

The Autonomy Scorecard 2023

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Development

Portugal
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What is the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard?



- Benchmarks regulatory frameworks for universities across Europe
- Provides European comparative data & trends
- Acknowledges specificities & does not promote a single model
- Scores & ranks systems according to the autonomy of universities in four dimensions:

ORGANISATIONAL

FINANCIAL

STAFFING

ACADEMIC

Autonomy dimensions

Organisational

- Rector selection procedure/criteria
- Rector term of office/dismissal
- Inclusion/ selection of external members for the governing bodies
- Academic structure decisions
- Creation of legal entities

Financial

- Length/type of public funding
- Keeping a surplus
- Borrowing
- Building ownership
- Tuition fees for national/EU students
- Tuition fees for non-EU students

Staffing

- Recruitment procedures
- Salaries
- Dismissals
- Promotions

Academic

- Setting total student numbers
- Selecting students
- Introducing/terminating study programmes
- Choosing language of instruction
- Selecting QA mechanisms/QA providers
- Study programme content design

Key enablers

- Strategic governance
- Strategic planning
- Leadership engagement
- Shared services
- Collaboration

- Facility use & space optimisation
- Strategic financial management & allocation to priorities
- Procurement
- Internal incentive schemes

- Career path models adapted to new ways of conducting research and L&T
- Incentives
- Skills development, staff training (diversity)

- Technology enhanced learning
- Design & introduction of programmes
- Admission policies

Scoring over 30 indicators

- based on restrictions which are assigned a deduction value
- percentage scores for each indicator
- Average score per autonomy dimension

Weighting system

assesses the relative importance of the autonomy indicators, based on the input of the European national rectors' conferences

Data collection and verification

with national university associations

Indicator: Capacity to decide on the overall number of students			
Restriction	Deduction value	Score	Percentage
Independent decision of universities	0 point	0/5	0 = 0%
Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students, while an external authority decides on the number of state-funded students	2 points	2/5	0,4 = 40%
Negotiation between universities and an external authority	2 points	2/5	0,4 = 40%
Exclusive decision of an external authority	5 points	5/5	1 = 100%
Free admission	5 points	5/5	1 = 100%

Ability to decide on the overall number of students	Number of responses	'Importance value'
Very important	21	63
Fairly important	7	14
Somewhat important	1	1
Not important	1	0
TOTAL	30	78

Table 1 Participating higher education systems

Code	Country/system	2011	2017	2023
AT	Austria	•	•	•
BE-fl	Flanders (Belgium)	•	•	•
BE-fr	Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium)		•	•
CH	Switzerland	•	•	•
CY	Cyprus	•		•
CZ	Czechia	•		•
DE-bb	Brandenburg (Germany)	•	•	•
DE-he	Hessen (Germany)	•	•	•
DE-nrw	North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany)	•	•	•
DK	Denmark	•	•	•
EE	Estonia	•	•	•
ES	Spain	•	•	•
FI	Finland	•	•	•
FR	France	•	•	•
GE	Georgia			•
GR	Greece	•		•
HR	Croatia		•	•
HU	Hungary	•	•	

Code	Country/system	2011	2017	2023
IE	Ireland	•	•	•
IS	Iceland	•	•	•
IT	Italy	•	•	•
LT	Lithuania	•	•	•
LU	Luxembourg	•	•	•
LV	Latvia	•	•	•
NL	Netherlands	•	•	•
NO	Norway	•	•	•
PL	Poland	•	•	•
PT	Portugal	•	•	•
RO	Romania			•
RS	Serbia		•	•
SE	Sweden	•	•	•
SI	Slovenia		•	•
SK	Slovakia	•	•	•
TR	Türkiye	•		•
UK-en	England (UK)	•	•	•
UK-sc	Scotland (UK)			•

Overall developments

- Various reforms since previous Scorecard
- Landscape consolidation:
 - Mergers
 - Alignment of regulatory frameworks across sub-systems
- Transnational collaboration – the European Universities Initiative and its impact on national regulatory frameworks
 - All 4 dimensions matter to support collaboration
 - Few reforms implemented yet

Example of reforms

2017	Czechia, England
2018	Luxembourg, Poland
2019	Estonia
2020	NextGenerationEU
2021	Latvia
2022	Croatia, Ireland, Slovakia

Overall developments

- Issues
 - Underfunding (general trend of underfunding and new investment needs)
 - Increasing ad hoc state interventions
 - Evolving geopolitical tensions (knowledge security, war in Ukraine)
 - Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Accountability
 - Growing complexity, monitoring and control
- Leadership
 - Increased autonomy requires skilled leadership (lack of LDPs and funding for it)

