The Autonomy Scorecard 2023

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What is the EUA University Autonomy Scorecard?

University Autonomy in Europe IV

The Scorecard 2023

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- Benchmarks regulatory frameworks for universities across Europe

- Provides European comparative data & trends

- Includes 35 higher education systems

- 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

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

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

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

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

Methodology

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)			•

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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)
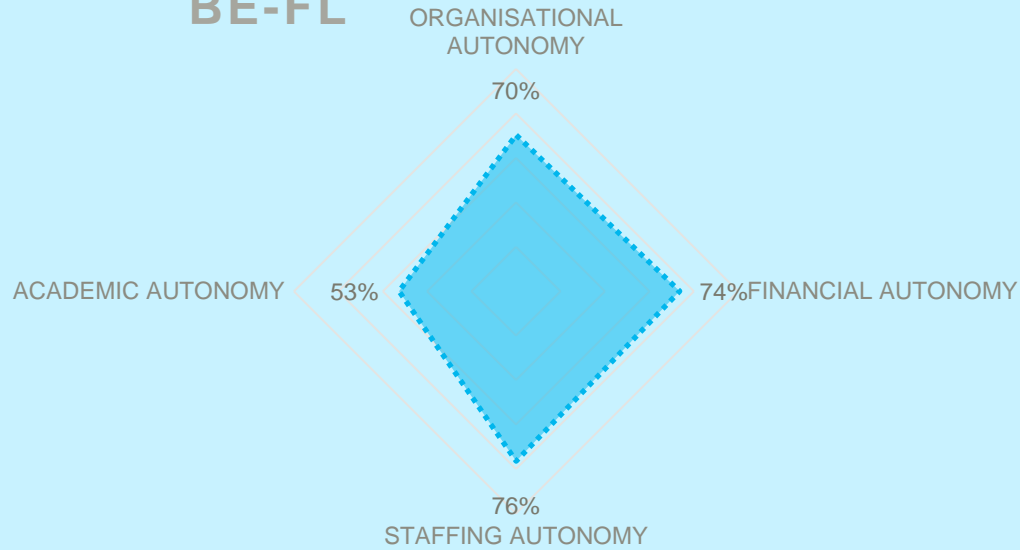
Insights on FWB

- No major legal change but further consolidation of the HE landscape entails more framing of university activities
- Homogenisation of rules via Government commissioners
- Universities considered as part of a wider group of providers
- 'Closed envelope' principle for funding model
- Obstacles to internationalisation

Non-Community				
Autonomy dimension	**2017**	**2023**	**2023 Cluster**	**Rank**
Organisational autonomy	90%	90%	High	4
Financial autonomy	54%	54%	Medium low	25
Staffing autonomy	49%	49%	Medium low	28
Academic autonomy	26%	26%	Low	35

Community-governed universities				
Autonomy dimension	**2017**	**2023**	**2023 Cluster**	**(virtual rank)**
Organisational autonomy	53%	53%	Medium low	33
Financial autonomy	48%	48%	Medium low	26
Staffing autonomy	42%	42%	Medium low	32
Academic autonomy	26%	26%	Low	35

