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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses EU-level developments in policy thinking in the area of higher education, training, and labour markets based on the analysis of a major large-scale strategy promoted by the European Commission in the 2000s: “Education and Training 2010” (ET 2010, launched in 2001, followed by a new strategy for the next decade, “Education and Training 2020”, ET 2020). The strategy shows major EU-level conceptualizations in the areas of education, training and labour market policies. The major focus of this analysis of the most relevant documents debated within this strategy is youth, students, and graduates; in particular in connection with higher education and lifelong learning opportunities. The EU-level strategy is linked here to the formerly existing Lisbon Strategy and to the new Europe 2020 Strategy for “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”.

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## EUROPEAN STRATEGIES AND HIGHER EDUCATION

### 1. Introduction

This concluding chapter discusses EU-level developments in policy thinking in the area of higher education, training, and labour markets based on the analysis of a major large-scale strategy promoted by the European Commission in the 2000s: “Education and Training 2010” (ET 2010, launched in 2001, followed by a new strategy for the next decade, “Education and Training 2020”, ET 2020). The strategy shows major EU-level conceptualizations in the areas of education, training and labour market policies. The major focus of this analysis of the most relevant documents debated within this strategy is youth, students, and graduates; in particular in connection with higher education and lifelong learning opportunities. The EU-level strategy is linked here to the formerly existing Lisbon Strategy and to the new Europe 2020 Strategy for “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. “Education and Training 2010” and its implications for European higher education

The focus of this chapter is on the two components of the “Education and Training 2010” strategy: (A) Developing Lifelong Learning (LLL) strategies, and (B) Higher education reforms. The chapter does not discuss such ET 2010 components as the initiative of the European Institute of Technology (EIT), developing school education policies, removing obstacles to mobility, promoting multilingualism, ICT for innovation and lifelong learning, and enhanced cooperation in vocational and adult education. The two selected components are large-scale systemic issues regarding the changes in which all EU member states are currently involved, under close supranational, EU-level, supervision, with common guidelines and

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<sup>1</sup> Published in: Marek Kwiek and Andrzej Kurkiewicz (eds.), *The Modernisation of European Universities. Cross-National Academic Perspectives*. Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang, 2012, pp. 333-360

common benchmarks. Mobility, as another component of ET 2010, for both students and academics, can be viewed as part of the higher education reform package.

The overall rationale of the ET 2010 strategy presented below is based on its major policy documents: “‘Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation’. *2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the ‘Education & Training 2010’ Work Programme*” (February 2008); “‘Education and Training’ as a key driver of the Lisbon Strategy’. *Adoption of Resolution* (November 2007); “‘Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe’. *2006 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the ‘Education & Training 2010’ Work Programme*” (February 2006); “‘Education & Training 2010’. The success of the Lisbon Strategy hinges on urgent reforms’. *Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe*” (February 2004); and “‘The concrete future objectives of education and training systems’. *Education Council report*” (February 2001).

The ET 2010 documents strongly support the idea of the dual role of education and training: both social and economic objectives are major policy objectives. The synergy between economic policy objectives and social policy objectives is emphasized. The non-economic effects of education and training systems are stressed, and their effects on social cohesion are mentioned:

Education and training are a determining factor in each country’s potential for excellence, innovation and competitiveness. At the same time, they are an integral part of the social dimension of Europe, because they transmit values of solidarity, equal opportunities and social participation, while also producing positive effects on health, crime, the environment, democratisation and general quality of life. All citizens need to acquire and continually update their knowledge, skills and competences through lifelong learning, and the specific needs of those at risk of social exclusion need to be taken into account. This will help to raise labour force participation and economic growth, while ensuring social cohesion. Investing in education and training has a price, but high private, economic and social returns in the medium and long-term outweigh

the costs. Reforms should therefore continue to seek synergies between economic and social policy objectives, which are in fact mutually reinforcing (EC 2006i: C79/1).

The ET 2010 has been linked to the future of the European social model, but not as dramatically as in the case of, for instance, higher education policies promoted within the “modernization agenda of European universities” and in all major communications from the European Commission throughout the 2000s about “universities” and their direct link to economic competitiveness, economic growth and the sustainability of the European social model in the future. In the former set of EC initiatives (and as conceptualized in EC communications, including “The Role of Universities in the Europe of Knowledge” from 2003), the economic future of the next generations of Europeans indeed depends, to a large extent, on the triangle of “research, innovation, and education”. The ET 2010 (as well as ET 2020) documents have much less dramatic overtones and their analyses of the status quo in higher education are much more balanced. The following set of passages from the above mentioned documents set the tone for the strategy and shows its major themes:

Europe is facing enormous socio-economic and demographic challenges associated with an ageing population, high numbers of low-skilled adults, high rates of youth unemployment, etc. At the same time, there is a growing need to improve the level of competences and qualifications on the labour market. It is necessary to address these challenges in order to improve the long-term sustainability of Europe's social systems. Education and training are part of the solution to these problems (EC 2006i: C 79/2).

Education and training form one apex of the knowledge triangle and are crucial to providing research and innovation with the broad skills base and creativity which these require. They represent the cornerstone on which Europe's future growth and the well-being of its citizens depend (EC 2007g: C 300/2).

The knowledge triangle [i.e. education, research and innovation] plays a key role in boosting jobs and growth. So it is so important to accelerate reform, to promote excellence in higher education and university-business partnerships and to ensure that all sectors of education and training play their full role in promoting creativity and innovation (EC 2008m: C 86/1-C 86/2).

