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Yet successive reviews of the *Bologna Process*, as expressed for example in Ministerial Communiqués, emphasise the need for *greater* efforts to promote the public good, public responsibility, social dimension, transparency and accountability of the higher education sector, alongside reassertion of the importance of the sector's teaching mission and student-centred learning within a collaborative process of curriculum reform.

Calls for a new, more socially responsible relationship between universities and the communities they serve include a powerful one for a direct contribution by universities to the process of building a more equitable society, as expressed for example, by the Executive Director of the Global University Network for Innovation at the launch of Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change early in 2014<sup>xxi</sup>: “the new concept of engagement ... means we have to rethink all forms of institutional activity, looking at the whole from the point of view of social responsibility”.

As highlighted in the EACEA's evaluation report on the original project proposal, “Promoting the social dimension and social responsibility of universities is crucial in the construction of the EHEA. To develop and further elaborate ways of dealing with concrete recommendations and to properly design policy measures and incentives to foster the social dimension and social responsibility of universities are urgent needs.”

To this could be added the need for universities to be able to proactively evidence their values (including integrity, transparency, trustworthiness and public service), their concern for effective stakeholder engagement and for socially responsible impacts etc rather than to rely simply on the rhetoric of claims regarding the contributions that universities already make.

As Davies and Simon (2013) put it: “ Public and civic engagement activities are now seen as critical in building trust in public institutions ... (and to) the development and implementation of new solutions”. Europe's Universities have a profound obligation to contribute to the search for and development of such new solutions and – where possible – to act as models in respect of *trust in public institutions*.

In such a context, the question could legitimately be asked as to whether a new and sector-specific set of benchmark standards is required to provide the framework for this or whether existing schemes, guidelines etc could not do this, even if they are generic, as in some iterations of Corporate Social Responsibility Benchmarking.



### 3.2 Corporate Social Responsibility as Concept and ‘Model’

In critiquing existing definitions of social responsibility used in ISO 26000 and by the European Commission, Vallaey (2007, 2011) argues persuasively that social responsibility on one hand cannot be a voluntary commitment and on the other that it is not beyond and outside the law but rather inextricably linked to the law. He notes however that coordination is required amongst the various stakeholder interests “in order to control and re-orient social practices deemed as problematic” by all legitimate means available, including legal, technical, cultural, ethical, regulatory, economic, political and *educational* (our emphasis) means.

He concludes that “the imperatives of social responsibility are very clear: (1) we must diagnose and manage the negative impacts generated by our organisations, (2) we must do so in networks of co-responsibility and (3) our ultimate goal is to work together to build a more just and sustainable society for our fellow human beings and distant descendants.”

When considered alongside the other critiques summarised above, profound implications for higher education as a process and universities as institutions emerge. These implications are compounded by challenges in terms of both concepts and values for the sector: Vallaey<sup>xxii</sup> notes a certain absence of intellectual rigour in the use of the term Corporate Social Responsibility and a resultant ambiguity. He points out that even ISO 26000 does not provide for “rigorous certification of clearly defined practices”. He does however pose the question of whether social responsibility might be a new model for the management of universities or just a new label. The latter is a concern shared by David Jones of Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, Scotland whose 2012 paper on the UK’s student-led People and Planet “Green League Table” critiques current managerial agendas and narratives on sustainability as “green-washing”, that is likely to disengage staff rather than to engage them<sup>xxiii</sup>.

Clearly, this is at odds with the core requirement of any attempt to promote or enhance university social responsibility, given the central importance of staff (both academic and support) to the labour-intensive nature of higher education. In response, we find all this provides a range of very good reasons for creating the foundation for a sectoral and continental approach to USR. In addition, in developing and refining the Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility care has been taken to try to build in staff (and student) engagement as a key theme and core requirement in an approach that would simply not be adopted in most other sectors.

In this, we have tried to draw on what Ghitulescu and Neves (2012)<sup>xxiv</sup> refer to as “renewed interest in CSR and the various stakeholders’ expectations with regard to social responsibility practices” which they see as a consequence of “the recent financial crisis and the subsequent economic downturn”. We have also taken ISO 26000 as our principal point of reference, notwithstanding reservations regarding the usefulness of *Corporate* Social Responsibility as concept and practice, or as expressed in the January 2014 Brussels focus group (WP 4 Report), as a “model” for higher education. We agree such reservations.



