

# UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY IN EUROPE

A research study by EUA

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## Why university autonomy?

- Correlations exist between autonomy and
    - performance;
    - quality;
    - degrees of income diversification;
    - more successful internationalisation;
    - efficiency and effectiveness
  - Institutional autonomy
    - allows universities to decide on strategic priorities according to their strengths;
    - does not automatically lead to better performance, but it is an important prerequisite.
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# Challenges

- **Institutional autonomy**
    - **is a complex concept that consists of various interconnected elements**
    - **is contingent on the diverse cultural, political, legal and historical backgrounds of Europe's HE systems**
    - **cannot be measured objectively**
    - **There are diverse systems, even within countries**
    - **There is not just one model – context is important!**
  
  - **The Autonomy Scorecard project**
    - **had to take into account constantly changing legislative frameworks and at times contradictory policy developments**
    - **had to simplify complex situations**
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## Organisational

- Selection procedure/ criteria for rector
- Dismissal/ term of office of rector
- Inclusion/ selection of external members in governing bodies
- Deciding on academic structures
- Creating legal entities

## Financial

- Length/ type of public funding
- Keeping a surplus
- Borrowing money
- Owning buildings
- Charging tuition fees for national/ EU students
- Charging tuition fees for non-EU students

## Staffing

- Staff recruitment procedures
- Staff salaries
- Staff dismissals
- Staff promotions

## Academic

- Deciding on overall student numbers
- Selecting students
- Introducing/ terminating programmes
- Choosing language of instruction
- Selecting QA mechanisms/ providers
- Designing content of programmes

## Organisational autonomy - trends

- ✓ **External members** are now included in university governing bodies in a majority of systems, though external authorities often remain involved in their selection.
  - ✓ Universities in nearly all systems are free to create **legal entities** and decide on **academic structures**.
  - ✓ **Rectors** are always chosen by the universities, although external authorities often have to confirm the appointment.
  - More flexibility regarding modalities concerning the rector
  - More independence in choosing external members of governing bodies
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# Methodology of the Autonomy Scorecard

## ■ The **scoring** system

- is based on deductions → restrictions on institutional autonomy are assigned a deduction value based on how restrictive a particular regulation is seen to be;
  - produces percentage scores for each indicator;
  - calculates the score for one autonomy dimension as an average of the scores for all indicators making up that dimension.
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# Organisational autonomy - the scorecard

1	United Kingdom	100%
2	Denmark	94%
3	Finland	93%
4	Estonia	87%
5	North Rhine-Westphalia	84%
6	Ireland	81%
7	Portugal	80%
8	Austria	78%
	Hesse	78%
	Norway	78%
11	Lithuania	75%
12	The Netherlands	69%
13	Poland	67%
14	Latvia	61%

15	Brandenburg	60%
16	France	59%
	Hungary	59%
18	Italy	56%
19	Spain	55%
	Sweden	55%
	Switzerland	55%
22	Czech Republic	54%
23	Cyprus	50%
24	Iceland	49%
25	Slovakia	45%
26	Greece	43%
27	Turkey	33%
28	Luxembourg	31%

## Financial autonomy - trends

- ✓ Universities generally receive their public funding as a **block grant**, although its allocation may be restricted.
  - ✓ **Surpluses can be kept** and **money borrowed** in a majority of systems, but in practice, various limitations still apply.
  - ✓ Universities in most systems are able to **own their buildings**, but often require external permission to sell them.
  - ✓ The situation is complex, but universities tend to be more free to set **tuition fees** for MA and non-EU students.
  