Flanders, FWB & others

BE-FL
- ORGANISATIONAL AUTONOMY 70%
- FINANCIAL AUTONOMY 74%
- STAFFING AUTONOMY 76%
- ACADEMIC AUTONOMY 53%

BE-FR
- ORGANISATIONAL AUTONOMY 90%
- FINANCIAL AUTONOMY 54%
- STAFFING AUTONOMY 49%
- ACADEMIC AUTONOMY 26%

SE
- ORGANISATIONAL AUTONOMY 59%
- FINANCIAL AUTONOMY 56%
- STAFFING AUTONOMY 97%
- ACADEMIC AUTONOMY 67%

AT
- 78%
- 59%
- 79%
- 85%

IE
- 76%
- 63%
- 58%
- 89%

FI
- 93%
- 67%
- 92%
- 90%

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Academic autonomy

EUA EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION
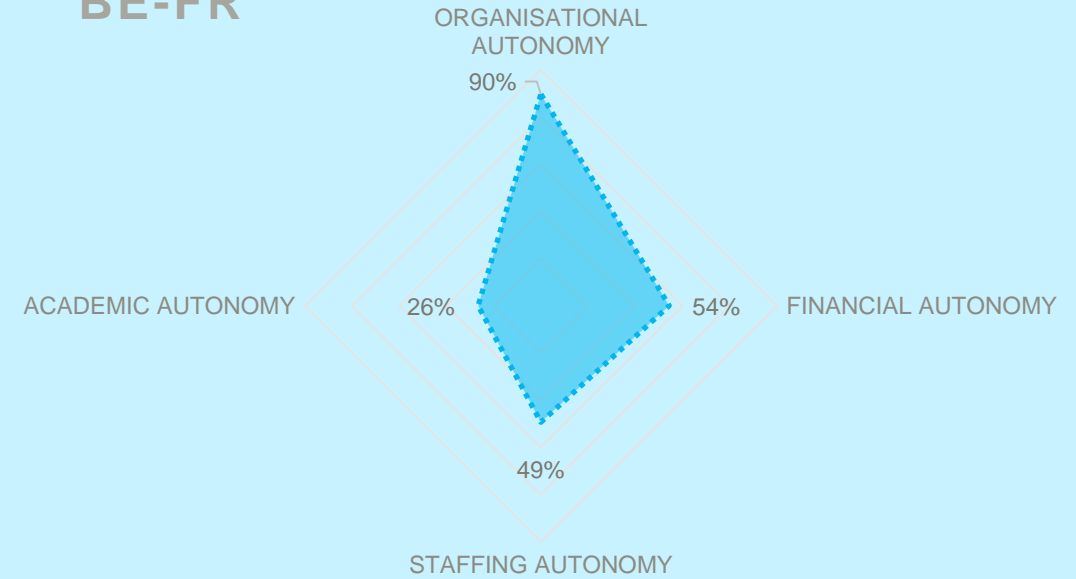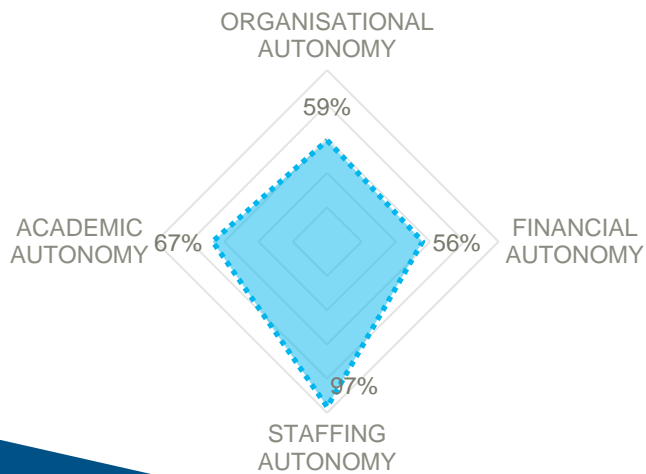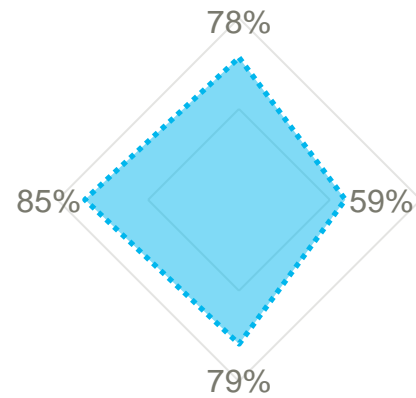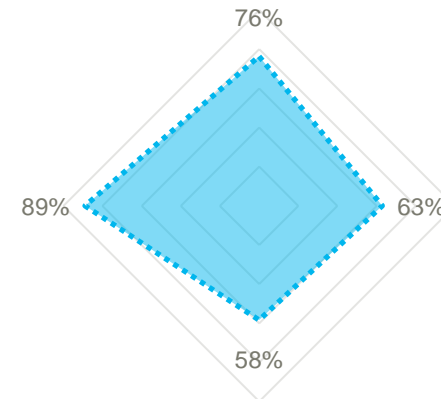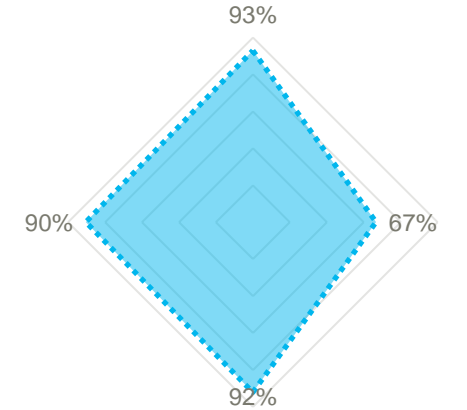
