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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

Tana Copenhagen, in association with FCG Sweden

Evaluation of Support to the European Humanities University

Final Report

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**Final Report
February 2021**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AY	Academic Year
DoA	Description of Action
EHU	European Humanities University
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)
ERA	European Research Area
EU	European Union
EUD	EU Delegation
GAPO	General Assembly of Part Owners
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
MOST	Mobility Scheme for Targeted People-to-People-Contacts
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSUN	Open Society University Network
QA	Quality Assurance
RCL	Research Council of Lithuania
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations

Preface

This evaluation was commissioned by Sida through the Sida Framework Agreement for Evaluation Services, and conducted by FCG in partnership with Tana Copenhagen.

The Evaluation Team consisted of Erik Bryld (team leader), Kerry Longhurst, Steve Webber and Grace Muchunu. The Final Report was quality assured by Francesca Jessup, whose work was independent of the evaluation team. Annefried Muller and Nadia Masri Pedersen provided project management support.

The team would like to acknowledge the very transparent and swift support from all at EHU throughout the evaluation. In particular we would like to mention the vivid support from Lina Gorbačiovienė, Head of the Rector's Office.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the European Humanities University (EHU) for the period 2015-2020. The objective of this evaluation is to assess the core support to EHU, its background and performance in relation to established objectives, plans, expectations or standards of performance. The evaluation focuses on the role of EHU and what it offers for liberal humanities studies in the Belarus context.

The team applied a theory-based approach to assess the results and operations of the EHU. The evaluation was undertaken as a remote exercise from December 2020 to early February 2021. A total of 52 persons were interviewed through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, an online survey was also conducted as well as theory of change and validation workshops.

EHU BACKGROUND

The EHU has a unique background as a ‘university-in-exile’ following its forced relocation to Lithuania from Belarus in 2004. In response to this situation the EHU attracted the support of a considerable donor community enabling it to operate and attract mostly Belarussian students to study liberal arts in an open and free environment in line with European values.

The donor support to EHU has been a response to the autocratic situation in Belarus. The rationale being that the university may foster civic engagement based on the promotion of European values through the provision of relevant disciplines in the university curriculum, an onus on academic freedom and the provision of a free and democratic teaching and learning environment.

The EHU has in the first part of the evaluation period been marred by scandals and exposed to significant drops in the student enrolment rate. To respond to such challenges the university developed the EHU Strategy 2019-2024. This strategy identified a set of priorities and targets, which the institution is currently in the midst of implementing and form the basis for this evaluation as well.

FINDINGS

The evaluation found the EHU to be largely relevant to students, academics and donors alike. The university modus operandi aligned with European values allows students and academics to teach and learn in an open and free environment. Students also pointed to the importance of the EHU providing a European accredited degree which can be used beyond Belarus.

For the donors the EHU is relevant in the sense that it provides education in line with European values. This is based on the maintenance of an academic environment in which freedom of expression is fostered, and a student-centred approach is

followed in which academic staff and students engage in collective debate and enquiry. The Liberal Arts based curricula include a range of humanities and social science disciplinary programmes, which have been subject to change over the period of evaluation. Civic engagement is an emphasis of EHU's approach, both within the academic programmes, and in extra-curricular activities of students and civic roles performed by staff.

When it comes to effectiveness, the team found students able to obtain jobs afterwards, commensurate with the knowledge and skills developed at EHU. Even among the students returning to Belarus where the authorities do not accept the EHU degrees for entrance into government-sector positions, students are in many cases able to find employment in the non-state sector, including civil society, activism, NGOs and the business sector. The evaluation found there to be plenty of instances of EHU students becoming entrepreneurs in a number of fields, but especially tourism and cultural management.

The student enrolment rate however remains a serious challenge for the university. The team found this to be a consequence of poor reputation from the past scandals and accreditation challenges as well as increasing tuition fees. At the same time the significant dropout rates at the EHU means that the university has a low completion rate.

In terms of research effectiveness, the team found that EHU does not have a strong research profile, but that several individual lecturers and professors are engaged in relevant research. The EHU produces a significant amount of studies but does not have a prominent ranking in international academic databases. A major challenge for the academics of EHU is the lack of available time to undertake research and also that the university does not yet have a cogent research culture nor a research infrastructure to support academics. The evaluation also found there to be competing expectations upon staff with regards to what type of research should be prioritised (i.e. scientific, applied, political or popular).

In terms of effectiveness of civic engagement, this is first and foremost ensured through exposing students to a free university environment, which contrasts sharply with official Belarusian norms. The university itself is not active in civic engagement in Belarus. There is however on-going activism among individual academics and students alike and as such, EHU staff and student civil society engagement is visible.

When it comes to promoting gender equality the team found that the gender equality agenda has been promoted by a handful of teachers at the Centre for Gender Studies but that gender equality is not a management priority which is reflected in curriculum and management.

The data for assessing impact is patchy, but the team did map a number of examples where students have returned and hold positions in Belarus from where they in principle can promote European values. Similarly, academic staff provided a range of examples of the ways in which staff and graduates contribute to developments in Belarus through academic and civic roles.

In terms of sustainability, the evaluation team found that EHU will remain dependent on donor funding for years to come. Belarussian students' tuition fees remain a low income base and there is little evidence that EHU will be able to attract

a major portion of non-Belarusian students. At the same time enrolment rates are dropping further emphasising the importance of donor funding. Donor funding however also poses challenges for the EHU in terms of short funding cycles, which impacts upon EHU planning as well as the university's ability to attract students and long-term professional staff.

A key finding of the evaluation is that the management of the EHU has become increasingly lean over time, but that there is room for improvement in terms of ensuring internal accountabilities and addressing urgent needs of the university. The governing board engagement with the university is not sufficiently frequent to ensure that the needed oversight and accountability mechanisms are effective. Also, the composition of the board does not fully capture the required expertise to provide guidance on the key priority areas of student recruitment, research, as well as civic engagement. Furthermore, several of the major donors are not part of the board, yet still engage in strategic dialogue with the university bypassing the formal accountability procedures.

Nonetheless, the university has started new important engagements such as its relations to OSUN and its enhanced focus on English in the curriculum. There is however room for enhanced strategic management at the university. There is an urgent need to ensure an increase in the student enrolment and to provide more strategic guidance in terms of fostering student civic engagement, research priorities and impact at various levels, as well as ensuring a strong focus on gender equality across the institution.

In spite of the challenges faced, the team finds that that EHU has overcome a critical period and in many ways is on the right track. The relevance of the work conducted by the EHU for Belarusian society, including the academic community writ large, and civil society, needs to be taken into account. The nature of the crisis now seen in Belarus has served to reconfirm the relevance of the EHU's role as a free alternative for Belarusian academia and students. This includes the tangible role seen in taking in students expelled from Belarusian universities following their involvement in protests against the regime.

A selection of key **recommendations** include:

For EHU:

- Reform the management of the university to improve accountabilities and enable an enhanced focus on the core challenges of EHU. This may include revising the governing board setup
- Increase attention to enrolment efforts in Belarus and the implementation of recruitment campaigns
- Draft and implement a gender equality policy which ensures gender mainstreaming across university operations
- Consider the further development of EHU Centres for enhanced research and civic engagement
- Pursue a balanced approach to creating international partnerships, taking into account European and EU opportunities as a means to get better integrated into

the European Research Area, as well as regional opportunities, in addition to partnerships with North American and Russian universities

For donors:

- For major donors: join the governing board for a formal and transparent engagement with the university on its strategic direction and management
- Consider a funding regime which is more aligned with the nature of the institution and the sustainability challenges of the EHU. This should include long-term funding commitments
- Establish routine fora to meet with faculty to learn about EHU research and the civic engagement contribution made by EHU staff, students and alumni

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the European Humanities University (EHU). In the following we present the background, objectives and scope of the evaluation.

1.1 BACKGROUND, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of EHU was commissioned by Sida, but it also provides recommendations and strategic directions to EHU as well as all current and potential future donors to the EHU including Sida. Specifically, the evaluation's purpose is to inform future strategies/scenarios for institutional, academic and financial development.

The primary objective of this evaluation is a rigorous and independent assessment of the core support to EHU 2015-2020, its background and performance in relation to prior established objectives, plans, expectations or standards of performance. The evaluation focuses on the role of EHU and what it offers for liberal humanities studies in the Belarus context. The terms of reference explicitly refer to evaluating relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, but the team also noted that there were coherence questions included in the Terms of Reference (ToR), consequently, coherence has been included as a criterion in the evaluation as prescribed below.

The evaluation provides recommendations related to:

- 1) Institutional development
- 2) Future strategies related to long-term financial sustainability and analysis of progress of fundraising strategy
- 3) Development of content, objectives and priorities for EHU

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECT AND SCOPE

The object of the evaluation is the Swedish support to the European Humanities University (EHU). As the support is provided as core funding, the evaluation will cover the entirety of the EHU. It consequently also includes assessment of funding provided by other donors or received through other sources such as student fees. This also means that it is the objectives and strategies of EHU, which guide the evaluation. To ensure that the EHU's objectives and approaches to meet these objectives are captured directly, the team, in addition to the use of formal strategy documents, conducted an online theory of change workshop with the EHU management. The evaluation scope is limited to year 2015 – 2020.

1.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The evaluation is aligned with the questions outlined in the terms of reference (see Annex 1). The team has developed a detailed evaluation matrix based on the questions, which was used to guide the evaluation. The evaluation matrix can be found in Annex 2. In this matrix we have defined sub-questions, indicators and data sources and methods for each of these. The sub-evaluation questions provide a greater level of detail to the evaluation questions allowing for enhanced precision in the team's response to the evaluation questions.

We have realigned the evaluation questions from the terms of reference with the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and found that they cover relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, while there is not a specific efficiency question. Some of the questions straddle effectiveness/relevance and impact but have been aligned with the most relevant criteria.

The team has found that all questions could be answered, though point to the challenges of attributing societal changes in Belarus to the relative size of the EHU support and outputs (an annual budget of EUR 5 million and a student base of around 200/year). We therefore, in agreement with Sida, adjusted the sub-questions under impact to allow for evaluability. Similarly, we have removed 'impact' from the first effectiveness question, so that it focuses on outcomes specifically.

To fully capture the relevance of the EHU support and ensuring that the link between EHU's study programme and its objectives and mission, we have included an additional relevance question: *Assess the relevance of the EHU's teaching programmes to (a) the graduate job market (b) EHU's mission as a University in exile and (c) its Humanities and Liberal Arts profile.*

This question has been added to the evaluation matrix as well.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

In the following, we first present an overview of the methodology applied in the evaluation. In chapter 3 we present the object of the evaluation, the EHU; in chapter 4 we present the findings according to the OECD-DAC criteria, while we in chapter 5 present the conclusions. Finally, in chapter 6 we present the recommendations to EHU and the donors. The annexes include list of references and interviewees, tools as well as an overview of the results of the online survey conducted.

2 Methodology

The team applied a theory-based approach combined with contribution analysis. The evaluation was undertaken remotely using online tools, however applying much of the same tools as would have been applied face-to-face including workshops, focus group discussions and interviews. The online nature of the assignment however, also raised concerns vis-à-vis security and duty of care that the team had to plan for and manage during the course of the implementation. In the following we present the team's approach and considerations in this regard.

2.1 METHODOLOGY

To be able to assess EHU's ability to meet its vision, mission and objectives, the team developed and used EHU's theory of change. This part of the methodology was based on the assumption that EHU had a perception of what the university is expected to achieve in terms of change and the major pre-conditions for this. The team identified the EHU theory based on:

- a) Evidence from existing documentation outlining EHU's planned activities and expected outputs and outcomes, and
- b) Through a theory of change workshop and interviews with key EHU staff members held on 14 January 2021.

A key element in the theory of change process was the identification of the underlying assumptions about how change occurs in the academic and employment sphere in which EHU operates. There is no official theory of change for the EHU and the theory and underlying assumptions were therefore reconstructed. The team's starting point was, that EHU's activities have been based on an expectation of causality that was then identified and eventually tested.

The theory-based approach was supplemented by contribution analysis. To establish links between activities and results, the team developed a contribution narrative against key outcomes identified. This describes how the activities and outputs were implemented, how they contributed to any change, and the role of other interventions and external factors. This also formed a basis for assessing impact of the EHU.

The team revisited the contribution narrative against the findings, and then validated this in the validation workshop.

2.2 METHODS AND TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation design incorporated the following levels of analysis, which was used for mapping appropriate methods and tools for data collection.

- Individual level: (including Belarusian students and graduates of EHU, academic and administrative staff)
- Organisational level (e.g., the management structure of EHU, academic and administrative units within EHU, alumni association)
- Institutional level (including the position of EHU within the Lithuanian higher education system, the role of EHU as an institution that serves as a reference point for HEIs within the Belarusian system; the level of engagement with partner institutions in Europe and beyond)
- Policy level (including policy priorities guiding donor support to EHU)
- Societal level (e.g. with regard to impact of EHU on developments in Belarusian society as a whole; relations between EHU and the role of civil society in Belarus).

The data collection tools and methods included:

- Documentary analysis
- Key informant interviews
- Written feedback from key respondents
- Survey for academic staff
- Theory of change and validation workshops

A total of 52 persons were interviewed through a semi-structured interview process as well as through focus group discussions (see Annex 5 for full list of interviewees¹). In addition, 36 academics responded to the staff survey conducted by the team and additional staff participated in the theory of change workshop as well.

2.3 ETHICS, UTILISATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The evaluation was conducted in line with the OECD/DAC Guidelines on Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. Interviews were conducted ensuring anonymity and stakeholders' confidentiality was protected.

The evaluation has been implemented with a utilisation focus and emphasised participation of stakeholders in all steps of the process. Comments and suggestions

¹ Names of student interviewees have been anonymised in line with the evaluation ethics.

were sought from intended users and handled in a systematic manner. In terms of ensuring participation and utilisation the follow key activities and principles were applied:

- Sida and EHU were approached in the inception phase to ensure that the two parties were in agreement with the approach taken by the evaluation. This included start-up meetings and commenting on inception report as well as draft evaluation reports
- The team undertook a theory of change workshop with EHU to ensure that the team had a proper understanding of EHU and their vision and promote EHU learning as well
- The team held a validation workshop with EHU for learning and validating findings
- The team will provide a presentation to a broader audience and donors to inform about EHU's performance, opportunities and challenge and in this assist with informing possible future partnerships
- Recommendations were formulated in a way that constructively provide opportunities for the users to apply these within a realistic timeline and with realistic resource application

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The evaluation was implemented in accordance with the planned timeline and close to all interviewees were available for interviews (with the exception of a few students, a GAPO member and a few social actors). EHU was also very cooperative in terms of sharing any information of relevance requested by the evaluation team. The team therefore finds that the evidence base was sufficient to enable the evaluation team with responding to the evaluation questions from the ToR.

As in any evaluation, there were of course limitations in carrying out the evaluation, these include:

- 1) The alumni data is patchy and therefore does not provide a complete picture of what happens to the students once they have left EHU. The team relied on existing data and qualitative interviews to provide an overview
- 2) The response rate of the teacher survey was around 50%, so the survey does not provide the response of all academic staff
- 3) The team was not able to reach out to students who had dropped out of EHU and get a more complete picture of the reasons for drop-out. This is an area where EHU can do more to assess the reasons behind this
- 4) As always, it would be interesting to talk to students that opted for not applying for going to EHU. The team did talk to other Belarussian students studying in Poland, but the data is insufficient to provide a full overview of why students chose not to go to EHU
- 5) Finally, the project was implemented in a COVID-19 context. This means that all meetings and workshops took place online. The team however found that interviewees are accustomed to engaging online and that they were open and responsive to the team's questions

The ongoing political crisis in Belarus, in which citizens are being actively intimidated by the state authorities for protesting against the continuation in office of the incumbent president following the contested election results of summer 2020, was a backdrop to this evaluation. However, the team did not experience restraint from interviewees in spite of these challenges.

3 Evaluation object

In the following we present the background of the EHU and the theory of change used for this evaluation. The final theory of change was validated in a theory of change workshop with the EHU.

3.1 EHU BACKGROUND

The EHU has been a ‘university-in-exile’ for the majority of the years it has existed – having been established in 1992 in the early post-Soviet period, it was obliged to relocate to Lithuania in 2004, following a decision by the Belarusian authorities to close the university’s operations in the country.

In response to this situation, the EHU attracted the support of a considerable donor community, with funding provided by European and North American governments, the European Union, and foundations. Until 2016, donor funds were managed under the auspices of the Nordic Council. After 2016, Sweden (Sida) has taken over this role, in what was until late-2020 a much-reduced donor community in terms of numbers. Since then a range of donors have re-joined EHU through the support of scholarships.

The withdrawal of donors from support of EHU came in the wake of several evaluation reports and financial audits conducted in the period 2012-16, which highlighted a range of areas in which EHU was seen to be under-performing, including in the spheres of quality of education, financial sustainability, management of the institution, research and publications, promotion of a student-centred approach. The university has faced challenges in the sphere of Quality Assurance – the Lithuanian QA agency has conducted a series of assessments of the EHU, in line with accreditation procedures. There was a risk that the university could even be forced to close because of substantive shortcomings shown in these assessments. The status of the university as a ‘political project’ played a role here, as the Lithuanian parliament introduced legislation that allowed for the recognition of the role of EHU as a ‘university in exile’, which appears to provide some form of concessions in terms of such standard requirements. Nevertheless, the university itself has continued to press ahead with internal changes to strengthen the quality of education, with a notable impulse provided by the appointment of the current rector of EHU in 2018.

The support of the host country of Lithuania has remained constant since EHU relocated to Vilnius in 2004, with the Lithuanian government providing funding (currently 200,000 EUR per annum and additional research grants) and in-kind contributions, which, since 2018, has included the provision of purpose-adapted accommodation for the university premises. Sweden and the EU are the other two on-going donor community members – the EU has been the largest donor in terms of financial contribution across the whole period (with 1 million EUR per annum); Sweden has increased its already significant contribution from 200,000 EUR at the

start of the period under evaluation to 800,000 EUR per annum since 2017, in order to bridge the gap that emerged following the withdrawal of other donors.

The rationale for donor support during the period under evaluation can be seen to have been modified since the start of donor support in 2004. At that stage, the drivers for donor support came primarily in response to the worsening situation in Belarus in terms of democracy, civil liberty, upholding of academic freedom and independence, the shrinking space for civil society, and a serious down-turn in relations between Belarus and the EU and its Member States and the United States of America. For example, EU funding was provided via the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), and the underpinning rationale for the university (and therefore its implicit Theory of Change) was first and foremost based in promotion of democracy and human rights through the provision of relevant disciplines in the university curriculum, an onus on academic freedom and the provision of a free and democratic teaching and learning environment, supported by research and other activities relating to the promotion of democracy and human rights in Belarus. The premise was that, during these most difficult years for democracy in Belarus, EHU provided a beacon for independent academic activities rooted in European values.

During the period under evaluation (2015-2020), the external environment had seen, prior to the summer of 2020, apparent significant change in the direction of the amelioration of relations between Belarus and Europe. This period also saw the acceptance of Belarus into the Bologna Process (an important symbolic step towards ostensible integration of the country's higher-education sector into the European mainstream), and increased cooperation between Belarusian HEIs, academics, researchers and students and their counterparts in the EU, including through European funding schemes such as Erasmus+, and dedicated bilateral interventions of the EU and MS, such as the MOST mobility scheme. In addition to increased opportunities for mobility provided for students and staff within the Belarusian system, there have been increased opportunities for studying abroad for Belarusian students (with Poland's HE sector proving to be particularly attractive).

The rationale for donor support has also changed in line with such developments - it should be noted, for instance, that EU funding for EHU is now provided not under EIDHR, but as part of the Mobility and People-to-People Contacts funding area within EU support to the countries of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) region, and the emphasis is on support to Belarusian students. Within the university, the types of disciplines offered has been modified over the period, with a reduction seen in the emphasis of political science and democratisation studies, and an increase in emphasis on a liberal-arts style approach (drawing on models provided by North American institutions).

Notwithstanding changes seen in the university curriculum, the exogenous factors noted above, combined with endogenous factors (including ongoing concerns over the quality of education at EHU, student concerns over the increasing fee rates, problems with turnover among academic staff, upheavals seen in connection with changes in the leadership and management of the institution) can be seen to have contributed to serious challenges for the university during the period under evaluation. Notably, student recruitment has contracted significantly (a drop of two

thirds since 2010). The reality is that the EHU has had to contend with a ‘crisis of identity’ in terms of making sure its academic offering is relevant and needed by potential students (to recruit them) and current students (to counter disturbing trends in drop-out).