Yet, it is impossible to ignore the reality that universities are *corporate bodies* just as much as commercial, for-profit private enterprises. The key to us seems to be in finding an appropriate balance between generic social responsibility obligations on one hand and those that are specific or peculiar to higher education and universities on the other. This suggested not only a need for attention to and compliance with generic social responsibility standards but also to sector-specific standards relating to the core ‘business’ of a university, i.e. teaching, research, support for learning and related activities.

Achieving such a balance has been an imperative for WP 3 and in working to achieve such a balance we have been able to draw on insights from recent empirical research on (corporate) social responsibility, mostly produced in university Doctoral studies. Amongst such insights, we note evidence that

- More considered engagement with the concept and practice of corporate social responsibility by the ‘academy’ would help address the dangers associated with too heavy an emphasis on the ‘pragmatic priority’ of CSR by foregrounding the nature of Corporate Social Responsibility as a question that requires theoretical as much as practical consideration (Dunne, 2009)
- Such engagement would enhance the contribution that a considered and appropriately theorised approach to social responsibility could make to global distributive justice (Gaffney, 2009)
- Organisations adopt social responsibility principally for legitimacy reasons (Iatridis, 2011)
- The degree of social pressure that an organisation faces directly impacts on its approach to social responsibility and the level to which it is proactive in corporate social responsibility disclosure (Hassan, 2010)
- External actors are important in influencing an organisation’s commitment to social responsibility (Thissen-Smits, 2013)
- Unions are potentially powerful partners in promoting workforce engagement with and overall success of an organisation’s social responsibility commitments (Kazmi, 2013)
- Where internal momentum and external pressure (such as is exercised through regulation, for example) combine, it makes an organisation capable of absorbing values from the community/ies within which it operates and at the same time contributing to that/those community/ies (Naidu, 2008)



These insights have informed thinking and action in WP 3 and were intended inform action in WP 6 in relation to the Manifesto and the process of gathering endorsements for the Benchmark Standards.

### 3.3 The Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility as a Common Reference Framework

With regard to the notion a *model*, it became clear from the evidence accessed in the course of implementation of WP 2 and during the course of the Benchmark Visits in WP 3 that the diversity of approaches, practices and stages of development in USR across the EHEA in addition to the interaction between the specifics of national (and in some cases regional) imperatives on one hand and the particularities of the missions, aspirations and challenges faced by individual institutions that a single, uniform ‘one-size-fits-all’ model of University Social Responsibility would be impossible to create and probably undesirable too.

All the evidence we came across indicates that University Social Responsibility cannot be determined by centralist, top-down edict – such would be counter to the very idea of the European University as an autonomous institution able to exercise academic freedom and to the very fact that higher education is a public service that is responsible to multiple stakeholders.

The Benchmark Standards presented in this document have therefore been developed with the aim of providing a Common Framework for University Social Responsibility as a core competence of European Higher Education.

As already stated, central to the sources drawn on in the development of the University Social Responsibility (USR) Standards is ISO 26000 that provides guidance for all types of organisation in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors globally, regardless of the sector or country in which the organisation is situated or the stage of development that the organisation is at regarding social responsibility.

The ISO sees the prime objective of social responsibility as being to contribute to sustainable development by ensuring social equity, good governance and healthy ecosystems.

The Benchmark Standards set out here have been developed to ensure alignment with ISO 26000 and the key principles of social responsibility as set out within it i.e. accountability, transparency, ethical behaviour, respect for stakeholder interests, the rule of law, international norms and human rights together with foregrounding contribution to sustainable development. They have also been developed to align with the imperatives of these other bodies in relation to both social responsibility and higher education.



However, the Standards are specific to the European Higher Education Area and to Universities in particular, as bodies whose particular responsibilities derive from the relatively privileged position that Europe's Universities have enjoyed over several hundred years, from obligations related to that and to and from on-going public support of Higher Education across Europe. In addition, the development of the Standards has been informed by the interests and responsibilities of the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and UNESCO in the specific sphere of Higher Education.