The key message of the Education and Training 2010 strategy is that it is essential to strengthen “synergies and complementarity between education and other policy areas, such as employment, research and innovation, and macroeconomic policy” (EC 2004: 4). One of the three priority areas to be acted upon “simultaneously and without delay” is the following: to focus reform and investment on the key areas for any knowledge-based society (the other two being “to make lifelong learning a concrete reality” and “to establish a Europe of Education and Training”):

In order to make the European Union the leading knowledge-based economy in the world, there is an urgent need to invest more, and more efficiently and effectively in human resources. This involves a higher level of public sector investment in key areas for the knowledge society and, where appropriate, a higher level of private investment, particularly in higher education, adult education and continuing vocational training (EC 2004d: 4).

A key area is also higher education which is central to a Europe of Knowledge:

Given that the higher education sector is situated at the crossroads of research, education and innovation, it is a central player in the knowledge economy and society and key to the competitiveness of the European Union. The European Higher Education Sector should therefore pursue excellence and become a world-wide quality reference to be in a position to compete against the best in the world (EC 2004d: 12).

The ET 2020 strategy, in general, is consistent with the major ideas expressed in the ET 2010 strategy. The methods of conceptualizing youth and students, as well as higher education institutions, education and training systems are structurally similar.

### **3. Developing Lifelong Learning strategies and “Education and Training 2010”**

The most relevant documents for this section include the following: “New skills for new jobs” (*Adoption of the Council Resolution*, November 2007); “Towards more knowledge-based policy and practice in education and training” (*Commission Staff Working Document*, August 2007); “Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems” (*Conclusions of*

*the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council and Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament, September 2006*); “Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe” (EC Communication, January 2003); “Lifelong Learning” (*Council Resolution*, June 2002); “Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality” (EC Communication, November 2001); and “A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning” (*Commission Staff Working Paper*, October 2000). The two guiding passages for brief analyses below are the following:

The need to increase participation rates in further learning remains a major challenge for Europe, particularly in the southern European countries and the new Member States. Greater numbers of adults in lifelong learning would increase active participation in the labour market and contribute to strengthening social cohesion (EC 2006f: C79/4).

Many countries are encouraging universities to play their part in making a reality of lifelong learning by widening access for non-traditional learners, such as those from low socio-economic backgrounds, including through the establishment of systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (EC 2006f: C79/5).

The European Commission’s conceptualizations of education and training systems increasingly link universities and lifelong learning. One of the major tasks of universities in the future could be the accommodation of elements of lifelong learning, especially elements of what is sometimes termed today adult learning. European universities are expected to have much wider openings than currently for older generations of potential students, albeit in different modes of studies with study programmes, particularly short-term vocational courses, specifically designed for them. At the same time, the Commission in general is increasingly concerned with lifelong learning viewed as learning throughout one’s life, from pre-school education through higher education and beyond. From this perspective, higher education is merely part of lifelong learning, designed specifically for students, mostly at the traditional age of study and mostly studying to gain either bachelor’s, master’s, or doctorate degrees (the tripartite division of the Bologna Process). Consequently, in the decade of the 2000s (under the Education and Training 2010 strategy), lifelong learning strategies were by definition focused on “making lifelong learning a reality” (EC 2001b). The definition of lifelong learning adopted by the European strategy ET 2010 was the following:



In addition to the emphasis it places on learning from pre-school to postretirement, lifelong learning should encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning. ... The principles which underpin lifelong learning and guide its effective implementation emphasise the centrality of the learner, the importance of equal opportunities and the quality and relevance of learning opportunities (EC 2001b: 3).

In the next decade (under the new Education and Training 2020 strategy), lifelong learning strategies will be much more focused on all stages and all modes of learning, learning throughout life regardless of the age of the learner. Certainly the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning is going in this direction:

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe, promoting workers' and learners' mobility between countries and facilitating their lifelong learning. The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. Individuals and employers will be able to use the EQF to better understand and compare the qualifications levels of different countries and different education and training systems.

The EQF introduces a fundamentally new way of thinking about learning as it uses a “learning outcomes” idea with eight levels of reference in respect of all types of education and training. In some countries both are realities, with learning outcomes having been defined and EQF levels 1 through 8 having been applied in policy thinking about education. In others, Poland included, no work has been done in this area so far except for pilot studies.

Both the ET 2010 and ET 2020 strategies increasingly focused on two other types of lifelong learning than formal learning: non-formal learning and informal learning. This is a reflection of a greater appreciation of learning taking place in non-traditional settings (e.g. out-of-school) and taking place in non-traditional modes. As the EC document stresses, so far, these learning experiences have been “invisible” in education systems, and consequently it was not possible to recognize them properly:

Learning that takes place in formal education and training systems is traditionally the most visible and recognised in the labour market and by society in general. In recent years, however, there has been a growing appreciation of the importance of learning in non-formal and informal settings. New approaches are needed to identify and validate these 'invisible' learning experiences.

At the European level, the following definitions of types of learning are used:

- Formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, with structured learning objectives, learning time and learning support. It is intentional on the part of the learner and leads to certification.
- Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically does not lead to certification. However, it is intentional on the part of the learner and has structured objectives, times and support.
- Informal learning results from daily activities related to work, family life or leisure. It is not structured and usually does not lead to certification. In most cases, it is unintentional on the part of the learner.

Within wider lifelong learning debates, the social dimension of higher education has been consistently stressed (see EC 2010b, see also Goetschy 1999 and Heidenreich 2004). This new EC document refers to the old topic in new ways, though. The major differences in themes are the following: the need to strengthen the financial support for students is accompanied by a reference to “affordable, accessible, adequate, and portable students loans” – which perhaps for the first time may lead directly to promoting the implementation of cost-sharing and cost-recovery mechanisms in higher education (because loans in general accompany fees). The role of universities in recognizing non-traditional paths to higher education is stressed, as are “more flexible and diversified learning paths”. Knowledge produced at universities is also expected to return benefits to society. And, finally, universities should be prepared to be more open to adult, non-formal and informal learners – which will be made easier through the recognition of learning outcomes and the widespread use of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Lifelong Learning.