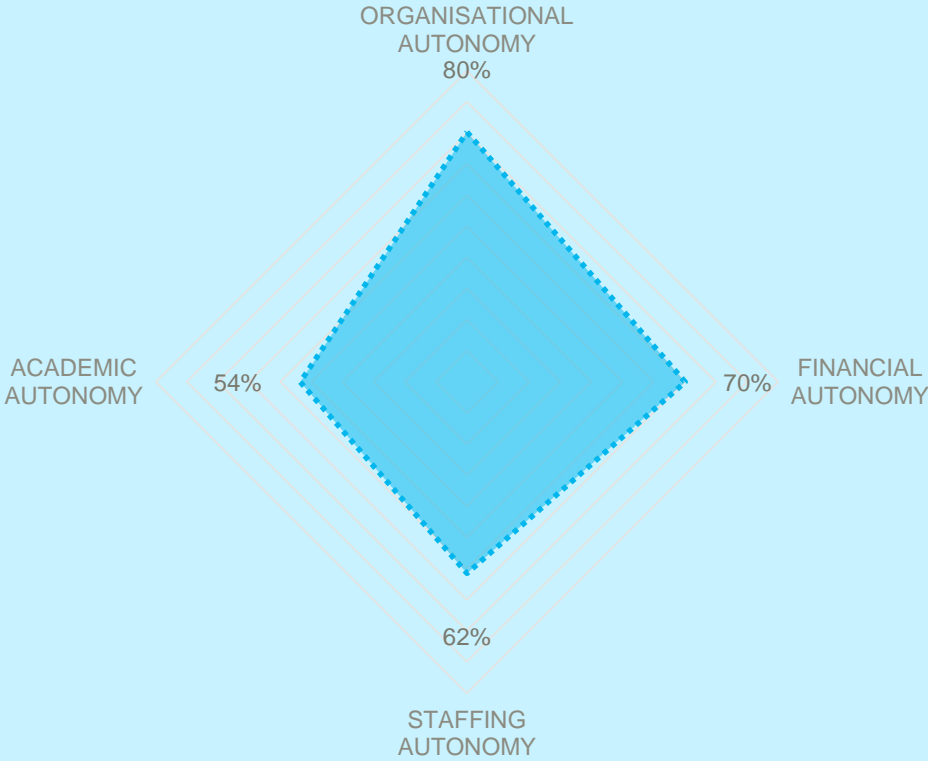
Insights on Portugal

- Stability in the regulatory framework
- Discussions on the revision of the funding model to take account of diverse capacities and situations of universities across the territory
- Evolving framework for Polytechnics
- The sector signals a lack of autonomy in practice, due mostly to:
 - Governmental, Parliamentary or Accreditation Agency procedures
 - interpretations of existing laws or regulations
 - constraints in defining fees for some programmes
- Current accreditation procedures are deemed to place excessive focus on resources and micro-management issues.

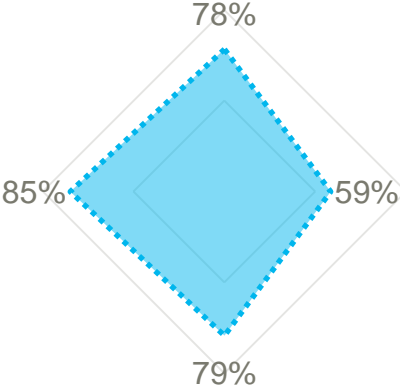
Autonomy dimension	2010	2017	2023	2023 Cluster	Rank
Organisational autonomy	80%	80%	80%	Medium high	8th
Financial autonomy	70%	70%	70%	Medium high	10th
Staffing autonomy	62%	62%	62%	Medium high	23rd
Academic autonomy	54%	54%	54%	Medium low	23rd

