EUROPEAN UNION

Universities in Innovation Ecosystems and the role of the European Universities alliances

Policy conference *From data to direction: How can EHESO support the monitoring of the Union of Skills?*

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Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

Higher education

European landscape of universities in innovation systems

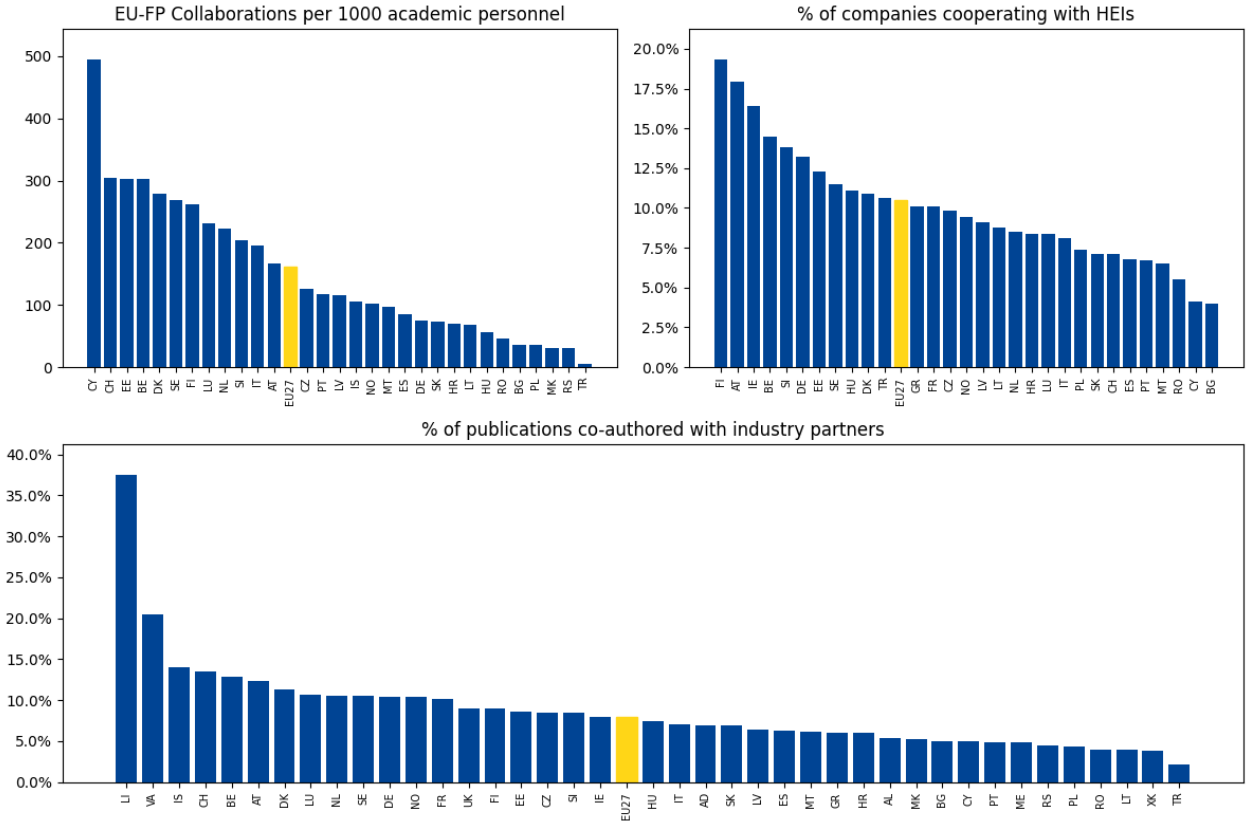
Questions

- How do universities cooperate with industry in research and how do they equip students with entrepreneurial skills?
- How do these different dimensions relate to each other?
- What role are the European Universities alliances playing?