More flexible and diversified learning paths – for example recognising prior learning, part-time education, and distance learning – can help to reconcile higher education with work or family commitments and to encourage wider participation. ... Higher education institutions can also exercise social responsibility by making their resources available to adult and informal and non-formal learners, strengthening research on

social exclusion, fostering innovation and updating educational resources and methodology (EC 2010b: C/135/5).

Lifelong learning strategies, major components of both the Education and Training 2010 and 2020 strategies, seem to be directed in EU conceptualizations to those parts of diversified higher education systems which are focused mostly on teaching. Research-intensive universities are referred to mostly within the “modernization agenda of European universities”, discussed briefly below.

#### **4. Higher education reforms, their contexts, and “Education and Training 2010”**

The most relevant documents for this section on higher education reforms include the following: “Modernising universities for Europe’s competitiveness in a global knowledge economy” (*Council Resolution*, November 2007); “Delivering on the modernisation agenda for universities: education, research and innovation” (*Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament*, May 2006); “Further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education” (*Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council*, February 2006); “From Bergen to London: The EU Contribution” (*Commission Progress Report*, January 2006); “Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling higher education to make its full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” (*Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States*, November 2005); “European Higher Education in a Worldwide Perspective” (*Annex to the: Communication from the Commission ‘Mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling universities to make their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy’*, April 2005); “The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge” (EC Communication, February 2003); and “Strengthening cooperation with third countries in the field of higher education” (*Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council*, July 2001). In addition to these, there are two recent documents from the EC which are major points of reference throughout the present book: “Communication from the Commission: Supporting growth and jobs – an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems” and “European Commission staff working document: Supporting growth and jobs: an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems” (see EC 2011a, 2011b or Chapter 12 and Chapter 13 in this book).

Additionally, the policy agenda for the “higher education reform” component of the ET 2010 will be analysed below in two other contexts that are most relevant for EU-level debates: the first is the “modernization agenda of European universities”, and the second is the new Europe 2020 Strategy.

The first context is the “modernization agenda of European universities”. The policy agenda for the “higher education reform” component of the ET 2010 strategy will be compared with another related – but separate and distinct – agenda pursued by the EC throughout the 2000s: the “Modernization Agenda” regarding European Universities, along with its policy documents as well as accompanying discussions within the emergent European Research Area (ERA).

The modernization agenda of the EC is directed towards research and innovation, especially in the Green Paper, “The European Research Area: New Perspectives” (2007, and the accompanying Staff Working Document). The creation of the ERA was proposed by the European Commission in its communication “Towards a European Research Area” of January 2000 (which can be viewed as both a starting and a reference point). Subsequently, both the “higher education reform” component of the ET 2010 strategy and the modernization/ERA agendas can be compared with the new, emergent “2020 vision for the ERA”. Overall, and without going into details, youth/students appear in the latter context in quite a limited way.

The overall view of higher education by the EC in both the “modernization agenda” of European universities and the ERA strategy is that universities are currently prime loci for economic growth, economic competitiveness and engines for innovation-driven knowledge-based economies. Social cohesion, equitable access to education, widening participation in education – and related issues – seem to be left mostly to the ET 2010 strategy, with both the modernization agenda and the ERA strategy being generally not involved with these issues (see Holman 2006).

The modern university in Europe (especially in its German-inspired Humboldtian version) has been closely linked to the nation-state. With the advent of globalization, and its pressures on nation-states, universities are increasingly experiencing their de-linking from both the traditional needs of the nation-state (inculcating national consciousness in the citizens of nation-state, etc.) and from its financial resources as the sole source of their revenues (Kwiek

2006a, 2009a and Kwiek and Maassen 2012). The share of non-core non-state revenues has been on the rise in many European systems. Universities increasingly need to rely on “third stream income” – especially non-core non-state income and earned income (as opposed to core state income and fee based income). In Europe, the overall social and economic answer to globalization has been the strengthening of European integration, and the policy agenda for this regional response to globalization was called the “Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs”. European universities, as well as the governments of EU member states, find it useful to refer to this strategy in redefining the role(s) of educational institutions under both globalization and its regional response, Europeanization. Consequently, the 2000s brought about substantially new ways of thinking about universities at the level of the European Commission. Emergent EU educational policies are increasingly influential as the university reform agenda is viewed as part of the wider Lisbon strategy reforms. The EU member states – national governments – are not only adopting the Lisbon strategy, but also the social and economic concept of the university implied in it and consistently developed in subsequent official documents from the European Commission. The EU member states, for the first time in the fifty years of the history of the European Union, need to balance their educational policies between the requirements of the new policies strongly promoted by the EU and the requirements of their traditional national systems (in the four first decades, higher education in general was left in the competence of the member states; today it is viewed by the European Commission as being of critical importance to the economic future of the European Union as a whole and therefore in need of EU-level interventions). Additionally, national educational policies are under strong globalization-related (mostly financial) pressures, as are all the other social services provided under the general label of the “European social model”.

In these new ways of thinking, the traditional link between the nation-state and the modern institution of the university has been broken; moreover, higher education in the EU context has clearly been put in a post-national (and distinctly European) perspective in which the interests of the EU as a whole and of particular EU member states (nation-states) are juxtaposed. The reason for the renewed EU interest in higher education is clearly stated by the European Commission: while responsibilities for universities lie essentially at national (or regional) levels, the most important challenges are “European, and even international or global” (EC 2003f: 9). The major challenges facing Europe – related to both globalization and demographics, such as losing its heritage and identity, losing out economically, giving up the

European Social Model, etc. – should, according to an influential *Frontier Research: The European Challenge* report, be met through education, knowledge, and innovation:

The most appropriate response to these challenges is to increase the capacity of Europe to create, absorb, diffuse and exploit scientific and technical knowledge, and that, to this end, education, research and innovation should be placed much higher on the European policy agenda (EC 2005b: 17).