Portugal & others

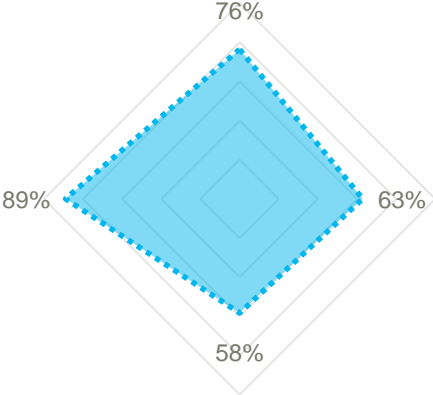
PT



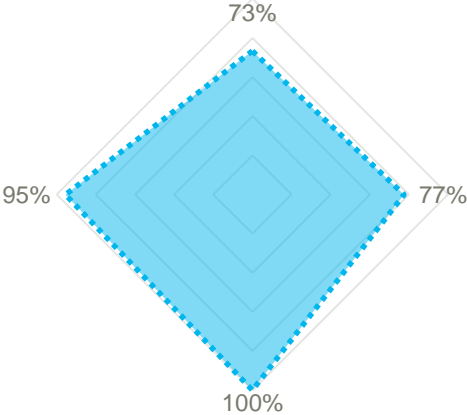
AT



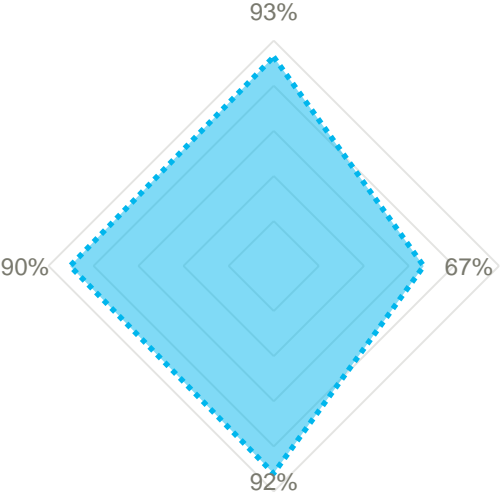
IE



EE



FI



Organisational autonomy

Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruitment procedures • Staff salaries • Staff dismissals • Staff promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding on overall student numbers • Selecting students • Introducing/ terminating programmes • Choosing language of instruction • Selecting QA mechanisms/ providers • Designing content of programmes

Governance trends

- External authorities are less involved in university executive leadership matters, with some exceptions and the extreme case of Türkiye.
- Experimental approaches described in the previous edition have led to sector-wide changes (e.g. Estonia).
- The main narrative for governance reform promotes efficiency in decision-making and a stronger connection to societal and economic interests.

Organisational Autonomy

Free to:	AT	EE	FI	IE	PT
Select executive head without external validation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Decide on selection criteria for executive head	✓	X	X	✓	X
Set the procedure to dismiss the executive head	!	!	✓	✓	!
Set the term of office of the executive head	X	!	!	X	X
Decide on external members in governing bodies	!	X	✓	!	✓
Decide on academic structures	✓	✓	✓	!	✓
Create legal entities	✓	✓	✓	!	!