Data

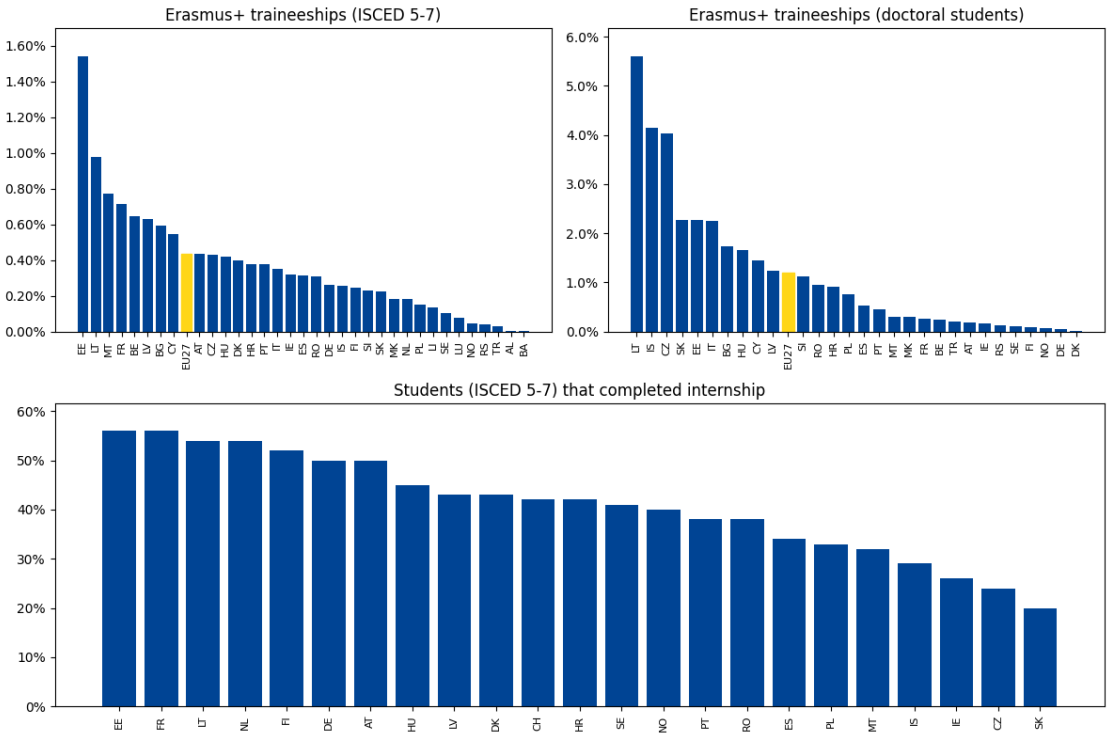
- EHESS country-level data to see national profiles. 2022 (2020 where not available).
- EHESO institutional-level microdata to compare alliance vs non-alliance universities. 2022.

University-industry collaboration



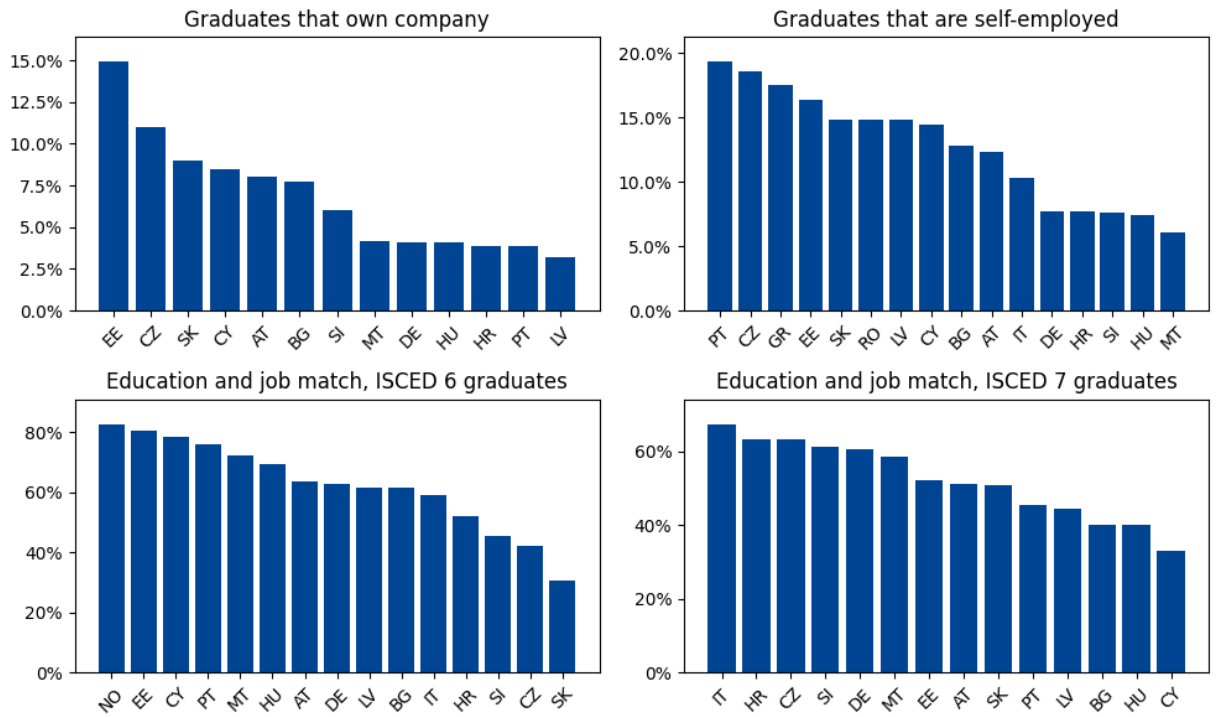
- Variation across countries.
- **Cyprus** leads in EU-FP cooperation (per 1.000 academic staff).
- **Finland** leads in % of companies cooperating with HEIs.
- **Liechtenstein** leads in joint publications with industry.