Thus recent years have brought about intensified thinking, from a distinctly EU perspective, regarding the future of public universities in Europe. Regional processes for the integration of educational and research and development policies in the European Union add a new dimension to the nation-state/national university issue. On top of discussions about the nation-state (and the welfare state), we are confronted with new transnational ideas on how to revitalize the European project through higher education, and how to use European universities for the purpose of creating, in Europe, a globally competitive knowledge economy. In the 2000s, for the first time, new ways of thinking about higher education were formulated at the EU level – and were accompanied by a number of practical measures, coordinated and funded by the European Commission. Higher education, left at the disposal of particular nation-states in previous decades in Europe, seems to have returned now to the forefront in discussions about the future of the EU (see Kwiek 2006b, 2012b, Maassen 2008, Maassen and Olsen 2007).

Consequently, Europe in the 2000s was undergoing two powerful integration processes, initially separate but recently increasingly convergent. The former is the Bologna process, the gradual production of a common European Higher Education Area (started by the Bologna Declaration signed in 1999) by 45 Bologna-signatory countries (reaching far beyond 27 EU member states and ranging geographically from the Caucasus to Portugal). Its main goals include the adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, the adoption of the three cycles of studies – undergraduate, graduate and doctoral, the spread of credit transfer systems enabling student mobility, and the promotion of pan-European quality assurance mechanisms. The latter is the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs, adopted by EU countries in 2000 and simplified and re-launched in 2005: it had two targets – total (public and private) investments of 3% of Europe's GDP in research and development, and an employment rate of

70%, both to be reached by 2010, and both not achieved by most European economies. Increasingly, the goals of the Bologna process were being subsumed under the goals of the Lisbon strategy and then the Europe 2020 strategy (see Davoine et al. 2008, Palmer and Edwards 2004, Sjørup 2004, Triantafillou 2009).

The European Commission stresses that the divergence between the organization of universities at the national level and the emergence of challenges which go beyond national frontiers has grown, and will continue to do so. Thus a shift of balance is necessary, the arguments go, and the Lisbon strategy in general, combined with the emergence of the common European Research Area (co-funded by EU research funds totalling 51 billion EUR for 2007-2013) in particular, provided new grounds for policy work at the European level, despite restrictions on the engagement of the European Commission in education – leaving the area of education in the competences of the member states – as defined by the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union (1992).

In recent years, the project of European integration seems to have found a new leading legitimizing motif: education and research for the “Europe of Knowledge”. A crucial component of the Europeanization process today is its attempt to make Europe a “knowledge society” (and “knowledge economy”) in a globalizing world. “Education and training” (a wider EU category) becomes a core group of technologies to be used for the creation of a new Europe; the creation of a distinctive and separate “European Higher Education Area” as well as a “European Research (and Innovation) Area” were the goals the EU had set itself by a deadline of 2010. The construction of a distinctive European educational policy space – and the introduction of the requisite European educational and research policies – has become part and parcel of EU “revitalization” within the broad cultural, political and economic Europeanization project (see Lawn 2003).

We are witnessing the emergence of a “new Europe” whose foundations are being constructed around such notions as, on the one hand, “knowledge”, “innovation”, “research”, and on the other, “education” and “training”. Education in the EU, and especially lifelong learning, becomes a new discursive space in which European dreams of common citizenship are currently being located. This new “knowledge-based Europe” is becoming increasingly individualized (and de-nationalized), though; as ideally, it should consist of individual European learners rather than citizens of particular European nation-states. The emergent



European educational space is unprecedented in its vision, ambitions and possibly its capacity to influence national educational policies. In the new knowledge economy, education policy, and especially higher education policy, cannot remain solely at the level of Member States because only the construction of a new common educational space in Europe can possibly provide it with the chance to forge a new sense of European identity, as well as be a practical response to the pressures of globalization; as the arguments presented by the European Commission go (see Kwiek 2006). “Europeans”, in this context, could refer directly to “European (lifelong) learners”: individuals seeking knowledge useful in a knowledge economy. The symbol of this new Europe is not “the locked up cultural resources of nation states, but the individual engaged in lifelong learning” (Lawn 2001: 177); not a nationally-bound and territorially-located citizen of a particular member state but an individual with an individuated “knowledge portfolio” of education, skills, and competencies. European citizenship is being discursively located in the individual for whom a new pan-European educational space is being built. The individual attains membership of this space only through knowledge, skills and competencies. At the same time, the economic future of Europe is increasingly believed to depend on investing in knowledge and innovation and on making the “free movement of knowledge” (the “fifth freedom”, complementing the four freedoms of movement in goods, services, people and capital) a reality (EC 2007h: 14); therefore, “science and technology” are “the key to Europe’s future”, as the title of an EC communication runs (EC 2004a); and “the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms” of higher education systems in Europe, as another title runs (EC 2003a).

The idea of Europe, as well as the core normative narratives and major discourses that hold Europeans as Europeans together, is being redefined; and this new education space (being constructed through the emergent European educational and research policies) in which the new European identity is being forged seems crucial. Through prioritizing the idea of “lifelong learning” in the Lisbon strategy and in the EU agenda of “Education and Training 2010” (see EC 2000c), learning becomes redefined as an individual activity, no longer as closely linked with national projects. The new “learning society” comprises more and more “(European) learning individuals”, wishing and able to opt in and opt out of particular European nations and states. Consequently, one of the key concepts in the Bologna process is no longer employment but employability, a transfer of meanings through which it is the individual’s responsibility to be employed, rather than the traditional responsibility of the state, as in the Keynesian “full employment” welfare state model.