✓ - Yes, universities can do this without any significant restrictions

! – Universities can do this, but with significant restrictions

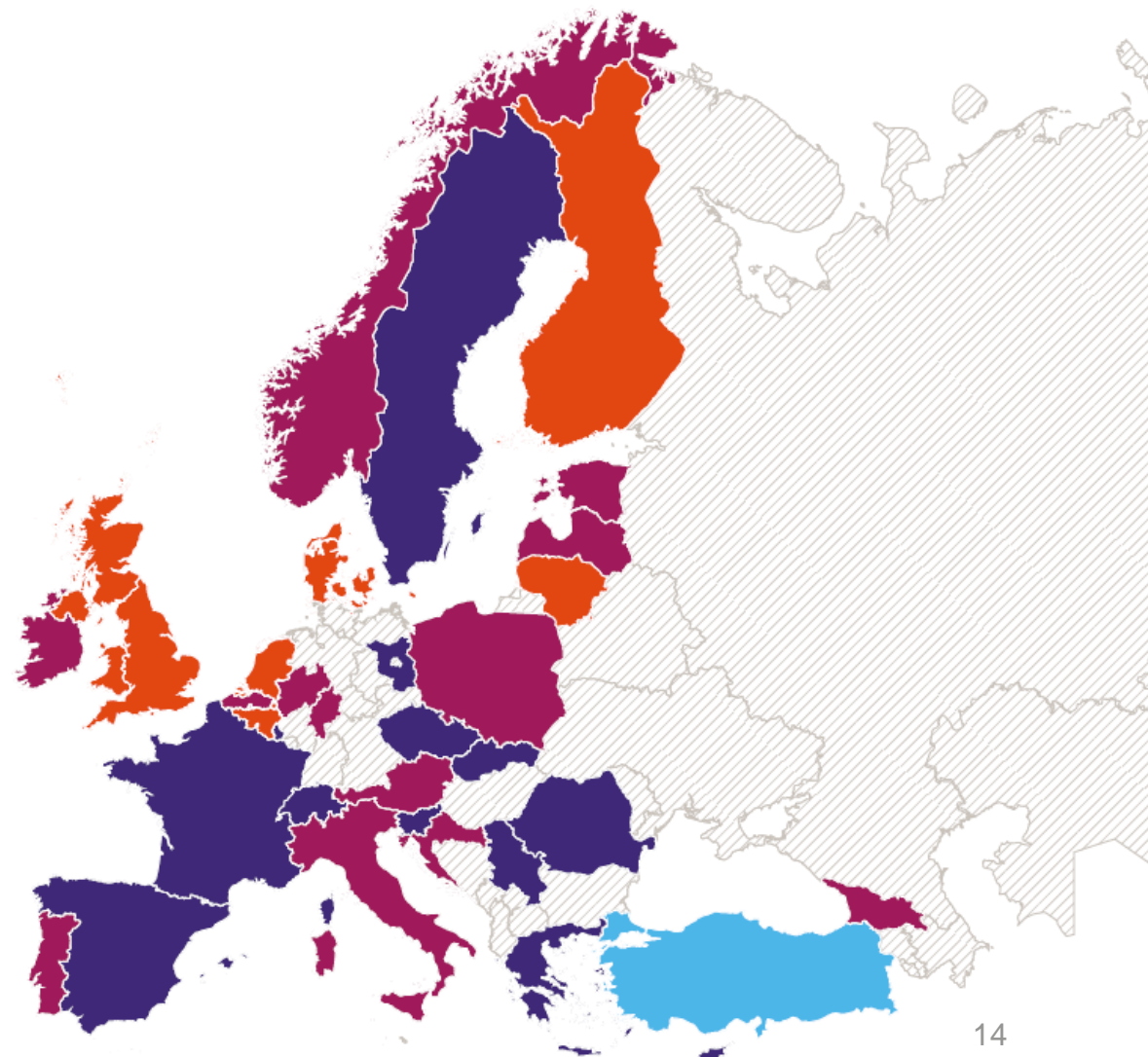
X – No, universities cannot do this

NB: The Scorecard records data for public universities.

1. Organisational autonomy

Map 7 Organisational autonomy clusters

- Notable increases: LU, SK, NL, LV
- Notable decreases: EE, SI, DK



Financial autonomy

Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruitment procedures • Staff salaries • Staff dismissals • Staff promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding on overall student numbers • Selecting students • Introducing/ terminating programmes • Choosing language of instruction • Selecting QA mechanisms/ providers • Designing content of programmes

Financial autonomy trends

- More steering through the funding model – indicators & performance agreements
- Stability of tuition fee models from the perspective of institutional decision-making capacity but possible upcoming changes
- Tensions around the campus; challenges to greening and efficiency
- More pressure on financial autonomy through:
 - *increased use of earmarked / targeted funding & eroding core public funding*
 - *insufficient public investment in infrastructure*
 - *lack of coverage of indirect costs in competitive funding*

Financial Autonomy

Free to:	AT	EE	FI	IE	PT
Allocate internal funding	!	✓	✓	!	!
Borrow money	!	✓	✓	!	X
Keep surplus on public funds	✓	✓	✓	X	!
Sell real estate	✓	✓	!	!	!
Set tuition fees for national/EU students at bachelor's degree level	X	X	X	X	✓
Set tuition fees for national/EU students at master's degree level	X	X	X	✓	✓
Set tuition fees for international/non-EU students at bachelor' and master's degree level	X	✓	!	✓	✓