  - Longer funding periods
  - Limit effects of financial crisis and decline in public funding
  - Balance autonomy and accountability (e.g. reporting requirements)
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## Financial autonomy - the scorecard

1	Luxembourg	91%
2	Estonia	90%
3	United Kingdom	89%
4	Latvia	80%
5	The Netherlands	77%
6	Hungary	71%
7	Italy	70%
	Portugal	70%
	Slovakia	70%
10	Denmark	69%
11	Ireland	66%
12	Switzerland	65%

13	Austria	59%
14	North Rhine-Westphalia	58%
15	Finland	56%
	Sweden	56%
17	Spain	55%
18	Poland	54%
19	Lithuania	51%
20	Norway	48%
21	Czech Republic	46%
22	France	45%
	Turkey	45%
24	Brandenburg	44%
25	Iceland	43%
26	Greece	36%
27	Hesse	35%
28	Cyprus	23%

# Academic staff recruitment

	Recruitment confirmed by an external authority for some or all	Number of posts regulated by external authority for some or all	Other restrictions
BB (DE)			•
CZ	•		
ES			•
FR		•	•
GR	•	•	
HU	•		
IE			•
PT			•
SK	•		
TR		•	

## Staffing autonomy - trends

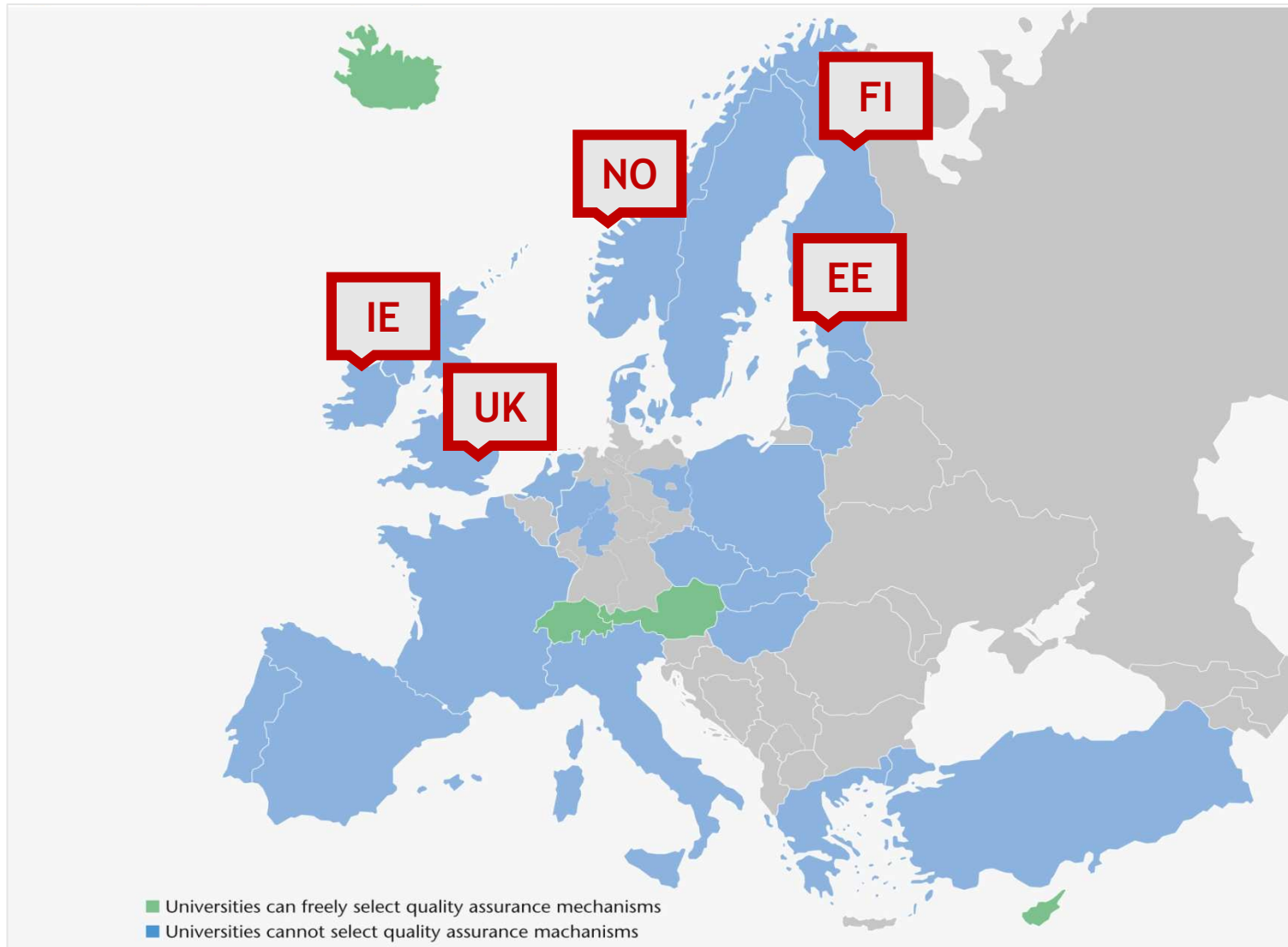
- ✓ **Recruitment procedures** are less prescribed than before.
  - ✓ In most systems, restrictions still apply to **staff salaries**, although these are less likely to be due to the civil servant status of university staff.
  - ✓ **Staff dismissals** and **promotions** remain restricted in more than half of the systems studied.
  - ✓ The **financial crisis** has strongly affected staffing policies.
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- Continue to fade out civil servant status
  - Reduce limitations on staff salaries
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## Staffing autonomy - the scorecard