The process of creating the European Higher Education Area and the simultaneous emergence of the European Research Area have one major common dimension: that of a redefinition of missions for the institution of the university (even though universities were at first neglected as places for research in EU thinking – for instance, in the first EU communication on the subject, “Towards a European Research Area”, universities and higher education in general were not even mentioned, see EC 2000c). Both teaching and research are undergoing substantial transformations today. The institution of the university is playing a significant role in the emergence of the common European higher education and common European research spaces, but in none of these two processes is the university seen in a traditional modern way – as discussed in the context of the emergence of the modern university in traditional European nation-states. It is evolving together with radical transformations of the social setting in which it functions (the setting of “globalization” and, regionally, “Europeanization”). Globalization is the overriding notion in most major European discussions about the role(s) of higher education and research and development, the notion behind the Lisbon strategy, especially when combined with such accompanying new notions as the “knowledge economy” and the “knowledge society” – and in respect of the traditional contexts of economic growth, national and European competitiveness and combating unemployment. The Lisbon “strategy for growth and jobs” was a regional (European) response to the challenges of globalization. As globalization seems to be redefining the role of nation-states in today’s world, it is indirectly affecting higher education institutions. In this context – and thus indirectly – the pressures of globalization are behind new higher education policies which promote the competitiveness of nations (and regions) through education, research and innovation. Globalization affects the proposed policy solutions in higher education for both national governments and the European Commission (Kwiek 2006a, 2009a, 2009b).

The impact of globalization on EU-level educational policies and strategies, and increasingly on the ensuing national policies and strategies, is substantial. Higher education is viewed, assessed and measured in the context of both globalization and Europeanization. Globalization, indirectly, for instance through the broad Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, fundamentally alters the lenses through which universities are viewed, assessed and measured. Its most evident impact on universities is the overall sense that European (predominantly public) universities need profound transformations if Europeanization is to be a successful response to globalization. Consequently, the overall picture on reading recent EU documents,

reports, working papers and communications is that the relationship between government and universities is in need of a profound change. The two documents, “Mobilising the Brainpower of Europe: Enabling Universities to Make Their Full Contribution to the Lisbon Strategy” (EC 2005b, see Kwiek 2006a) and “Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation” (EC 2006a) make clear that radical transformations of university governance are expected by the European Commission to make possible their full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy. Universities are urged to consider fundamentally new arrangements (new “contracts”) with societies and governments are urged to consider establishing new partnerships with universities, accompanied by a shift from state control to accountability to society (EC 2005a: 9). As explained clearly in an EU issue-paper on university governance: “coordinated change is required both in systems regulation and in institutional governance in order to mobilise the enormous potential of knowledge and energy of European universities to adapt to new missions” (EC 2006a: 1). The policy lesson for the EU member states is that substantial changes in governance are needed: according to the new university/government contracts envisaged by the EU, universities will be responsible and accountable for their programmes, staff and resources, while the state will be responsible for the “strategic orientation” of the system as a whole – through a framework of general rules, policy objectives, funding mechanisms and incentives (EC 2006a: 5).

Globalization is viewed as a major factor influencing the transformations to the state today, in its two major dimensions: the nation-state and the welfare state. As the nation-state is changing, the argument goes, so is the modern university, most often very closely linked to the state in major European variants of higher education systems. The modern university becomes radically delinked from the nation-state – and in the European context, new EU higher education policies are being developed which put lifelong learning (and the lifelong learner) in the centre of the project for an integrated European Union. In the EU discourse on future university missions the individualized learner, the product of both globalization and Europeanization, is contrasted with the traditional citizen of the nation-state, formed by the modern university which was born along with the nation-state. These challenges and opportunities seem to be clearly seen in the emergent EU discourse on the university in which both universities and students are delinked from nation-states; while universities are expected to be linked to the Lisbon strategy of more growth and more jobs, and more competitiveness of the European Union economy, students are expected to be more linked to the new project of the “Europe of Knowledge” than to traditional, individual national projects of particular

European nation-states (see Maassen and Olsen 2007, Maassen 2008, Kwiek and Maassen 2012).

The second context is the *Europe 2020 Strategy*. The policy agenda of the “higher education reform” component of the ET 2010 strategy can be compared with the new ET 2020 strategy as viewed through several recent EC documents of 2009-2010: “Key competences for a changing world” (2009); “Joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the ‘Education & Training 2010 work programme’” (January 2010); “Messages from the EC Council in the field of education as a contribution to the discussion on the post-2010 Lisbon Strategy Council messages” (November 2009); “Developing the role of education in a fully- functioning knowledge triangle” *Council conclusions* (November 2009); “A strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training” (ET 2020) *Council conclusions* (May 2009); and “Enhancing partnerships between education and training institutions and social partners, in particular employers, in the context of lifelong learning” *Council conclusions* (May 2009).

In most general terms, *Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* in the European Commission’s description is “the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives – on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy – to be reached by 2020. Each Member State will adopt its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels will underpin the strategy”. To measure progress in meeting the Europe 2020 goals, 5 headline targets have been agreed for the whole EU, and they are being translated into national targets in each EU country. The 5 targets for the EU in 2020 include the following:

- \* Employment: 75% of 20-64 year-olds to be employed;
- \* R&D/innovation: 3% of the EU's GDP (public and private combined) to be invested in R&D/innovation;
- \* Climate change/energy: greenhouse gas emissions 20% lower than 1990, 20% of energy from renewables, 20% increase in energy efficiency;

- \* Education: reducing school drop-out rates below 10% and at least 40% of 30-34-year-olds completing third level education (or equivalent);
- \* Poverty/social exclusion: at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The targets should give an overall view of where the EU should be on key parameters by 2020; they are being translated into national targets so that each Member State can check its own progress towards these goals. They do not imply burden-sharing – there are common goals, to be pursued through a mix of national and EU action. They are interrelated and mutually reinforcing: educational improvements help employability and reduce poverty, more R&D/innovation in the economy, combined with more efficient resources, makes us more competitive and creates jobs; and investing in cleaner technologies combats climate change while creating new business/job opportunities. Every EU country is in the process of adopting the targets. These will be used to measure progress in meeting the Europe 2020 goals.