It is to respond to such challenges that the university developed the EHU Strategy 2019-2024, published in mid-2018. This strategy identified a set of priorities and targets, which the institution is currently in the midst of implementing.

3.2 EHU THEORY OF CHANGE

The following reconstruction of the EHU Theory of Change takes this strategy and its contents as the reference point as well as the findings from the 14 January 2021 theory of change workshop held with the EHU (in the absence of an explicit ToC). Based on this, the following theory of change has been applied (table 1):

Table 1: Draft theory of change of the European Humanities University	
Level	Theory
Inputs	If... Sida provides funding to EHU, along with the contributions of the European Union and Lithuania, and Sida contributes through its role in indirect management of donor support; and If... EHU is able to recruit qualified lecturing and research staff, develop an appropriate range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the liberal arts, introduce effective changes to the management and administration of the institution in line with the Strategy 2019-2024
Assumptions	- <i>The role of EHU as university-in-exile retains strong relevance for Belarusian students, academics, and society as a whole.</i> - <i>Donor funding is sufficient, combined with the contributions of other donors to ensure requisite level of donor support</i> - <i>EHU is able to generate sufficient income to complement the donor contribution and arrive at a sustainable financial position, through student fees, research and project funding, securing donations of additional donors</i> - <i>The plans embedded in the Strategy 2019-2024 are relevant for the needs of the institution, and are being implemented effectively</i>
Outputs	Then... - The EHU will increase the number of non-BY students by 20% by 2023/2024 - Increase the study quality to increase the number of students to 850 - Offer at least two double degree programmes by 2023/2024 - Increase the number of English courses to 50% on BA and 70% for MA by 2023/2024 - Increase the quality of research and arts activities - Improve EHU's organisation and administration

Assumptions	- <i>The academic offering of EHU will be relevant and attractive to students from Belarus and other countries</i> - <i>Student recruitment and retention issues will be effectively mediated</i> - <i>QA procedures are robust and ensure that EHU complies with QA requirements of Lithuanian QA agency</i> - <i>There is sufficient capacity and support for EHU staff to engage in research and produce research outputs</i> - <i>There is sufficient capacity and commitment to achieve effective internationalisation, and sufficient interest among potential partner institutions</i>
Outcomes	<i>Leading to...</i> - <i>EHU will enjoy a reputation as a centre of academic excellence, providing a student-centred learning experience that brings together Belarusian students and students from other countries</i> - <i>EHU will attract civically-minded students committed to European values</i> - <i>A vibrant research culture will exist in the EHU community, research outputs will contribute to academic, policy, cultural, societal debates in Belarus and further afield</i> - <i>The EHU has a strong management structure in place and the financial situation of the institution is viable</i> - <i>The EHU is well integrated into academic and research networks in Europe and beyond</i>
Assumptions	- <i>EHU is able to engage effectively in change processes that facilitate these outcomes, including through the operationalisation and implementation of the goals and actions embedded in the Strategy 2019-2024</i>
Impact	<i>Eventually contributing to...</i> EHU becoming an: - <i>internationally-oriented and recognized university,</i> - <i>attracting civically minded students from Belarus and the region,</i> - <i>distinguished by commitment to the European values and Liberal Arts</i> - <i>as well as rich on-campus life and alumni network</i>

Note: The assumptions are added by the consultant team based on the desk study and findings during the evaluation

4 Findings

In the following we present the findings of the evaluation in accordance with OECD-DAC's evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions outlined in the ToR.

4.1 RELEVANCE

R1: To what extent has the EHU intervention objectives and design responded to the need of the beneficiaries, as well as the partner/institutions policies, and priorities?

R2: Assess the relevance of the research that EHU undertakes and its linkages to relevant academic institutions, research initiative and regional / European networks?

R3: Assess the relevance of the EHU's teaching programmes to (a) the graduate job market (b) EHU's mission as a University in exile and (c) its Humanities and Liberal Arts profile

In the following review of Relevance relating to the period 2015-2020, the changing nature of the contexts in which the EHU operates need to be highlighted as significant influencing factors. The period began in a time of transition in Europe's relations with Belarus, with a gradual amelioration following the low point seen after the 2010 events in Belarus (aftermath of elections and repression of opposition figures, constraints on civil society, etc.). Until the summer of 2020, relations were 'normalising', while in economic terms Belarus had become more stable, and students from the 'middle class' had increasingly looked outside of Belarus for options in higher education, taking advantage of opportunities in Poland², Germany, Sweden and other destinations.³

These changes to the background context can be contrasted to the constant across this period (and indeed, since 2004) – the status of the EHU as a university '*non grata*' in its own country, Belarus, where the regime has continued to place restrictions on the activities of the university in Belarus (e.g. not allowing it to advertise its programmes, blocking the university from participating in education fairs, etc.).⁴ In the aftermath of the contested presidential elections of 2020, further

² According to the Polish Ministry of Education and Science, some 7000 Belarusian students are enrolled in Polish HEIs annually. See 'Polish Universities Help Students from Belarus', 22 September 2020, <https://www.gov.pl/web/science/polish-universities-help-students-from-belarus>

³ See accounts of Belarusian students on their choice to study abroad in M. Stepkina, 'Там, где трава зеленее или Почему молодёжь уезжает из Беларуси' ('Where the grass is greener, or why Belarusian youth are leaving the country', *Delfi*, 14 February 2020, www.delfi.lt/ru/abroad/belorussia/tam-gde-trava-zelenee-ili-pochemu-molodiozh-uezhaet-iz-belarusi.d?id=83535107. See also data on the outflow of Belarusian students to international study destinations in the OECD online database (data up to 2018): <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#>

⁴ Feedback from respondents.

restrictions have been introduced by the Belarusian authorities that directly or indirectly affect the university, and its staff and students (including travel restrictions).

These factors have impacted on the nature of relevance of EHU, as defined under the evaluation questions set for the evaluation, as reviewed below. In the review, the dual nature of the support to EHU as both an ‘academic project’ and as a ‘political project’⁵ will be explored from the perspectives of the key stakeholder groups.

Responded to the need of the beneficiaries, as well as the partner/institutions

The EHU’s mission: In the EHU’s mission statement, the relevance of the institution’s role as a Belarusian university that is grounded in European values relating to academic freedom and the pursuit of knowledge are set as the foundation of the university’s *raison d’être*.⁶ In practical terms, this involves the university’s commitment to integration into the European Higher Education Area (and the higher-education community of its host country, Lithuania), while simultaneously maintaining its essence as a Belarusian university, in which Belarusian students and academics are the core members of the community, and the linkages to Belarusian culture and society are at the centre of the university’s work.

The stated commitment to free academic values contained in this approach, which underpin the academic nature of the project, also tie it inextricably to the political dimension of the project – as the EHU continues to function only because it has relocated to Vilnius (as a university in forced exile), and is maintained largely because of the ongoing and continuous support of the international donor community, which makes this commitment on the basis of political decisions.

The question of whether EHU is an ‘academic’ or ‘political’ project was discussed with stakeholders. Academic staff and students tended, in responses and through the theory of change workshop, to emphasise the academic nature of the university’s work – and indeed noted that they do not feel comfortable with the notion of it being a political project. However, it should also be noted that the EHU is only able to operate thanks to external donor support, which, according to interviews, is politically motivated – the university is only able to generate less than one third of its required income to cover running costs. The political relevance of the EHU is a key factor in its identity in exile, therefore. However, in terms of its academic role, the size of the institution is very small – the student cohort is more similar in size to that seen in medium-sized academic departments in large EU MS HEIs. This context needs to be borne in mind when assessing the work of the university and its results – as it is not directly comparable to the work of peer HEIs within the EU.

⁵ See coverage of this issue in ‘Evaluation of EU assistance to the European Humanities University’, January 2013.

⁶ The mission, as set out in Chapter I of the university Statute, defines EHU as a: ‘Student-centred University for promoting civil society development through Humanities and Liberal Arts for students from Belarus and the region by bringing them together, and offering international experience in study quality.’

Donor perspectives: The commitment made by the current members of the donor community (Sweden, Lithuania, and the European Union) serve as *de facto* confirmation of the university's intervention objectives, as followed by the EHU over this period.⁷ The withdrawal of a range of donors in the wake of the 2015-16 revelations of mismanagement and financial misconduct relating to EHU were not indicative of doubts surrounding the relevance of the EHU *per se*, as an academic and political project, but was prompted by donor concerns about the oversight by the donor community and EHU governance structure. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 2020 presidential elections and ensuing crisis in Belarus, there is a renewed interest among former donor countries to resume support at some level, as seen in recent targeted contributions to supporting students expelled from Belarusian universities, to allow them to study at EHU.⁸

The roles of Sida, the Lithuanian authorities, and the EU Delegation to Belarus, have all been highlighted by respondents to the evaluation as having been significant over this period – with Sida's project managers providing constant support and feedback, the EUD taking an active stance in engaging with the university, and Lithuania's commitment shown across various levels of support (from the free housing of EHU in custom-adapted buildings, the award of special status of EHU as university in exile, as well as the annual research grant).⁹ From the donors' perspective, the university has remained one of the few platforms with which support to Belarusian civil society can be provided – and the ongoing crisis in Belarus has served to heighten the attention paid to the actual and potential roles of EHU in responding to these events.

Beneficiary perspectives on the Relevance of EHU: The beneficiaries are taken here to cover current and potential students, alumni, Belarusian academic staff.

EHU is perceived by these stakeholders to be a European university (based in and accredited by an EU Member State), functioning according to European standards and adhering to European values of freedom of expression and academic endeavour. As such, it is one among thousands of higher-education institutions across Europe, which serves as potential destinations for a growing number of Belarusian students, who want to gain a degree qualification from a European university.

However, what makes EHU stand out for Belarusian applicants is that alongside its credentials as a European university, it retains its full commitment to its Belarusian

⁷ Confirmed in feedback from external stakeholders.

⁸ See 'Vilnius-based EHU is ready to accept students, expelled from Belarusian Universities', 29 October 2020, <https://en.ehu.lt/news/support-belarus-students/>

⁹ In 2019 the Lithuanian parliament introduced legislation in order to award EHU the status of a 'University that operates in conditions of exile.' This move came in the wake of the negative assessments of EHU made by the Lithuanian quality assurance agency in 2017, which, until resolved accreditation being granted in 2019, meant that the EHU was under threat of closure. The award of the special status, while not removing EHU's obligations to adhere to Lithuania's quality assurance agency's requirements, does provide a level of political support and guarantee to the university. See 'Lithuanian Government grants EHU with a status of "University in Exile"', 8 May 2019, <https://en.ehu.lt/news/lithuanian-government-grants-ehu-with-a-status-of-university-in-exile/>

roots and heritage, as reflected in the languages of instruction (as well as Russian acting as the core language, this is one of very few universities in the world where courses are also offered through the medium of Belarusian language), and in the subject matter of the programmes and the research and civic engagement activities. Furthermore, students and staff form a Belarusian community at EHU, which makes it unique among university environments outside of their own country.

As shown in feedback to the evaluation from current students and alumni, in addition to the attractiveness to potential applicants (and their parents) of the opportunity EHU provides to gain a European degree, the EHU also attracts those who want to study in an academic environment free of ideological constraints, which is student-centred, and underpinned by democratic relations among staff and students, etc. The EHU's approach stands in stark contrast to the model seen in the vast majority of Belarusian HEIs.

By the same token, for academic staff, the EHU has provided a venue based on academic freedom in which they can teach and engage in research free from political interference, in contrast to the restrictions faced in their own country of Belarus.

Relevance for Belarusian society, civil society, and academia: The nature of societal perspectives on EHU has been influenced by the stance of official media in Belarus since before its expulsion in 2004 – with regular critical coverage of developments in the university. The current incumbent of the presidency of Belarus personally engaged in criticism of the university, for instance, contesting its role in educating an independent 'elite' that could challenge the existing system. The 'scandals' seen in 2015-16, and the challenges faced by EHU in gaining accreditation for its programmes in 2018, also served to fuel negative media coverage and can be regarded as influencing societal opinion.

Relevance of the research that EHU undertakes and its linkages to academic institutions, research initiatives and European networks

EHU faces a number of competing expectations regarding its research in ways that are both the same and different to other universities. EHU is expected by donors and some external stakeholders to be relevant by producing research salient to Belarus and parallel to this to be relevant internationally and to integrate into the European Research Area (ERA), strike up strategic partnerships, produce high quality publications of international standing and to improve the overall scientific quality of its research.

The evaluation found that during the 2015-2020 period EHU continued to carry out multiple types of activities, but with a growing emphasis on developing its scientific research. EHU's focus on its scientific work is presented in its 2019-2024 Strategy and specified in the Research (Art) Strategy implementation plan 2019-24 (which effectively began in AY 2018/19, if not before). The EHU's 2019-2024 research strategy is connected to the Research Council of Lithuania's (RCL) qualitative research assessment exercise, which will be carried out in 2023, to which EHU is planning to submit three units for assessment.

The question as to how relevant EHU's research is needs to take into account the fact that the Research (Art) strategy remains a process and that more time needs to

elapse until the fruits of the strategy are fully realised. Moreover, the timeframe between carrying out fresh research, the analytical phase, writing-up findings and then publishing in quality journals can be at least twelve months (see also effectiveness and impact). Furthermore, it needs to be noted that although the current evaluation is concerned with 2015-2020, the period starting from 2018 is more critical in terms of the evaluation of EHU's research since this is the start date of the Lithuanian research assessment exercise.

There is a strong consensus amongst interview partners, including EHU academic staff, that research is an underdeveloped element of the university's activities and that there is a longstanding disconnect between teaching and research. It is the case that EHU was previously trying to cover too many research areas (13 prior to the 2019-2024 strategic plan) and that this was detrimental for internal coherence, external profile and research impact, hence the decision to concentrate research on five fields, and also that EHU was lacking partnerships and networks. External stakeholders and experts also confirmed that EHU's research profile lacked visibility and did not reflect its *raison d'être*.

According to the evaluation's interviews with external academic experts and other stakeholders (including donors) the relevance of the research activities of the EHU as an institution is weaker than the relevance of the activities carried out by individual staff and / or amongst groups of staff in the form of Centres within EHU (however the size and scope of activities of Centres, Laboratories and Institutions varies and not all are concerned with research). Documents and interviews confirmed that research collaboration, such as conferences, joint publications and visiting fellowships with European or international partners mostly came about through an individual's own contacts rather than EHU's institutional relations. It was only in 2020 that EHU became part of the new Open Society University Network (OSUN) and hitherto it had little in the way of strategic institutional partnerships based on research activities with European universities. This situation can be explained by a number of factors, but not least that until the 2019-2024 strategy EHU lacked a coherent overarching research concept and an institutional research infrastructure.

Relevance of the EHU's teaching programmes to the graduate job market, EHU's mission as a University in exile and its Humanities and Liberal Arts profile

The evaluation has examined the extent to which the relevance 'in principle' of EHU outlined above has been matched by ensuring relevance 'in practice' in terms of the academic offering provided through the portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.

In this matter, the EHU faces similar challenges to those encountered by virtually all universities, in ensuring that the structure and content of programmes responds effectively to the needs of students (and, by extension, prospective employers). The higher-education 'market' has become increasingly competitive in recent years, driven by the growth in internationalisation of higher education, the expansion of the HE sector in many countries, and increased demand for higher-education opportunities among students across the globe.

In the case of EHU, the circumstances are rather specific – as it functions as a university-in-exile oriented towards students from one country for the most part (95% of the student cohort is Belarusian). For these students, the choice of EHU as an academic destination serves to limit their future employment choices in Belarus to the non-governmental sector (e.g. in the private sector, or working for international organisations, for NGOs, the independent media), as EHU degrees are not accepted for state-sector jobs. As the evidence shows, however, for a good number of students an EHU degree is a stepping stone towards finding employment (or engaging in further studies) in Europe or further afield. This situation presents a challenge for the university and its academic programmes – as staff need to be aware that they are delivering programmes that need both to be relevant for those who intend to work in Belarus, and those who either intend to seek employment opportunities abroad, or who find that they are unable to find suitable employment in Belarus and therefore have to move out of the country to pursue career options. Furthermore, the current drive to recruit a greater proportion of non-Belarusian students will also affect this situation. This discussion will continue under Effectiveness, below.

Relevance of the disciplines covered in the portfolio: There has been an ongoing process of adjustment of the range of disciplines offered by EHU (see also coverage of this issue in the 2013 Evaluation of EU Support to the EHU). These adjustments have been made within the scope of the Liberal Arts and Humanities disciplinary coverage. The adjustments have been made on the basis of the relative attractiveness of academic programmes to applicants. The programmes in political science (and previously in European studies), and law, for instance, have seen a general decline in numbers, while programmes in disciplinary areas relating to the cultural/heritage sphere have, in relative terms, proved more attractive (reflecting the realities of the potential job market opportunities for graduates). The current undergraduate portfolio of European Heritage, Media and Communication, Theatre Art and Acting, Visual Design, and World Politics and Economics, as well as the integrated Master's programme in Law, and the Master's level portfolio of Cultural Heritage Development, Public Policy, and Visual Plastic Art reflect this trend. See further under Effectiveness below, where these developments are set against the context of falling student numbers at EHU.

The developments seen in the portfolios also map against the evolution in the donor community stance with regard to the relevance of disciplines offered – whereas under the initial support provided by the EU after EHU's exile to Vilnius, for instance, the emphasis was on subjects that related to democracy promotion and human rights (indeed, EU funding was channelled under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights), support is now provided under 'Mobility and People-to-People Contacts'.¹⁰ The donor community stance on the disciplinary make-

¹⁰ ANNEX III of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2019 Action Document for Support to the European Humanities University – Phase IV.

up of the programme portfolio has been to respect EHU's independence in decision-making.

Relevance of the levels of study available: The fact that EHU provides opportunities for school-leavers from Belarus to enter European higher-education at Bachelor's level can be seen to be a key aspect of the university's profile, and responds strongly – in principle – to the needs of the potential applicant base (see further under Effectiveness). Study opportunities at Master's level provide for both graduates of EHU Bachelor's-level programmes, and those who have previously completed undergraduate studies in Belarus (or other countries).

Structure of programmes: The low residence format of study ensures that the needs of students who are not able to / prefer not to move to study full-time in Lithuania are catered for. This allows the university to maintain offerings to students from less wealthy backgrounds (including those from regions outside of the capital city), and those who have work or family commitments that require their presence in Belarus. However, the relatively high drop-out rates for low residence seen over the 2015-20 period indicate that even if the offering is attractive in principle, in practice major challenges face low residence students (see Effectiveness).

Currently moves are underway to restructure certain Bachelor's level programmes to render them shorter (by a year), to increase their attractiveness to prospective students.

Content and delivery of degree programmes: The feedback received from students, alumni and lecturers noted the ways in which EHU's programmes contrast with those offered in Belarus (where there exist equivalent offerings in a particular discipline) – the underlying emphasis at EHU on ideologically-free education, in which students are empowered to develop themselves as independent learners and critical thinkers, is reflected in the content and delivery of programmes. Whereas students in Belarusian universities face a very heavy workload of teacher-led classes in which discussion is very limited, and freedom to conduct independent lines of enquiry constrained, in EHU the opposite is the case. A frequently-noted comment in feedback to the evaluation has been that students are told at EHU there are 'no right or wrong answers,' and that students quickly come to feel that their views are valued in the democratically-based learning environment.

The evaluation team has heard that an increased emphasis on project-work has been brought in over recent years, including the use of groupwork aspects, as a means of allowing students to apply skills and knowledge to real-life situations. There have also, over the period 2015-20, been increased opportunities for internationalisation, including outbound and incoming Erasmus exchanges. (See coverage under Coherence.)

Civic identity: The evidence reviewed indicates that students and alumni confirm that the EHU experience inculcates a strong sense of civic identity and responsibility, which is developed both intrinsically through the approach to studies and extra-curricular work, and in the civic-engagement activities that students are involved in. The net result of the student-centred approach, the development of critical thinking, the development of transferable skills, all are seen as relevant in preparing the students to play active professional and civic roles (see further under Impact.)

Liberal Arts profile of studies: The EHU's commitment to the liberal arts profile it has embraced since its foundation period in Minsk continues to be prominent in its academic programmes, underpinned by the Core Curriculum followed by all undergraduate students. The responses to the survey recently conducted by the Student Union indicate that, among first-year students in particular, there are calls to reform the approach to the core curriculum (to render it elective, rather than compulsory), as students call for more practically-oriented subjects. However, it should also be noted that often older students and alumni reflect, retrospectively, that the core curriculum did provide a sound foundation for their intellectual development.

