Universities as Partners and Contributors to the Agenda 2030
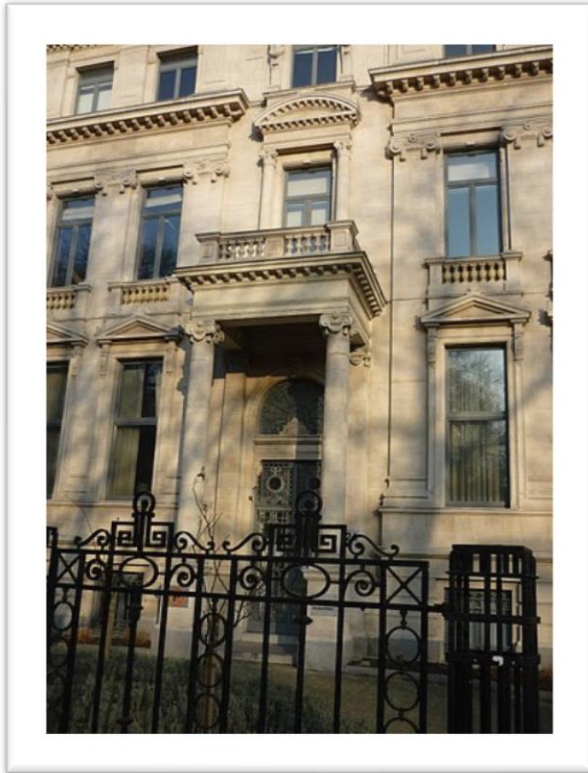
Thérèse Zhang
Deputy Director for Higher Education Policy
EUA

@euatweets

ASEM SOM2 – Bucharest, 14 May 2019

EUA

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

In the ASEM Education Process:

- Stakeholder present since 2008
- Partner in ASEF Rectors' Conference (ARC), development of ARC Policy recommendations
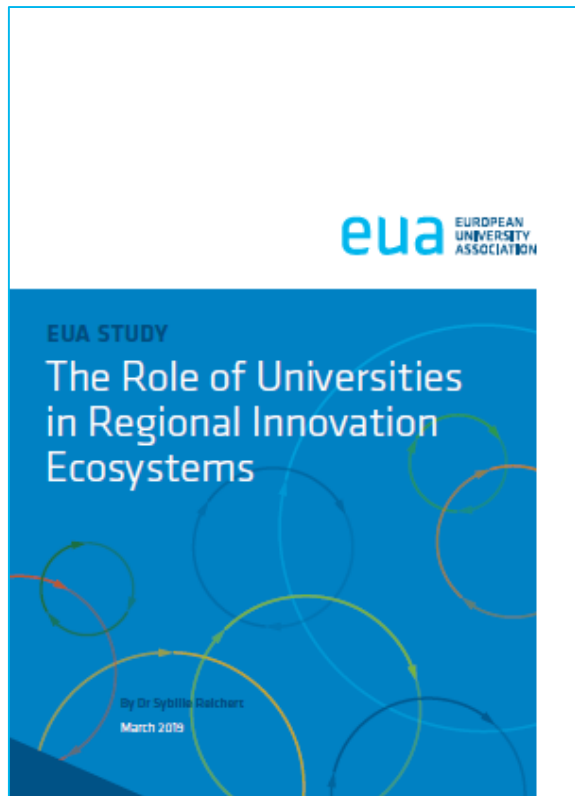
EUA and sustainable development

SDGs is a fast growing concern for the university sector

- First UN agenda to include higher education (MDG did not)
- Growing number of members base their strategies on the SDGs
- Universities have a role to play in all SDGs

EUA promotes the <u>role of universities for the SDGs in general</u>

- Education, research, and innovation facilitate achieving the goals
- SDG 4 (access to education) and SDG 9 (investment in research and innovation) also facilitate the achievement of sustainable development in general
- Policy development: EUA takes part to the EU SDG Stakeholder Platform
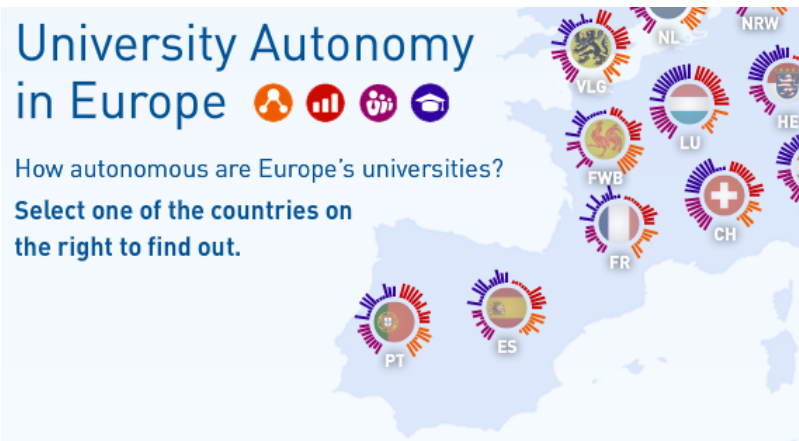
Universities as civil society partners

