused on the state of the art in international comparative studies in higher education research and on emerging topics and challenges on three different levels of analysis: comparisons of national higher education systems (system level), higher education institutions (institutional/organisational level), and behaviour, attitudes and working conditions of individual academics, students or graduates (individual level). The 25 participants and speakers represented three EuroHESC projects, CINHEKS, TRUE and EUROAC and two external commentators who offered a view of comparative research in other fields (Dr Juha Tuunainen and Dr Romy Wöhlert). The aim of the workshop was to discuss and reflect on the theoretical and conceptual potentials, pitfalls and opportunities (hypotheses about causalities, combination of quantitative and qualitative research or data comparability, etc.), as



Breakout group in Helsinki, Workshop on Comparative Research, 2012



What can we learn from comparative research? Panel discussion, Helsinki, 2012: Amy Ewan, Sarah Moore, David Hoffman, Gäele Goastellec, Ivar Bleiklie



Getting some fresh air in Helsinki, 2012: Anna Kosmützky and Hugo Horta

well as on problems of a practical nature (e.g. project organisation, relationships between national teams, language limitations, etc.) within higher education research.

The presentations given at the seminar will be developed into full articles and featured in a special issue of the *Journal of Higher Education* (forthcoming, 2013) focusing on comparative research in higher education and guest edited by the organisers of the event.

Workshop: Network Theory II

25–28 June 2012, Kassel

Organisers: Professor Georg Krücken
and Žarko Dragšić (U. Kassel)

Workshop co-funded by INCHER, KIGG (Kassel's International Graduate Center for Social Sciences) and ESF/EuroHESC.

In this workshop we build on the discussion as well as the practical exercises of the successfully completed workshop on Networks and Social Network Analysis funded by the ESF/EUROHESC that took place in Reykjavik in June 2011.

It is also envisaged that researchers from EuroHESC-CRPs who are new to the network perspective and social network analysis can participate in the workshop because of a built-in beginners' workshop on Monday, 25 June. Here, the new participants will be introduced to the current theoretical discussions and debates surrounding networks, as well as experience hands-on exercises with the social network analysis software UCINET designed to operationalise the relational insights of the network approach. The advanced seminar will highlight contemporary conceptual and theoretical approaches of networks in higher education

Annex 1. Networking and Dissemination Activities



Network Theory Workshop II, INCHER-Kassel, 2012: Yurgos Politis, Terhi Nokkola, Giulio Marini, INCHER-student, Hugo Horta, INCHER-student, Žarko Dragšić, Ilmaz Bamdadi, Manuel González Canche, Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, Bojana Culum

(Tuesday, June 26) and offer further practical training (Wednesday, June 27) with advanced exercises, which will support the participants' efforts to conceptualise and conduct their own network studies. In the last (closed) part of the workshop (Thursday, June 28), the group of early career researchers from EUROAC, CINHEKS and TRUE currently working on a study on collaboration in international comparative research projects will work with data on ICT based collaboration collected within the EUROHESC framework and discuss potential publication strategies.

EuroHESC Final Conference

29–31 August, Berlin

Organisers: Professor Ivar Bleiklie (U. Bergen), Professor John Brennan (Professor Emeritus Open University UK), Dr Gaelle Goastellec (U. Lausanne), Dr David Hoffmann (U. Jyväskylä) and ESF

The four Collaborative Research Projects of the EUROCORES programme on Higher Education and Social Change (EuroHESC) brought together 29 research teams in 17 countries for three years (2009–2012) to undertake a programme of interdisciplinary comparative research into the relationships between higher education and society.

At the closing conference of the programme on 29–31 August 2012 in Berlin the four CRPs will present and debate their approaches and findings with each other and with invited experts. The CRPs will draw on the results of their comparative empiri-

cal research to engage in debate around four key cross-cutting topics and to address the likely consequences of present changes *in* higher education and society *for* higher education and society:

- Organisational forms and reforms in European higher education systems – causes and consequences for higher education and society.
- Changing conditions and contexts of academic knowledge production: subservience to market rationalities or support for heterarchical networks?
- The changing status and role of the academic profession: from cultural elite to alienated labour?
- Authority lost and gained: the changing coordination and control of academic work.

The programme's findings and discussions on changes in higher education and society will be related to policy perspectives on the higher education, science and innovation nexus, while a panel of invited speakers will draw together the various strands of the conference with a round-table discussion of the future of higher education and higher education research.