Equipping students with skills



- Internships are common across the board
  - **Estonia, France, and Lithuania** have highest rates.
- Erasmus+ traineeships (specific internships) are much rarer.
  - **EU-27 average** for Bachelor/Master students is **0.4%**
  - Doctoral traineeships are more common (**EU average 1.2%**)
- **Estonia and Lithuania** have high scores on both overall internships and Erasmus+ traineeships

Post-graduation skills

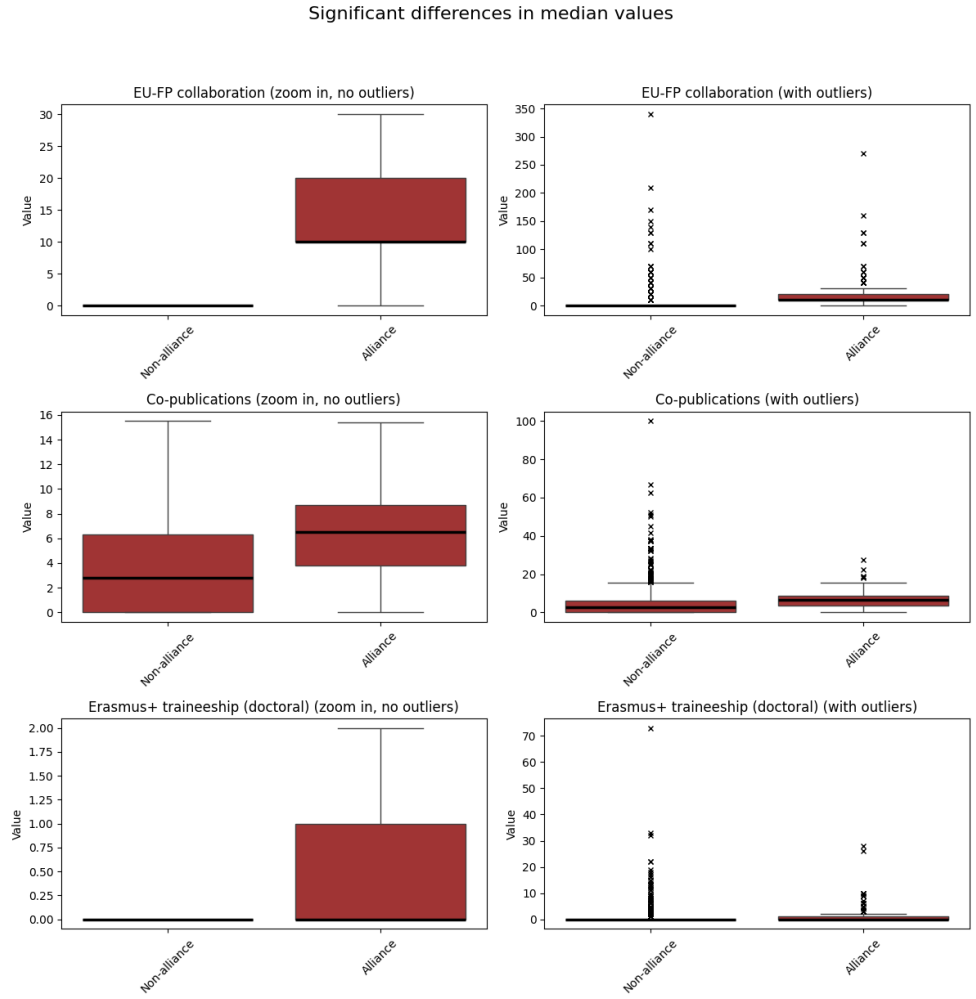


- In **Estonia**, nearly 15% new graduates have founded their company.
- General self-employment (incl. freelancing)is higher in **Portugal, Czechia, Greece**.
- Job match varies by country and degree. **Norway** leads for Bachelor's graduates, and **Italy** for Master's graduates.

The system is interconnected

- Correlation analysis showed significant links:
  - Countries where **more universities cooperate with industry** on EU-FP projects, have **more students completing internships**.
  - Countries where **students complete more internships** have **higher education-job match**.
  - Countries with **more Erasmus+ traineeships** also have **more graduates that own their company**.

The role of European University alliances



- We compared HEIs that belong to an alliance to those that do not.
- EHESO 2022 microdata.
- Alliance members are more engaged in:
  - **EU-FP collaboration with industry**.
  - **Co-publication with industry.**
  - **Erasmus+ doctoral traineeships.**
- No difference in academic patents or bachelor/master traineeships.

Conclusion

- Universities are embedded in innovation systems **in diverse ways** across countries.
- Institutional collaboration and student skills development **are interconnected**.
- EUA can be seen as networks that **concentrate and catalyze** high-intensity research and innovation.

Limitations and future direction

Limitations

- **Correlation is not causation.**
- **Self-selection bias**: universities that join EUAs are likely already strong in research and collaboration.

Future direction

- **Longitudinal data** to measure true impact and added value of alliance membership over time.
- Incorporate **more indicators** on innovation to EHESO, for example:
  - Educational offerings, such as micro-credentials (coming).
  - Graduate competences related to entrepreneurship.

Thank you!

PPMi

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