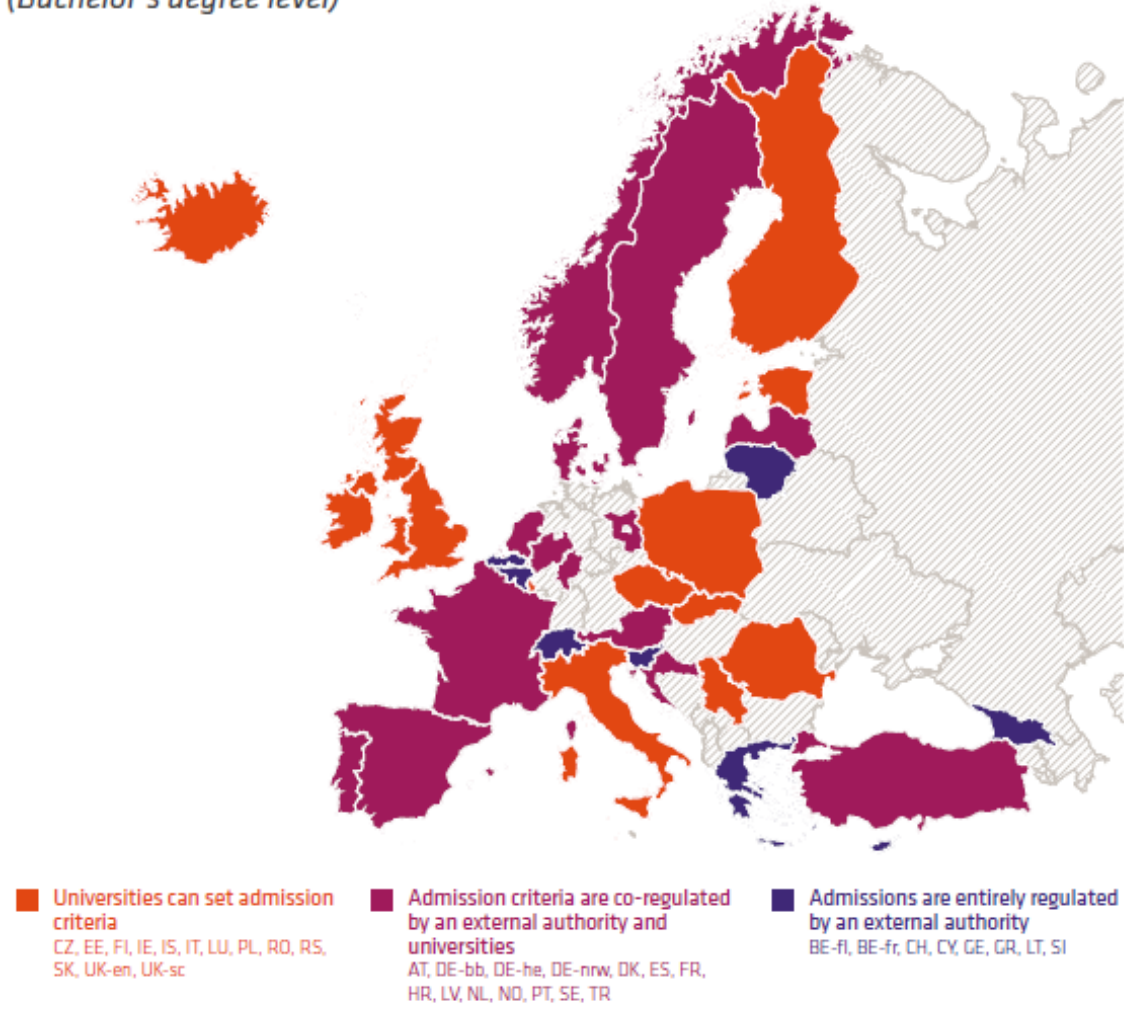| Organisational	Financial	Staffing	Academic
• Selection procedure/ criteria for rector • Dismissal/ term of office of rector • Inclusion/ selection of external members in governing bodies • Deciding on academic structures • Creating legal entities	• Length/ type of public funding • Keeping a surplus • Borrowing money • Owning buildings • Charging tuition fees for national/ EU students • Charging tuition fees for non-EU students	• Staff recruitment procedures • Staff salaries • Staff dismissals • Staff promotions	• 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