The targets are being translated into national targets. Those areas most in need of attention will be addressed by 7 flagship initiatives at the EU, national, local and regional levels. Within each initiative, both the EU and national authorities will have to coordinate their efforts so that they are mutually reinforcing. Within one of the three priorities (the Inclusive Growth component) of Europe 2020, what is of interest here is the flagship initiative called “An agenda for new skills and jobs”.

The agenda has been defined in 2010 as having the aim to “modernize labour markets and empower people by developing their skills throughout the lifecycle with a view to increase labour participation and better match labour supply and demand, including through labour mobility” (EC 2010c: 4). The strategy offers a vision of “Europe’s social market economy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (EC 2010c: 8). What are the implications of Europe 2020 for higher education reforms and for universities in particular? With reference to the EU target of 3% of GDP spent on research and development, the strategy means stronger links between knowledge (including knowledge produced in universities) and innovation. The strategy also refers to increases in both public and private funding for R&D and calls for improving the conditions for private R&D in Europe. There are two overall recommendations in the strategy referring directly and indirectly to universities:

- Innovation: R&D spending in Europe is below 2%, compared to 2.6% in the US and 3.4% in Japan, mainly as a result of lower levels of private investment. It is not only the absolute amounts spent on R&D that count – Europe needs to focus on the impact and composition of research spending and to improve the conditions for private sector R&D in the EU. Our smaller share of high-tech firms explains half of our gap with the US.

- Education, training and lifelong learning: A quarter of all pupils have poor reading competences, one in seven young people leave education and training too early. Around 50% reach medium qualifications level but this often fails to match labour market needs. Less than one person in three aged 25-34 has a university degree compared to 40% in the US and over 50% in Japan. According to the Shanghai index, only two European universities are in the world's top 20 (EC 2010c: 13).

Universities are also explicitly referred to in three (out of seven) flagship initiatives of Europe 2020: “Youth on the move”, “Innovation Union”, and “Agenda for New Skills and Jobs”. The conceptualizations of universities in each of the three initiatives will be briefly discussed below. Universities are directly or indirectly involved in these three flagship initiatives, at both the EU and national levels.

The Europe 2020 strategy in its “Youth on the move” flagship initiative involves a selection of tasks for universities: “The aim is to enhance the performance and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education institutions and raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU, combining both excellence and equity, by promoting student mobility and trainees' mobility, and improve the employment situation of young people”:

At the EU level, the Commission will work: - To step up the modernisation agenda of higher education (curricula, governance and financing) including by benchmarking university performance and educational outcomes in a global context; - To promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning; - To launch a youth employment framework outlining policies aimed at reducing youth unemployment rates: this should promote, with Member States and social partners, young people's entry into the labour market through apprenticeships, stages or other work experience.

At the national level, Member States will need: - To ensure efficient investment in education and training systems at all levels (pre-school to tertiary); - To improve educational outcomes, addressing each segment (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary) within an integrated approach, encompassing key competences and aiming at reducing early school leaving; - To enhance the openness and relevance of education systems by building national qualification frameworks and better gearing learning outcomes towards labour market needs; - To improve young people's entry into the labour market through integrated action covering i.a. guidance, counselling and apprenticeships (EC 2010c: 11).

The above selected tasks within the “Youth on the Move” flagship initiative may be viewed as EU priorities in conceptualizing the future of public universities: the modernization agenda for European universities, promoted throughout the 2000s, will be maintained; the attractiveness of European higher education will be linked to both excellence and equity; there will be increasing pressure on involving universities in lifelong learning, including the recognition of non-formal (and perhaps even informal) learning – with increasing emphasis on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) within which universities are included as stages 6-7-8 in the stages relating to learning (BA-MA-PhD). Investments in education are expected to be efficient – and increases in investments are not mentioned in the document. Universities will be expected to be much more strongly linked to the labour market, by means of, inter alia, defining educational outcomes at higher education level and developing national qualifications frameworks leading to the EQF.

The Europe 2020 strategy in its “Innovation Union” flagship initiative includes another selection of tasks for universities: “to re-focus R&D and innovation policy on the challenges facing our society, such as climate change, energy and resource efficiency, health and demographic change. Every link should be strengthened in the innovation chain, from 'blue sky' research to commercialization”.

At EU level, the Commission will work: - To complete the European Research Area, to develop a strategic research agenda focused on challenges such as energy security, transport, climate change and resource efficiency, health and ageing, environmentally-friendly production methods and land management, and to enhance joint programming with Member States and regions; - To strengthen and further develop the role of EU instruments to support

innovation; - To promote knowledge partnerships and strengthen links between education, business, research and innovation.

At national level, Member States will need: - To reform national (and regional) R&D and innovation systems to foster excellence and smart specialisation, reinforce cooperation between universities, research and business; - To ensure a sufficient supply of science, maths and engineering graduates and to focus school curricula on creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; - To prioritise knowledge expenditure, including by using tax incentives and other financial instruments to promote greater private R&D investments.

Within this flagship initiative of Europe 2020, the following themes linked to the future of public universities are raised: greater commercialization of research; closer links between research and innovation; strengthening the European Research Area; linking research-intensive universities; strengthening of EU research programmes to be more closely linked with innovation; linking EU funded research to the business community; strengthening cooperation between universities and business through linking research with innovation; a focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematical areas of study (STEM) at universities, with possible shifts in the funding of teaching and research areas; and promoting greater private R&D investments, possibly with more public funding involved.

To sum up, the Europe 2020 strategy does not diverge from what was assumed for universities in the Lisbon Strategy regarding their ever-closer links to the knowledge economy. There are no significant differences between the roles of universities promoted in both strategies and in the “modernization agenda of European universities”, explicitly mentioned in Europe 2020. The major direction in conceptualizing the future roles of universities, and research-intensive universities in particular, has been reinforced in recent EU documents.

