



Press release

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3# RISIS POLICYMAKERS SESSION Excellence in Research and Innovation: exploring the academic world and its funding systems

Experts coming from the most relevant academic institutions, active in the field of Research and Technology, Science, Innovation and Policy Studies took part in the **3rd Policymakers Session**, organized in virtual format because of the Covid-19 emergency on **Friday 29th of May**.

The conference focused on the results of a recent study published on *PlosOne* and titled *Scientific output scales with resources. A comparison of US and European Universities*. By integrating data on scientific publications from the **CWTS Publication Database** with data on **European Universities from RISIS-ETER (European Tertiary Education Register)** researchers from USI, Università della Svizzera Italiana in cooperation with University of Turin demonstrated a strong relationship between universities revenues and their volume of publication and citations.

The analyses illustrated by **DR Benedetto Lepori from USI**, was introduced by an opening of **DR Emanuela Reale, from the Research Institute on Sustainable Economic Growth, National Research Council of Italy**, mainly focused on **RISIS project**. The Research Infrastructure for Science and Innovation Policy Studies, reminds DR Reale, underlining the peculiarity of RISIS Infrastructure at European level, includes useful **datasets families** (mainly focused on **Firm Innovation, European Integration, Knowledge and Dynamics, Phd and careers, Policy Learning** among others) and provides many services: freely on line accessible services; project-based access to curated and enriched datasets; tools for methodological advances; registers on research organizations and firms; ontologies, visualization maps; indicators on actors, topics and geography. Among RISIS priorities, one of **the most relevant is working at visibility towards academics, stakeholders, and policymakers, this is why events like this are organized periodically, trying to promote a constructive dialogue between the academic world and the political universe on specific topics**. The last Policymakers session organized on 19th December 2019 was dedicated in fact to **RISIS – KNOMAK tool** an on-line tool to display and download selected indicators on knowledge production in the European Research Areas. The tool allows to policy analysts, researchers to exploit the core datasets in RISIS on publications, patents, projects, social innovation projects, and to integrate them through a common ontology, space(countries/regions), and actors (public and private).

DR **Benedetto Lepori from Usi, Università della Svizzera Italiana** illustrated the main results of the research in his presentation titled **Best Universities behind rankings**. Showing the Academic Ranking of World Universities 2019 that puts at the top two American universities (**Harvard and Stanford**) followed by **Cambridge**, he launched three questions at the core of his speech, **concentrating his attention on a definition of international ranking**. Nevertheless, it is important to discover also the origin of the dominion of US universities and, last but not least, **what Europe can do to get in topped ranked place**. Illustrating the aspects of the recent study published on *PlosOne*, Lepori described the two different systems dominating in the USA and in Europe. **In USA there is a higher level of resources at the system level, about two times in the US comparing with Europe**, there are more students in colleges, there are multiple funding sources (fees, stats, grants, donations). Moreover, US top-



universities receive most of their funds from private donations. In Europe, underlines Lepori, there are no similar mechanisms (except the UK), where public HEIs all depend on basic governmental allocation.

DR Sumathi Subramaniam, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Policy Officer in the Unit for Policy on Higher Education (European Commission) in her presentation focused on policy implication and resource allocation in Higher Education. **European countries should keep their focus on the delivery of good quality of Research and Education, affirmed Subramaniam.** Cooperation in Europe, she underlined, is focused on excellence, quality, and inclusion in Education Research and Innovation thanks to the various funding systems. Concerning the scientific production in Europe, she mentioned the Science Research Innovation Performance of the EU 2020 (SPRI), the annual report published recently: Europe is leading R&I for the green transition with 25% top-cited scientific publications on climate and 27% on bio-economy).

Excellence in Research and Innovation is linked to the quality of Education and Training and the Commission will, therefore, - stated Subramaniam - coordinate education and training, research and innovation policies and develop more synergies between its programs. European Higher Education institutions are mainly funding through public sources and according to Dr Subramaniam the key challenge for the authority is to find the right balance between public and private funding. To enhance the development of funding in HEIs, the Commission is supporting several actions. **The European Commission is going to conduct with OECD in-depth analyses on resourcing on higher education systems.** The study started on 1st June and its main aim is to review higher education systems in order to offer countries **recommendations on funding and human resources policies to enhance the performance of Higher Educations institutions.** Moreover, **USTREAM project** focused on examining the measures that are in place in universities across Europe to enhance efficiency at the operational level, with a view to identify good practice examples and develop recommendations for further development in higher education and research area produced a series of important consideration for policymakers: provide sustainable and adequate core funding, foster partnership, and sector level collaboration, among others.

Further information:

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