1	Estonia	100%
2	United Kingdom	96%
3	Czech Republic	95%
	Sweden	95%
	Switzerland	95%
6	Finland	92%
	Latvia	92%
8	Luxembourg	87%
9	Denmark	86%
10	Lithuania	83%
11	Ireland	82%
12	Poland	80%
13	Austria	73%
	The Netherlands	73%
15	Iceland	68%
16	Norway	67%
17	Hungary	66%
18	Portugal	62%
19	Hesse	61%
	North Rhine-Westphalia	61%

21	Turkey	60%
22	Brandenburg	55%
23	Slovakia	54%
24	Italy	49%
25	Cyprus	48%
	Spain	48%
27	France	43%
28	Greece	14%

# Quality assurance mechanisms



## Academic autonomy - trends

- ✓ **Overall student numbers** are limited in nearly all systems.
  - ✓ Universities in Europe still have little freedom in choosing **QA mechanisms**.
  - ✓ **Accreditation** is still compulsory for BA/MA programmes in a majority of systems.
  - ✓ The **language of instruction** can be chosen freely in approx. 2/3 of all systems.
  
  - Greater freedom in setting admission criteria
  - Balance autonomy and accountability, e.g. promote institutional audits instead of programme accreditation
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## Academic autonomy - the scorecard

1	Ireland	100%
2	Norway	97%
3	United Kingdom	94%
4	Estonia	92%
5	Finland	90%
6	Iceland	89%
7	Cyprus	77%
8	Luxembourg	74%
9	Austria	72%
	Switzerland	72%
11	Hesse	69%
	North Rhine-Westphalia	69%
13	Brandenburg	67%
14	Sweden	66%
15	Poland	63%

16	Italy	57%
	Spain	57%
18	Denmark	56%
	Slovakia	56%
20	Latvia	55%
21	Portugal	54%
22	Czech Republic	52%
23	The Netherlands	48%
24	Hungary	47%
25	Turkey	46%
26	Lithuania	42%
27	Greece	40%
28	France	37%



## Other activities

- Launch of an **online autonomy tool** to present the results in an interactive way → visit **[www.university-autonomy.eu](http://www.university-autonomy.eu)**
- **National dissemination events** in cooperation with the national rectors' conferences
- Provision of **expertise and consulting services** on autonomy and governance reforms, particularly in countries where higher education reforms are ongoing

Benchmarking of different national frameworks

Analyses of individual country “performances”

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# University Autonomy in Europe



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



## Sweden

- 19th in Organisational
- 15th in Financial
- 3rd in Staffing
- 14th in Academic



## United Kingdom

- 1st in Organisational
- 3rd in Financial
- 2nd in Staffing
- 3rd in Academic



## Portugal

- 7th in Organisational
- 7th in Financial
- 18th in Staffing
- 21st in Academic

**Thank you for your attention.**

**For further information, please contact**

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