





# Topics for PLA discussion

- Values/fundamental values of higher education – **the global contemporary landscape**
- **Europe in a plural world.**
- **The EHEA fundamental values process.**  
A remarkable development.
- **The fundamental values in the higher education systems at present:**
  - monitoring;
  - functions and the way forward;
  - link with other Bologna Process developments.

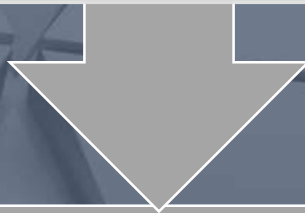
# Values in higher education – a global landscape (*the prevailing discourse*)

Different understanding of values.

Different lists of values in different parts of the world.

Different definitions

What are these values?



Values in higher education are under attack.

*Causes: culture wars, freedom of speech debates, post-truth age, diminished public trust, illiberal politics, etc.*

academic freedom (cf. Academic Freedom Index)

institutional autonomy

academic integrity

collegiality and solidarity

truth

sustainability

academic governance

transparency and responsibility



## Europe in a plural and fragmented world

- **A last redoubt?** In particular for academic freedom; both the EHEA and the EU.
- **A systematic, progressive regional framework of reference** for the fundamental values of higher education – for the first time in history. *Not all is doom and gloom.*
- **The most significant and potentially impactful** recent contribution of the Bologna Process is in the area of values of higher education?



# The EHEA fundamental values process

- A remarkable, unprecedented development. 2018-2024 and continuing
- Long term work within the Bologna Process.
- Significant contributions by the Council of Europe.
- Role of stakeholders.
- The crisis of academic freedom in Europe – and a solution to it.

*EC vs Hungary,  
European Court of Justice 2017*



# The EHEA fundamental values of higher education – *a unique new framework of reference*



- academic freedom
- institutional autonomy
- academic integrity
- students and staff participation in governance
- public responsibility *for* and *of* higher education

Values –fundamental values (not legal principles);

**institutional values**

Cluster of values; **rights and responsibilities**

Shared conceptual references (anchors to prevent drifting)

Commitments; guidelines for “protection” and “promotion”

Implementation mechanism/monitoring



EHEAROME2020

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**Rome  
Ministerial  
Communiqué**

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A N N E X I



EUROPEAN  
HIGHER  
EDUCATION AREA



# TIRANA EHEA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

29 - 30 MAY 2024

Annex 1 to the Tirana Communiqué

## EHEA STATEMENTS ON FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

**A monitoring framework**  
 – *fundamental values of higher education in the EHEA (implementation tool)*

VALUES	Type of monitoring and Indicators	
<b>Rights/Freedoms</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic freedom</li> <li>- Institutional autonomy</li> <li>- Participation of students and staff in university governance</li> </ul>	<i>De jure</i>	
	Protection	Outlook
	Promotion	
	<i>De facto</i>	
	Infringements	
	Threats	
	Positive developments	

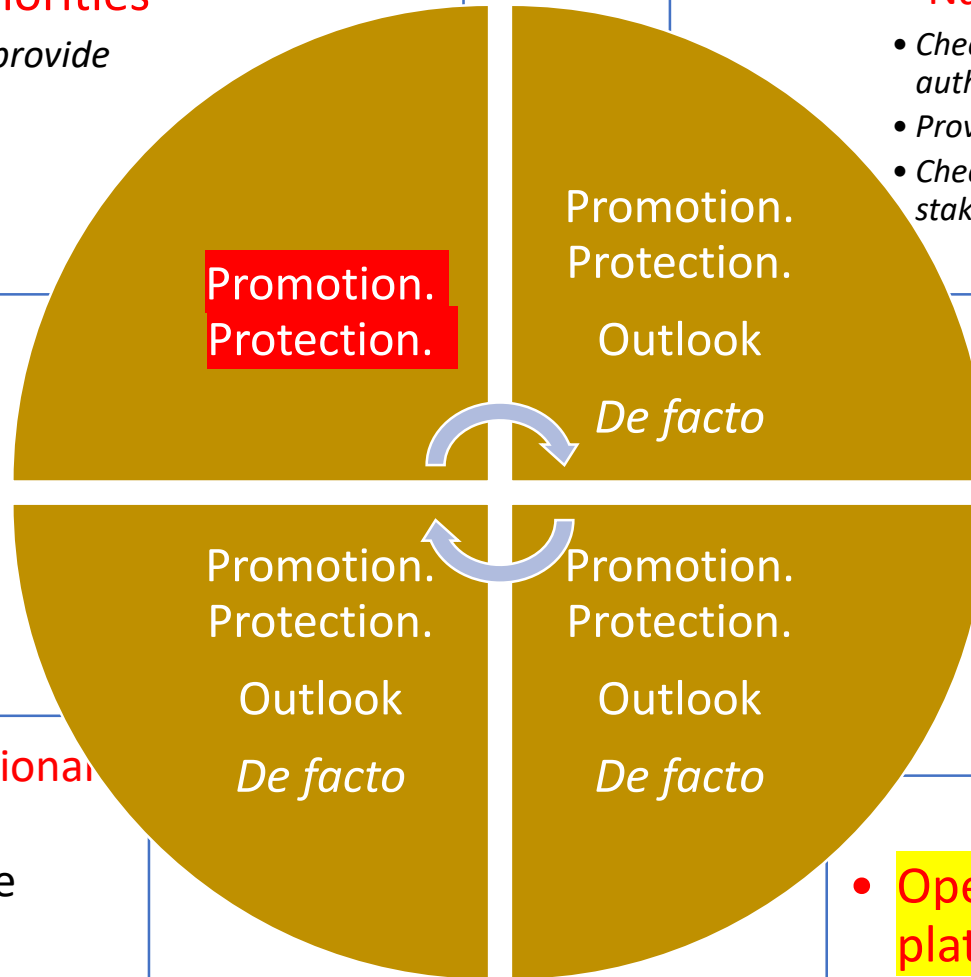
VALUES	Type of monitoring and Indicators	
<b>Duties/Obligations</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Academic integrity</li> <li>- Public responsibility <i>for</i> higher education</li> <li>- Public responsibility <i>of</i> higher education</li> </ul>	<i>De jure</i>	
	Protection	Outlook
	Promotion	
	<i>De facto</i>	
	Fulfilment	
	Threats	
	Positive developments	