Thus, the Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility detail criteria covering all aspects of the responsibility of a European University has for "the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development (including the health and welfare of society), takes into account the expectations of stakeholders and is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour" (ISO 260000, p3).

They cover all the "core subjects" of ISO 26000 i.e. Organisational Governance; Human Rights; Labour Practices: the Environment; Fair Operating Practices; Consumer Issues; and Community Involvement and Development in three Standards (Governance, Environmental and Societal Responsibility and Fair Practices). These all take account of the particular nature of the European Higher Education Area and of Europe's Universities and this is at the core of a fourth Standard, covering Research, Teaching, Support for Learning and Public Engagement.

Finally, the Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility set out in this document have been developed with a number of potential uses and prospective users in mind and with an awareness that the Standards themselves will be further developed and refined over time, as the number of users and uses grow.

Amongst the envisaged uses are

- as a checklist for individual institutions, the relevant national agencies and ministries across the EHEA, in terms of policy and practice
- to inform strategy, development planning and continuous improvement at institutional, national and European levels
- as a framework for institutional reporting
- as a reference point for students and staff unions and associations.

Deliberately however, no recommendations are made within this Report regarding specific future use of the Standards.



## 4. THE BENCHMARK STANDARDS FOR UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THE EHEA

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This section provides a brief account of the process whereby the version of the Benchmark Standards presented in this Report was arrived at. It includes commentary on the role of the Benchmark Visits as an important formative influence on this process.

### 4.1 The Benchmarking Visits and the Development and Refinement of the Standards

The Benchmarking Visits were seen as a ‘means to an end’, that ultimately being the creation of a set of sector-specific Benchmarking Standards available to universities across the EHEA. As a Project Team we agreed before the Visits commenced that WP 3 would focus on the development, trialing and testing of the Benchmark Standards so that the version of the Standards that would be made public at the end of the Project would be a reasonably robust one, that had stood up to trial usage and to the scrutiny of a cross-section of stakeholders. As already stated, the process adopted to ensure this was an incremental, iterative and reflective one.

The Benchmarking Visits were thus not seen or presented as either diagnostic or summative assessment of the state of USR in the institutions that were the subject of the Visits but rather very much as an opportunity for formative development of the Standards. As such, and insofar as the nature of the exercise required some feedback to the institutions visited, the approach taken throughout was informed by the values of collaborative exploration, with application of a notion of ‘critical friendship’, whereby any comments offered to the institution on the evidence it presented and on the contributions of key informants would be matched by comments from the key informants and other staff of the institution on the Benchmark Standards themselves. The approach taken to the Benchmarking Visits was thus akin to what Zairi<sup>xxv</sup> (1998: page 86) has termed “bench learning”.

Mention has already been made of the incremental, iterative nature of the process of developing, trialing and testing of the Benchmark Standards. The Benchmarking Visits were the critical core of this process and a complex, dynamic relationship developed between the two exercises, requiring effort to ensure that the integrity of each was safeguarded whilst, at the same time, they were both used as part of a single process to deliver on the core objective. There was potential for tension in such a situation and care had to be taken in particular to manage stakeholder (and partner) expectations of the Benchmarking Visits.

In designing the template for the Benchmarking Visits therefore, care was taken to avoid an over-mechanistic or heavily standardized “schema” such as those set out in the classic process models of benchmarking presented by writers such as Camp (1989 and 1995), the emphasis being rather on the development of a set of sector-specific Benchmark Standards that would align with the notion of *strategic (partnership) benchmarking* and *benchmarking networks* as





Described by Watson (1993)<sup>xxvi</sup> and as consistent with thinking on the Project's Manifesto and its aspirations regarding the creation of a network that would take the work forward beyond the life of the Project itself.