Relevance of programmes to the graduate employment market: Where data allow (e.g. from feedback received by interviews), job destinations do seem to correlate with the disciplinary background of the graduates. There is variation, understandably, between employment opportunities of those who return to Belarus and those who seek employment outside of the country, and between disciplines (cultural heritage, media, communications, are less 'politically-charged' and job prospects have been relatively stronger in Belarus in these spheres – while opportunities for graduates in political science, and to an extent, law, have objectively been more limited in Belarus). The feedback to the evaluation team from alumni notes that, in terms of the standard of education received and the skills and knowledge developed, EHU degrees do provide a good platform for entering professional life.

4.2 COHERENCE

C1: What measures have been taken by EHU to link up to the international / European academic and research networks?

EHU conducts its international relations principally through ERASMUS+ on the one hand and the opportunities provided by the Open Society on the other. It is chiefly through the measures provided in these frameworks that EHU as an institution has linked up to European and international academic networks.

With regards to the question of EHU's coherence between 2015-2020, three key observations emerged in the course of the evaluation:

- (i) EHU has taken advantage of ERASMUS+ exchanges, capacity building and training actions but has been far less active in its measures to link up to networks and create partnerships in the sphere of research, thus EHU is relatively inactive in the European Research Area (ERA).¹¹
- (ii) The other pillar of the EHU's international partnerships, namely the Open Society, is changing its modus operandi in the higher education field. The

¹¹ This observation possibly buttresses the evaluation's findings presented elsewhere that EHU research is lagging relative to other activities and also that EHU research collaboration tends to occur on the back on individual initiatives as opposed to being led by an institutional approach.

creation in 2020 of the Open Society University Network (OSUN),¹² of which EHU is a member can potentially have significant implications for the EHU's international relations and its coherence with European and international academic contexts.

- (iii) EHU outlined in its 2019-2024 strategy the objective of setting up two double or joint degrees by AY2023/24 with Bard College and Herzen State Pedagogical University in Russia as potential partner institutions.

The evaluation found that EHU has taken advantage of several ERASMUS+ schemes to the benefit of students, staff and the institution as a whole. This has helped embed EHU and its staff and students into the European higher education landscape.

EHU has developed more than 93 agreements with EU and non-EU states around the world in the framework of ERASMUS+. During the evaluation period 133 EHU students took part in ERASMUS+ (Key Actions 103 and 107) as outgoing students for either a full academic year or for one semester. The evaluation found that most students went to Western Europe, but also Poland, Cyprus and Russia figured quite highly as destinations. During the same period 24 students used ERASMUS+ mobility opportunities for two or three month traineeships abroad. According to interviews with staff and students the study abroad period is integrated into the home degree, meaning that the credits an EHU student earns abroad are fully transposed into the degree at EHU. The evaluation also found evidence suggesting that EHU was perceived as an interesting destination for incoming ERASMUS+ students. During the evaluation period 104 students came to EHU for a semester mostly from Western Europe, Turkey, but also Russia and Central Asia. On top of ERASMUS+ exchanges ten EHU students spent a semester or full academic year in Russia,¹³ and one student studied at Bard College as part of the Bard-EHU partnership.

EHU also had relatively high levels of staff mobility under ERASMUS+. During the evaluation period EHU hosted 35 staff from partner universities (26 on teaching assignments and nine for training). Scholars / staff came from the Czech Republic, Germany, Turkey, Poland, Latvia, as well as Bulgaria and Russia.

The EHU's coherence with European academic networks is also confirmed by its involvement in the 'AIMED' ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership (2018-2020) (KA2 Education, Training and Youth) and the EU-funded Jean Monnet Chair award on Constitutional Law and Human Rights. In the period 2014-2019 only two Jean Monnet actions were funded from Lithuania.¹⁴

Beyond ERASMUS+ EHU documents and web pages also make references to cooperation with St Petersburg State University and The Higher School of Economics

¹² <https://opensocietyuniversitynetwork.org>

¹³ Unclear in documents whether this was at St. Petersburg or Higher School of Economics and whether under a 'strategic partnership'.

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/factsheets/programme-countries/lithuania_erasmusplus_international_2019.pdf

in Moscow, as well as nine agreements with universities under Campus Europae which resemble ERAMUS+ mobility partnerships. However, it is not clear what concrete actions these relationships entail and what the scale of their ambitions are.

As already mentioned, the evaluation found that the coordinates of EHU's international relations started to change in 2020 as a result of the creation of OSUN (which currently comprises 23 university members and a further 15 research and educational members). The Open Society and Bard College have been partners for EHU since its inception and amongst other activities they provided support in setting up EHU's core curriculum. Interviews with stakeholders confirmed that during the evaluation period Bard College continued to provide support to EHU on a 'project basis' to aid the development of teaching and learning methodologies, as well as student exchange. Open Society / Bard College support also came in the form of grants to EHU for 'establishing the Network of Successful Social Projects Amongst EHU's students' (FOSI 13,240 euros) and Micro grants for student projects (Bard College 17,130 euros).

OSUN is, according to interviews, subsuming EHU's previous bilateral relations with Bard College and also the Central European University into a larger higher education multilateral context. The evaluation found that EHU staff and US-based stakeholders hold high expectations that OSUN will provide a new footing for EHU's international relations.

The evaluation team found that OSUN has already brought about opportunities for EHU staff and students to take part in courses and activities offered online by other member universities and research centres. The evaluation found that EHU and OSUN are a 'good fit' in a number of ways; membership in OSUN (i) reinforces the Liberal Arts identity of EHU (ii) elevates the international character of EHU and its curriculum (iii) provides additional learning and teaching opportunities for staff and students and (iv) sheds light on the circumstances of EHU as a university in exile.

Although OSUN was created during the final year of the evaluation period and therefore there are limited findings to comment upon, the evaluation team sees that OSUN is a potentially consequential development and raises a host of issues to do with EHU's European / EU coherence (even identity) (as well as other criteria) that need to be highlighted and given further consideration:

- The creation of OSUN brings into focus questions to do with the relationship between European and international (U.S.) academic and research contexts and whether EHU's deeper engagement within OSUN (even though it includes many other European partners and the CEU is a founding member), might affect EHU's anchoring in the EU higher education landscape.
- EHU's plan presented in the 2019-2024 strategy to establish double or joint degrees with Bard College and Herzen State Pedagogical University. This prompts the question as to why EHU has not yet become part of an ERASMUS MUNDUS Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) alongside EU and possibly also non-EU universities, given that opportunities have been around for some time, (the evaluation notes that an application for an EMJMD was recently made but was rejected).

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

E1: What are the outcomes of the core operations of EHU? What are the current strengths and how could these be enhanced? What are the main challenges?

E2: How has gender equality been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention? To what extent has the intervention contributed to the improvement of gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up?

The following review summarises the key trends and issues arising over the period 2015-2020, across the range of major parameters relating to the core operations of EHU.

Governance and administration

While management is not an explicit evaluation question, the evaluation team finds that some of the solutions to the challenges faced by EHU also relates to the current management structure. The period under evaluation has seen considerable change in the area of governance and administration of EHU. This can be seen in the fact that over the five years, three rectors have been in position, a situation which necessarily introduces an element of flux into an academic institution, as the leadership role is crucial in setting the path for development of any university.

At the Board and senior management level, the team found that informal arrangements have been applied to formal Lithuanian requirements to make management effective, but that this arrangement also has implications for accountability. EHU has, in accordance with Lithuanian law, established a General Assembly of Part Owners (GAPO) comprising representatives from initial donors: EURASIA foundation, Open Society Foundation and the Lithuanian Government. In principle, GAPO is the final authority on all appointments and major strategic decisions. This includes appoint the rector and setting the governing board. The rector then reports to (but is also a member of) the governing board and to GAPO. In practice, according to interviewees, GAPO members post-approve governing board decisions, but play little active role in the EHU management. In the period evaluated there was also a president of the university (the founder of the university Anatoli Mikhailov) positioned between the governing board and the rector, which then formally had four management layers.¹⁵ The removal of the president position and the fact that GAPO in reality only post-approve decisions with no changes to these has therefore made this setup more simple and *de facto* two layered.

GAPO has however also changed over time. Not all members participate in GAPO meetings and some members are now individual members rather than institutional representatives, though the team note that Lithuania is still a financial significant donor to EHU. It is also noted that two out of three members are from the United

¹⁵ See management arrangement overview in the 2019 strategy report.

States while the major founding sources are European. At the same time, the governing board membership has also seen changes. Except for Lithuania no other donors sit on the governing board (though invitations have been provided by EHU in the past). Interviews show that the governing board meets bi-annually and that discuss overall strategy level decisions. The level of detail of discussion was limited due to the time available and frequency of meetings. Overall, the combined interviews of governing board members, GAPO members, senior management and other people of knowledge of the process indicate that issues are discussed but that these are rarely challenging the management of the EHU. Furthermore, it is not evident to the team how the board representation is aligned with the expertise needed to fulfil the EHU strategic plan. The team also understands from interviews that the decision of streamlining the management arrangements by making the presidency post redundant came after request from donors not formally on the governing board. Donors are thus influencing decisions through bilateral dialogue but not as a formal member of the board.

With regard to the Senate, changes have been introduced to the format of working of this body, following the adoption of the new Statute of the EHU in 2018 (with a new senate elected that year, comprising 19 members, including three students and representatives of the academic departments). Feedback indicated that not all staff and students are content with the revised format of the Senate, stating that there is now reduced potential for influence of academic staff and student opinion on decision-making – in the recent survey of students conducted by the Student Union, for instance, 60% of respondents supported the suggestion to return to the Senate the larger role it used to have in the decision-making processes of EHU.¹⁶

The number of academic departments has been streamlined in this period, from four departments¹⁷ to two, achieved through merging departments into the Academic Department of Social Sciences, and the Academic Department of Humanities and Arts, as a means to achieve economies of scale in administrative affairs. This is in line with the overall process of reducing the number of administrative positions in the university.

The feedback gathered by the evaluation from staff and students indicates that respondents would like to see increased transparency with regard to decision-making in the institution, and greater opportunities for ‘rank-and-file’ academic staff as well as students to be more closely involved in these processes.

Academic programme delivery

The current evaluation does not have a remit to provide detailed review of the academic programmes of EHU – that is a task undertaken by the Lithuanian Quality

¹⁶ ‘University-wide survey of students’, Student Union of EHU, 2020.

¹⁷ Department of Law, Department of Social and Political Sciences, Department of History, Department of Media.

Assurance agency, in coordination with the university's internal quality assurance teams. The aim here is to provide an overview of the key developments. The period under evaluation has seen considerable challenges, some of an existential nature, which the university has had to respond to.

Accreditation and Quality Assurance: Since its arrival in Lithuania, the academic programmes and other aspects of the university's operations have been assessed on several occasions by the relevant Lithuanian authorities charged with oversight of quality assurance and the quality of university administration,¹⁸ as well as by reviews and evaluations conducted by external reviewers/evaluators, focused on particular aspects of the EHU's activities, including the outcomes of donor support.¹⁹ EHU has been responding to the requirements of the Lithuanian authorities across the period – however, in 2017-2019 the situation regarding the university's legal status as a provider of degree programmes faced an enormous challenge, as the Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) failed the university's accreditation registration application in 2017.²⁰

This was a comprehensive institutional review, that looked not only at the conformity of academic programmes with Lithuanian requirements, and the quality of the programmes of study, but also analysed the strategic management of the university, the material base of the academic programmes (classroom, library, other resources), the validity and rationality of the financial plan, the assessment of the research (or art) strategies. The results were mixed – the academic studies block received an overall 'positive' assessment (notwithstanding criticism of a number of areas), while strategic management and research blocks both received 'negative' assessments. The report included a broad range of recommendations for the university to address, in order to be able to reapply for accreditation.

In the aftermath of this episode, the university has had to undertake considerable efforts to address the outstanding issues. In the programme management sphere, this has included the development of more robust and comprehensive internal quality assurance procedures. While there was a risk that the university might close at some point in 2018, the situation has now been resolved to a considerable extent – with the 2019 report of SKVC confirming the accreditation of a block of programmes,²¹ while

¹⁸ See for example the 2014 review: 'Institutional review report of European Humanities University, Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education', Vilnius 2014

¹⁹ See ToR for the current evaluation, p. 7

²⁰ 'Institutional Review Report of European Humanities University, Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Vilnius 2017. See also the analysis of the findings of the report and response of EHU in I. Giedraitytė, 'Analysis of EHU's Academic Offer', 2018

²¹ The report 'CONCLUSIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION DOCUMENTS FOR A PERMIT TO CONDUCT STUDIES AND STUDY-RELATED ACTIVITIES OF THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION "EUROPEAN HUMANITIES UNIVERSITY"', SKVC, 2019, states that 6 disciplines in 3 fields of study were assessed positively, from the total of 12 disciplines in 8 fields of study included in the university's application.

work is continuing in EHU to address other identified shortcomings in the remainder of the portfolio, and other aspects identified in the 2017 and 2019 reports.

Degree recognition: EHU degrees are recognised in line with the accreditation of EHU programmes by the Lithuanian quality assurance agency, and therefore equip graduates with an internationally-accepted degree, on the basis of studies completed in an EU Member State. The EHU website states: *‘EHU diplomas are recognized throughout the European Union as well as in other countries. In addition to a diploma, graduating students receive a Diploma Supplement.’*²² However, the website does not contain information regarding the recognition of the EHU *degrees in Belarus*. Formally, the Belarusian ENIC Centre (National Institute for Higher Education - Foreign Credentials Assessment Centre performs the task of recognition of degrees of Lithuanian universities (as part of its overall role of international degree recognition), and EHU degrees are, in principle, covered by this mechanism. Feedback from EHU to the current report notes that this is limited to the Master’s level only.

In practice, as interview feedback indicated, the Belarusian authorities do not accept EHU degrees for positions within government services (e.g. as civil servants). For those EHU graduates who either want to enter, or continue, government service, they must use a Belarusian qualification. For non-governmental and commercial sector positions, this barrier does not officially exist – and many graduates have used their EHU degrees to pursue careers in a range of sectors in Belarus.

Changes to the portfolio of programmes: The accreditation process has been one factor among several (including overall internal review of the existing portfolio) that have, in combination, resulted in the reduction of numbers of disciplines offered from 12 to 8. It should be noted that this is a very limited offering for a university. As discussed below, there have been significant recruitment challenges in some subject areas, which have necessitated difficult decisions to be made regarding closure of programmes and the termination of academic staff contracts. Meanwhile, EHU has acted to respond to identified new opportunities (e.g. in the sphere of visual plastic art, and theatre art and acting, introduced in 2019-20) – the rationale for these programmes is that they represent important linkages between the academic sphere and cultural and societal developments in Belarus. Concepts for Master’s programmes in International Law in War & in Peace, and Gender Studies, are currently under development.²³ The aim across the portfolio is to render programmes more attractive to potential students, to address the drop in recruitment figures. However, as with any university programme, there will be a lag in time between

²² <https://en.ehu.lt/academics/diploma/>

²³ EHU feedback to the current report notes that the following degree programme proposals are ‘soon to be submitted for registration by the Lithuanian Quality Assurance Agency’: BA in Law, LLM in International Law and Trade, MA in International Law and Security Studies.

introduction and gaining momentum in recruitment – which in the case of EHU is further complicated by the restrictions on promoting its programmes in Belarus.

The Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 states that: *‘Currently, EHU has a potential to introduce a double degree/joint study programme with Bard College and Herzen State Pedagogical University (criteria and preparation for this has to be set up and implemented). Double degree/joint programmes with different international universities will highly improve EHU’s position as an international hub of liberal arts and academic excellence.’*²⁴ The current evaluation report notes that progress towards this goal appears to be limited. It should also be noted that such discussions were already present at the time of the 2012 external evaluation conducted for EUD Minsk. Establishing double or joint degree programmes is an extremely time-consuming task. The benefits need to be clearly weighed against the inputs required.

The Strategic Plan for 2019-2024 also includes the goal of making a transition from academic programmes which are mostly taught in Russian (90% as of 2018)²⁵ to a blend of 50:50 Russian and English as languages of instruction by AY 2023/24 for Bachelor’s level, and 70% for Master’s level. Analysis of feedback received by the evaluation team from lecturing staff reveals that these targets are problematic – as not only will this be a challenge for the existing academic staff, but also in particular for Belarusian undergraduate students (as respondents note that the standard of English language proficiency tends to be limited). The survey of students conducted by the Student Union shows that students are keen to learn foreign languages at EHU, with 96.4% of respondents stating that they would like to see English as a subject embedded across their programme of studies – which suggests that they do not currently possess sufficient language skills in this language. (The issue of English as a language of instruction was not covered in the survey).

Student recruitment and retention

Recruitment, retention and drop-out, and graduation of students: In the period under evaluation the EHU has seen a considerable decline in student numbers (the overall student body, recruitment figures, graduation figures). The total number enrolled has dropped, for example, from 1352 at the start of the period under evaluation to 672 at the end point of the period. This is part of a long-term trend: the 2012 external evaluation of donor support to EHU noted that the university stated that it was ‘able, thanks to donor support, to maintain support to up to 2000 students, the actual number enrolled seems to fluctuate considerably. For instance, in the 2011-12 academic year, at the start of the session (1 October 2011) some 1858 students were enrolled, but by the end of the academic year this figure had dropped to 1167 students.’²⁶ The table below (table 2) related to the 2015-20 period and has been

²⁴ EHU Strategy 2019-2024, 5.3

²⁵ EHU Strategy 2019-2024, 5.4

²⁶ ‘Evaluation of EU assistance to the European Humanities University’, January 2013, p. 17

compiled by the evaluation team on the basis of various documents supplied to the evaluation team by EHU.²⁷

Table 2: Statistical overview of student numbers at EHU for the period 2015-20

	Academic Year					
	AY 14-15	AY 15-16	AY 16-17	AY 17-18	AY 18-19	AY 19-20
Total number of students enrolled	1352	1071	895	812	745	672
Number of students recruited	206	268	251	225	186	176
Number of drop-outs	278	190	149	136	87	58
Drop-out rate	22%	21%	18%	17%	12%	9%
Number of students graduated	230	269	178	153	171	120

The goals set in the EHU Strategy for 2019-2024 include the aim to increase recruitment, in order to achieve an overall student body of 850 (with 170 non-Belarusian students making up 20% of this total).²⁸ This target appears to be modest – when compared with the total seen at the start of the 2015-20 period (when 1352 students were enrolled), or indeed earlier periods.

There have been drives over recent years (noted also in the 2012 evaluation) to increase recruitment of non-Belarusian students, with Russian-speaking students a particular target. The EHU Annual Report for 2014-15 notes that some 12% of students recruited that year were not from Belarus, but from the former Soviet Union region (including Russian-speaking Lithuanians). This proportion has dropped subsequently (according to the statistic quoted in EHU reporting that 95% of students are Belarusian). The Strategic Plan embeds a target of increasing the number of non-Belarusian students to the level of 170 students (20%) of the overall enrolment by 2023/24 academic year, feedback received from EHU indicated that the university is currently on track to achieve this. However, it should be noted that plans to increase outreach from early 2020 (including discussion of opening representations in Russia and Ukraine) have had to be postponed since February 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis.

For AY 2020/21, the number of students who entered programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate combined) stood at 176 at the start of the academic year, which is a low figure in comparison with even the reduced figures seen in previous years – only the addition of students granted scholarships after being expelled from Belarusian universities took the total to 240.

²⁷ Annual reports of EHU; the file 'Drop-outs All', covering the period 2015-20;

²⁸ European Humanities University: Strategy, 2019-2024.

Factors influencing down-turn in recruitment: Clearly, notwithstanding the strong confirmation by current and former students of the quality of education, EHU has continued to struggle, over the period 2015-2020, to recruit students across all programmes (with certain disciplines in particular seeing a drop in recruitment).