# Sources of data for all values

- **Public authorities**
  - *Self-reporting; provide system level information.*

- **National operators**
  - *Check input from public authorities.*
  - *Provide expert input .*
  - *Check input provided by stakeholders.*

Data from other reports/, evaluations, or monitoring exercises



**Small sample of national stakeholders** (e.g., student union, trade union, academics)

- **Open platform**

*Check input from authorities and experts.  
Provide bottom-up/stakeholders input.*

Monitoring AF  
in the EHEA:  
comprehensive  
scope; clear  
meaning;  
practically  
oriented

How to monitor values: focus on commitments

Transnational implementation tool (protect and promote)


Cluster of values, not only one or the other

Peer learning (positive developments)

Role of stakeholders



The  
fundamental  
values of  
higher  
education in  
the EHEA

- 
- A common framework of reference.  
**Similar to the qualifications frameworks?**
  - Is it effective? The future of the EHEA fundamental values of higher education.
  - The role of education.
  - Links with other EHEA areas/WGs.

# Frameworks of reference and conceptual reference points

- **Frameworks of reference include** (variably):
  - a conceptual reference (shared)
  - guidelines for the practice and protection of academic freedom
  - elements of codification (can be legislative norms - but not necessarily, regulations, codes of conduct, etc.)
  - provisions about institutions and/or institutional mechanisms that should or could be utilised to implement the respective understanding and codification of academic freedom.
- ***Conceptual reference points:***
  - *not only a definition or a link to an existing definition; a sufficiently long conceptual elaboration available in a written format that serves as a common reference, go-to conceptual source (or “anchor”) for actors inside and outside the university, which they use in sync for the understanding, codification and practice of academic freedom.*

L. Matei and G. D’Aquila 2025

L. Matei 2024:

<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20240827182451588>

A taxonomy of  
frameworks of  
reference and  
conceptual  
references for  
academic

- *Institutional*
- *National*
- *Regional*
- *Global*





Existing  
global  
frameworks  
(variable)

- **UNESCO's 1997 and 2017 recommendations** on academic freedom and freedom of scientific research
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** –*Principles for the implementation of the right to academic freedom 2024*
- **International Covenant** on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)  
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- **Magna Charta Universitatum** (1988, 2020)

European  
frameworks of  
reference  
(regional)

- **EHEA: 2018-2024**
- **EU:**
  - **Jurisprudence:** ECJ - European Commission vs Hungary 2020
  - **Conceptual reference followed by monitoring attempts:** (Ministerial) Bonn Declaration on Freedom of Scientific Research in 2020
  - **European legislation** for academic freedom: EU Parliament (**ERA Act**)
  - **EU Commission:** Guidelines for the protection and promotion of the **fundamental academic values**

# National frameworks of reference

- **UK:** Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act (2023) and other legislation
- **South Africa:** Higher Education Council - conceptual references and national regulations for academic freedom, university autonomy, and public accountability.
- **Sweden...**
- **Every country? Not always legal**



Institutional/inter-  
institutional (UK)

- King's College London 2022-2023  
**King's presidential series on  
academic freedom** published  
*Principles for re-imagining  
academic freedom*
- Chicago Principles, 2014

## Frameworks of reference at work - observations

- **Overlapping** (“if I am a refugee doctoral student in Germany” ...)
- **Contradictions, tensions** (e.g. UK, Hungary-EU, Florida-USA)
- **Status**: human rights, legal/fundamental rights, values governance principles
- **Clusters of values or principles** (AF, autonomy, integrity, responsibility, etc.-*freedoms and responsibilities*)