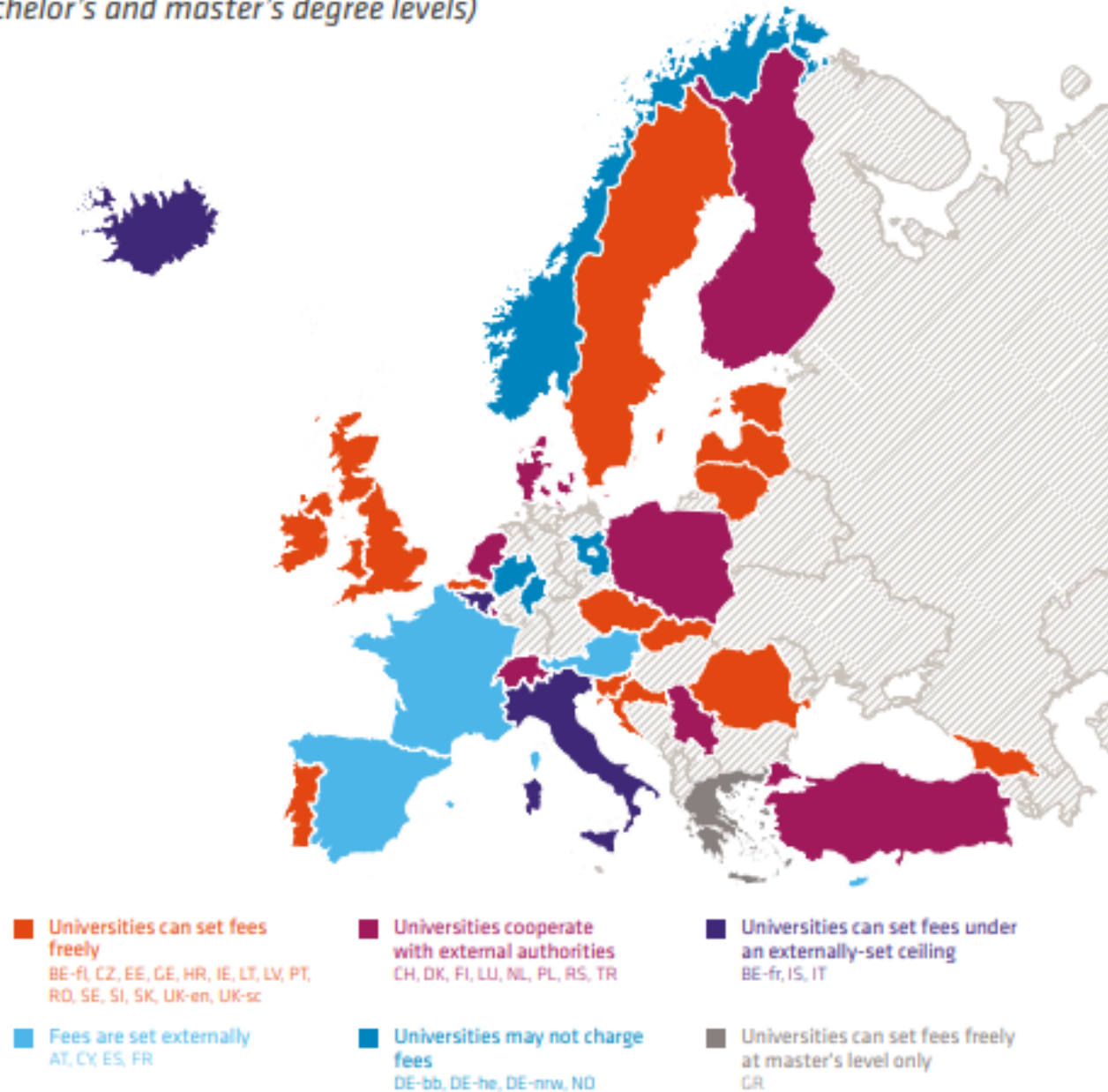
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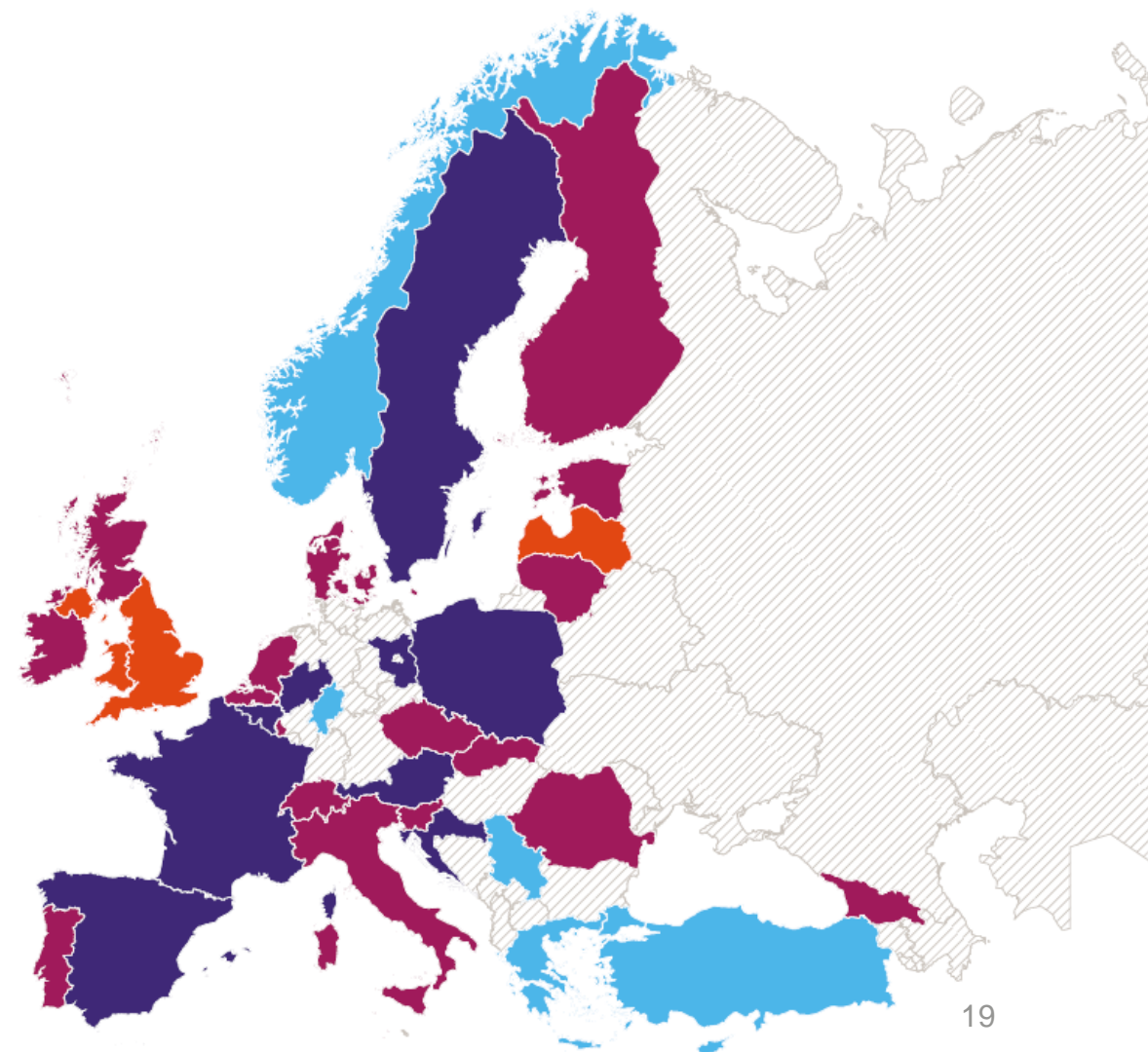
Map 4 Fee setting for international students
(bachelor's and master's degree levels)