In the process of organizing, undertaking and reviewing the outcomes from the Benchmarking Visits, the emphasis therefore was on engaging our institutional partners and key informants in order to ensure that the Standards (and indeed the very idea of them) were seen as credible, fit-for-purpose and would ultimately be able to command sectoral 'buy-in' to and 'ownership' of them. Given the point at which the decision was taken to create a new set of Benchmark Standards, there was time to address this and, in the event, we were able to secure the engagement of both the case institutions and the key informants in the process, as operationalised. We are duly grateful to all those who helped us make and finalise the arrangements for the Benchmarking Visits, those who provided material to help inform these and, mostly, to those who gave their time as key informants and, later, as 'critical friends' to the process of refinement of the Standards.

The Integration Workshop, held in April 2013, set the objectives and scope of the Project's benchmarking activities, as described in the Interim Project Report of September 2013. As planned, five Benchmarking Visits were arranged and carried out according to an agreed, explicit procedure and using standard templates for analysis of documentation and other evidence. By the time of the last Benchmark Visit, in April 2014, the Draft Benchmark Standards were in v4, there having been a series of iterations from v0, as presented in the Integration Workshop.

In addition to using evidence and feedback gathered during the course of the Benchmarking Visits to inform the further development of the Draft Standards, a further version (v10) was the focus of a comprehensive summative review, involving a selection of the key informants who participated in the Benchmark Visits and others by means of an anonymous online questionnaire survey, using open questions, carried out in July and August 2014. This review complemented the earlier focus groups at European, national, regional and institutional levels, as mentioned above. The version of the Benchmark Standards attached to this Report, and a core deliverable of the Project as a whole setting out the promised Common Reference Framework is the outcome of this review of v10.

In terms of the development of the various draft versions of the Standards over time, it is worth noting that five versions were produced between the Integration Workshop (April 2013) and the conclusion of the last Benchmarking Visit (April 2014), a further five versions in the period May to July 2014 and a final five versions between conclusion of the questionnaire survey of a selection of the key informants at the end of August and conclusion of the Project at end September.

The first five sets of revisions saw the scope of coverage grow of the Standards grow from an exploratory pilot - with very few criteria in only a couple of areas - to a complete set, even if at the stage that this set was completed, there was still a significant reliance on ISO 26000 and fairly little that was sector-specific when compared with the later versions.





The last five sets of revisions saw mostly relatively minor though not unimportant changes, indicating the very strong endorsement that was forthcoming from the results from the final key informant consultation.

Overall, the most significant changes to take place in the process of trialing, testing, consulting on and refining the Standards were internally driven within WP3 in the period May to July 2014, largely by P7 and its associates in the University of Edinburgh and by some particularly valuable input from P5, the University of Porto, this largely though not exclusively focused on the most innovative component of the Standards, Standard 1, which covers Research, Teaching, Support for Learning and Public Engagement, i.e. the core activities of Europe's universities.

Initially, these activities were dealt with in the Draft Standards only in relation to the "core subjects" of ISO 26000. It was only some way into the process of refining the Standards that it was decided that it was not only essential to create a Standard to specifically address these activities but also to place it first in what had by that stage become a set of four Standards, reduced from the original seven, partly but not exclusively for the sake of manageability.

In turn, the emphasis across these four Standards shifted over time to emphasise not only the core activities but also the vital importance of Standard 2: Governance and Standard 4: Fair Practices as key in underpinning efforts in the sphere of Standard 3: Sustainability, both Environmental and Societal. In the wake of these shifts in emphasis, some of the constituent criteria associated with each of the Standards developed over time.

We hope that what we have produced in the version of the Standards presented in this Report is not only consistent with and informed by ISO 26000 but also both sector-specific and – ultimately intended to be sectorally-owned and used - concise, clear and tight enough a document to be fit-for-use as the basis of an open benchmarking system across the EHEA that can accommodate national, regional and institutional differences in approach and priorities within the broad sphere of University Social Responsibility.