Universities play various roles in pluralistic societies, e.g.:

- Gathering and providing robust evidence about the state of the planet and sustainability

- Training next generation of citizens and professionals, with a responsibility to include sustainability in this training

- Ability to work accross disciplines, with different types of partners on solution for complex problems
    - ✓ Technological research – new technical solutions
    - ✓ Social science and humanities – new societal solutions

- As key actors for international partnerships

Innovation ecosystems

EUA STUDY
The Role of Universities in Regional Innovation Ecosystems

By Dr Sybille Reichert
March 2019

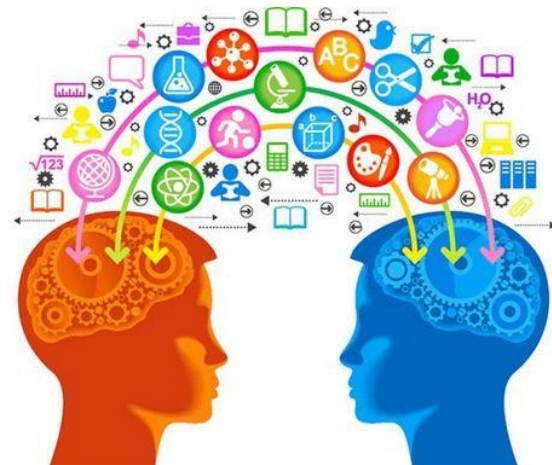# Strong institutions for strong partnerships

There is a clear link between Goal 16 and 17

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

Going beyond strong state institutions

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

Universities as partner in innovation ecosystems

Universities play a vital role in innovation beyond technical solutions

Shape and reproduce values (such as sustainability)

Facilitates co-creation

- Empowering citizens – citizen science

- Facilitating up-take of social and technical solutions by companies and authorities
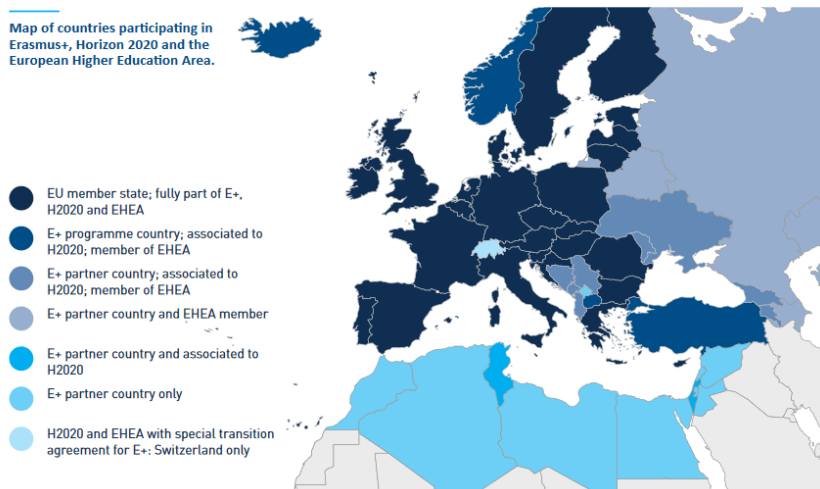
Universities as global partners

Science is traditionally international
- More so in an age of big science and high complexity

Universities can play a role as channels of contact
- People to people contact (student mobility)
- Science diplomacy
- Institutional cooperation – also with a capacity-building aspect
- <u>Common action for achieving the SDGs globally</u>
  - ✓ Common action for quality education (Goal 4)
  - ✓ Strengthening institutions together (Goal 16)
  - ✓ <u>Developing knowledge-based solutions</u>

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

- EU member state; fully part of E+, H2020 and EHEA
- E+ programme country; associated to H2020; member of EHEA
- E+ partner country; associated to H2020; member of EHEA
- E+ partner country and EHEA member
- E+ partner country and associated to H2020
- E+ partner country only
- H2020 and EHEA with special transition agreement for E+: Switzerland only

Summary

Knowledge needs to be acknowledged as a key facilitator for sustainability

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

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

... which is probably why universities are becoming increasingly engaged in sustainable development and in global partnerships for the goals

Would the ASEM Education Process also become a place for such global partnerships?