The factors that have contributed to this situation are complex. The controversies seen over the appointment and subsequent removal of the rector of EHU (2015-16) were widely reported in Belarusian media and in social media. The departure of many donor community members and the suspension of funding was also reported upon, as were subsequent problems with accreditation, and the student strike protests in autumn 2019. A key issue influencing recruitment has been the question of fees and availability of scholarships. The decision to raise fees and change the conditions for low residence students in 2019 was a difficult one for the university to make, but is, according to interviewees, already having effects on student and parent decision-making regarding EHU as a destination. The short-term nature of donor funding also can be seen as a factor here – as making commitments of 2 years of funding is less than the length of the undergraduate programmes that students sign up to, thereby giving cause for concern among applicants as to whether funding will last the length of their programme. Finally, Poland, which is the second largest taker of students from Belarus, has embarked on a new drive to attract more students from Belarus through more grants and bursaries.²⁹

These endogenous factors are compounded with a range of exogenous factors that have impacted recruitment. In Belarus, although the Propilei centre serves to support applicants (including through the provision of the intensive preparatory programmes that many students take), the fact that officially the university is not able to engage in promotional activities and openly recruit students under its own name serves as a major obstacle. As an illustration – when EHU planned to join a mission of Lithuanian HEIs on a recruitment mission to Belarus, once the Belarusian authorities learned of EHU's inclusion the entire mission was cancelled for all participating HEIs. It is also to be noted that EU delegation in Minsk is not able to promote the university – hence the absence of EHU from education fairs organised by the EU in Belarus.

Drop-out and retention figures: With regard to the balance between drop-out and retention, the average figure for the proportion of entrants who subsequently graduated across the period 2015-2020 is 45%, i.e. less than half of entrants make it to the end of the programme. At Bachelor's level, there is a marked difference between high residence (61%) and low residence (32%), with regard to numbers graduating. At Master's level, an average of 55% of entrants graduated in the period 2015-2020 – also therefore representing a cause for concern. With regard to annual drop-out rates, there has been a positive change from 22% seen in AY 2014-15 to 9%

²⁹ For details on Belarus studying abroad, see: <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=RFOREIGN#>

in AY 2019-2020, which has served to offset somewhat the overall downward trend in student numbers.

While a number of factors influence drop-out (including financial concerns, personal reasons, etc.), according to feedback a key influencing factor relates to the need for entrants to adapt to the new teaching and learning culture they encounter in EHU, which is markedly different from that they have experienced previously in Belarus. The emphasis on learner independence, in which students must take greater responsibility for their studies than seen in the more controlled environment in Belarus, as well as the requirements relating to independent thinking, critical enquiry, development of interpersonal skills, etc., and the adaptation to living away from home in a foreign country, all make demands on the entrants. The Propilei centre in Minsk plays a key role in preparing students for the EHU experience, for those who attend the preparatory foundation programme for one year prior to entry. In EHU itself, academic staff provide a lot of support to students (according to student feedback), assisted by the student affairs team (feedback from representative).³⁰

As EHU staff noted to the evaluation team, low-residence students are ‘vulnerable’, as they not only need to adapt to the new learning environment, but must do so from distance, while combining studies with work commitments (or for some, other study commitments).. According to feedback from EHU to the draft report, the situation has been affected as well by the recent introduction of tighter requirements by Lithuanian QA authorities relating to low-residence programmes: *‘Starting from AY 2019/20. it is obligatory to ensure the same amount of contact hours in low-residence and high-residence forms of studies, thus an increase of contact hours in low residence studies has occurred,’* EHU and Propilei centre provide support through webinars and outreach, to supplement the in-person contact periods (students attend EHU for intensive periods several times per year).

With regard to Master’s students, an explanatory factor behind the drop-out rate is that students have less time to adapt to the learning environment at EHU in comparison with students on undergraduate programmes. Furthermore, their prior university experience will have been in Belarus – and it is often more difficult for these older students to adapt, in comparison with those who enter undergraduate programmes having graduated from high school.

The drop in enrolment and drop-outs combined impacts graduation rates. The data provided to the evaluation team for the number of students graduating in the period 2015-20 (and the proportion this represents of the total number of entrants) shows a general downward trend: from 230 (2015), rising to 269 (2016), dropping to 178

³⁰ In addition, EHU staff explained that a proportion of the apparent drop-outs shown in the annual figures can be explained by cases of those who have to take academic leave, and then subsequently return to graduate.

(2017), 153 (2018), 171 (2019), to a sharp drop in 2020, when the total number graduating was only 120.³¹

The student experience at EHU

The period under evaluation has seen considerable flux in EHU, which has impacted on the student body. Closure of academic programmes, rises in the fee level, changes in the nature of student involvement in decision-making at EHU, the non-continuation of the contracts of a number of lecturing staff, along with other factors (including the current COVID-19 crisis) have all been cited as factors giving rise to student concerns. For instance, when EHU introduced changes to the fee structure in 2019, this move provoked disquiet in the student community, including the organisation of protests and a strike by a proportion of the student body.

Notwithstanding these issues, when students reflect upon the value of the educational experience at EHU, current and former students tend to express more positive opinions, according to the evidence reviewed.³² indicates that students are generally satisfied with the experience of studying at EHU. The recent (late 2020) survey³³ of current students conducted by the Student Union, for instance, shows scores of over 7 out of 10 across a range of core indicators relating to student satisfaction with the academic side of their EHU experience (general satisfaction is ranked at 7.2/10; satisfaction with the core curriculum was 7.3/10, etc.). Lower scores were given with regard to the quality of student accommodation (6.5/10), the cost of accommodation (6.2/10), and 6.6/10 for the organisation of distance-learning for the entire student body under the COVID-19 pandemic conditions.³⁴ Surveys are also conducted among the student body on an annual basis by the EHU Academic Support Centre (as feedback on individual courses, supplemented by aggregate-level analysis). The surveys and analyses cover a range of issues relating to the student experience of studies, extra-curricular opportunities, access to learning resources, etc. In the 2019-20 survey, for instance, the key question of ‘to what extent are you satisfied with your educational process at EHU’, the score of 6.67/10 was recorded.³⁵

An oft-quoted aspect of the experience, in feedback and online sources reviewed for the evaluation, relates to the socialisation aspect of the studies – in which students acquire maturity of character and become independent thinkers, thanks to the approach of EHU (which must be contrasted with the approach students were accustomed to in Belarus, which has retained the Soviet system’s top-down, knowledge-based approach in which individual needs and interests are not the priority). The opportunities to become involved in civic engagement projects, and in

³¹ Source: File ‘EHU Graduation’ shared to the evaluation team by EHU.

³² Interview and focus group feedback from current and former students, academic staff; student survey conducted by the Student Union in 2020; EHU reporting; internet-based material.

³³ Общеуниверситетское анкетирование студентов, EHU Student Union, 2021.

³⁴ It can be noted that many universities across Europe have struggled to provide effective responses to the pandemic situation.

³⁵ ‘Monitoring assessment of the quality of education in the university for the 2019-20 academic year’.

internationalisation activities (including mobility) also rate highly in feedback to the evaluation team. See also below and section on Impact, on career destinations.

Academic staff: The survey of teaching staff conducted for the evaluation received 36 responses from lecturing staff (see overview in Annex 6). Staff were asked to respond to a series of questions posed in the form of statements, with responses ranked according to a standard Likert scale ('strongly agree', 'agree', 'difficult to answer', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree'). The responses indicate generally positive assessments by respondents to all questions, relating, *inter alia*, to the level of support provided to them by the university in fulfilling their teaching roles, the level of resourcing, training opportunities, workload, opportunities for networking and mobility (all questions received more than 50% positive assessments, at times considerably so). There is a general trend for more senior staff to register more positive responses than more junior colleagues. Despite the overall positive trend, comments provided by some respondents contain criticism relating to areas that need to be addressed in order to achieve more widespread coverage of staff needs.

With regard to in-service training, EHU shared information on the internal capacity-building activities conducted over the period 2015-20, along with information about the free-of-charge language classes in Lithuanian and English provided to staff, and the increasing opportunities to engage in capacity building via external providers/events.³⁶ In the case of the latter, the Open Society University Network (OSUN), established in Spring 2020, of which EHU is a member, has launched a range of initiatives aimed at academic staff networking and in-service training, via regular webinars and other means, which EHU staff feedback to the evaluation rates as extremely valuable. One of the initiatives is a modular PhD programme to facilitate doctoral studies for OSUN staff, alongside their regular teaching commitments.

The evidence relating to the academic staff indicates certain underlying tensions – on the one hand, feedback from students and staff indicates the high level of commitment of staff, and generally students express a strong degree of satisfaction with the work of their lecturing staff. At the same time, staff morale is a concern – in particular, the teaching load of academics remains high, as seen in evidence contained in annual reports and from interview feedback, meaning that relatively less time is available for them to engage in research and other activities within their ascribed working time. Respondents noted that Lithuanian QA requirements mean that teaching loads for low-residence programmes are similar to those for the high-residence, resulting in overload on staff. The student-centred approach of the university – while positive for students – also means that a 'hidden' additional workload for staff is required.

³⁶ Source: File – 'DATA ON CAPACITY-BUILDING OF TEACHING STAFF OF EHU (IN-SERVICE TRAINING) 2015-2020', prepared for the evaluation team by EHU.

Feedback in a focus group discussion has also drawn attention to the lack of a sabbatical (academic leave) procedure which is essential in allowing academics to have time dedicated only to research, free for a certain period from their other duties (paid by the university). Economies introduced by the university have also led to constraints for some staff in being able to engage in mobility activities, training, etc. (see annual reports of EHU on this issue).

The problems associated with issuing long-term contracts also remain – a problem associated not least with the nature of donor funding cycles, which are more suited to short-term development cooperation projects than the stability a university needs to be able to function effectively. This impacts on the financial security of staff – and a further issue noted during the evaluation relates to post-retirement financial conditions of academic staff.

EHU research

As already mentioned, stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation all concurred that the EHU as an institution had been ineffective in the area of research. In contrast, the research work of many individual academics and Centres and Institutes was viewed as being effective and salient to the EHU's mission, Belarus and wider European research context.

The period 2015-2020 was a phase of adaptation and evolution for EHU as it worked towards implementing its 2019-2024 Research/Art strategy. The evaluation found that the strategy appeared to include the necessary building blocks and concrete plans to potentially render EHU's research more effective, relevant and significant in terms of impact. This has included alignment to the Lithuanian research assessment criteria and a fine-tuning of EHU research priorities.

According to this evaluation the effectiveness of EHU research saw an improvement or at least the seeds of improvement after 2018 based on the metrics used in the Research Council of Lithuania's research assessment exercise (across all units EHU research (art) activity performance indicators increased from 74 points in 2017, to 212,9 points in 2018 and then 370,644 points in 2019). At the same time, as already noted under the section on relevance, EHU's involvement in collaborative research projects and activities remained low (two projects; one Horizon 2020, one Belarus Congress) and only eight publications from EHU staff appeared in journals within SCOPUS / Web of Science databases.³⁷

The evaluation found that the overall effectiveness of the EHU's periodicals to be rather unimpressive (based on the numbers of downloads and the fact that none are in the SCOPUS database). Whether cancelling most of EHU's periodicals to concentrate on raising the quality of 'Topos' as a flagship journal (as outlined in the research strategy) will lead to heightened effectiveness (in terms of more readers, a higher number of submissions and downloads) cannot be judged by the current evaluation.

³⁷ it is not known whether these publications were written by staff who are still in situ at EHU and whether they can be submitted as part of the 2023 research assessment exercise

Based on the evidence gathered by the evaluation team EHU has a number of key strengths when it comes to its research. First, EHU staff are research active and publish in peer-reviewed journals (102 between 2017 and mid-2020). They also publish in at least three languages (Belarusian, Russian and English). Second, EHU staff carry out both scientific and applied (policy relevant) research, as well as impact studies and media-related commentaries and interventions, also in the form of online lectures and videos. Third, some of the EHU's Centres are becoming focal points for the development of research activities, including publications and collaboration with foreign academics and institutions and non-academic stakeholders. Fourth, though it remains work in progress, as a result of the 2019-2024 Research/Art strategy, EHU has fine-tuned its research priorities and has started to put in place an institutional research infrastructure (including a publishing house, a database for staff to input their activities and a project coordinator's office) aimed at supporting and monitoring staff in their scientific activities.

Key indicators of research effectiveness identified by the evaluation include:

- The number of externally funded collaborative scientific projects remained low during the evaluation period, but there are indications of more activity in this area emerging.³⁸ Although EHU presented a long list of institutional projects/activities completed between 2015 and 2020, only two were scientific: 'The History of Nuclear Energy and Society' project (Horizon 2020, 2015-2018) and the 8th International Congress of Belarusian Studies (RCL grant, 2019). Though scientific in nature, it is not clear how far EHU faculty members were involved, nor if these activities led to research publications or further research collaboration and partnership networks for EHU as a whole.
- EHU faculty are research active and a steady flow of publications in the form of peer reviewed articles, monographs, conference reports (international and Lithuanian / Belarusian), as well as different forms of professional artistic activity are produced each year. However, concerning the 'gold standard' of publications in SCOPUS / Web of Science Databases EHU's output remains low (8 in total between 2017 and mid-2020). This point notwithstanding, since 2017 the quality of EHU's scientific research output has grown across all subject areas (Humanities, Social Sciences and Art) according to the evaluation methodology of the Research Council of Lithuania. In this context all three units gained substantially more points between the years 2017 – 2019 based on publications. Across all units EHU research (art) activity performance indicators increased from 74 points in 2017, to 212,9 points in 2018 and then 370,644 points in 2019. These findings seem to confirm that

³⁸ AY2019/20 two bids were made (funding still pending) to the Research Council of Lithuania Joint Lithuania – Poland Projects (DAINA) scheme with the Universities of Warsaw and Wroclaw.

from a Lithuanian / European perspective EHU's research is gaining relevance.

- EHU had up to six in-house periodicals at different points in its history. However, some periodicals were published infrequently, some were open access and others were not, moreover the extent to which contents reflected core EHU research is not evident. The relevance of EHU journals for European and international research contexts is not clear. The number of downloads of articles from open access journals is not impressive. For example, for AY2017/18 there were only 23 requests for full article texts from four journals and whilst this grew substantially to 5775 for AY2019/20 it is still not high. Since 2018 the number of periodicals has been reduced to reflect the fine-tuning of EHU's research strategy and to enable staff to focus on preparing SCOPUS-standard publications.³⁹ Part of the EHU's remedy was the decision to wind-down *The Belarusian Historical Review*, the *Journal of constitutionalism and human rights* and *Crossroads* and to concentrate on improving the quality of the periodical 'Topos' (international authors, articles in Russian, Belarusian and English and indexed in *The Philosopher's Index* and *EBSCO-CEEAS*, eventually to join SCOPUS) as a journal that would represent the research profile of EHU as a whole.⁴⁰
- The evaluation found that EHU Centres, especially the Centre for Gender Studies and the Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights to be particularly active in ways that served to heighten the effectiveness of their research. Both Centres are interdisciplinary, produce academic and applied research and as such address contemporary issues of relevance to Belarus and to other European states and societies, as well as to the EHU's donor community. Furthermore, they create bridges between research, teaching and projects, involve students in their activities and collaborate with foreign academics and institutions.⁴¹
- The EU-funded Jean Monnet Chair 'Teaching the European Transnational Constitutionalism inside and outside the EU / TETC', though primarily focused on curriculum development and dialogue with civil society, also had research activities including workshops and conferences with foreign academics and universities. The relevance and effectiveness of EHU's research profile in constitutionalism and human rights was advanced by the activities of the Jean Monnet Chair at regional and European levels. Furthermore, donors and external stakeholders confirmed during interviews that the research of the Centre has heightened relevance in relation to developments in Belarus since summer 2020.

³⁹ Practical Actions on the Strengthening and Development of Research (Art) Activities in European Humanities University A.Y. 2018-2019 and 2019-2020

⁴⁰ Recent download data is not yet available

⁴¹ Based on focus group discussions with EHU staff, interviews with donors, Jean Monnet Chair reporting documents;

- The evaluation found that EHU does not seem to have a systematic approach to hosting researchers from Belarus and that visiting scholars, if they come, do so on an ad hoc basis through their links with individual academics. This suggests that EHU does not regard itself, and is not perceived by external scholars and experts aspiring to conduct independent research as a relevant hub or safe haven for academic freedom.

Based on the evaluation team's interviews with EHU staff and leaders a number of challenges affecting the overall effectiveness of EHU research prevail:

- EHU has yet to consolidate its research culture and apply the measures foreseen in its research/Art strategy. The full and successful implementation of the strategy and its capacity to render EHU research more effective will depend on a stable environment (in terms of finance and staff levels).
- The evaluation found that EHU staff have limited time to pursue their research. Teaching loads are heavy, not least because courses have to be delivered in both online and face-to-face formats. Lecturers in some subjects are also obliged to regularly update the content of their teaching to reflect changes in Belarus, which presents a further limit on time available for research.
- Funding available for staff to carry out research and especially the types of activities needed to develop fresh research, such as fieldwork, visits to institutions or libraries appears to be limited.
- Based on the evaluation team's interviews, staff sometimes feel that there are competing expectations placed upon them regarding research and writing priorities. On the one hand they are expected to carry out more scientific work, but on the other they are encouraged, and see it as an important part of their job as an academic at EHU, to address a public audiences by writing commentaries, articles or impact studies (to do with Belarus), which though might be viewed as important and 'effective' in some ways, do not necessarily count as being scientifically effective and valuable.
- There is a lack of contact between academics and donors. This means that donors seldom know the details of EHU research activities and the capacities of individual academics and in turn, EHU faculty are not necessarily aware of the interests of the donor community. This implies that there is an underutilisation of potential research cooperation / exploitation / dissemination between EHU and the donor community.

Civic engagement and outreach activities

The concept of civic engagement is embedded at the core of EHU's mission. Here the university's long-term collaboration with Bard College in the USA, and other universities in the broader network of liberal arts based institutions, has contributed to EHU's own development of civic engagement opportunities both within academic programmes, and applied through student extra-curricular activities.

An aspect of the EHU's work relates to the role of 'social partners' of the university, which are involved in shaping the academic programmes, and also are

often involved in acting as hosts for students (whether in Vilnius or in Belarus) to conduct project work, volunteering for an NGO or community project, etc. The evaluation team, however, found that EHU does not have a systematic approach to civic engagement or cooperation with many of the social partners.

Interviews show that the civic engagement drive to large extent comes from teachers and students. Students and teachers engage with social partners and in civic activities directly. EHU provides a foundation for this by promoting open class debates and a free working environment. As one interviewee stated: 'EHU education is about getting you to think and to get engaged'....'the non-formal aspects of EHU education are about opening the mind'. It is linked to project and team work assignments as opposed to courses being assessed by just individual work. There are instances where the student office has acted as a facilitator, but the team found that in most cases it was a teacher or student driven engagement.

The engagement with civic activities allows EHU lecturers to contribute (many lecturers combine their academic work with roles in the civic sphere, across the range of disciplinary spheres covered in the university). This engagement includes the organisation of round tables, seminars, webinars, to discuss issues relevant to Belarusian audiences.

Gender

In terms of gender mainstreaming and gender equality the EHU has ensured a gender balanced representation among key staff functions. Among the nine leading senior staff at the EHU there are five women and four men.⁴² This gender balance is also mirrored on the gender distribution of the general staff as evidence from the EHU website.⁴³ However, the representation in the governing board stands out with seven male members and no female representation, and only one out of 17 honorary doctors being female.⁴⁴ The team understands from interviews that there are plans of including two women in the governing board in the future. Finally, however around two thirds of the students at the university are female.

The level of gender mainstreaming in EHU policies is limited. EHU does not have a gender policy, but a Code of Ethics and EHU Equal Opportunities policy. Going through key documents such as the strategy for EHU and the annual reports, there is no mention of gender and gender-related terms in any of these. This also translates into lack of mention of the Centre for Gender Studies. Mention of gender and gender-related terms including equality, equity, representation, inclusion is minimally mentioned in the strategies, guidelines, and annual reports. Similarly, student and staff data broken down into male/female, men/women categories are limitedly

⁴² EHU Annual Report 2019.

⁴³ <https://en.ehu.lt/staff/>

⁴⁴ <https://en.ehu.lt/about/honorary-doctors/>

reflected in the institutional documents.⁴⁵ There are also no clearly defined goals in any of the strategy and management documents pertaining the gender equality. All in all there is limited formal attention to gender in the documents. Interviews with governing board and management level staff reflect this limited management attention to gender.

In terms of gender studies, EHU has always had one or two gender specific studies in the past or studies where gender is integrated. The Centre for Gender Studies have spearheaded gender research and activism focus within EHU. Formed in 1997 in Minsk, the Centre's activities transitioned to Vilnius in 2005 when EHU relocated its base. Between 2000-2004, the Centre led one of the main graduate programs that unilaterally focused on gender – MA in Gender Studies. However, from 2005, this program ceased to exist on its own and was incorporated into other study programs as majors, including Masters in Cultural Studies, Public Policy and gender-related courses at the Bachelor's program in Media and Communication. The Centre's activities are focused primarily on research and projects leaning more towards the activism sphere than in academia.

