

A REPORT OF ATTENDING
2020 EUA-ANNUAL CONFERENCE webinar series
17-24 April, 2020

In the role of Represantor of Goce Delčev University, Štip, from 17 till 24 April, I took participation at the 2020 EUA-Annual conference webinar series.

My participation come up along with the successful application for membership of Goce Delcev University, Stip in European Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE) .

EUA presented a webinar series based on selected sessions of the 2020 EUA Annual Conference. The webinars covered the original theme of the 2020 EUA Annual Conference: *Universities building a better Europe*. They were of interest to institutional leaders, including rectors, vice-rectors and heads of departments, as well as higher education researchers and analysts, and representatives of other bodies involved in educational policy.

After welcome address and presentation of the program, the Conference started on *17 April, with the Webinar “Strength in numbers can university alliances change the game?”* This webinar explored the benefits and challenges associated with various cooperative models in place. The discussion has also been informed by the results of a recent EUA survey about strategic cooperation, showing the geographical and thematic scope of university cooperation and the challenges of working together.

Next *webinar named “Promoting universities societal engagement” was held on 22 April.* This webinar included presentations of two approaches to addressing higher education’s societal responsibility. One showcases an institution’s implementation of a European framework for community engagement in higher education, as well as the project upon which this framework is based. The other presentation demonstrated one university’s efforts to support researchers at risk and promote academic freedom.

The goal of this session and the discussion of the participants was to examine whether there is an opportunity to develop innovative policy tools both at the university and the

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) level for assessing externally and internally the community engagement of universities.

On the last day of the Conference, *24 April*, a webinar named *“Making a difference through partnerships”* was held. This webinar presented initiatives by higher education actors who take a collaborative approach to address and fulfilling universities’ role in society. Two successful university stories and examples were presented and discussed. Each of the workshops was finished with report and discussion on the key findings of the working groups and with concluding remarks.

We can conclude that „Universities play a crucial role in creating knowledge and fostering democratic and sustainable societies. Their impact on wellbeing and the development of a thriving, competitive Europe stems from educating future leaders, professionals, researchers and citizens. It equally comes from curiosity-driven research aimed at identifying and meeting the broad challenges we all face and outreach to local and global industry and governments to foster much-needed innovation. Yet demonstrating and communicating universities’ impact at the societal level is a challenge in itself“. Universities, especially during this hard time need strong leadership, a focused strategic approach, as well as coordinated efforts across Europe and beyond.