

# European Higher Education in a Globalised World

EUA Convention Graz,  
29-31 May 2003

Frans van Vught  
University of Twente



# Historical Roots

- **Plato's Academy**
- **Medieval 'Wander Students'**
- **The Birth of the Research University**



# Recent Developments

- **Mobility Programs**
- **Inter-governmental Agreements**
- **The Bologna Declaration (1999)**



# A General Distinction

- **Internationalisation:**

- **Increasing cooperation between nation states**
- **Activities across national borders**
- **Major role for nation states**



# A General Distinction

- **Globalisation:**
  - **Interdependence of economies**
  - **Liberalisation of trade and markets**
  - **Vanishing role for nation states**



# In Higher Education

- **Internationalisation:**

- **Can be shaped and influenced by Higher Education Institutions (e.g. mobility, joint curricula, consortia)**

- **Globalisation:**

- **An external macro socio-economic process, hardly to be influenced by Higher Education Institutions**



# The Bologna Declaration

- **Enhance the international competitiveness of European higher education**
- **Through an increase of the transparency of European higher education**
- **In particular the comparability of higher education degrees and qualifications**



# The Bologna Process

- **Nation States as major agents**
- **Higher education a public good?**
- **But also: deregulation and decrease of public funding**
- **Role for higher education institutions?**



# The Lisbon (2000), Stockholm (2001) and Barcelona (2002) summits

- **European Union in 2010: the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth and better jobs and greater social cohesion**
- **A European area of research and innovation**
- **Increase European R&D expenditure to 3 % of the Union's GDP by 2010**
- **A European area of lifelong learning**



# The European Research Area

- **Coordination and integration of research efforts**
- **Sixth Framework Research Programme (networks of excellence)**
- **Attain critical mass to remain competitive in the international league**
- **Concentration of research funding on a smaller number of areas and institutions?**
- **A European Research Council?**



# The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge

(communication of the commission of the EC, 2003)

- European universities are at present not globally competitive
- European universities generally have less to offer and lower financial resources than their equivalents in the other developed countries, particularly the USA
- The ideal model of Wilhelm von Humboldt may be less relevant now than nearly two centuries ago
- European universities need to face the challenges of globalisation



# The Globalisation Process

- **WTO & GATS**
- **Economic rationale ('market commodity' approach)**
- **New providers: corporate, virtual, for-profit universities, media companies**
- **New cross border delivery: branch campuses, franchise & twinning arrangements**
- **Major impacts on the dynamics of European higher education**



# General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

- Designed to increase trade liberalisation internationally
- Aims to promote and enforce liberalisation of 'education' as a service
- Multilateral set of rules (negotiated in 1995; Uruguay Round)
- Administered by WTO



# Globalisation & European Higher Education

- Opening up for foreign access?
- Foreign providers eligible for national subsidies and incentives?
- New funding systems?
- New quality assurance systems?



# Opportunities and Threats for Higher Education Institutions

## Opportunities:

- Review teaching & learning programs for international clientele
- Include 'international dimension'
- Concentrate on high quality programs
- Reach for international accreditation
- Development of joint programs
- Increase of funding



# Opportunities and Threats for Higher Education Institutions

## Threats:

- **Extra investments in quality, staff, infrastructure, facilities**
- **Increased competition on an international scale**
- **Decrease of state 'protectionism'**
- **Decrease of funding**