Interviews show that the attention to gender is strong among the in the Center for Gender studies and that members of the Centre do engage and are free to launch teaching related to gender. The Centre is also involved in multiple research projects pertaining to gender and gender activism on an individual basis. These include among others: Social Stratification of post-Soviet Societies: Gender, Class, Nation; Gender Representations in Visual Culture and Feminist Curatorship; Gender, Mobility, and Human Rights; and, Gendered Issues in Media. According to the Academic Department of Social Sciences 2019/2020 report there are plans underway into launching of a new MA programme in Gender studies (in English) by the Centre.⁴⁶

Gender in other studies is, according to interviewees, limited. In the studies around liberal arts, gender is not mainstreamed and close to all articles/texts used in the curriculum have male authors.⁴⁷ The team understands from interviews, that it is a challenge for students at liberal arts to combine their studies with the gender courses taught under the media and cultural studies. Masters students can however seek advice and input from the Centre for Gender Studies pertaining to gender in their thesis.

Interviews with students indicate frustrations with the limited attention to gender in the curriculum, as well as the options for including gender in their programmes.

⁴⁵ Review by the evaluation team of: 2019-2024 EHU strategy; annual reports 2016-2019; and EHU Academic Department of Social Sciences Report 2019-2020. In addition to the EHU Code of Ethics and EHU Equal Opportunity Policy

⁴⁶ See also 3) a special volume of EHU scientific journal *Perekrestki* (Crossroads) dedicated to the 25th anniversary of our Center for Gender Studies, https://ru.ehu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CrossRoad_2017_1_2.pdf.

⁴⁷ Interviews and screening of available curriculum data

Collaboration in student led projects have however provided an avenue for students to interact and implement gender research and civic engagement. Recently, student micro-grants awarded by the Bard Center for Civic Engagement, included a gender equality focus in one of the winning projects. The grants are competitive.

The attention to gender among academic staff varies according to their subject area. However overall there is limited evidence to show reflections on gender outside the Centre for Gender Studies. The limited management attention to gender is thus very much reflected in all aspects of the EHU from curriculum to the governing board composition.

4.4 IMPACT

I1: What is the impact of EHU to its country of origin, Belarus?

Defining the parameters of impact

The intervention logic embedded in the donor funds that guide the support of the donor community of the EU, Sweden and Lithuania covering the period under evaluation emphasise impact relating to students and alumni of EHU, with regard to the contribution that these individuals make to Belarus through their professional and civic roles and activities. This was confirmed in interviews with major and minor donors to the EHU.

For the purpose of the current evaluation, a broader understanding of impact is used, in order to capture all aspects of the impact that can be associated with the work of the EHU – i.e. not only associated with students and alumni, but also the activities of academic staff (teaching, research, civic engagement), centres and departments, and by extension the university as a whole. Students and alumni remain at the centre of attention, however, and the review below starts with this group, after an initial summary of key limitations present in the analysis of the impact of EHU.

Limitations of the evidence base: The evidence base relating to the impact of EHU contains certain limitations:

- As with many HEIs across Europe, EHU does not engage in detailed monitoring, analysis and reporting against the concept of impact of its work at the level of societal, political impacts. Coverage of impact seen in such matters as employability rates is covered to some extent (see limitations below), while impact of the work of the EHU in academic disciplines and research spheres relating to Belarus is not a key focus in annual reporting (which focus rather on results of work conducted in a particular year).
- In addition, as the EHU continues to be a university ‘*non grata*’ for the Belarusian regime, the restrictive practices of the Belarusian authorities render it undesirable (unsafe) for the university to present detailed information about the activities of alumni, academic staff, EHU outreach work, as this can lead to negative consequences for the parties concerned. This is particularly noticeable at the current time, in the aftermath of the contested presidential elections in 2020 – as

the expulsion of students and lecturers from universities in Belarus, as well as the sacking of professionals from a range of spheres, shows. In line with this point, the following analysis does not refer to specifics of individual cases of impact.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the analysis below draws on the evaluation team's reconstruction of the nature of impact of EHU, using feedback received from stakeholders, and analysis of available documentary evidence, including open-source data.

Students and alumni

The assumption underpinning donor support is that through providing access for students to higher education that is set in an 'environment of academic and political freedom,' students will be able to develop professional and civic skills that will allow them to make a positive contribution to Belarus. As an example, the 2016 EU Description of Action (DoA) states that: 'The overall objective of EU support to the EHU is to boost democratic development in Belarus by giving young Belarusians access to independent higher education,' accompanied by the indicator: 'Number of EHU graduates participating in the civic life of Belarus through their work in NGOs, business, media, other universities, state institutions.' The baseline and target of 62% of graduates returning to Belarus after studying at EHU was set in that 2016 DoA, although the 2019 DoA for support to EHU does not include this specific target.⁴⁸

The figure of 62% was established by EHU on the basis of a survey conducted among alumni in the AY 2015-2016, according to feedback received by the evaluation team. The evaluation team sought to identify the rates for return over the period 2015-2020 using a dataset of 'alumni profiles' for that period supplied by EHU. However, the dataset contains a large number of gaps in the entries registered, which acts as a barrier to arriving at clear-cut conclusions regarding the rate of return, as well as other key parameters (see below).

Alumni-related data: The review begins with analysis of graduate-related provided in the file '2015-2020 Alumni Profiles'⁴⁹, which contains data of 1067 graduates⁵⁰. The database is designed to capture a range of data, including the country in which the graduate is located; whether graduates are in employment, studying, both working and studying, looking for a job, not employed; and, the place of work. However, there are significant gaps in the dataset (where respondents chose not to provide

⁴⁸ European Commission: 'ANNEX IV of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Annual Action Programme 2016 in favour of the Republic of Belarus: Action Document for Support to the European Humanities University', 2016, p. 86. The same global objective and indicator are embedded in the 2019 iteration of the DoA: ANNEX III of the Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measures in favour of the Republic of Belarus for 2019: Action Document for Support to the European Humanities University – Phase IV, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Shared with the evaluation team by EHU

⁵⁰ 880 Bachelor's level, 187 Master's level graduates

information to the EHU). These limitations in the data do not allow for clear conclusions and quantification to be achieved, as shown below:

Country of destination after graduation: 569 entries out of 1067 (53%) do not show the country in which the graduate is located. Some 252 graduates state that they are located in Belarus (or are located in both Belarus and another country, e.g. Lithuania, Russia), while 246 state that they are located in other countries than Belarus. As data for 569 (53%) of entries is missing, it is not possible to arrive at clear conclusions regarding how many graduates have, in fact, returned to Belarus for work or study following graduation in EHU. The database does not capture the country of origin of alumni (so it is assumed by the evaluation team that data on non-Belarusian students is contained alongside that of Belarusian students, which complicates the analysis). Furthermore, the dataset provides only a snapshot of evidence at the moment the graduate submits the data – if they subsequently move to another country, or another employment, this is not captured.

Employment status: Information on employment status (working/studying/not employed) is missing for 51%, or 454 (of the total of 880) graduates of Bachelor's level; and for almost 50%, or 93 of 187 Master's level graduates. Entries for those who indicate that they are in employment or studying contain 129 blanks (33%) from the total of 394, with regard to the type of institution they work for/study in.

Conclusions cannot be drawn regarding career destinations (cf. the assumptions embedded in the DoA), as the dataset does not provide systematically organised information on such categories as the job position held by the graduate, the sector/sphere of employment, type of institution (governmental/ commercial sector, NGO, media), etc.⁵¹

Alumni stories

While statistical analysis is not feasible using the dataset provided, the evaluation has gathered feedback from alumni, EHU lecturers and social partners, and conducted analysis of internet-based sources, relating to the 'stories' of alumni. This relates to alumni career trajectories following graduation, their involvement in civic activities in Belarus or relating to Belarus, etc. A set of illustrations are provided below, mapped against the disciplinary areas they studied in at EHU and against professional and civic spheres of activity. (The examples are anonymised and limited details provided, in line with the evaluation's no-harm approach.)

- In the **civil society sphere**, EHU alumni are very active members of human rights and other NGOs operating in and outside of Belarus.

⁵¹ It can be noted that a survey of alumni is currently (early 2021) being conducted by a Lithuanian agency.

- **Legal defenders:** EHU alumni are members of the Belarusian Bar Association and defend rights of peaceful protesters in the courts. Former students are representing victims of political repressions in Belarus before the international human rights bodies, including UN Treaty bodies. One graduate is a lawyer representing one of the candidates of the 2020 presidential elections.
- **Academia:** For a proportion of EHU graduates (precise figures not available), the experience of studying at EHU has provided a platform to go on to postgraduate study (at Master's or PhD levels), either at EHU itself, or in universities/research institutes in Europe or further afield. For some this has led to a career in academia – which otherwise would have been difficult to achieve, had the student received their higher education in Belarus. This is significant, as there is a deficit in Belarus in terms of academics working in the disciplinary areas covered by EHU, with research skills and aptitudes that are rooted in European traditions of academic freedom and critical thinking. Some EHU alumni return to EHU to give workshops to current students and to advise on students' social projects.
- **Media:** The EHU academic programme on media was designed specifically to train free-thinking graduates who would be able to make a contribution to Belarusian media. There are a range of examples of graduates who have gone on to take up positions in the independent media covering Belarus (e.g. the Belsat TV channel, Radio Svaboda, France 24, BBC, Euronews, etc.). Impacts have included conduct of media training for opposition politicians, establishment of various media platforms and outlets (e.g. internet-based radio station), documentary films (e.g. on the taboo subject of HIV-AIDS in Belarus), etc.
- **Art sphere:** Graduates include art curators, art critics, journalists specialising in the art sphere.
- **Heritage:** various positions in Belarusian museums are held by EHU former students. Alumni get involved in a range of cultural heritage projects including those funded by the EU. One former student was invited to be a member of the Public Supervisory Commission on Preservation of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of Belarus.
- **History:** Former students took part in projects 'Belarusian Oral History Archive project' and 'Virtual Museum of political repressions in Belarus'.
- **Business and entrepreneurship:** Alumni work in the commercial sector, IT sector, tourism, self-employment. Alumni have established their own start-ups for their own travel businesses, cultural heritage promotional companies and production studios.

Contribution of EHU staff and EHU Centres to academic and public debate on topics relating to Belarus

Working in an academically free environment allows academic staff to address research topics that are of interest to Belarusian society, but which are not sufficiently researched in Belarus or are covered in an ideologically controlled manner. Examples of the nature of the contributions made include:

- Addressing gaps and taboos in public debate: Academic staff's work on Stalinism in Belarus was published and attracted the attention of both researchers and the general public in Belarus and internationally. The publication is used now by Belarusian universities.
- The Centre for Gender Studies and the Centre for Jewish Heritage address important gaps in the Belarusian public debate and cultural practices in the spheres covered by their work. In the sphere of gender, for example, the EHU academic team and students engage actively in addressing sensitive, taboo issues in Belarusian society (including such topics as women in politics, LGBTI issues), through open seminars, projects, publications. The team is contributing to the gender-focused work of the Belarusian opposition's Coordination Council for the Transfer of Power.
- Contributing to the legal sphere – publications of EHU staff used by Human Rights lawyers in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine.
- Contributions to political and legal sphere: As noted by a respondent, 'Our faculty members help to shape future political and legal system in Belarus through publications and scientific conferences participation'. The Center for Constitutionalism and Human Rights acts as a gateway between academia and the professional and civic spheres, serving as a resource centre, a venue for conferences, a provider of capacity-development for Belarusian lawyers (e.g. through webinars for Belarusian practitioners in the sphere of Constitutional Law). The Centre also actively cooperates with key European institutions such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the office of the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights, through a range of means (e.g. webinars relating to the political crisis and the human rights fall-out from it).
- EHU staff make an active contribution to the maintenance and promotion of Belarusian cultural and linguistic heritage, through publications in Belarusian language on a range of subjects, by acting as a host organisation for influential Belarusian cultural figures (including, for instance, an internationally-renowned Belarusian author). These figures in turn contribute to EHU's academic programmes and cultural life.
- EHU staff have been involved in EU projects providing technical expertise to TACIS, ENPI and CBC projects involving Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia.

There are a number of examples of collaboration between EHU staff and current and former students, in contributions to civic and professional spheres in Belarus. One interesting case is in the sphere of urban studies, between a graduate and a member of staff. The Minsk urbanist platform, established by a graduate of EHU, organises internships for Belarusian students who then conduct research under the supervision of a member of EHU staff. The platform organises conferences for Belarusian audiences involving Belarusian officials from the sphere of architecture and urban planning. Such examples also confirm the impact of support to the EHU in

providing an environment in which Belarusians can join together in an atmosphere of intellectual and cultural freedom to engage in joint endeavours. The EHU acts as a pathway for interaction between academic and civic and cultural spheres, which serves to reduce the barriers that can often exist between the academic realm and other walks of life.

4.5 SUSTAINABILITY

S1: Financial sustainability: assess the organisation's fundraising strategies and long-term financial sustainability, including possible scenarios for a broadened funding base

The EHU projects increasing turnover with balancing income and expenditures in its strategic plan (see fig. 1). The expected increase in turnover will require the EHU to either increase the earnings from tuition fees, donor funds or other external grants including research grants. EHU projects that the bulk of the increase in funding will come from study related income and additional student accommodation, while EHU expects the donor funding to remain stable EHU 2.74 million year.⁵²

Figure 1: EHU projections of income and expenditures from the strategic plan



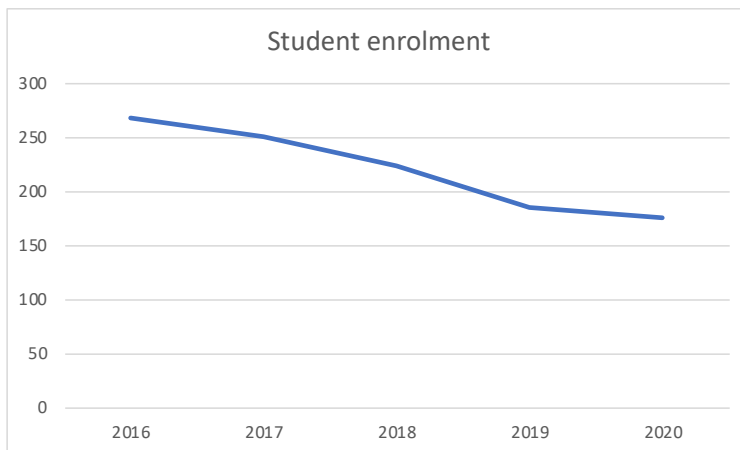
Tuition fees are expected to be the main new income for the university in the future according to the strategy. The income is expected to be a combination of the increase in earnings from the 20% hike in tuition fees to an increase in the number of students enrolled at the EHU. As mentioned above in the Effectiveness section, the university has embarked on a new recruitment campaign to motivate an increased number of students to join the university. The university has undertaken several studies to assess the market potential and undertake some outreach activities via the

⁵² EHU Strategy 2019-2024, p 25

Propilei Centre in Minsk, but is still to develop and implement are more comprehensive recruitment campaign.

The effects of the new enrolment campaigns are still to be fully documented, but what is evident from the enrolment rates in the period evaluated, the number of students enrolled have dropped from 268 in 2016 to 176 in 2020⁵³ (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Student enrolment at EHU 2016-2020



The current enrolment figures challenges EHU's strategic plans for the next years and underlines the important role of donor funding. Donor contributions are projected to contribute to 62% of the EHU income in 2023/2024 compared to 76% in 2017/2018, underscoring the importance of enrolment.⁵⁴ The lower enrolment rates combined with the dropout rates have resulted in a decrease in the number of enrolled students of 44% from 2014/2015 to 2017/2018.⁵⁵ With a continued drop in enrolment this number has decreased further in this last part of the period evaluated. According to the EHU strategy, the EHU projects an increase in the earning on tuition fees of close to 100% from 2017/2018 to 2023/2024. If the EHU manages to stabilise the current decline but not increase the student enrolment, then EHU will be short of close to one million EUR in its annual budget in 2023/2024 if all other financial factors remain unchanged.

In terms of costs, these have increased over the years mostly as a consequence of the increased cost of the facilities in Lithuania. However, as this is an in-kind donation from Lithuania, this cost increase does not impact the operations of the university. Non-the-less the cost per new student is increasing illustrating the need for enhancing income or cutting down on costs (see figure 3 below). Also, the team found the senior executive salaries agreed in the latest EHU remuneration system to be on the high side, though of course being a university in exile and needing to

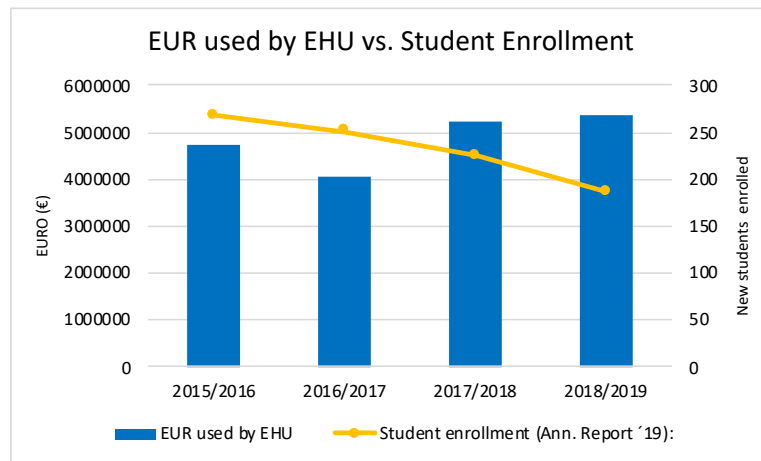
⁵³ EHU Annual Report 2019, p 14

⁵⁴ EHU Strategy 2019-2024, p 25

⁵⁵ EHU Strategy 2019-2024, p 11

attract quality staff does require competitive salaries.⁵⁶ However, the team also notes that 22 out of 46 full time staff members have additional jobs outside of EHU.⁵⁷ This may benefit the teaching but is also a risk in terms of ensuring adequate time to undertake a full time position at EHU.

Figure 3 EUR used against enrolment rate



Unless the EHU is able to change the enrolment rate substantially, EHU will need to rely on donor funding and grants to cover the planned costs of running the university. The donors funding to EHU is cyclically linked to the context in Belarus and the rest of the region, which is evidenced from interviews with donors. This means that funding decreased as donors shifted attention to Ukraine and then increased again lately with the latest developments in Belarus. However, the EHU has also had issues with misuse of funds and the loss of accreditation in the beginning of this evaluation period which prompted donors to leave the EHU, and where Sida stepped in with EU support as well to ensure continued operation and a more focused donor support through the provision of core funding.

Over the last years the EHU has received around EUR 2.7 million annually in donor funding from the EU, Sida and Lithuania (for Lithuania this includes the EUR 80-90,000 research grant from the Ministry of Education in addition to the EUR 200,000 average of grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The EU has provided more than EUR 14 million in support to EHU over the years). This is in addition to Lithuania's contribution of the university premises free of charge to the EHU, which

⁵⁶ Professor basic level salaries are EUR 2,040 to 2,210 while the senior executive basic salaries are Eur 4,100-8,500 before bonuses according to the EHU Remuneration System of EHU Employees, March 2020. According to Informatic Europe, the average Lektorius salaries in Lithuania are EUR 616-1,040, see: <https://www.informatics-europe.org/data/higher-education/academic-salaries/professors.html> but also notes that EHU provided information from STRATA indicate that the professor and associate professor salaries to be at par with Lithuanian salaries

⁵⁷ Data obtained from the EHU Rector's Office

is an additional in-kind Lithuanian contribution amounting to EUR 1.87 million annually.⁵⁸

Currently, the EHU has its donor funding covered for 2021. Sweden furthermore is providing an additional SEK 2 000 000 October 2021 and SEK 3 000 000 in June 2022 for annual year 2021-2022, but currently no other final commitments in place for the period 2022 onwards. The evaluation team talked to a range of donors and there are strong considerations from the EU, Sida as well as other of continued support, which may enable the university to operate according to current standards, but also concerns of ‘the current funding level being too small for the university to survive and attract new students, yet too great to terminate funding due to the duty of care to current students’. In addition to this, Denmark, Norway, Estonia as well as the Konrad Adenauer Foundation have decided to aid students of Belarus under the present circumstances by providing scholarship fees for students in the current financial year. There is however uncertainty among the donors as to whether this will continue in the next financial year.