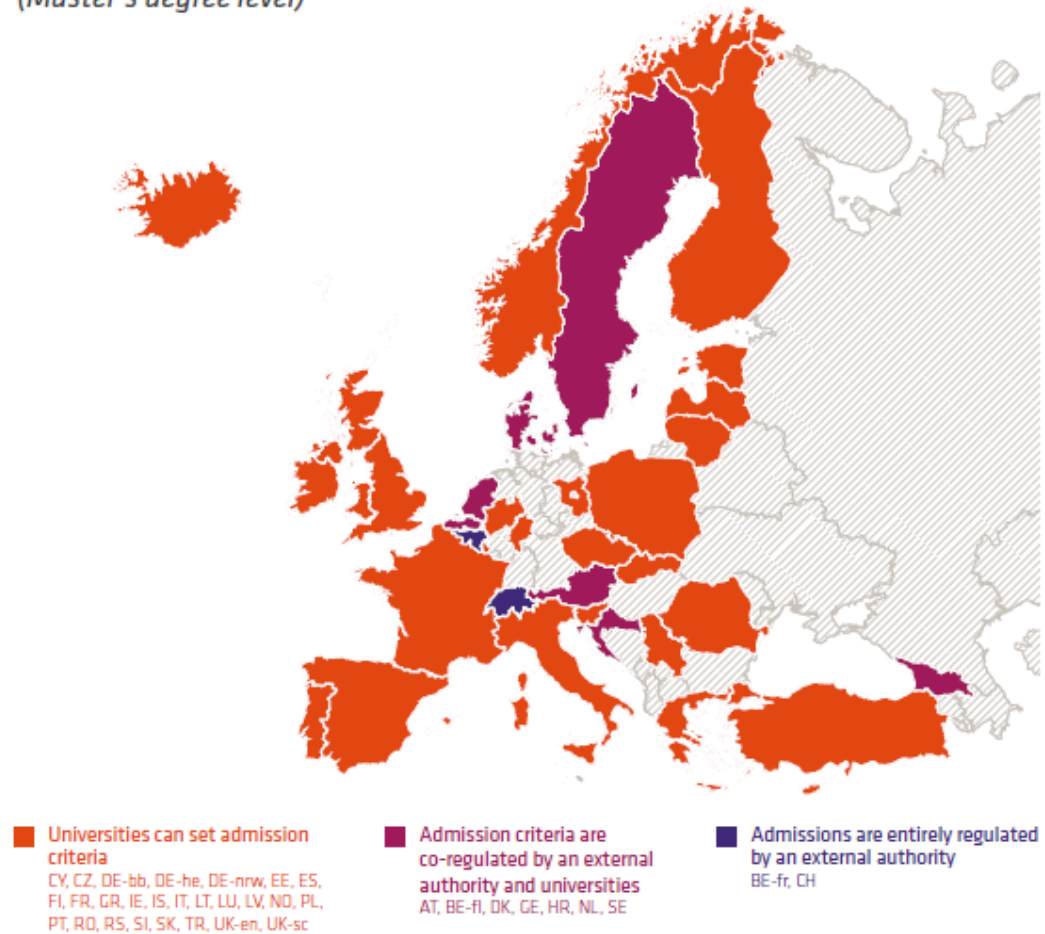**Graph 17** Overall student numbers
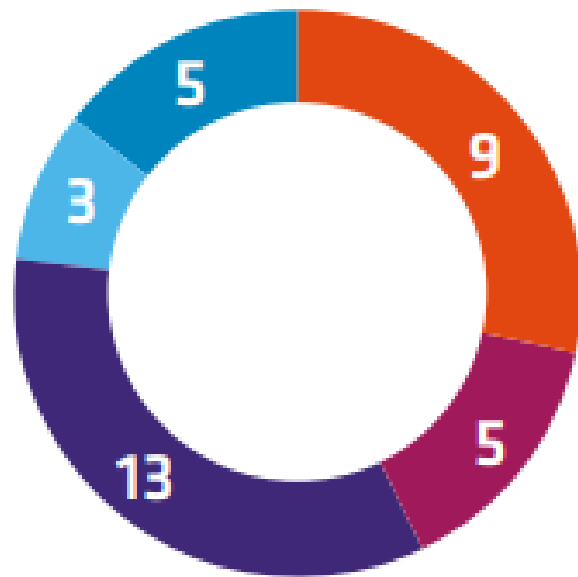
- **Exclusive decision of the university**
  EE, IE, IT, LU, NO, PL, SE, UK-en, UK-sc