# Globalisation: a challenge for European higher education institutions

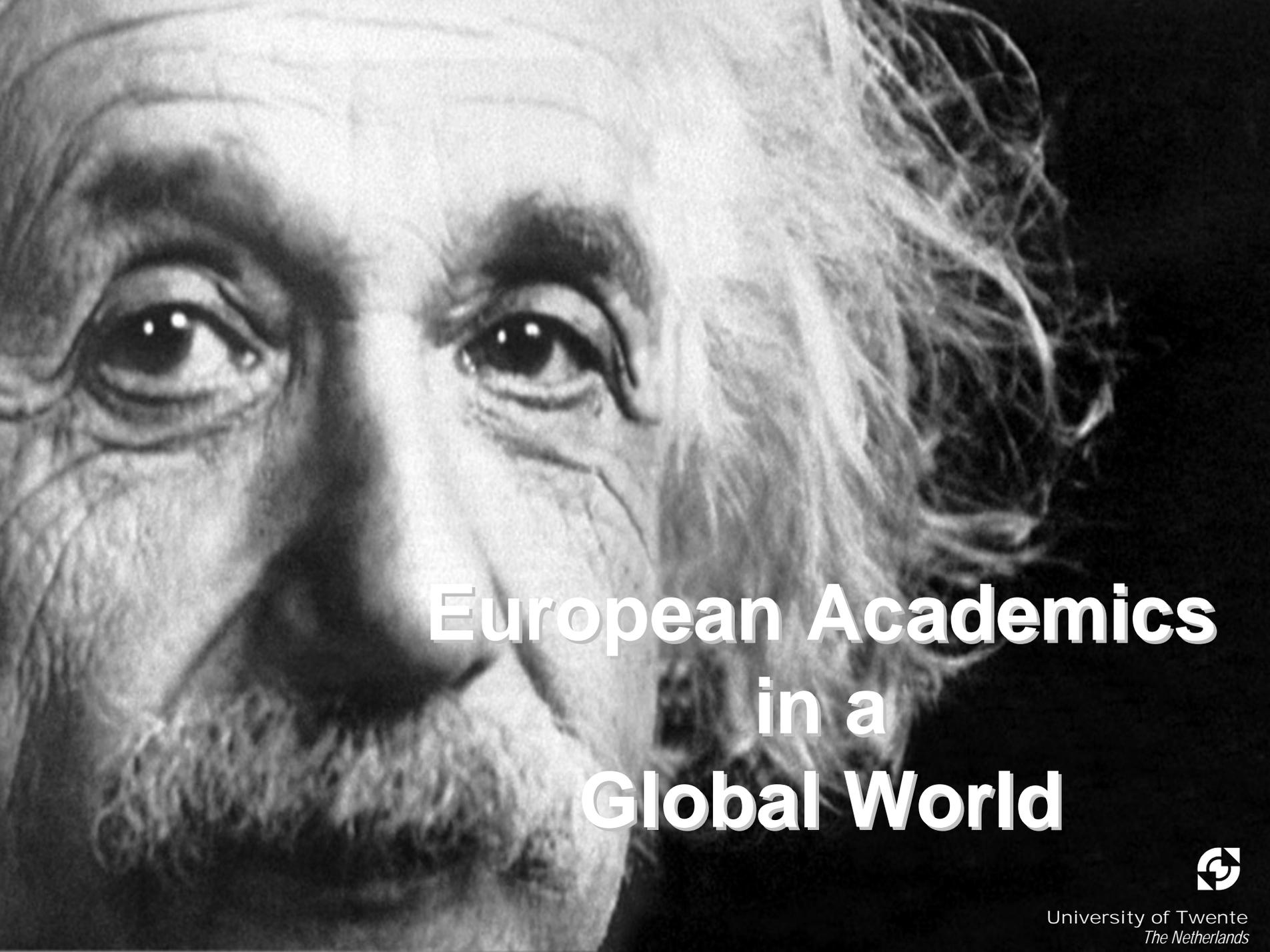
- **Use Bologna process**
  - **Convergence of curriculum structures**
  - **Comparability of degrees and qualifications**
- **Develop and market European profile and academic reputation**
- **Consortia and joint degree programs**



# The European Higher Education Profile?

- Cultural heritage?
- Humboldtian ideals?
- Linguistic diversity?
- Public good? Public funding?
- Competition for quality? European Research Area?
- Categorisation and stratification? European top universities?



A black and white, close-up portrait of Albert Einstein, showing his characteristic wild, white hair and a full, white beard. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark, making his face the central focus.

# European Academics in a Global World