Interviews with some donors indicate, however, that future funding will not only be based on the context but also on the ability of the EHU to perform in terms of quality of research and training and ability to attract Belarussian students. Thus, a decline in enrolment cannot by default be compensated through enhanced donor support. The two major funding streams – donor funds and tuition fees - of the EHU are thus linked.

A final income avenue for the university are research grants. The university have over the years received some grants from other sources and continue to receive Erasmus mobility funding. However, beyond Erasmus, the application for research grants is minimal and not a significant contributor to covering the university costs. EHU has not prioritised applying for research grants as a consequence the income generated from institutional grants has been low. According to the documents provided during the evaluation period, EHU secured only one scientific research grant (Horizon 2020).

In addition to the longer-term financial projections, EHU is also challenged by ongoing shortages in the cash flow. Several interviewees pointed to the frequent limited cash availability and the regular challenge pertaining to the payment of teacher salaries. EHU has to reserve funds available, and thus rely on the funding cycle of the tuition fee payments and the disbursements from the donors.

A final sustainability issue is the future scenario for EHU if moving back to Minsk becomes a viable option (ending the university in exile status). The team understands, but have not had access to, that EHU has developed an options paper for responding to possible favourable changes in the Belarussian context. The team understands that possible plans include moving back to Belarus as well as having campuses in Belarus as well as in Vilnius. It is evident from interviews with current and possible donors that the likelihood of funding EHU in Vilnius are small if the situation changes in

⁵⁸ Interviews and EHU Annual Report 2019.

Belarus and donors are capable of providing similar direct support to civic engagement inside Belarus. EHU will therefore need to ensure other means of funding if the university is to continue to operate in such a situation.

5 Conclusions

EHU has a unique history as a university in exile. It is the only university that is founded on Belarussian heritage, which has a majority of Belarussian students and academics yet provides its services in line with European academic values. While the history of the university in exile is more than a decade old, the focus of this evaluation is the period 2015-2020.

Overall, the evaluation team found the EHU to be relevant to students, academics and donors alike. Students interviewed found EHU to be relevant because of the unique combination of being a Belarussian university but with European accredited degree which can be used beyond Belarus. Several also pointed to the freer academic environment of learning.

The evaluation found that the donors funding the university are doing so because of its status as a university in exile and commitment to European values in the hope that Belarussian students will attend the university and return to Belarus to promote the European values countering the present autocratic regime. The evaluation team found that the promotion of European values in terms of ensuring a free academic environment in line with the principles of the Bologna Process and the values underpinning the European Higher Education Area remains a core foundation for the EHU.

The EHU is however not a university that focuses on political science and education pertaining to democracy and civil rights. It is a university grounded in liberal arts and the university strategy and management is focused on the provision of quality education and research – as are most universities. The civic engagement which is the foundation of the donors' support comes in an academic environment that allows the academics and students to debate and engage freely. The civic engagement element of the EHU beyond academic freedom is not a significant management priority. However, the outcome of the university's approach is that there is a proliferation of civic engagement among students and academics at the university.

In terms of effectiveness, the team found EHU effective on many fronts, but with room for improvement. First and foremost, the team found students largely appreciative of the EHU and the courses offered. There was also appreciation of the democratic approach in the education and the strong focus on e.g. group work and support from well-established online learning approaches – though concerns were raised about the limited transparency and participation in the management of the university.

The student enrolment rate has however been falling significantly in the last five years as a consequence of poor reputation from the past scandals and accreditation challenges, increasing tuition fees as well as Belarussian authorities' campaigns against the university and ban of marketing the university in Belarus. At the same

time the significant dropout rates at the EHU, at both Bachelor's and Master's levels, means that the university has a low completion rate.

Those that do complete do however seem to be able to obtain jobs afterwards, commensurate with the knowledge and skills developed at EHU. Even among the students returning to Belarus where the authorities do not accept the EHU degrees, students are in many cases able to find employment in the non-state sector.

The team found that EHU does not have a strong research profile, but that several individual lecturers and professors are engaged in relevant research. The EHU has been able to produce a significant amount of studies and editions of its own publications. However, the ranking of the EHU on international academic databases remains low as does the download of EHU publications. A major challenge for the academics of EHU is however the lack of available time to undertake research compared to teaching. In many ways the EHU is thus markedly stronger in its education endeavours than in its research. This is also reflected in the limited management attention to research.

In terms of effectiveness of civic engagement, this is first and foremost ensured through exposing students to a free university environment. The university itself is not active in civic engagement in Belarus. There is however activism among individual academics as well as selected students.

In terms of gender the EHU has throughout the period evaluated had a course on gender studies or a course with strong gender elements. The team found that the gender equality agenda is promoted by a handful of teachers at the Centre for Gender Studies but that gender equality is not a management priority. Consequently, gender is not mainstreamed across to EHU not a clearly defined priority of the management. There is thus significant room for improving gender equality across the institution from the composition of the governing board and honorary doctors to women scholars' representation in the curriculum.

In terms of impact, the team found that the present data available makes it difficult to identify the full scale of impact of the EHU in the context of Belarus. The data is even insufficient to confirm the number of students returning to and/or remaining in Belarus after graduation. The team was however able to talk to a number of students and track other students through available data to provide an extensive number of examples where students have returned and hold positions from where they in principle can promote European values. Similarly, academic staff provided a range of examples of the ways in which staff and graduates contribute to developments in Belarus through academic and civic roles, in line with the rationale for the donors' engagement with the EHU.

In terms of sustainability, the evaluation team found that EHU with the current projections will remain dependent on donor funding in the short- to medium-term. Belarussian students' tuition fees remain a low income base and there is little evidence that EHU will be able to attract a major portion of non-Belarussian students. At the same time enrolment rates are dropping further emphasising the importance of donor funding. There is likely room for cost reductions in the EHU but insufficient to make a major impact on the running budget.

Donor funding however does also provide challenges for the EHU in terms of short funding cycles, which impact the EHU planning as well as the university's ability to attract students and long-term professional staff. Also, the short funding cycles and lack of EHU equity means that the EHU is regularly struggling with its cash flows. The financial situation also poses a risk for the students who are unsure as to whether the university will be operational for their full education cycle. In case of an improvement of the situation in Belarus, EHU's funding from donors are at risk as other attractive funding opportunities will emerge underscoring the importance of EHU becoming an attractive choice of education on its own.

In terms of management of the university, the EHU has been streamlining the education portfolio and number of departments making the university leaner, but also reducing the number of course options for students. The senior management level has also become more lean with the removal of the post of presidency and with the *de facto* non-interference of GAPO with governing board decisions. In reality GAPO is defunct and the composition needs to be revisited or its role reformed. It is, also evident to the evaluation team that the governing board engagement with the university is not sufficiently frequent to ensure that the needed oversight and accountability mechanisms are sufficiently effective. It is also not clear to the evaluation team if the composition of the board fully captures the required expertise to provide guidance on student recruitment as well as civic engagement. Furthermore, several of the major donors are not part of the board, yet still engage in strategic dialogue with the university bypassing the formal accountability procedures.

The team finds that the management of the university has started new important engagements such as its relations to OSUN and its enhanced focus on English in the course plan. There is however room for enhanced strategic management at the university. There is an urgent need to ensure an increase in the student enrolment and to provide more strategic guidance in terms of fostering student civic engagement, research priorities and impact at various levels, and gender mainstreaming.

In spite of the challenges faced, the team finds that that EHU has overcome a critical period and in many ways is on the right track. The relevance of the work conducted by the EHU for Belarusian society, including the academic community writ large, and civil society, needs to be taken into account. EHU has throughout its period in exile served as an alternative model of Belarusian higher education (based on the principles of academic freedom), to contrast with the model seen in Belarus itself which remains under the control of the political authorities.

The nature of the crisis now seen in Belarus has served to reconfirm, in the view of the current evaluation, the relevance of the EHU's role as a free alternative for Belarusian academia and students. This includes the tangible role seen in taking in students expelled from Belarusian universities following their involvement in protests against the regime.

The findings of the evaluation leave the EHU and donors with the following dilemmas:

1. The EHU must decide on whether the university will remain more or less fully dependent on donor funding, which is linked to the Belarussian context as opposed to the attraction of larger number of non-Belarussian students. It

needs to consider how it can make itself more attractive and increase the enrolment rate from any of these two groups.

The donors will need to come to terms with the fact that they are funding a university and not directly civic engagement in Belarus. The provision of short-term funding is an impediment to the strategic management of a university that is unlikely to be sustainable in the near future. The donors need to appreciate that the core mandate of the university is to provide education and research in a free environment. The students returning to Belarus have been exposed to European values and may promote changes in the country. For this to happen however, the university needs to be attractive for Belarusian students, which requires long-term stability. It also requires strategic vision of the university management, which again will require formal engagement from the donors to demand such change.

6 Recommendations

In the following we present the major recommendations stemming from the evaluation findings and conclusions for the EHU and the donors respectively.

For EHU:

- Reform and formalise the relationship between GAPO and the Governing Board. GAPO's membership reflects a funding relation which is a decade old. The GAPO composition should therefore be revisited in line with the EHU donor situation and mandate. Furthermore, the statute of GAPO should be revised to limit the formal role of the entity and transfer more authority to the governing board to formalise the efficiency gains of the present GAPO-governing board relationship
- Reform the governing board so that it becomes a more active player in the management of the university holding the Rector and his/her team to account. This may include:
 - Revising the terms of reference for the board members to ensure enhanced focus on board member accountability
 - Align board composition with university mandate and needs. This should persons with specialist knowledge on enrolment and retainment of students; include representation from Belarus civil society; ensure a more gender balanced board composition
 - Increasing the frequency of board meetings and linking the performance ratings closer to areas of relevance to the university's future, including enrolment rates and student satisfaction. EHU may also choose to institute sub-board working groups targeting specific challenges related to e.g. enrolment and drop-out rates
 - Finally, to ensure clear lines of accountability the team recommends that the Rector is not included as a member of the governing board but participates as a rapporteur to the board on university progress
- Increase transparency and participation in university decision-making processes, including access to agendas and minutes for staff and students alike and introduction of student representation in key management fora
- Increase attention to enrolment efforts in Belarus and the implementation of recruitment campaigns. This should be complemented by surveys among prospective students to enable the campaigns to be more targeted, including the use of social media
- The status of EHU degrees with regard to their recognition in Belarus, and the procedures involved in recognition of degree qualifications, needs to be clearly indicated on the EHU website and other materials aimed at prospective students.

- Carry out annual update of the alumni survey to gain an updated view on destinations post-graduation and beyond. Surveys should also be undertaken among drop-out students to understand the high drop-out rates and act upon these
- Draft and implement a gender equality policy which ensures gender mainstreaming in the implementation of university operations and academia. This includes:
 - Include specific strategy goals for gender mainstreaming and equality at EHU
 - Revision of current curricula across all courses to ensure gender relevant curriculum and a better representation of women scholars in the curricula
 - Increase women's representation in governing board, senior management and honorary doctorates
 - Report on gender equality progress to governing board
- Consider the further development of EHU Centres (possibly based on templates provided by the Centre for Gender Studies and the Centre for Constitutionalism and Human Rights). Centres act as focal points for research (scientific and policy related), PhDs, as well as teaching activities and can also provide gateways for visiting scholars and serve as a basis for developing partnerships with foreign academics and institutions
- Pursue a balanced approach to creating international partnerships, taking into account European and EU opportunities as a means to get better integrated into the European Research Area, as well as regional opportunities, in addition to partnerships with North American and Russian universities
- Ensure that a fair and transparent in-house funding scheme operates, to make the best use of research funds. Establish (or strengthen) criteria to promote (a) research aimed at scientific publications (b) collaborative research with foreign academics / institutions with a clear publication strategy (c) the publication plans of early career researchers
- Reassess the research strategy to make the expected outcomes realistic and aligned with the EHU's needs in terms of attracting students and promoting civic engagement. This may also relate to the how EHU presents their research and related activities and communicate results to a broader audience
- Establish routine fora for donors (existing and potential) to meet with faculty to discuss research interests and priorities, and to meet with the social partners of the EHU, in order to learn about the civic engagement contribution made by EHU staff, students and alumni
- For donors who wish to continue funding EHU as a university:
- For major donors: join the governing board or appoint a representative to the board for a formal and transparent engagement with the university on its strategic direction and management. Work to ensure that the governing board becomes more operational in terms of meeting frequency and level of engagement and more relevant to EHU needs to hold the university management to account
- Consider a funding regime which is more aligned with the nature of the institution supported and the sustainability challenges of the EHU. This should include considering long-term funding commitments to allow EHU for long-term

planning and attracting students and qualified staff. Long-term commitments should be linked to the performance of the EHU as agreed with the governing board

- The donor community should review and expand the rationale for support in order to reflect the broader academic, research and civic engagement roles of EHU
- Establish routine fora to meet with faculty to discuss research interests and priorities, and to meet with the social partners of the EHU, in order to learn about the civic engagement contribution made by EHU staff, students and alumni
- Consider the use other types of donor instruments (individual states) to support EHU's development; joint funding schemes (research council cooperation), visiting lecturer schemes (like DAAD), research / study tours for students
- Consider providing advisers (from academia, civil society, etc.) on an ad hoc basis to support EHU in addressing priority areas associated with the implementation of the Strategic Plan

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of Support to the European Humanities University

Date: 24 October 2020

General information

1.1 Introduction

The European Humanities University (<https://en.ehu.lt/>) is a Belarusian university-in-exile, based in Vilnius, Lithuania. EHU is a private institution of higher education operating in the European Union for Belarus on the basis of principles of institutional autonomy and standards of the European Higher Education Area. EHU was founded in Minsk in 1992 and closed by Belarusian authorities in 2004. It re-launched activities in Vilnius in 2004 and was granted the status of a Lithuanian university in 2006. EHU has received the endorsement of the Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education of Lithuania and is a fully-fledged private non-profit University-type Higher Educational Institution.

EHU offers education in the humanities, social sciences and arts to undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students. EHU also offers research training and pursues research in these fields.

1.2 Evaluation object: Intervention to be evaluated

The evaluation object is the European Humanities University and the support provided by the European Union, Lithuania and Sweden.

Since its relocation to Vilnius, around 70% of its annual budget is provided by international donors. A trust fund providing core funding was established in 2007 on the initiative of the then EU Commissioner for External Affairs and managed until 2016 by the Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers. In 2016 Sida took over the administration of the international funding including provision of technical assistance on institutional and organisational matters. Over the years, the EU has remained the biggest contributor providing on average EUR 1 million annually. Sweden increased in 2017 its initial annual contribution from EUR 200,000 to EUR 800,000. Lithuania besides direct financial contributions of a minimum of yearly EUR 200 000 also has been supporting EHU with accommodation. Since 2018 EHU is operating free of rental charges in a, for the purpose of the university, renovated historic monastery in the old centre of Vilnius.

The international support to EHU was subject to evaluations by the EU in 2013. As part of the accreditation process an institutional review was done in 2017 by an

international team of academics commissioned by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) of the Government of Lithuania.

The specific objectives of the intervention are to:

- Give access to higher educations to young Belarusians in an environment of academic and political freedom;
- Provide education relevant to the Belarus context;
- Contribute to the education, housing and subsistence of Belarusian students throughout their studies;
- Provide support to the EHU in pursuing the long-term sustainability by pooling the EU funding and the contributions of other donors

1.3 Evaluation rationale

EU, Lithuania and Sida support the core budget of EHU, making funds available on a project basis for periods of 2 – 4 years. Following a development logic, these contributions are expected to contribute to EHU ultimately becoming an institute that is moving back to Minsk once the political situation allows such return.

The current cycle of funding, both for the EU and Sida, ends with the academic year 2020 – 21. Decisions on further financial support need to be taken latest in the first quarter of 2021, without which EHU is likely to cease its operations from October 2021 and onwards.

EHU's strategy 2019 – 2024, adopted in June 2018, introduces significant reforms to rationalize expenditure, improve education and research programmes and augment the enrolment of students. With the completion of the second year into the implementation of the strategy, the evaluation will assess its pertinence and the achievements till date and also the envisaged mid and long-term impact.

2. The assignment

2.1 Evaluation purpose: Intended use and intended users

The evaluation purpose is to inform future strategies/scenarios for institutional, academic and financial development.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the European Humanities University, the EU Delegation in Minsk, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Sida, Department for Europe and Latin America.

The evaluation/appraisal is to be designed, conducted and reported to meet the needs of the intended users and tenderers shall elaborate in the tender how this will be ensured during the evaluation process.

During the inception phase, the evaluator and the users will agree on who will be responsible for keeping the various stakeholders informed about the evaluation.

2.2 Evaluation scope

The evaluation scope is limited to the period 2015 – 2020. If needed, the scope of the evaluation may be further elaborated by the evaluator in the inception report.

Evaluation objective: Criteria and questions The primary objective of this evaluation is a rigorous and independent assessment of the core support to EHU

2015-2020, its background and performance in relation to prior established objectives, plans, expectations or standards of performance.

The evaluation should particularly focus on the role of EHU and what it offers for liberal humanities studies in the Belarus context. The aim is to evaluate relevance, effectiveness, and impact. The evaluator should also have a discussion regarding the problems related to sustainability. The evaluation should also provide recommendations for possible future direction (geographical coverage, available courses, academic collaboration) as well as funding scenarios and recommendations regarding human resources policy.

The consultant shall describe the institutional format and context in which EHU operates and give an overview of the use of resources. The following questions are of particular interest. Please note that the questions are meant as guidelines for the evaluation and not an attempt to exhaust all items that can be explored during the assignment.

Organisation's role and relevance, effectiveness and impact

- What are the outcomes and impact of the core operations of EHU? What are the current strengths and how could these be enhanced? What are the main challenges?
- What is the impact of EHU to its country of origin, Belarus ?
- To what extent has the EHU intervention objectives and design responded to the need of the beneficiaries, as well as the partner/institutions policies, and priorities.
- Assess the relevance of the research that EHUs undertakes and its linkages to relevant academic institutions, research initiatives and regional networks?
- What measures have been taken by EHU to link up to the international humanities research?

Governance and operations

- Financial sustainability: assess the organisations's fundraising strategies and longterm financial sustainability, including possible scenarios for a broadened funding base
- How has gender equality been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention? To what extent has the intervention contributed to the improvement of gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?

Recommendations could include, but not necessarily be restricted to, the following issues:

- Recommendations for institutional development
- Recommendations for future strategies related to longterm financial sustainability and analysis of progress of fundraising strategy
- Recommendations for development of content, objectives and priorities for EHU
- Questions are expected to be developed in the tender by the tenderer and further refined during the inception phase of the evaluation.

2.4 Evaluation approach and methods

It is expected that the evaluator describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report. Given the situation with Covid-19, innovative and flexible approaches/methodologies and methods for remote data collection should be suggested when appropriate and the risk of doing harm managed. Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the evaluator and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The evaluator shall to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods.

A *gender responsive* approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used.⁵⁹

Sida's approach to evaluation is *utilization-focused*, which means the evaluator should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is therefore expected that the evaluators, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, evaluators should ensure an evaluation design that do not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

2.5 Organisation of evaluation management

This evaluation is commissioned by Sida in consultation with the EU Delegation in Minsk and the Foreign Ministry of Lithuania. The evaluand EHU has contributed to the ToR and will be provided with an opportunity to comment on the inception report as well as the final report, but will not be involved in the management of the evaluation. Hence Sida will evaluate tenders, approve the inception report and the final report of the evaluation. The start-up meeting and the debriefing/validation workshop will be held with Sida.

2.6 Evaluation quality

The evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation⁶⁰. The evaluators shall use the OECD/DAC Better Criteria for Better

⁵⁹ See for example UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1616>

⁶⁰ OECD (2010) *DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation*.

Evaluation⁶¹. The evaluators shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

2.7 Time schedule and deliverables

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. Given the situation with Covid-19, the time and work plan must allow flexibility in implementation. The evaluation shall be carried out 9 November, 2020 – 26 February, 2021.

The timing of any field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the evaluator in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase. The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

Deliverables	Participants	Deadlines
Start-up meeting (virtual)	Sida, EUD Minsk (optional)	Tentative 9 November, 2020
Draft inception report		Tentative 26 November, 2020
Inception meeting (virtual)	Sida, EUD Minsk (optional)	Tentative 3 December, 2020
Comments from intended users to evaluators (alternatively these may be sent to evaluators ahead of the inception meeting)		Tentative 14 December, 2020
Data collection, analysis, report writing and quality assurance	Evaluators	
Debriefing/validation workshop (virtual?)	Sida, EUD Minsk (optional),	Tentative 29 January, 2021
Draft evaluation report		Tentative 10 February, 2021
Comments from intended users to evaluators		Tentative 19 February, 2021
Final evaluation report		Tentative 26 February, 2021
Seminar (Vilnius, virtual?)	EHU management and board, EUD Minsk, Sida, Lithuanian MFA	Tentative February, 2021

⁶¹ OECD/DAC (2019) *Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use*.