- **Universities decide on the number of fee-paying students while an external authority defines the number of state-funded study places**
  GE, HR, LT, LV, RO

- **Universities negotiate with an external authority**
  AT, CY, CZ, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, DK, ES, FI, IS, PT, SI, SK

- **Exclusive decision of an external authority**
  GR, RS, TR

- **Free admission**
  BE-fl, BE-fr, CH, FR, NL

Map 5 Admission criteria setting
(Bachelor's degree level)

Universities can set admission criteria
CZ, EE, FI, IE, IS, IT, LU, PL, RO, RS, SK, UK-en, UK-sc

Admission criteria are co-regulated by an external authority and universities
AT, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, DK, ES, FR, HR, LV, NL, NO, PT, SE, TR

Admissions are entirely regulated by an external authority
BE-fl, BE-fr, CH, CY, GE, GR, LT, SI

Map 6 Admission criteria setting
(Master's degree level)

■ Universities can set admission criteria
CY, CZ, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, EE, ES, FI, FR, GR, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SI, SK, TR, UK-en, UK-sc

■ Admission criteria are co-regulated by an external authority and universities
AT, BE-fl, DK, GE, HR, NL, SE

■ Admissions are entirely regulated by an external authority
BE-fr, CH

Graph 18 Introduction of new degree programmes
(Bachelor's and master's levels)
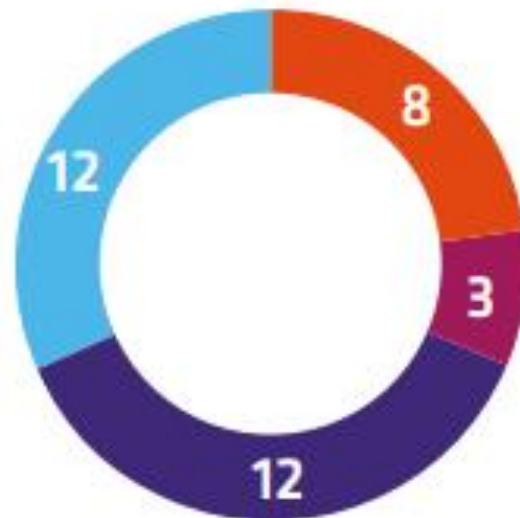
- Universities can open degree programmes without prior accreditation
  AT, CH, IE, LU, NO, SE, UK-en, UK-sc

- All new degree programmes/ courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be funded
  ES, GE, NL