The “higher education reform” agenda of ET 2010 could also be analysed in the context of a series of 7 recent expert group analyses of the European Research Area, on a single labour market for researchers, on a world-class research infrastructure, on strengthening research institutions, on optimizing research programmes and priorities, and on opening up to the world (all published between 2008-2009) – which provide a large-scale experts’ account of the ideas developed in the Green Paper (“The European Research Area: New Perspectives”,



EC 2007i) published by the European Commission, and which may result in future initiatives. Also, the context of the new EC communications on “Better careers and more mobility: a European partnership for researchers” and “Towards Joint Programming in research: Working together to tackle common challenges more effectively” (both with accompanying staff documents) would be valuable. The focus of research in this direction could be the overall missing dimension of youth/students in EU-level analyses, strategies, policy documents and expert-level reports (see also Weiler 2009).

The “Education and Training 2010” strategy was operating between a knowledge-based economic rationale and a knowledge-based society rationale. In the area of higher education, there is clearly a shift in public policy towards both “economization” of educational problems and towards “educationalization” of economic problems: European universities are increasingly made responsible for the (economic) future of countries, regions, and individuals. However, this is a relatively new institutional responsibility for an 800 year-old European social institution, even in its modern Humboldt-derived form which is 200 years old. Most EU-level policy documents seem to confirm the new, strongly economic role of universities, despite numerous references to other (e.g. social, cultural, democracy-related, citizenship-related) dimensions of their functioning. A global public good/private good debate on higher education is very useful in this context: increasingly globally, and more often in the last five years at the EU-level, higher education credentials are viewed as a mostly a private good (which, over the passage of time, leads to conclusions that higher education systems bring about high private returns – consequently, credentials may have to be paid for, which paves the way for new cost-recovery and cost-sharing mechanisms to be discussed in EU economies). The wage premium for higher education in an EU-27 comparative perspective is high, and it is very high in major new EU member states (with Poland and Hungary among the top five OECD economies). The related issues include the uncertain role of the bachelor degree in the transition from higher education to the labour market (see Fleckenstein). The bachelor degree has been strongly supported at the EU level throughout the 2000s, despite the Bologna Process officially being an intergovernmental, rather than supranational, process.

The ET 2010, like the Bologna Process, seems to have different priorities than the modernization agenda for European universities. The social priorities of the ET 2010 can be juxtaposed with the economic priorities of both the European Research Area (ERA) and the “modernization agenda of European universities” promoted by the EC throughout the 2000s.

The extent to which this social/economic distinction at the level of intergovernmental (Bologna Process) and supranational (ERA and modernization agenda) large-scale European processes – and the accompanying European strategies – is reflected in national level policies is still unclear. But, as reflected in the policy literature, the economic dimension, at least in the area of higher education policy, is clearly gaining a higher priority today than the social dimension.

The ET 2010, like the Bologna Process (and higher education institutions in general), functions within European Higher Education Area (EHEA) initiatives – while the modernization agenda of universities functions within the ERA (and top-level, research-intensive universities). To what extent are different priorities at the EU level translated into national level ones in EU member-states? To what extent are national translations of EU-level education and training strategies limited, or enhanced, by the traditions from which national higher education systems come (Napoleonic or southern models, Humboldtian or Central European models, as well as Anglo-Saxon models)? While the impact of traditions on national translations of EU-level strategies in higher education can be high in some systems, in others the impact on national strategies in respect of lifelong learning, rather than higher education, can be high. The EC's "creeping competence" in education generally may mean that the EC is much more interested in those policy areas in which its influence is not easily contested: lifelong learning and the vocational (VET) sector are good examples here.

In particular, the natural policy question would be why the "modernization agenda of European universities" does not belong with the ET 2010 (and, subsequently, to the new ET 2020)? Is it specifically economy-focused, rather than youth/student-focused? The answer is positive: the modernization agenda refers clearly to research universities as top research performers within particular national higher education systems. The ET 2010 refers to all higher education institutions, regardless of their research engagement levels. The more universities are linked to the economic dimension, the more will their cooperation with the business communities be supported, the more will universities' financial self-reliance be promoted – and the more will European research-intensive universities stand apart from European higher education institutions generally. What are the consequences of the possible Europe-wide acceptance of this divide between economy-focused research intensive universities and teaching-focused (all the others) higher education institutions? What is the future of the (traditional) unity of research and teaching in institutional missions? The

questions are beyond the scope of the present chapter but we have analysed them elsewhere in more detail (see Kwiek 2009b).

Consequently, there is an ever-growing diversification of higher education institutions in Europe: so the ET 2010 (and ET 2020) strategies may be linked more to teaching-oriented institutions (related to youth/students, the equitable access agenda, widening access agenda, etc.); while the “modernization agenda of European universities” (and ERA initiatives) – may be linked more to research-intensive universities. This may have far-reaching consequences for the funding and governance patterns of both types of institutions. The focus on research (international rankings, detailed research assessment exercises closely linked to funding levels, etc.), clearly separates the top 200 European universities (generally viewed as research-intensive and present in global university rankings based mainly on their research output and the international visibility of their research faculty) from the vast majority of the 3,800 European institutions focused on teaching youth/students, etc. And this, slowly emergent from various EU-level policy initiatives in the 2000s (ET 2010, Lisbon Strategy, “modernization agenda”, EHEA, ERA), is one of the most striking consequences of the combination of social and economic goals, the emergence of the possibility of two separate higher education regimes existing within national systems: one focusing on the economy (called research-intensive universities and involved in the ERA and the “modernization agenda”); and the other, comprising all the other institutions, focusing on students and their (increasingly economized, or viewed through a lens of economic rather than social) concerns. This emergent structural differentiation would cut across national systems and across the EU as a whole. The combination of a research mission and a teaching mission for 90 per-cent of higher education institutions in Europe anyway seems “mission impossible” for a variety of structural reasons, including access to research funding, increasingly restricted to top national research performers with an increasing concentration of funds, and the sectors increasing competition-related parameters.