## 4.2 The Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility across the EHEA

### 1. Research, Teaching, Support for Learning and Public Engagement

The institution's core academic activities are underpinned by the values and principles of social responsibility. In order to ensure this, the institution

- 1.1 Guarantees academic freedom for its staff and students.
- 1.2 Widens and diversifies access to education within a commitment to lifelong learning.
- 1.3 Manages student admissions in a transparent and equitable way, using explicit criteria to inform selection decisions, providing formative feedback to unsuccessful candidates.
- 1.4 Ensures that public funds provided to support teaching and student fees are used for the purpose for which they are provided.
- 1.5 Requires that its curricula are informed by socially responsible, ethical research and that its graduate attributes incorporate evidence-based thinking and decision-making, active citizenship and employability.
- 1.6 Adopts a learner-centred approach to teaching and student support, ensuring assessment and feedback is used to promote learning.
- 1.7 Facilitates collaborative and independent learning that goes beyond the classroom and into the community.
- 1.8 Enables international collaboration and supports student and staff cross-national mobility.
- 1.9 Enforces ethical protocols for research, teaching and related activities.
- 1.10 Facilitates dialogue between the research community, the public and policy makers to link research to 'real world' issues.
- 1.11 Improves its contribution to society through open access to research outcomes and its public engagement activities.



## 2. Governance

The principles of social responsibility are respected throughout institutional policy, strategy, procedures and processes. They permeate all levels, as an integral element of management accountability and stakeholder engagement. The institution

2.1 Encourages a culture of social responsibility with high ethical and professional standards and clear protocols to avoid conflict of interest.

2.2 Formally recognises staff and student unions and involves them as partners in governance and decision-making, providing for their representation on the Board (or equivalent) and on its advisory committees.

2.3 Ensures that social responsibility is treated as a core commitment by the Board and senior management and that the institution's social responsibility performance is the focus for annual evaluative reporting.

2.4 Exercises due diligence by assessing the risk and impact of all activities, ensuring compliance with the law, relevant standards and norms.

2.5 Conducts ethical and socially responsible investment and procurement, with comprehensive public reporting of criteria and decisions.

2.6 Is a responsible neighbour, facilitating dialogue and working in partnership with and investing in the local community.

2.7 Recognises its staff and student social responsibility initiatives through an internal reward scheme.

2.8 Actively participates in relevant social responsibility networks.

2.9 Reports on its progress towards clear and independently verified social responsibility and sustainability goals.

2.10 Publishes the outcomes of internal and external reviews, complaints, academic appeals and the source and use of all funding.



### 3. Environmental and Societal Sustainability

The institution is committed to environmental sustainability and biodiversity in all aspects of its operations, including in its use of goods, services and works and in its evaluation of decisions. It takes appropriate action to ensure that its commitments are realised and

- 3.1 Ensures its policies and practices minimise any negative impact on the environment caused by its activities or supply chain.
- 3.2 Promotes sustainable development.
- 3.3 Delivers a continuous improvement programme that works towards cleaner, sustainable, eco-efficient, resource efficient, zero waste and ethical operations including procurement.
- 3.4 Publishes regular environmental sustainability reports, incorporating risk and action assessments covering environmental, societal and supply chain risks.
- 3.5 Encourages the use of environmentally friendly technologies, and of energy efficient, reusable and biodegradable materials.
- 3.6 Practices socially responsible and sustainable procurement, publishes a code of ethical behaviour for procurement decision-making that includes workers' rights and fair trade principles and promotes social responsibility and sustainability wherever it has influence over the supply chain.
- 3.7 Ensures respect for and compliance with internationally proclaimed human rights, the rule of law and national and International anti-corruption requirements.
- 3.8 Ensures that all its International activities promote human and societal development and, where possible, help address the issues of poverty, quality of life, advance peace and promote conflict resolution.

### 4. Fair Practices/



#### 4. Fair Practices

The institution ensures equality and fairness for its staff, students, and others as appropriate and its policies and procedures are intended to avoid discrimination or inequity. The institution

4.1 Promotes and celebrates pluralism and diversity, and ensures equality regardless of age, culture, ethnicity, gender or sexuality.

4.2 Practices open, transparent, fair and equitable recruitment and promotion of staff, using affirmative action where appropriate, providing comprehensive staff development that incorporates social responsibility.

4.3 Establishes through negotiation with staff unions comprehensive employee communication, consultation and negotiation protocols and implements these.