The inception report will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology (including how a utilization-focused and gender responsive approach will be ensured), a stakeholder mapping, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design and an evaluation matrix. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

The final report shall be written in English and be professionally proof read. The final report should have a clear structure and follow the report format in the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report Template for decentralised evaluations. The executive summary should be maximum 3 pages. The evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection used shall be clearly described and explained in detail and a clear distinction between the two shall be made. All limitations of the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

Findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations should reflect a gender analysis/an analysis of identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions. Recommendations should be specific, directed to relevant stakeholders and categorised as a short-term, medium-term and long-term. The report should be no more than 35 pages excluding annexes (including Terms of Reference and Inception Report). If the methods section is extensive, it could be placed in an annex to the report. Annexes shall always include the Terms of Reference, the Inception Report, a stakeholder mapping/analysis and the Evaluation Matrix. Lists of key informants/interviewees shall only include personal data if deemed relevant (i.e. when it is contributing to the credibility of the evaluation) based on a case based assessment by the evaluator and the commissioning unit. The inclusion of personal data in the report must always be based on a written consent.

The evaluator shall adhere to the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation.⁶²

⁶² Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, Sida in cooperation with OECD/DAC, 2014

The evaluator shall, upon approval by Sida of the final report, insert the report into the Sida Decentralised Evaluation Report for decentralised evaluations and submit it to Nordic Morning (in pdf-format) for publication and release in the Sida publication data base. The order is placed by sending the approved report to sida@nordicmorning.com, with a copy to the responsible Sida Programme Officer as well as Sida's Evaluation Unit (evaluation@sida.se). Write "Sida decentralised evaluations" in the email subject field. The following information must always be included in the order to Nordic Morning:

1. The name of the consulting company.
2. The full evaluation title.
3. The invoice reference "ZZ980601".
4. Type of allocation "sakanslag".
5. Type of order "digital publicering/publikationsdatabas.

2.8 Evaluation team qualification

The evaluation team should consist of three consultants that might be complemented with one support/project management function. The team shall include the following competencies:

- Expert knowledge of and experience in conducting evaluations,
- Strong analysis, report writing and communication skills in English,
- Documented experience in evaluating higher education and research institutions,
- At least one team member should have at least PhD degree in the area of humanities and social science, significant experience and knowledge of support to higher education and working with higher education institutions, including good understanding of institution building and strengthening within higher education,
- At least one team member shall have documented local knowledge and experience from working in Eastern Europe.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the call-off response. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience. It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complimentary. It is recommended that local consultants are included in the team if appropriate. In addition, and in a situation with Covid-19, the inclusion of local evaluators may also enhance the understanding of feasible ways to conduct the evaluation

The evaluators must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

Please note that in the tender, the tenderers must propose a team leader that takes part in the evaluation by at least 30% of the total evaluation team time including core team members, specialists and all support functions, but excluding time for the quality assurance expert.

2.9 Financial and human resources

The maximum budget amount available for the evaluation is SEK 800 000.

The contact person at Sida is Mats Svensson. The contact person should be consulted if any problems arise during the evaluation process.

Relevant documentation will be provided by Mats Svensson, programme manager, Sida.

The evaluator will be required to arrange the logistics – tickets, visa, booking interviews, preparing visits etc. including any necessary security arrangements.

3. Annexes

Annex A: List of key documentation

- Evaluation of EU assistance to European Humanities University Letter of Contract N° 2012/298326 Final report prepared by Stephen Webber, The European Union's ENPI Programme for Belarus, January 2013.
- European Humanities University evaluation report, Institutional Evaluation Programme European Humanities University / January 2014
- EHU efficiency audit draft report, Swedish International Development Cooperation 2016-01-15
- Board efficiency assessment of the governing board of the European Humanities University (ehu), draft report, Swedish International Development Cooperation, June 14, 2016
- Institutional review report of European Humanities University, Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Vilnius 2014
- Institutional review report of European Humanities University, Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Vilnius 2017
- **report 1:** Assessment of ehū's research activities and academic development unit by Swedish development advisers and **report 2:** Analysis of ehū's academic offer, prepared for: European Humanities University by Ieva Giedraitytė, June 14, 2018
- vřį „Europos Humanitarinio Universiteto“ paraiřkos dokumentų leidimui vykdyti studijas ir su studijomis susijusią veiklą vertinimo išvados (conclusions of the evaluation the package of documents applied from European Humanities University for permission to execute studies and activities related to studies), Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Vilnius 2019 (in Lithuanian language)
- EHU license to execute studies and activities related to studies (05.04.2019). EHU Annual reports for the years 2017, 2017 and 2019

Annex 2 Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation question from ToR	Specific Questions and Indicators	Sources of Information	Methods & tools
Relevance			
R1: To what extent has the EHU intervention objectives and design responded to the need of the beneficiaries, as well as the partner/institutions policies, and priorities?	R1a: Responding to needs of students? Indicator: recruitment and retention statistics, student and drop-out responses R1b: Alignment of EHU strategies with Sida, EU and Lithuanian Government funding decisions? Indicator: Degree of comparability between EHU strategy priorities and partner funding decisions R1c: Alignment of EHU strategies and activities with Sida and EU support to Belarusian civil society	- EHU strategy and planning documents - EHU reports - Student survey results - Partner decision documents - Interview notes from interviews with EHU, partners and current and former students and drop-outs - Inputs from theory of change workshop	- Theory of change workshop - Survey - Interviews - Desk study
R2: Assess the relevance of the research that EHU undertakes and its linkages to relevant academic institutions, research initiative and	R2a: Relevance of EHU research to Belarus context and/or as a contribution to the European and global research environments. Indicator: Numbers of citations of research published by EHU scholars and publications in high-ranking peer-reviewed journals R2b: Are EHU research outputs and publications used by the academic community in Belarus, Europe, internationally?	- EHU research plans - EHU researchers' publications - Details of participation in research networks / international research projects	- Interviews - Desk study

regional / European networks?	Indicator: citations of EHU research in Belarusian and international academic publications. R2c: Does EHU attract and host researchers from Belarus? Indicator: Numbers of researchers and scholars hosted by EHU research centres R2d: Does EHU have research linkages to relevant institutions and networks in Lithuania, EU and/or other countries? Indicator: (i) Number of research collaboration partnerships, number of collaborative research projects involving EHU staff and students, (ii) Numbers of grants as prestige and quality markers	- Interviews with EHU staff and external researchers - Other regional institutions research strategies and plans - Citation indices	
R3: Assess the relevance of the EHU's teaching programmes to (a) the graduate job market (b) EHU's mission as a University in exile and (c) its Humanities and Liberal Arts profile	R3a: Are academic programmes preparing students for the graduate job market? Indicator: (i) career destinations of graduates (and country of employment for graduates), (ii) confirmation of study relevance by former students, (iii) employment statistics R3b: Are teaching activities contributing to awareness of civic roles, rights and responsibilities / and independent thinking amongst students? Indicator: extent to which teaching programmes include civics education and promote core skills for independent and critical thinking	- Alumni statistics / career office data - EHU programme documents - Interviews with EHU staff and students - Student survey	- Interviews - Desk Study - Survey

	R3c: Do teaching programmes reflect Humanities and Liberal Arts curricula and traditions? Indicator: scrutiny of EHU programmes individually and as a whole, against definitions of Humanities and Liberal Arts education.		
Coherence			
C1: What measures have been taken by EHU to link up to the international / European academic and research networks?	C1a: Does EHU leadership promote international academic collaboration, exchange and partnerships? Indicator: (i) Number of partnerships with other Universities, especially Humanities and Liberal Arts, (ii) Mobility data for students and staff C1b: How far Is EHU embedded into the European Research Area (ERA)? Indicator: extent of participation in EU projects, levels of outgoing and incoming staff mobility	- EHU strategy documents - Interviews with EHU academic staff and senior leadership - Feedback from partner institutions	- Desk Study - Interviews
Effectiveness			
E1: What are the outcomes of the core operations of EHU? What are the current strengths and how could these be enhanced? What are the main challenges?	E1a: What are the outcomes of the core operations of EHU? Indicator: (i) documentation of key outputs and outcomes related to student graduation and employability, and research produced, (ii) Citations of EHU research publications, ranking of in-house journals, numbers of students going on to do PhDs, (iii) career destinations of EHU graduates E1b: What are the current strengths and challenges?	- EHU strategy and planning documents - EHU reports - Student survey results - Interview notes from interviews with EHU, partners and students - Inputs from theory of change workshop	- Theory of change workshop - Survey - Interviews - Desk study

	Indicator: desk review and interviews identify strength and challenges in terms of meeting institutional goals	- Citation indices	
E2: How has gender equality been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention? To what extent has the intervention contributed to the improvement of gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up?	E2a: How has gender equality been integrated into the design, planning and implementation of the intervention? Indicator: (i) Reference to gender in goals, indicators, curriculum priorities; (ii) female/male student and researcher ratios; (iii) use of gender disaggregated data, (iv) gender distribution among management and professional staff E2b: To what extent has the intervention contributed to the improvement of gender equality? Indicator: Changes in key indicators on gender data among students, alumni, researchers and research gender E2c: Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow-up? Indicator: improvement areas identified in documents and interviews	- EHU strategy and planning documents - EHU reports - Student survey results - Interview notes from interviews with EHU, partners and students - Inputs from theory of change workshop	- Theory of change workshop - Survey - Interviews - Desk study - Alumni data analysis
Impact			
I1: What is the impact of EHU to its country of origin, Belarus?	<i>Individual level of impact:</i> I1a: To what extent is the experience, skills and knowledge of studying at EHU being used by students to enhance their professional and civic lives? Indicator: Students can provide contribution stories and evidence linking EHU study with personal and institutional changes in Belarus	- Student survey results - Interview notes from interviews with partners and students - Lithuanian QA agency reports	- Survey - Interviews - Desk study - Alumni data analysis

	I1b: To what extent has the experience of teaching at EHU allowed staff to develop pedagogical skills and approaches that map against contemporary developments in HE in Europe? Indicator: Present and former staff can provide contribution stories and evidence that link capacity improvement with HE standards I1c: To what extent has the experience of engaging in research at EHU allowed researchers to contribute actively to the research sphere. Indicator: Citation statistics, data on research outputs. I1d: What are the post-education employment types and rate of EHU students? Indicator: employment statistics of post-graduates I1e: To what extent has the goal of addressing gender stereotyping in Belarus been achieved by EHU? Indicator: Contribution stories from former students and/or researchers identify changes in Belarus linked to EHU studies and research	- Feedback from employers of graduates - Civil society reports, donor reports, media coverage	
Sustainability			
S1: Financial sustainability: assess the organisation's fundraising strategies and long-term	S1a: What funding channels are available for EHU in the medium- to long-term? Indicator: (i) donor and funding commitments to EHU, (ii)	- EHU strategy and planning documents - EHU financial reports and accounts	- Interviews - Desk study - Alumni data analysis

financial sustainability, including possible scenarios for a broadened funding base	EHU funding plans and implementation reporting shows progress against plans S1b: Is there evidence of EHU improving financial management to different funding scenarios? Indicator: (i) alignment of strategic plan with budget and financial commitments, (ii) evidence of output based budgeting and alignment of cost with outputs? S1c: What are the potential for other funds in the future? Indicator: Plans developed for fund-raising, securing funding from Erasmus+ and other funding programmes. S1d: What plans and measures does EHU have in place to guard against potential problems with recruitment levels? Indicator: Evidence of student recruitment plans and evidence of market research.	- EHU funding strategies - Interview notes from interviews with EHU and partners and possible future partners - Interviews with financial officers.	
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Annex 3 – Data collection tools

- Semi-structures interviews (see interview guide below)
- Focus Group Discussions
- Online survey (see below)
- Desk review
- Theory of change workshop

Interview guide

DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CORE STAKEHOLDERS

Main Purpose

1. To provide informed responses to the evaluation questions (EQs) presented in our matrix.
2. To gather and scrutinise the perspectives of core stakeholders.
3. To add nuance to findings derived from the results of the review of documents and survey.
4. To help identify and explain any unintended effects and outcomes that have not been captured in existing reporting.

Overall Approach:

In-depth interviews (IDIs) will be carried out with core stakeholders using a semi-structured approach based on the types of questions and lines of enquiry outlined in a common interview guide and then tailored to the type of interviewee.

Aim	Line of Enquiry / Type of Question	Interviewee	EQ
Ascertain type of participant and background.	Personal story. Stage of career. Role or relationship with EHU.	All	
Identify the main activities or responsibilities they have or had at EHU	How do they 'fit' in the EHU story / structure? What brought them to the EHU? What role, which activities, which years etc.	All	

Relevance of EHU's mission	How would you describe EHU's core mission and to what extent do you think that it has been achieved? In what ways does the existence of the EHU and its activities contribute to civil society and political / institutional change in Belarus? Are there any obstacles laying in the way of EHU fulfilling its mission (internal/external)? Does the core mission need adjusting?	EHU staff, leadership Donors Lithuanian authorities Student / alumni representatives.	R1
Overall relevance of EHU	What did you know about EHU before coming here? Were there any specific factors that attracted you? Did your experience at EHU meet your overall expectations? What is beneficial about working / studying at EHU compared with other Universities in Belarus or elsewhere? Based on your experience and knowledge, does EHU contribute to civil society in Belarus?	Academic, support and management staff. EHU past and current students Drop-outs	R1
Relevance of research	What are the aims / objectives / priorities of EHU's research strategy? How is the strategy formulated / monitored and according to what standards, criteria and assumptions? Describe the methods EHU employs to monitor / evaluate research staff. Who do you consider to be the main audience for your research? In what ways do you feel that EHU's research contributes to civil society in Belarus? What have been the outcomes of research collaboration with Lithuanian or other European partners? To what extent is EHU's research strategy aligned with (and benefitting from) European frameworks and opportunities (ERA, H2020, Jean Monnet)?	EHU leadership, research office, academic staff, PhD students. Donors Academic peers.	R2
Relevance of Teaching	Are graduates taking up the kind of jobs and activities envisaged in the EHU's mission? Is Belarusian civil society benefitting from EHU graduates? Are there any particular skills and knowledge that you got from your studies that have helped your career? How would you describe a Humanities and Liberal Arts education?	Students, alumni, teaching staff, careers office, development office, employers.	R3

	How do courses encourage thinking about civic roles and responsibilities, democracy and liberal thinking in the ways envisaged in the EHU's mission? How does EHU ensure employability is embedded in its academic programmes and student support?		
Coherence	What were the main objectives of EHU's plans for internationalisation over the past five years and how far have they been achieved? How has EHU benefitted (and what have been the outcomes) from international research / teaching partnerships and networks? How many students / staff participate in international projects or exchanges as a part of their jobs or studies? Is there a trend in this regard? What is the extent to which EHU degree programmes include a semester abroad / Erasmus exchange? Are the results of these periods spent abroad integrated into student's degree results at EHU? How far are students encouraged to spend part of their studies abroad? In what ways are incoming staff / students integrated into EHU activities?	EHU leadership, research office, international offices, student / alumni representatives, international staff.	C1
Effectiveness	What obstacles have been identified as challenges and impediments to the effective delivery of the EHU's mission? How far are research outputs, outreach and academic programmes linked up with and furthering the EHU's mission? Are EHU graduates taking up posts in Belarusian civil society? Is EHU perceived as an institution furthering liberal values and democracy? How far do EHU academic programmes align with Humanities and Liberal Arts education elsewhere in Europe? Is EHU research output regarded by academic peers to be of (European) quality? Is EHU research output regarded by academic peers as relevant in the context of Humanities disciplines?	EHU leadership, Donors, alumni, civil society organisations, academic peers.	E1

Effectiveness	Describe the EHU's overall institutional approach to questions of gender and inclusion. How does EHU leadership promote gender issues, and what monitoring methods have been put in place? Is there any evidence to suggest that there has been an improvement in gender equality over the past five years? In what ways (examples) has EHU included gender into research and teaching activities? What, if any, have been the challenges confronted by EHU staff in the process of including gender into activities? What strategies does EHU employ to ensure a gender balance amongst the student / staff body, how is this monitored and to what effect?	EHU leadership, support and teaching staff, personnel office staff.	E2
Impact	If and in what ways did your studies at EHU prepare you for your current career or activities? Was there any particular knowledge or skills that have been instrumental or useful for your job? Did you (or do you feel that you may need to) carry out any further training or education after graduating from EHU to prepare you for the job market? To what extent does EHU equip Belarusian students to contribute to civil society? Do you feel that you (or other EHU graduates) have contributed to institutional or political change in Belarus? To what degree (using examples) have EHU teaching and research activities aligned with European Higher Education standards? In what ways has the EHU's mission and core outputs changed to reflect this? Does EHU provide an environment for you develop your teaching skills and research profile in ways that would not be possible in Belarus? Do you feel that your courses and curricula reflect European standards, in terms of subjects covered, methods of delivering teaching, interactions with students and reading lists made available to students?	Students, alumni, teaching and research staff.	I1

	How far do you use examples from European Universities or consult other academics when creating your courses and syllabi? Do you feel that your experience of working / studying at EHU has influenced your views on gender and in particular stereotypes about women and their role in Belarus society?		
Sustainability	What are the EHU's own institutional expectations and plans regarding the future funding of the University? What financial strategies have been employed by EHU and to what effect? What evidence can be shown to confirm that financial planning has been (re)aligned to meet the most recent mission statements (and vice versa)? What are the assumptions and methods used by EHU to set and also adjust student fees, as well as decisions about scholarships? To what degree has EHU pursued Erasmus+ capacity building grants and have such grants been capitalised upon (follow-on projects, securing long terms effects etc.)? What measures and plans does EHU have in place to compensate for declining student numbers, especially Belarusians? What have been the effects of previous attempts to diversify its student intake?	EHU leadership, donors, recruitment office.	S1

2) Survey**Survey of academic staff (teaching and research) of the European Humanities University**

Rationale for survey: This survey will be distributed to all academic staff (full-time and part-time, teaching and research) of EHU with the assistance of the EHU rectorat. Respondents will not be asked to indicate their names or disciplines, to ensure anonymity.

The questions and requests for comments map against the contents of the EHU Strategy 2019-2024 – the hypothesis is that if effective measures have been introduced to ensure achievement of the aims of the Strategy, there will be strong confirmation of progress in response to the survey.

**Request to respond to survey
Evaluation of Support to the European Humanities University**

Dear respondent,

The current evaluation has been commissioned by Sida. The purpose is to review the support to the EHU in the period 2015-2020, including analysis of the achievements of the university in the spheres of teaching and learning, research, and internationalisation. We would be grateful for your responses to the following questions, and your brief comments in the boxes provided.

The questions ask you to rank your response to a statement, using the scoring in the table provided, on the scale from 5 ('strongly agree') through to 1 ('strongly disagree')

Section A. Information about respondent:

- a. Please state in which year you began to work at EHU.....
- b. Please state whether you are employed full-time [] or part-time [] as a member of academic staff
- c. Please state your position (e.g. Professor, Dotsent, senior lecturer, lecturer, assistant, research fellow)
.....

Section B: Questions.

Please indicate in the boxes below the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statements. We would also be grateful to receive your written comments per statement:

1. The academic subject area you teach is provided with a good level of resourcing (e.g. access to academic literature, online resources, equipment if relevant)

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

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2. As a member of the academic staff of EHU you receive effective support for your professional development needs (e.g. training in teaching methods, use of new resources, etc.)

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

3. The teaching load (amount of contact hours and non-contact commitment) is set at an appropriate level in line with your overall contractual responsibilities.

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

4. An effective set of procedures for internal Quality Assurance of the teaching and learning programme is in place.

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

5. Your disciplinary subject area in EHU is consistently able to recruit motivated students.

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

6. Sufficient time is allocated for you to engage in research activities within your overall workload.

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

7. The university provides sufficient support to you in your research activities (e.g. with regard to access to resources, opportunities to submit funding applications).

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

8. Adequate opportunities exist for you to engage in networking and collaboration with researchers from other institutions (in Belarus, Lithuania and elsewhere):

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

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9. Sufficient opportunities are available for academic staff to engage in mobility/exchange activities (visits to partner institutions in other countries):

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

10. Your disciplinary subject area in EHU benefits from effective integration of the university into broader higher-education and research networks in Europe and internationally:

1 – strongly disagree	2 – disagree	3 – difficult to answer	4 – agree	5 – strongly agree
Comments:				

Thank you for your contribution to the evaluation. All responses will remain anonymous.

