

al search for talent, and position themselves beyond their own borders. The Bologna Process offered a framework for shared solutions to shared problems.

While it was hailed as a landmark reform, achieving in only 10 years what many national governments had failed to achieve in several decades, the Bologna Process did not evolve along equal paths in the different countries and institutions, and there was significant variation in the pace of change and degree of success in implementation of the action lines. These trends were magnified by the even faster pace of globalization that was creating previously unknown levels of instability and volatility in the economic and political environments of the different EU member states, even though the universities themselves were firm believers in—and strong benefitters of—European cooperation.

A key question raised is whether the British exit from the European Union (EU) will also lead to a brain exit from the United Kingdom.

HOW DO WE MOVE FORWARD?

There is a clear message in Brexit that no matter how international or European universities seek or claim to be, they operate in a national context that will define and, at times, constrain their mission, scope, and activities. This political outcome has the potential to impact negatively on internationalization for the universities, but, at the same time, it raises awareness of the importance in going beyond the rhetoric and purposefully reconnecting internationalization to academic values.

Greater intentionality and integration of internationalization into institutional mission and sense of purpose can enable universities to demonstrate the value and impact of an international community of students and scholars, firstly to themselves, and secondly to the government in the upcoming negotiations. British universities are currently issuing statements around the importance of diversity and how vital it is to their success, but they will need to articulate clearly what it means to have international research collaborations and an international classroom and campus, and how that benefits all members of the university.

They will need to find a way to express internationalization in other terms than for the purposes of prestige and income generation, and demonstrate the importance of a genuinely inclusive approach, as expressed in the statements they are currently making. UK universities are fine examples of institutions that thrive on European cooperation, and are more robust and more able to fulfill their mis-

sions as a result of it. The road ahead is an arduous one, but a European Higher Education Area without the United Kingdom would be everybody's loss. ■

European Universities in the Aftermath of the Economic Crisis

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After a seven-year period, the economic crisis seemed to be over in 2015: economic growth was picking up again in most European Union (EU) countries. During the crisis, economic growth fell, fewer taxes were collected, banks were rescued with public money, government debt levels rose and (youth) unemployment increased. Governments cut budgets in order to satisfy the “Maastricht criteria” of budget deficits and of the government debt-to-GDP (Gross Domestic Product) ratio. This has impacted universities, both through the reduction of direct per-student expenditures and (much less) through the reduction of student aid (loans and grants). Except in the United Kingdom, EU governments barely allowed universities to compensate for the loss of public funding of direct costs through increased tuition fees, although several countries—such as Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden—introduced full cost tuition fees for international students outside of the EU.

The financial and economic crisis hit Europe harder than the United States in terms of bailout costs of banks and decline in GDP. This was felt by universities and students alike. More than half of the 22 European countries and regions for which the European University Association collected data, cut government expenditures for university education (including student aid) during the crisis, with the greatest cuts in Greece and Hungary (more than 40 percent). Universities located in the group of countries that had to seek refuge under the umbrella of the European Emergency Fund (Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain) were hard hit in terms of funding direct costs, student aid, and research.

EUROPE'S COMPETIVENESS REDUCED

In 2000, the EU launched the Lisbon Strategy, aimed at

increasing regional competitiveness through economic innovation by means of higher education and research. The economic crisis slowed down and, for some countries, reversed the process. In many countries, there will still be a need in the near future to further reduce government debt, undercutting the space for government outlays for higher education and research.

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The EU program for student exchange, Erasmus, has been beneficial to maintain and even increase student mobility during the crisis. However, intra-EU student mobility (4 percent of the total university enrollment) is relatively low compared to student mobility within the United States. The mobility of well-off students from countries with serious funding deficits (mostly in the south) to Western Europe is likely to increase, even though language differences in Europe continue to present a major barrier to mobility.

The EU is now relatively homogeneous in terms of university degree structure, with the levels of bachelor, master, and PhD, thanks to the process initiated with the Bologna agreement in 1999. However, the organizational structures of universities differ substantially across the EU, due to substantial differences in legislation. In some countries, universities are still highly controlled by government and enjoy little autonomy, be it financial, organizational, pedagogical, and where curriculum and even staffing are concerned. During the crisis, university reforms virtually came to a standstill, perhaps because the climate for change was not beneficial in the face of all the other uncertainties.

The competencies of university graduates are related to university funding and organization. The impact of the crisis has reduced the innovative power of EU economies, in so far as they depend on the competencies of graduates. Research productivity continued to increase, but likely as a result of pre-crisis investments. The future will show the extent to which research has been hurt by the crisis, in particular in countries (mostly in the south) with a deep recession during the crisis period. The EU Framework Program has compensated to some extent for research cuts at the national level, and encouraged convergence, while “excellency programs”—like the one in Germany, with substantial extra investments—will give rise to divergence.

Universities in the northwest of Europe and in central and eastern European countries seem to have been more resilient to the crisis, compared to those in the south. A further widening of the competencies gap between the north and south of Europe is to be expected.

There is little or no evidence to support the notion that the crisis has encouraged innovation at European universities, whether in learning content or methods, or in research.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SAFEGUARDED

Equality of access to higher education in Europe has not suffered, if measured by the availability of financial aid to students, compared to total public expenditures on higher education. During the crisis, European countries mostly abstained from raising the private (direct) costs of higher education, as a way to compensate for cuts in public expenditures. The European tradition of guaranteeing equality of access, with low or no tuition fees and ample student grants, is heavily criticized for benefiting the upper and upper-middle classes (the children of the richer part of the population, who are more likely to go to university.) From this perspective, the alternative of higher private costs and social loans (the system now in place in the United Kingdom) would be fairer. However, this alternative does not seem to fit in the political traditions of continental Europe.

Still, in comparison to the United States, Europe may not have fared too badly during the crisis in terms of preserving equality of access. The United States, with substantially higher tuition fees, may have lost its edge in promoting intergenerational mobility through higher education. It is likely that the crisis made it more difficult for youngsters from low and middle-income groups to participate in higher education, compared to Europe (with similar levels of student aid in relation to GDP). ■

The Global Challenge of Academic Integrity

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The *Wall Street Journal* raises the alarm: international students enrolled at US universities typically cheat more frequently than their domestic counterparts. Accord-