## **5. Conclusions and areas for further research**

Slightly more than a decade ago, when the discourse regarding the knowledge economy was only emergent, youth and students were a major concern in the context of the ever growing attainment levels in higher education. Currently, especially in the European policies studied in

the present chapter (but also in global thinking about economic growth on the one hand, and the role played by education in economic growth along human capital lines of thinking), the role of the low-skilled (and the low-waged) has been viewed as increasingly important; the low-skilled being of all ages, not only in the traditional student age bracket. Consequently, as shown in this chapter, the role of lifelong learning is growing, combined with the role of all educational providers, not only higher education institutions preparing higher education graduates for entry into the labour market. The traditional EU-level concern with youth is slowly being replaced by, or at least powerfully accompanied by, a concern for the generally low-skilled (because “new skills” for all age categories are needed for “new jobs”, also to be available to all age categories). The traditional EU-level concern for higher education and its graduates is accompanied by a concern for lifelong learning in general, and as a much wider category of both formal (in school, in university), non-formal and informal types. The overall interpretation of youth in the EU strategies studied here is strongly related to other wider constructs: the education and training sector in general, represented in the European Quality Framework by various levels from 1 to 8, and lifelong learning in general for both young and older workers.

Both “youth” and “universities” in the EU-level discourse can be construed as social policy targets, to be used to introduce relatively (historically) new ways of thinking about youth/students and their educational institutions. Together with the notions of employability and flexible job security, individuals themselves are becoming responsible for their social and economic fortunes (or misfortunes). Together with the notion of globally, or comparatively, “underperforming” universities, with European universities seen as “lagging behind” their American counterparts, European universities are becoming increasingly responsible for what they produce (research output and graduates), and increasingly accountable to society – with an emphasis on seeking non-state income, increasingly private income, to support their new missions and expand in a social setting in which all social programmes have to increasingly compete for public subsidies. Both youth and universities are interpreted in the EC discourse in such a manner that their own responsibility increases, and the responsibility of their nation states decreases, especially from a public funding perspective. At the same time, wider constructs are in progress: all-encompassing education and training systems, lifelong learning, the low-skilled, new skills for new jobs, and related items. Their implications for national policies are still unclear. Regarding social policies in post-communist countries, the impact of the European social model in general, and several selected EU-level strategies and policy

mechanisms in particular that were studied in this chapter, on the changing status of Central European countries in a historically unprecedented manner from “transition” to “accession” to “EU member states” within the last two decades, has been huge in ideological terms. But in practical terms, it has been negligible so far.

In general, “catching up” with the West at the beginning of the 1990s meant joining rich Western European democracies: economically, politically and socially. While the political transformation towards democracy has been successfully completed, and the economic transformation towards a market economy has been completed as well, the social transformation towards a European social model does not seem to have been completed, and it can be argued that from the very beginning of the transformation period it may have not have even been attempted in practical terms. It has not been attempted at the level of particular nation states – and, to a large degree, it has not been supported internationally; either by the subsequent European Commissions or by other international and transnational actors active in the areas of social policies in transition countries. The European Union, in general and without examining national variations, did not seem to support reforms leading to the introduction of this welfare model in post-communist countries. Perhaps the reason was that social policy reforms in this direction would have, in all probability, led to the destabilisation of the very fragile economic growth that followed the collapse of command-driven economies. The political priority throughout the region was given, and historically rightly so, to economic concerns, at the expense of social concerns that were left for more opportune times. In the meantime, Central European welfare states were evolving in different directions (Inglot 2008): different across post-communist countries, and different from their Western European counterparts. Central Europe was on its own in reforming its post-communist social policies, including pensions and healthcare, unemployment, and educational policies. A decade of neglect in reforms (generally the 1990s) may have led to the emergence of the post-communist welfare state, or a new model of social policies specific for (the majority of) new EU member states.

Consequently, the EU-level strategies and policy mechanisms discussed here – the “Education and Training 2010” strategy, “the modernization agenda of European universities”, the European Research Area, the Lisbon Strategy, the Europe 2020 strategy, and related ideas – have had the double impact on national policies and national strategies in the region.

First, in the most general terms, those strategies and policies which required limited public financial support were followed, both in theory and in practice; those which required substantial public financial support were followed in theory rather than in practice. And, finally, those requiring unprecedented increases in public expenditure – for instance, major guidelines and benchmarks related to social policies, labour market activation policies, unemployment policies, public funding for research and development, public funding for higher education, etc. – resulting from the overall principles of the (economic) Lisbon and Europe 2020 strategies (or from “the modernization agenda of European universities” combined with the guiding principles of the emergent “European Research Area”), were generally disregarded. There were important cross-country differences in the region, for instance, in public expenditure on research and development or public expenditure on higher education (with different starting levels for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria, and different levels in 2010).

Second, EU-level strategies and policies were politically useful in Central Europe. Whenever it was politically useful for national governments in the region (while employing tough social reforms, especially related to the levels of coverage or costs of the public services available, or to the reforms of pensions or healthcare or higher education that led to them becoming partially privatized or substantially more market-oriented, as well as more privately-funded and less-publicly funded), EU-level strategies and policies were both referred to in public debates and in policymakers’ arguments within national legislative bodies. Whenever it was not politically useful, they were not brought into the public arena, leading to the conclusion that their impact on national policies was also highly instrumental.

EU-level conceptualizations of ET 2010 were generally much less relevant for public debates about the future of public services or higher education in France, Germany or the United Kingdom than the same conceptualizations in new EU member states where they were used in all those cases in which supranational support for tough economic or social reforms were sought. In this sense, the overall relevance of the EU-level strategies studied in this chapter was much higher in new EU member states than in the EU-15 countries – but not necessarily in full accordance with their original spirit.

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