Annex 2. Administration and governance

National Funding Organisations supporting the EuroHESC Programme

Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF)

Austrian Science Fund, Austria

Nacionalna zaklada za znanost, visoko školstvo i tehnološki razvoj Republike Hrvatske (NZZ)

The National Foundation of Science, Higher Education and Technological Development of the Republic of Croatia, Croatia

Suomen Akatemia (AKA)

Academy of Finland, Finland

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)

German Research Foundation, Germany

An Comhairle um Thaighde sna Dána agus sna hEolaíochtaí Sóisialta (IRCHSS)

Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences, Ireland

Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)

Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, Netherlands

Norges Forskningsråd (RCN)

Research Council of Norway, Norway

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT)

Foundation for Science and Technology, Portugal

Consiliul National al Cercetării Stiintifice din Invatamantul Superior (CNCSIS)

National University Research Council, Romania

Vetenskapsrådet (VR)

Swedish Research Council, Sweden

Schweizerischer Nationalfonds (SNF)

Swiss National Science Foundation, Switzerland

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

United Kingdom

National Science Foundation (NSF)

United States

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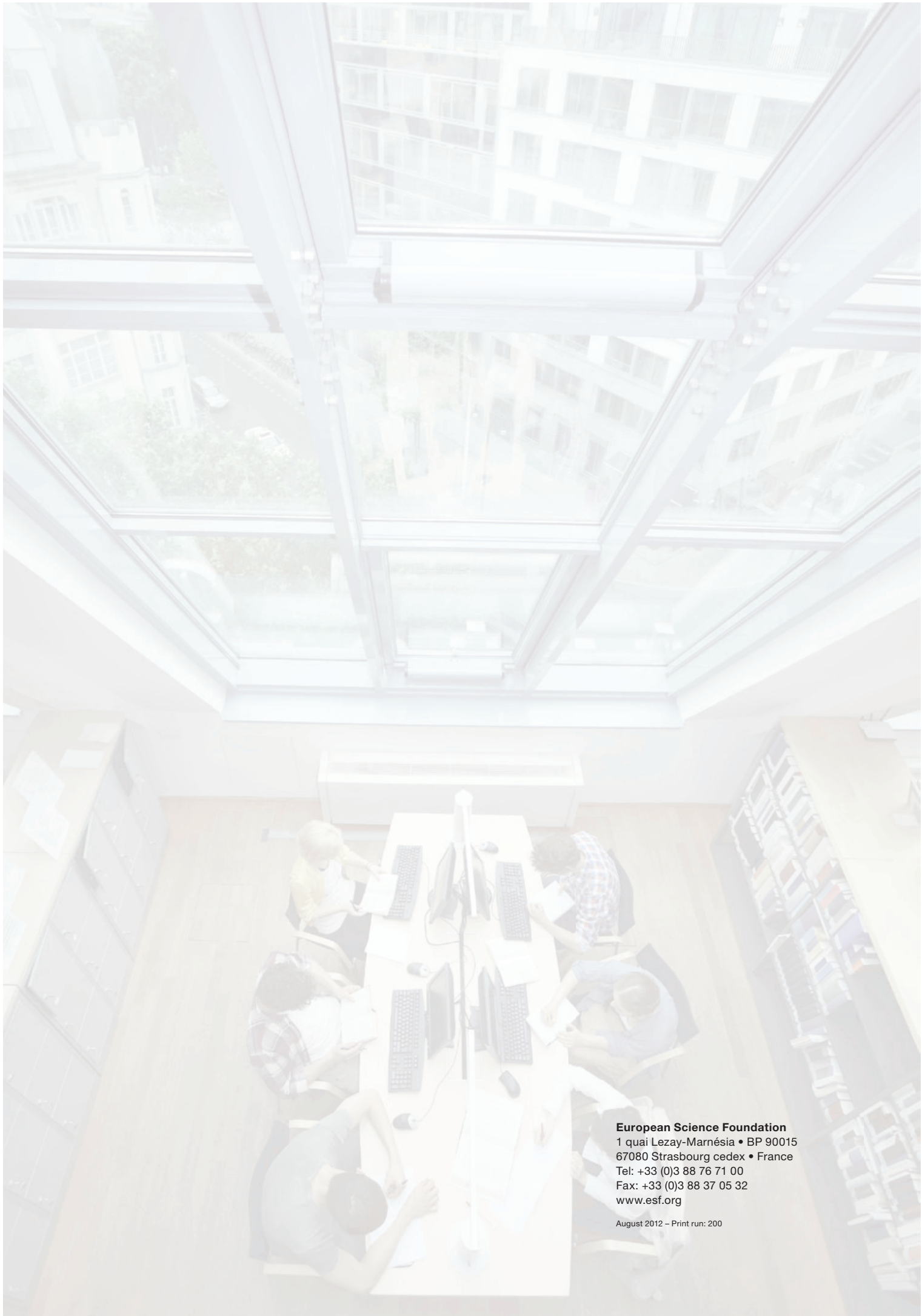
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