4.4 Promotes the health, safety, physical social and mental well-being of staff and students beyond minimum legal requirements.

4.5 Promotes equality of opportunity, guarantees equal, fair and just pay and equitable conditions, and proactively works to avoid inequality through flexible working and career development and progression opportunities.

4.6 Ensures that working conditions at least comply with relevant national laws, collective agreements and applicable International Labour Organisation standards and makes every effort to avoid casualisation of the workforce.

4.7 Guarantees freedom of association and respects collective bargaining.

4.8 Has transparent, fair and equitable complaints and disciplinary procedures and ensures that complaints and disciplinary matters are addressed swiftly and fairly.

4.9 Publishes the possible sanctions for a proven breach of ethical or related requirements and protects whistleblowers.

4.10 Provides professional support services to meet specific additional needs of students and staff as arising from a disability, for example.

4.11 Communicates with suppliers about its procurement policy and uses research to inform its procurement decisions.

## 5. ENDNOTES

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<sup>i</sup> The notion of ‘good’ or ‘best’ practice proved to be a problematic one in this project. There are issues with holding any practice in what is a new and rapidly developing area such as USR up as good or best largely because the volume of practice evidence is too limited (and too variable in scope and quality) at present to be able to make robust let alone definitive judgments. Accordingly, in WP3 we have tended to prefer the terms ‘current’ or ‘interesting’ practice. In time and with the emergence of mature practice, it may be easier to identify that which is ‘good’ or even ‘best’.

<sup>ii</sup> In general, the pattern of diversity identified in the survey carried out within the framework of WP 2 reflected that found by Furrer et al in their 2010 investigation of attitudes towards corporate responsibilities in western and in central and eastern Europe. Drawing on a multi-level study of the views of 3064 managers and business students in eight European countries, Furrer et al concluded that though environmental sustainability was regarded as most important by all respondents, students attributed more importance to environmental sustainability and less to societal sustainability than managers and western European respondents accorded more importance to societal factors and less importance to economic factors: See *Attitudes toward Corporate Responsibilities in Western Europe and in Central and East Europe* in *Management International Review* (2010) 50: 379–398.

The pattern found in the directory of cases that was created as an outcome from WP 2 project also reflected the findings of Larran Jorge et al in their 2012 paper, *Do Spanish Universities use Corporate Social Responsibility as a Differentiating Factor?* (*International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (2012) 2.11: 29-42), i.e. that USR is not a significant strategic priority as yet.

<sup>iii</sup> ISO 26000 ([www.iso.org/iso/discovering\\_iso\\_26000.pdf](http://www.iso.org/iso/discovering_iso_26000.pdf)) itself provided a useful starting point for this exercise in that it provides a descriptive listing of 75 initiatives in the sphere of social responsibility that are or incorporate some form of standards. 40 of these are generic and of those, 7 of these are Intergovernmental, 23 Multi-Stakeholder and 10 Single Stakeholder. In addition, 35 are sector specific but none are specific to Higher Education nor indeed to Education more broadly. Several of the generic initiatives are – to some extent – relevant to Higher Education in Europe, notably the UN Global Compact and EFQM and some relevant to some Universities e.g. the OECD’s Risk Awareness Tool related to operating in countries where there is weak governance.

<sup>iv</sup> The various iterations of the Global Reporting Initiative (G4/GRI [Sustainability Reporting Guidelines: Reporting Principles and Standard Disclosures](http://www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRIG4-Part1-Reporting-Principles-and-Standard-Disclosures.pdf) 2013: [www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRIG4-Part1-Reporting-Principles-and-Standard-Disclosures.pdf](http://www.globalreporting.org/resource/library/GRIG4-Part1-Reporting-Principles-and-Standard-Disclosures.pdf)) are perhaps the prime example of such. The range of disclosures required and the nature of some of the indicators themselves suggest “overkill” and, as such could be seen as a disincentive to enhanced transparency and accountability.

<sup>v</sup> Even ISO 26000 could be held to be too generic for the purposes of the higher education sector, hence in part the decision to develop a set of sector-specific Benchmark Standards. That said, the Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility across the EHEA cover all “core subjects and issues” set out in ISO 26000.