2. Financial autonomy

Map 9 Financial autonomy clusters

- Notable increase: PL
- Notable decreases: LU, TR, NO



Staffing autonomy

Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recruitment procedures • Staff salaries • Staff dismissals • Staff promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding on overall student numbers • Selecting students • Introducing/ terminating programmes • Choosing language of instruction • Selecting QA mechanisms/ providers • Designing content of programmes

Staffing autonomy trends

- Civil servant status continues to apply to a majority of senior staff in about half of the systems. Netherlands now completed a long-term deregulation process.
- Critical points of tension include rigidities in staffing matters such as salary-setting, contract duration, criteria (language proficiency...).
- The lack of attractiveness of academic careers and job security for early-career researchers are highly discussed issues.
- More flexible recruitment paths, ambitions regarding international attractiveness remain thwarted by regulations.

Staffing Autonomy

Free to:	AT	EE	FI	IE	PT
Recruit senior academic staff	✓	✓	✓	!	!
Recruit senior administrative staff	✓	✓	✓	!	!
Set salaries for senior academic staff	!	✓	!	X	X
Set salaries for senior administrative staff	!	✓	!	X	X
Dismiss senior academic staff	!	✓	✓	X	X
Dismiss senior administrative staff	!	✓	✓	X	X
Promote senior academic staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	!
Promote senior administrative staff	✓	✓	✓	✓	!