- All new degree programmes/ courses must be submitted to prior accreditation to be introduced
  BE-fl, BE-fr, CY, GR, HR, IT, LT, PT, RO, RS, SI, SK

- Other restrictions
  CZ, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, DK, EE, FI, FR, IS, LV, PL, TR

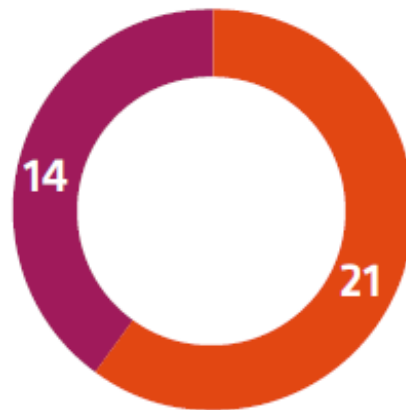**Graph 19a** Capacity to choose the language of instruction at bachelor's degree level
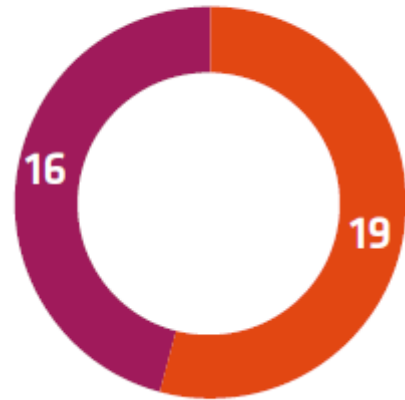
16

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- ■ Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes
  AT, CH, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, ES, FI, IE, IT, LU, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, TR, UK-en, UK-sc

- ■ Restrictions on the use of foreign languages apply
  BE-fl, BE-fr, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FR, GE, GR, HR, IS, LT, LV, NL, RS, SI

**Graph 19b** Capacity to choose the language of instruction at master's degree level

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- ■ Universities can choose the language of instruction for all programmes
  AT, CH, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, ES, FI, GR, IE, IS, IT, LU, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SK, TR, UK-en, UK-sc

- ■ Restrictions on the use of foreign languages apply
  BE-fl, BE-fr, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FR, GE, HR, LT, LV, NL, RS, SI

Graph 20 Capacity to select quality assurance providers
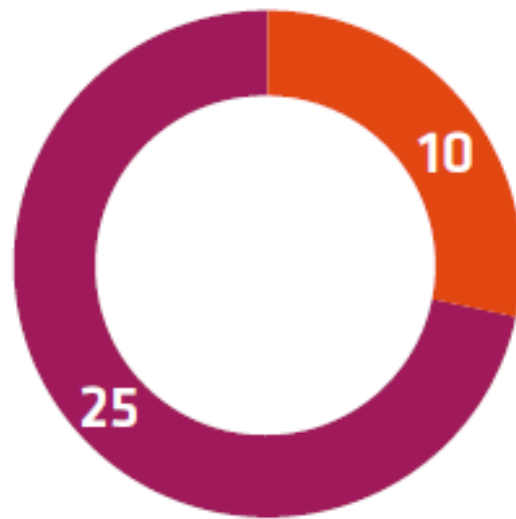
- **Universities can choose a provider freely according to their needs** (including agencies from other countries)
  AT, CH, DE-bb, DE-he, DE-nrw, EE, FI, LT, LV, RO

- **Universities cannot choose the quality assurance agency**
  BE-fl, BE-fr, CY, CZ, DK, ES, FR, GE, GR, HR, IE, IS, IT, LU, NL, NO, PL, PT, RS, SE, SI, SK, TR, UK-en, UK-sc

Academic autonomy

| Free to:	AT	SE	FI	IE	BE-fl	BE-fr*
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	🟢	🟢	🔴	🟢	🔴	🔴
Choosing language of instruction at bachelor's and master's degree levels	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟡	🟡
Selecting external QA mechanisms	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴	🔴
Selecting external QA providers	🟢	🔴	🟢	🟢	🔴	🔴
Design content of programmes	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢

