

SUHF KVALITETSKONFERENS 2025

Cooperation – trust – quality assurance

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Date

Why do we cooperate?

- Range of motives from altruistic, to financial, from scientific to political, from strategic to *ad hoc*
→ better quality (only) one of possible motives
- Global world, global issues, global solutions
- Declared and hidden motives, expected and unexpected outcomes
- **Cooperation as intrinsically valuable** (even at a cost, even at a risk to quality) → “culture of cooperation”

**THIS
IS WHAT
WE DO**

EUA's strategic plan



<https://www.eua.eu/publications/positions/europe-s-universities-shaping-the-future.html>

“The scale of today’s global challenges and opportunities demands that as a sector we **collaborate and cooperate** to a degree that is unprecedented in history”

“... (we need a) European platform where we **pool our wisdom** in horizon scanning, strategising, communicating with power holders and shaping public discourse”

“... **share our experiences and expertise** to optimise creativity, research, learning, innovation, governance and operations”

Goal: Optimising our members’ capacity to address societal needs **through collaboration and sharing** of good policies, practices, expertise and resources

EUA Universities without Walls 2030

- universities that are **open and engaged in society**
- ... while **retaining their core values**
- universities will provide an **open, transformative space for common knowledge production** through research, education, innovation and culture

<https://www.eua.eu/publications/positions/universities-without-walls-eua-s-vision-for-europe-s-universities-in-2030.html>



THROUGH IT ALL WE STAY CONNECTED!

Cooperation as a component of quality

- Assumptions and beliefs

- Cooperation will (more likely than not) lead to (better) quality
 - Access to resources, research results, brains
 - Diversity is good and inducive of innovation (and thus of quality)
 - Exiting comfort zone supports enquiry and discovery
 - Sharing of (good) practices and experiences leads to better solutions, efficiency, and (thus) better quality
 - People involved in cooperation (including mobility) will gain from the experience and come out richer (better)
- Individual, institutional, national and global benefits (although these may not always be aligned!)

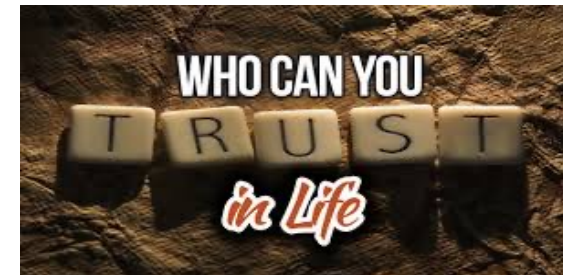


Cooperation as a component of quality

- Fears

- Concerns of respect of standards (for environment, scientific rigour...)
- Concerns for security (of individuals, of information, of use of research...)
- Cooperation leads to loss of control (including over quality)
- Investment without guaranteed pay-back
- Uncertainty about the shared value base
- Science diplomacy and cooperation vs politics

Fundamentally:



CONTROL VALUES
BUILD CONFIDENCE
UNCERTAINTY MUTUAL RULES
TRUST
RISK NEW
TRANSPARENCY FOREIGN DISTANCE
RELIABILITY
DEMONSTRATE

QA as enabler of (quality) international cooperation



- Common agreed framework
- Different but sufficiently good/similar
- QA as a basis for recognition and thus mobility
- Quality assurance as **proxy for trust (it is good to trust but better to check) → “conditional trust”**

QA as an obstacle to cooperation

- Incompatible requirements, criteria, timelines
- Quality vs traditions and habits
- Multiplication of procedures

Solutions from the Bologna process:

- Shared set of criteria
- EQAR and DEQAR
- European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

European Commission:

- Alliances (?) and the European Degree (?)
- Institutional approaches to QA

Thank you for your attention