✓ - Yes, universities can do this without any significant restrictions

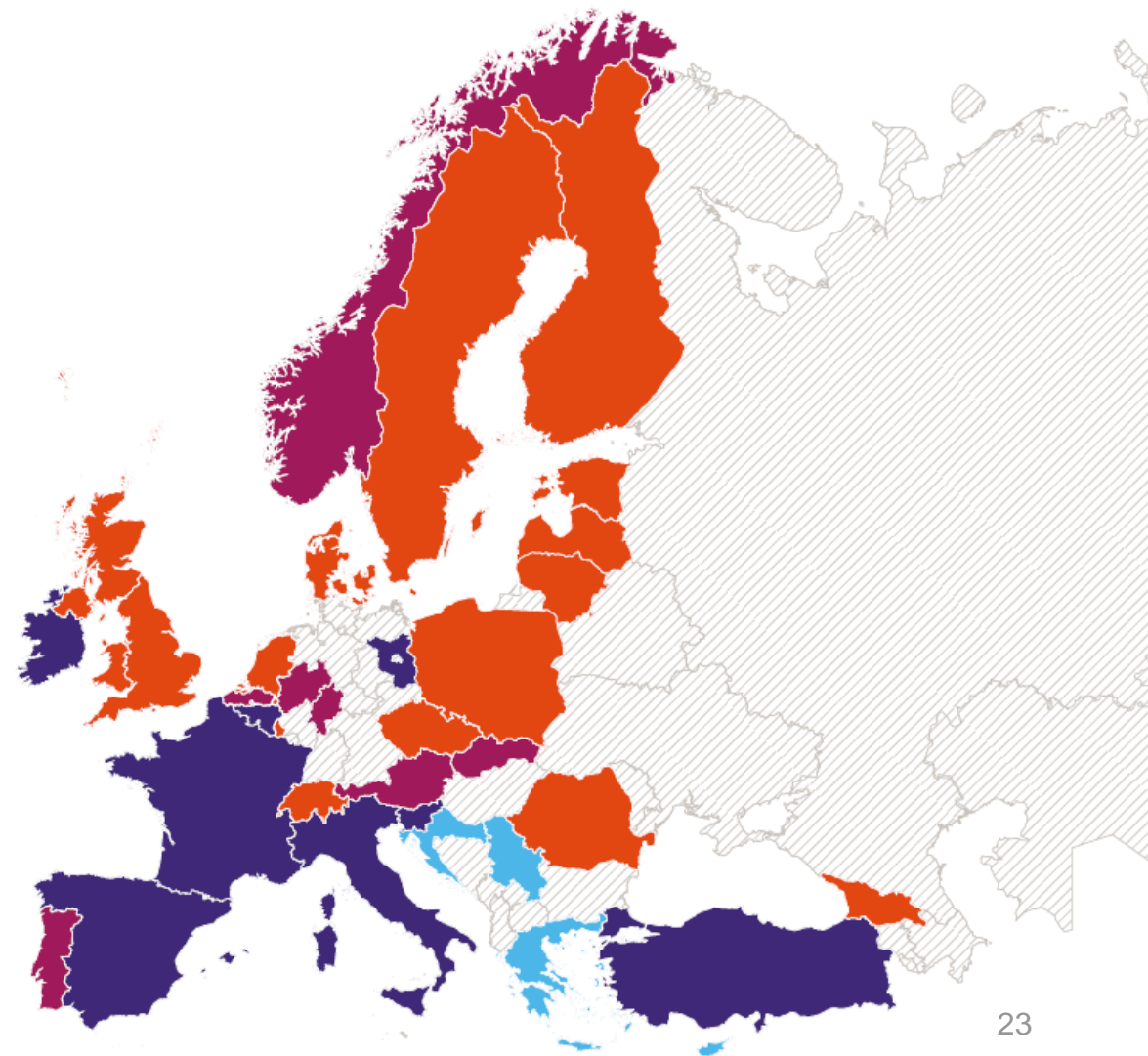
! – Universities can do this, but with significant restrictions

X – No, universities cannot do this

NB: The Scorecard records data for public universities.

3. Staffing autonomy

- Notable increases: NL, IE, SI, AT
- Notable decreases: HR, SK



Academic autonomy

Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff recruitment procedures• Staff salaries• Staff dismissals• Staff promotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deciding on overall student numbers• Selecting students• Introducing/ terminating programmes• Choosing language of instruction• Selecting QA mechanisms/ providers• Designing content of programmes

Academic autonomy trends

- Tensions around internationalisation – new limits because of financial pressures
- Slow pace of transition towards external QA at institution level instead of programmes
- Growing interest from governments for the contents and organisation of both the academic offer and research

Academic Autonomy

Free to:	AT	EE	FI	IE	PT
Decide on overall student numbers	!	✓	!	✓	!
Select students at bachelor's degree level	!	✓	✓	✓	!
Select students at master's degree level	!	✓	✓	✓	✓
Introducing programmes at bachelor's and master's degree levels	✓	X	X	✓	X
Choosing language of instruction at bachelor's and master's degree levels	✓	!	✓	✓	✓
Selecting external QA mechanisms	X	X	X	X	X
Selecting external QA providers	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Design content of programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ - Yes, universities can do this without any significant restrictions