🟢 Yes, universities can do this without any significant restrictions

🟡 Universities can do this, but with significant restrictions

🔴 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

High

Medium high

Medium low

Low

19
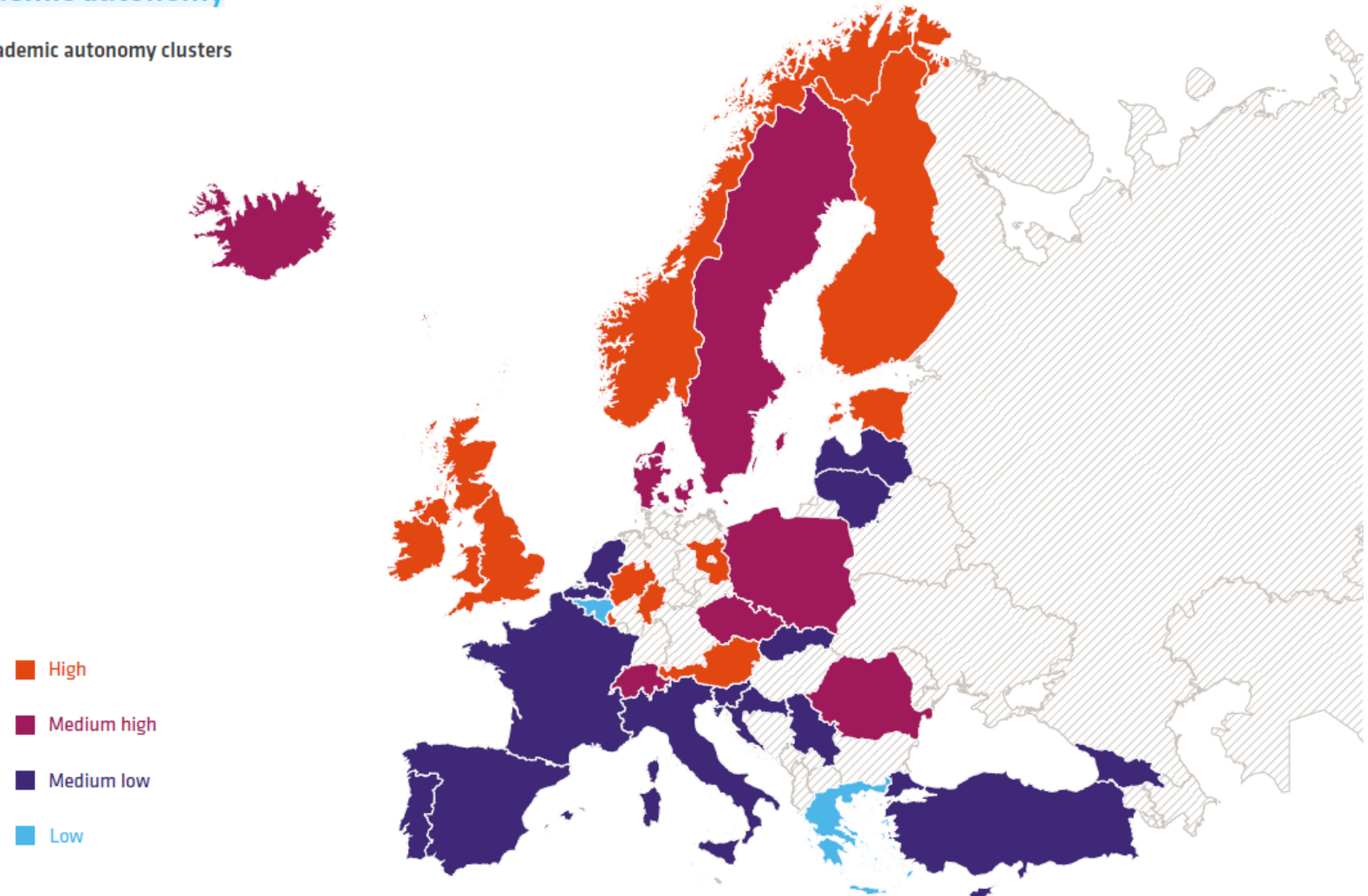
Key messages

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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