<sup>vi</sup> Examples include the Environmental Sustainability Index and the Environmental Performance Index (ESI/EPI) in the USA and others that are international in orientation but which nonetheless use the English language such as FTSE4Good, the Global Responsibility Index. Some of these broaden out their scope to more general elements or other strands of social (as distinct from environmental) responsibility such as the Boston Centre for Corporate Citizenship’s Community Involvement Index: <http://ccc.bc.edu/index.cfm?pagelid=2053>



viii The UN Global Compact ([www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)) is founded on ten key principles, all of which are addressed within the Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility across the EHEA:

1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
2. make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.
3. Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
4. the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
5. the effective abolition of child labour; and
6. the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
9. encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
10. Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

ix This included a review of the USA-based Talloires Network ([talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/](http://talloiresnetwork.tufts.edu/)), an international association that “promotes the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education”. In practice the activities of this Network seem to focus on community service rather than on social responsibility as defined in ISO 26000 however. This may provide for potential linkages between the Benchmark Standards for University Social Responsibility across the EHA in future despite the narrower – or perhaps more specialist – scope of the Talloires Network and the relatively limited presence of Universities from the EU member states amongst the Networks’ membership. Perhaps there may be particular scope for collaboration in the sphere of professional development (via the Network’s Faculty and Staff Professional Development Programme [FSPDP]), obviating the need to re-invent a potentially usable “wheel”.

xi See for example, [www.businessdictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com). The wider literature at times defines *core competencies* as *core capabilities* or *distinctive competencies*.

xii In this, the position taken up is at odds with the implications of the argument advanced by Larran Jorge et al (2012: see Endnote 2 above) that use of social responsibility as a strategic differentiator and potential source of competitive advantage by a university would be *legitimate*. We do not share this view.

xiii See the work of *Mohamed Zairi* for more insight into different types of benchmarking, e.g. *Benchmarking for Best Practice*, Taylor and Francis, 1998.

xiv Based on an interview survey of 27,932 people selected by multi-stage, random (probability) sampling across the 28 EU Member States. The survey was carried out between 15 and 24 March 2014

xv See *Economics, Education and Unlearning*, University of Manchester Post-Crash Economics Society, 2014

xvi The UK University & College Union in “Empire Built on Sand: The University of Central Lancashire’s Great Overseas Gamble”, London: February 2014

xvii The UK’s Times Higher Educational Supplement (and other sources) noted in September 2014 “slavery” amongst the workforce on some campuses in Dubai, which is making strenuous efforts to position itself as a ‘global leader in international education’. At least one prominent European University has a significant presence in Dubai.

xviii See, for example, the UK University and College Union (UCU)’s Briefing Note “The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership – What it is and Why we should be Worried”, London: March 2014

xxiii Neal King, IAUP Chair, writing in *University World News*, “Creating Global Citizens” 28 March 2014, Issue 313.



xx Keynote speech to 21<sup>st</sup> European Student Convention, Budapest, February 2011. In *Reimagining Democratic Societies*, Council of Europe Higher Education Series 18, March 2013, the same official (Sjur Bergan) states that democratic re-imagination and innovation cannot succeed without higher education and higher education cannot fulfil its educational, academic and societal missions without working for the common good.

xxi Rebecca Warden “Engagement report calls on universities to *rethink*” *University World News*, 6 February 2014 Issue No: 306

xxii *Defining Social Responsibility: a Matter of Philosophical Urgency for Universities*, Francois Vallaey, n.d. but available in English in the GUNI website <http://www.guninetwork.org> or in Spanish from the IESALC/UNESCO webpages: <http://www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve>

xxiii David R Jones (2012) “Looking through the ‘greenwashing glass cage’ of the Green League Table towards the sustainability challenge for UK universities” in *Journal of Organisational Change Management* 25 (4): 630 - 647

xxvii “The effect of changing economic conditions on attitudes toward corporate social responsibility” Brenda E Ghitulescu & Joao S Neves in *International Journal of Business Governance and Ethics* 7 (2): 153 – 171 (2012)

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