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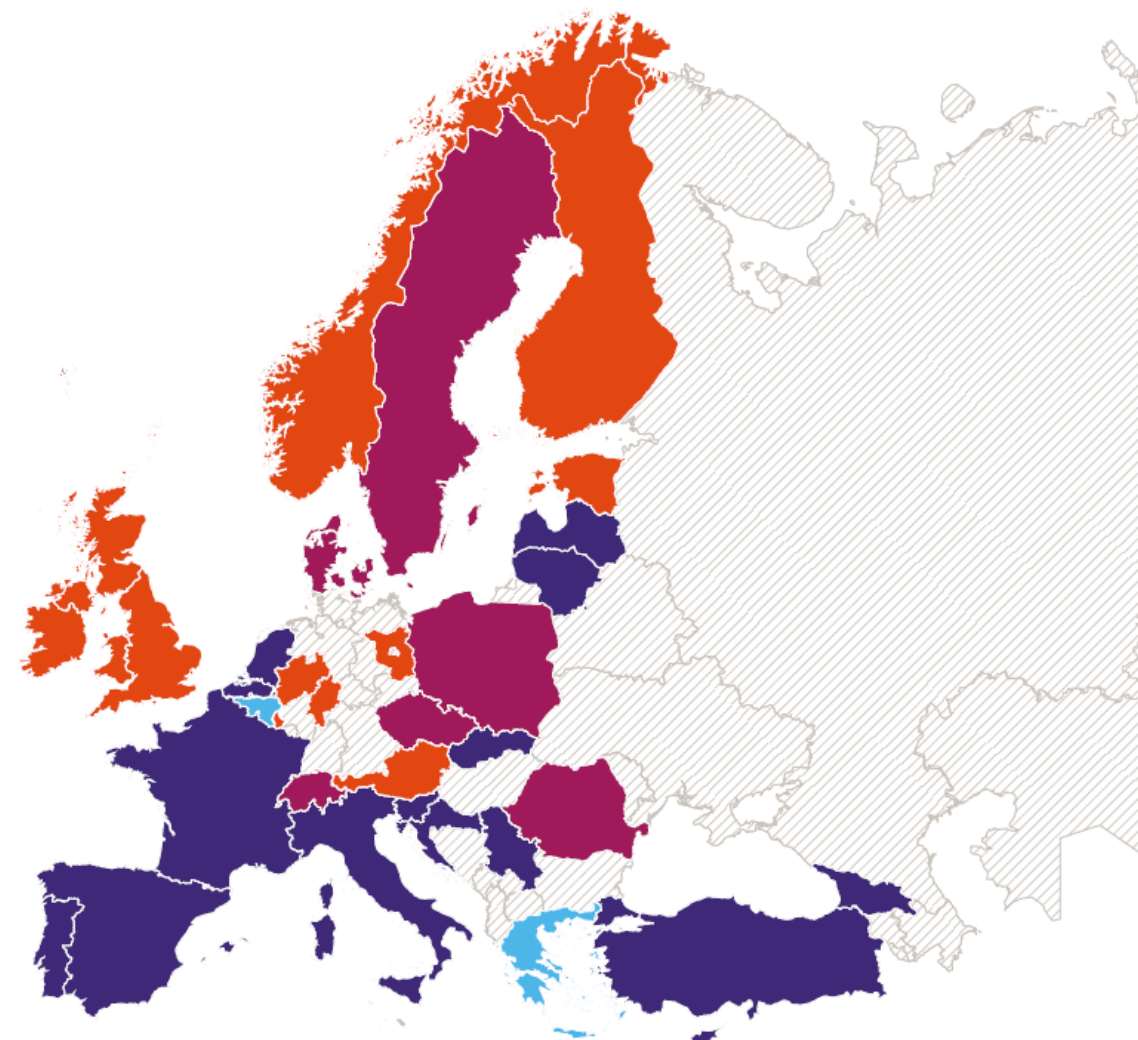
X – No, universities cannot do this

NB: The Scorecard records data for public universities.

4. Academic autonomy

Map 13 Academic autonomy clusters

- Notable increases: BE-fl, AT, LT, LV
- Decreases: DK and EE



Key messages

1. Autonomy goes hand in hand with sound **accountability** frameworks. The notion of accountability is evolving and becoming increasingly complex, and as such, so is the interplay with institutional autonomy.
2. To reap the benefits of greater autonomy, universities must be supported to develop the right sets of **skills**, whether strategic, transversal or technical, to best exploit autonomy. Autonomous universities require strong leadership.
3. Sustainable funding, flexible governance, and sufficient autonomy help unlock **efficiency** in university operations and support them in delivering impact.
4. Regulation does not mean all needs to be in the law – see use of “Codes” with emphasis on **principles**, notably in England or Scotland.
5. An **institutional vision** is necessary & it must be developed and shared with all governance stakeholders.

THANK YOU

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