

# **Outcomes of the four working groups**

## **Investing today in talent for tomorrow**

**EUA Annual conference  
and EUA 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

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## Context: Main change drivers

- Massification
  - Demographic trends
  - Financial crisis
  - The emerging economies
  - Technological changes and the rise of knowledge societies
  - Legislative frameworks are changing: more autonomy/greater accountability
- ⇒ Importance of institutional strategies (with a longer time horizon)

## Introduction to the Aarhus conference and the WGs

- How to promote research-based education in order to prepare all graduates for their professional and personal lives and for citizenship?
- How to develop young researchers?
- How to ensure a good working environment?
- How to ensure that the next generation of leaders are capable of addressing future challenges?

## **WG1. Building research capacity right from the undergraduate level**

- **Should** we deliver research-embedded teaching in a massified system? **Can** we afford it?
- Engaging undergraduates in research improves their education experience.
- But do all students need/want research-embedded education? Should we distinguish between academic/professional education? Mixed answers.
- Embedding research in student-centred learning involves several types of activities than can be seen as a series of steps leading to an increasingly greater engagement in research.

## **WG1. Building research capacity right from the undergraduate level (2)**

- **Can** we deliver research-embedded teaching in a massified system?
- Policies, political pressures and rankings => teaching and research are competing for time, resources and space.
- Do we have the resources required?
- One possible solution:
  - Ensuring that there is enough space for everyone at the system level
  - Each institution decides the extent to which research provides a basis for education

## **WG2. Fostering career structures and opportunities for young researchers**

- Very strong attachment to the research mission expressed by all institutions
- Strong consensus that the institution (rather than only the supervisor) is responsible for doctoral education
- Mixed answers about the responsibility for post docs: institutional engagement is weaker than at any other level of education.

## **WG2. Fostering career structures and opportunities for young researchers (2°)**

- At least 50% of PhDs have non-academic careers: are we providing the right training? No clear answer
- But agreement that these are legitimate choices: low rate of unemployment and the excellent quality of their jobs prove it.
- Critical mass is essential for talent development but the interpretation of critical mass differs according to the disciplines.
- Different examples of increasing critical mass: One graduate school for Scotland; inter-institutional alliances elsewhere



## **WG3. The university as employer**

- Importance of national and institutional contexts in relation to the status of staff
- Main strategy: create a good working environment to increase staff commitment to the institution and to optimise problem solving



## **WG3. The university as employer: specific actions**

- Invest in staff development, including administrative staff
- Invest in young talents: e.g., support them during their first grant proposal writing; provide opportunities for their own research
- Establish clear recruitment and exit procedures
- Retain staff through a set of institutional benefits: e.g. supplemental pension schemes, support for international mobility; couple appointments; competitive wages
- Develop HR's intercultural capacity to support international recruitment

## **WG 4. How to effectively identify and train future leaders**

- How to identify future leaders? Issue was sidestepped!
  - WG discussed whether leadership can be taught on the basis of 2 examples:
    - Leadership for students: included in degree programmes  
=> leadership can be taught
    - Leadership programmes for future university leaders  
=> little impact because main criteria is research
  - Leadership training should include knowledge, leadership practice and attitudes.
  - Leaders must have a broad understanding of society and know-how to work with a range of partners. Social skills are paramount.
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## **WG 4. How to effectively identify and train future leaders (2)**

- With the appointment of rectors, is the concept of university leadership changing?
- Whether elected or appointed, rectors need the acceptance of their community.
- Appointed rectors have more pressure/power to shape and steer the institution strategically:
  - They are accountable to their boards
  - They usually rely on a chain of appointed leaders (e.g., deans) who are accountable to them
- Rectors should mentor/groom the next generation of leaders, with particular attention to gender balance

## Concluding remarks: cross-cutting issues

- European actions:
  - Pension scheme
  - Leadership development
- Institutional actions:
  - Sharpening institutional strategies and profiles
  - Creating a supportive working environment
  - Enhancing intercultural skills for improved internationalisation
  - Creating a vibrant learning/research environment
  - Creating a community of purpose: a sense of belonging is essential for a university to function optimally

## Concluding remarks

- Is this enough and helpful as a basis to go forward?
- Does it give a sense of what needs to change in institutions?
- The next session aims to come up with elements of the Aarhus Declaration.
- The two questions: How to provide the conditions for:
  - Creating a **vibrant** learning/research environment?
  - Creating a community of purpose and a **sense of belonging**?