Annex 4 Documentation

Documents consulted at this stage in the evaluation process.

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Annex 5 List of interviewees

No.	Name	Designation	Institution
1	Anatoli Mikhailov	Founder of EHU, President	EHU
2	Mindaugas Kacerauskis	Deputy Director	Development Cooperation Department - MFA of Lithuania
3	Andrius Kubilus	Chair of Governing Board, former Prime Minister of Lithuania, member of the European Parliament	European Parliament
4	Dr. Jonathan F. Fanton	Senior Fellow at Hunter College	City University of New York
5	Lina Gorbaciovene	Chancellor-Head of Rectors Office	EHU
6	Sergei Ignatov	Rector, professor	EHU
7	Jolanta Bieliauskaite	Head of Academic Department of Social Sciences	EHU
8	Aliaksei Makhnach	Head of Academic Department of Humanities and Arts	EHU
9	Alexander Puptsau	Head of the Senate	EHU
10	Rasa Buivydiene	Head of the Finance and HR Unit	EHU
11	Nijole Saugeniene	Head of Academic Support Center	EHU
12	Maksimas Milta	Head of Communication and Development Unit	EHU
13	Anastasiya Radzionava	Head of Students Affairs Unit	EHU
14	Tsimafei Misiukevich	Head of Student Union	EHU
15	Andrei Hernovich	Lead	EHU - Minsk Propilei Center
16	Dr. Uladzislau Ivanou	Coordinator - Center of Gender Studies	EHU
17	Prof. Almira Ousmanova	Researcher - Center of Gender Studies	EHU
18	Liudmila Ulyashyna	Associate Professor	EHU
19	Alexander Vashkevich	Professor	EHU
20	Kseniya Shtalenkova	Assistant Lecturer	EHU
21	Iryna Ramanava	Professor	EHU
22	Victor Martinovich	Assistant Professor	EHU
23	Andrei Vazyana	Lecturer	EHU
24	Mats Svensson	Programme Manager-Department for Europe and Latin America/ Unit Eastern Europe	Sida
25	Horton Beebe-Center	Chair of GAPO	GAPO
26	Berend De Groot	Head of Cooperation	EEAS-Minsk, EU-Minsk
27	Dirk Schuebel	Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Minsk, Head of Delegation	EEAS-Minsk, EU-Minsk
28	Vassilis Maragos	Head of unit in DG NEAR BRX	EC
29	Marika Kundla		Estonia - MFA
30	Hans Brask	Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to Lithuania	Denmark
31	Jonathan Becker	Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs	Bard College
32	Pavel Marinich	Founder	Zubr Platform / Malanka Media
33	Aleksandra Lazarenko	Creative Director	Kovcheg Art Space
34	Jakob Wöllenstein	Head of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Belarus Country Office	Konrad Adenauer Foundation Belarus Country Office
35	Prof. Elena Korosteleva		University of Kent, UK
36	Dr. Anais Marin		Warsaw University
Current Students FGD			
37	Male student		
38	Female student 1		
39	Female student 2		
40	Female student 3		
41	Female student 4		
42	Female student 5		
43	Female student 6		
44	Female student 7		
45	Female student 8		
Alumni FGD			
46	Female student 1		
47	Female student 2		

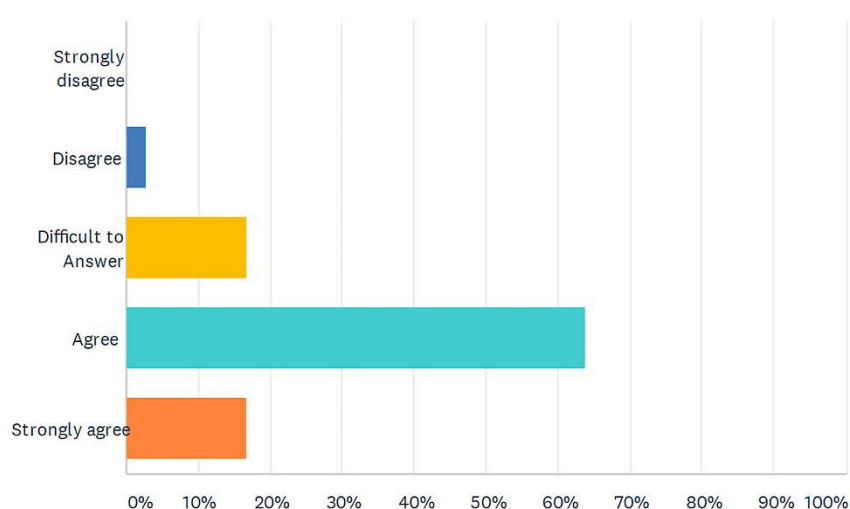
ANNEX 5– LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

48	Female student 3		
49	Female student 4		
50	Female student 5		
Non-EHU Belarussian Students FGD			
51	Male student 1		
52	Male student 2		

Annex 6: Summary of academic staff survey results

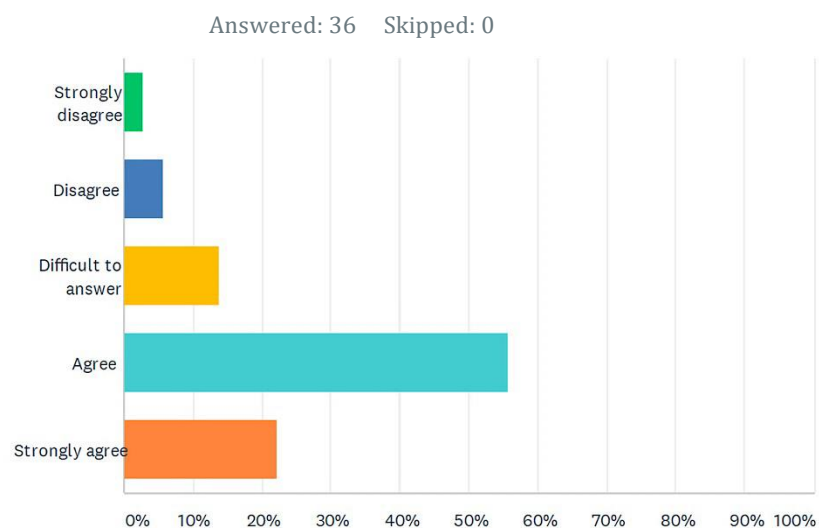
Q4: The academic subject area you teach is provided with a good level of resourcing (e.g. access to academic literature, online resources, equipment if relevant).

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree		0.00%	0
Disagree		2.78%	1
Difficult to Answer		16.67%	6
Agree		63.89%	23
Strongly agree		16.67%	6
TOTAL			36

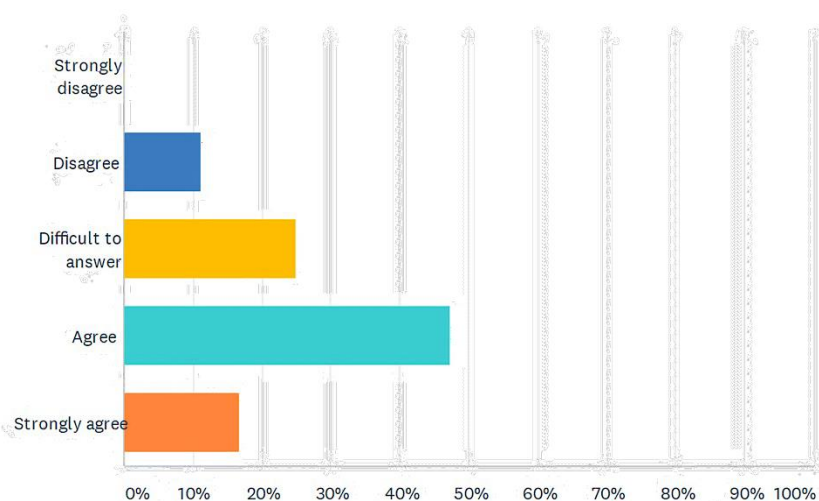
Q5: As a member of the academic staff of EHU you receive effective support for your professional development needs (e.g. training in teaching methods, use of new resources, etc.).



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.78%	1
Disagree	5.56%	2
Difficult to answer	13.89%	5
Agree	55.56%	20
Strongly agree	22.22%	8
TOTAL		36

Q6: The teaching load (amount of contact hours and non-contact commitment) is set at an appropriate level in line with your overall contractual responsibilities.

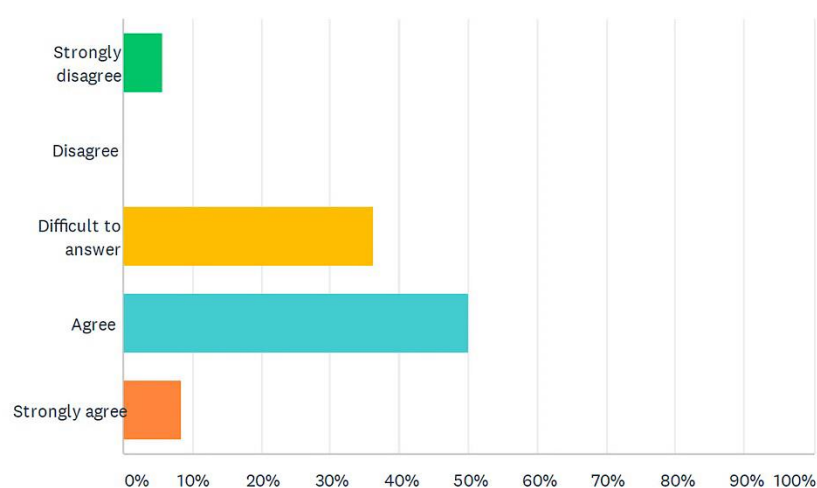
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Disagree	11.11%	4
Difficult to answer	25.00%	9
Agree	47.22%	17
Strongly agree	16.67%	6
TOTAL		36

Q7: An effective set of procedures for internal Quality Assurance of the teaching and learning programme is in place.

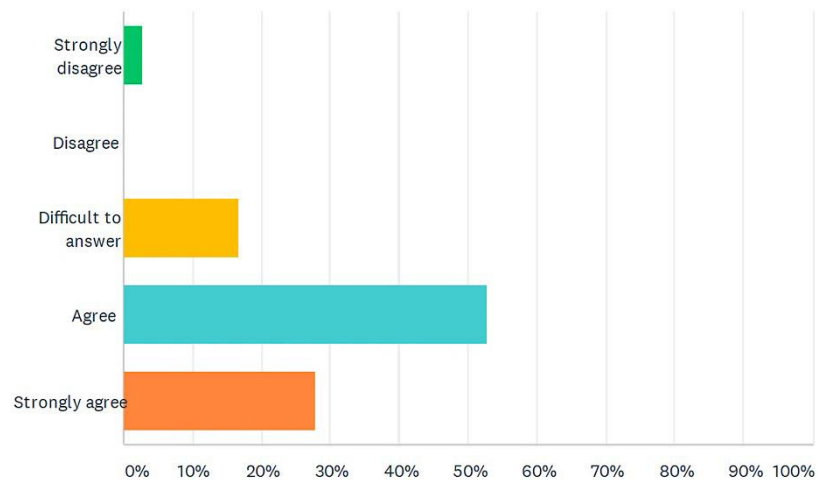
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	5.56%	2
Disagree	0.00%	0
Difficult to answer	36.11%	13
Agree	50.00%	18
Strongly agree	8.33%	3
TOTAL		36

Q8: Your disciplinary subject area in EHU is consistently able to recruit motivated students.

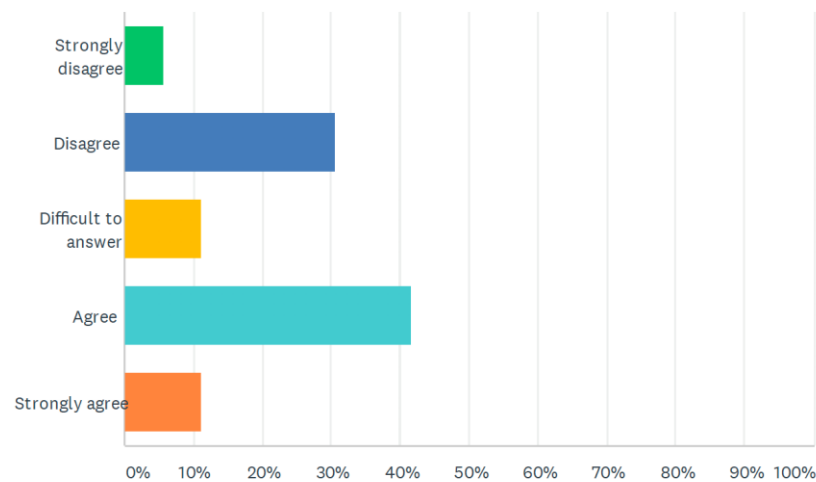
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.78%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
Difficult to answer	16.67%	6
Agree	52.78%	19
Strongly agree	27.78%	10
TOTAL		36

Q9: Sufficient time is allocated for you to engage in research activities within your overall workload.

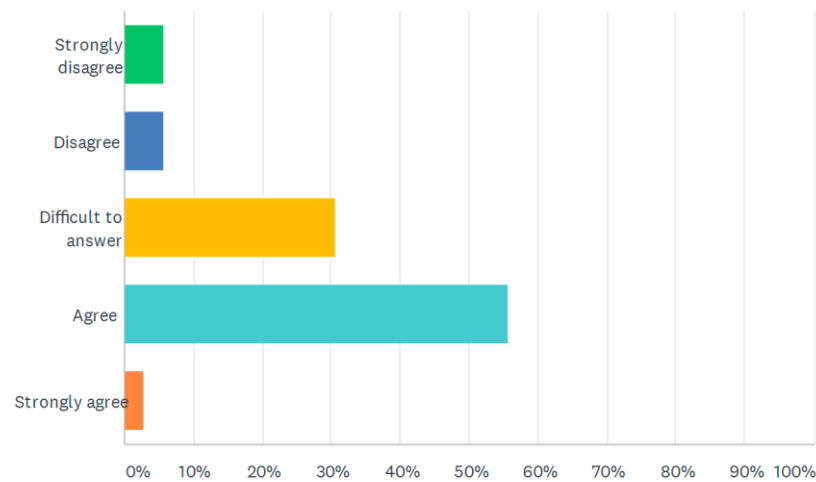
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	5.56%	2
Disagree	30.56%	11
Difficult to answer	11.11%	4
Agree	41.67%	15
Strongly agree	11.11%	4
TOTAL		36

Q10: The university provides sufficient support to you in your research activities (e.g. with regard to access to resources, opportunities to submit funding applications).

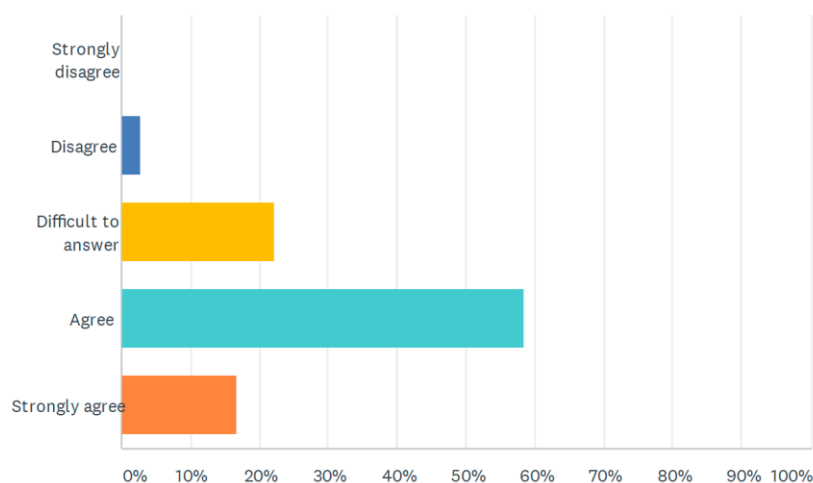
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	5.56%	2
Disagree	5.56%	2
Difficult to answer	30.56%	11
Agree	55.56%	20
Strongly agree	2.78%	1
TOTAL		36

Q11 Adequate opportunities exist for you to engage in networking and collaboration with researchers from other institutions (in Belarus, Lithuania, and elsewhere).

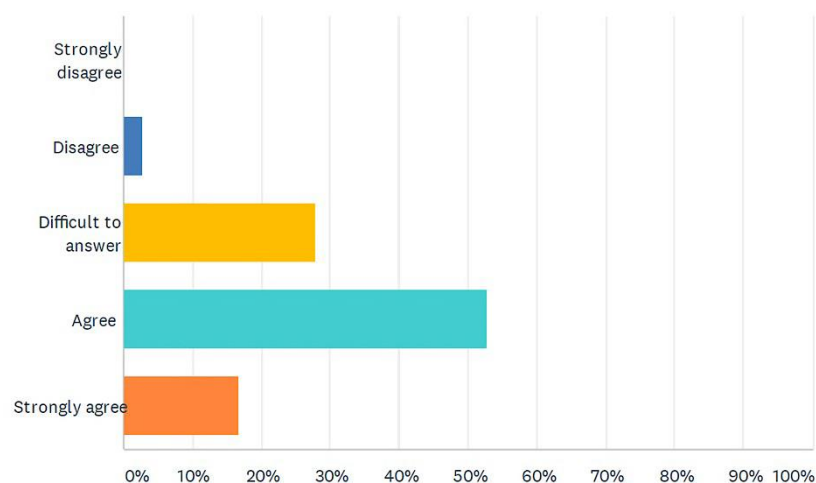
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Disagree	2.78%	1
Difficult to answer	22.22%	8
Agree	58.33%	21
Strongly agree	16.67%	6
TOTAL		36

Q12 Sufficient opportunities are available for academic staff to engage in mobility/exchange activities (visits to partner institutions in other countries).

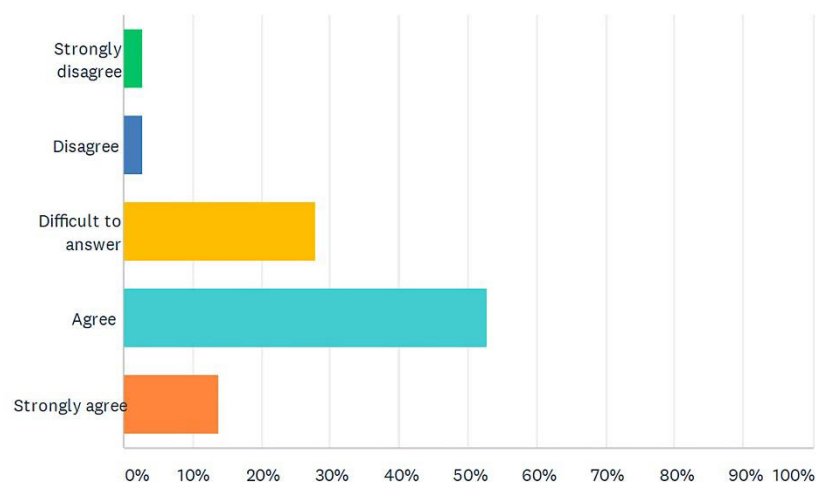
Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0
Disagree	2.78%	1
Difficult to answer	27.78%	10
Agree	52.78%	19
Strongly agree	16.67%	6
TOTAL		36

Q13 Your disciplinary subject area in EHU benefits from effective integration of the university into broader higher-education and research networks in Europe and internationally.

Answered: 36 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.78%	1
Disagree	2.78%	1
Difficult to answer	27.78%	10
Agree	52.78%	19
Strongly agree	13.89%	5
TOTAL		36



Evaluation of Support to the European Humanities University

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the core support to European Humanities University (EHU) for the period 2015-2020, its background and performance. EHU is a Belarusian university-in-exile. EHU was founded in 1992 and closed by Belarusian authorities in 2004. It re-launched activities in Vilnius and was granted the status of a Lithuanian university. In response to this situation EHU attracted the support of many donors enabling it to operate and attract mostly Belarussian students to study in an open and free environment in line with European values. The evaluation found the EHU to be largely relevant to students, academics and donors alike. When it comes to effectiveness, the team found students able to obtain jobs afterwards, with the knowledge developed at EHU. The student enrolment rate however remains a serious challenge for the university. The management of the EHU has become increasingly lean over time, but there is room for improvement in terms of ensuring internal accountabilities and addressing urgent needs of the university. In spite of the challenges faced, the team finds that that EHU has overcome a critical period and in many ways is on the right track.

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