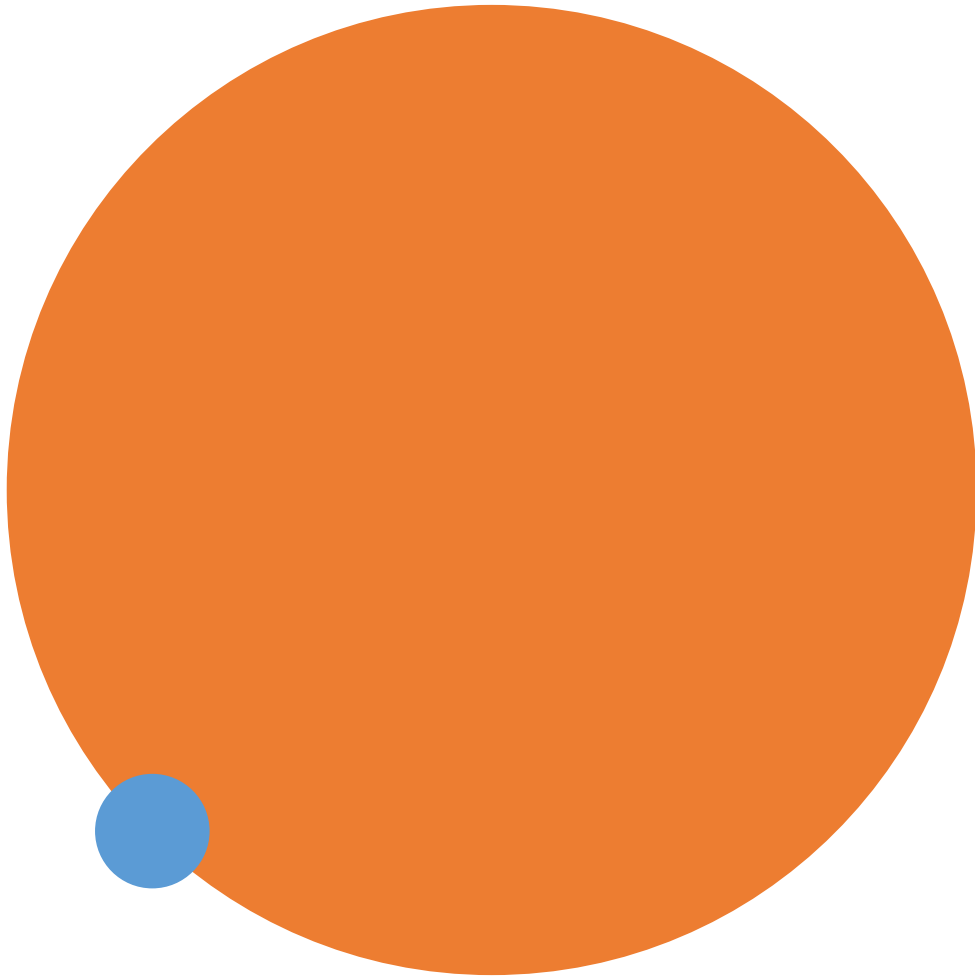


*Statement on  
Academic  
Freedom.  
ROME  
MINISTERIAL  
COMMUNIQUÉ*

*Academic freedom is an indispensable aspect of quality learning, teaching and research in higher education as well as of democracy.*

*It is a necessary condition for higher education institutions to produce and transmit knowledge as a public good for the benefit of society.*

*It guarantees academics and students the freedom of thought and inquiry to advance knowledge through research and to exchange openly, as well as the freedom to communicate the results of research within and outside of the framework of academic institutions and programmes.*




*Academic freedom is a distinct, fundamental democratic right in part grounded in the right to education, and shares elements with freedom of thought, opinion and expression.*

*Academic freedom must be framed by rigorous scientific and professional standards, respect for the rights of others, ethical conduct and the awareness of the impact of research on humans and their environment. It is crucial in order to advance the standards of academic disciplines and fields of enquiry.*

*As such, academic freedom protects not only individual scholarship and expression but also the free functioning of academic institutions in democratic societies.*


*Institutional autonomy is constitutive for academic freedom.*



*Academic freedom can be understood to comprise the freedom to learn (!), to teach and to research, with each of these freedoms entailing the freedom to think, to question, and to share ideas, both inside and outside the higher education sector.*

*Giving meaning and life to these freedoms in the reality of the academic environment automatically opens up a number of issues. The freedom to teach can only be realised concretely in combination with public and social responsibility and institutional autonomy.*

*Public authorities have the responsibility to ensure that relevant higher education programmes are offered to citizens, while autonomous higher education institutions assume a large responsibility for research underpinning programmes, and for how programmes are taught.*



*Higher education governance* also has an impact on the freedoms to learn, teach and research, and should be organised consciously in ways that respect academic freedom.

Different governance models co-exist in Europe with academic staff and students differently represented in *governing and decision-making bodies*.

*Participation in governing bodies* may favour the teaching and research missions of the institution and may reflect the goal of broader societal engagement.

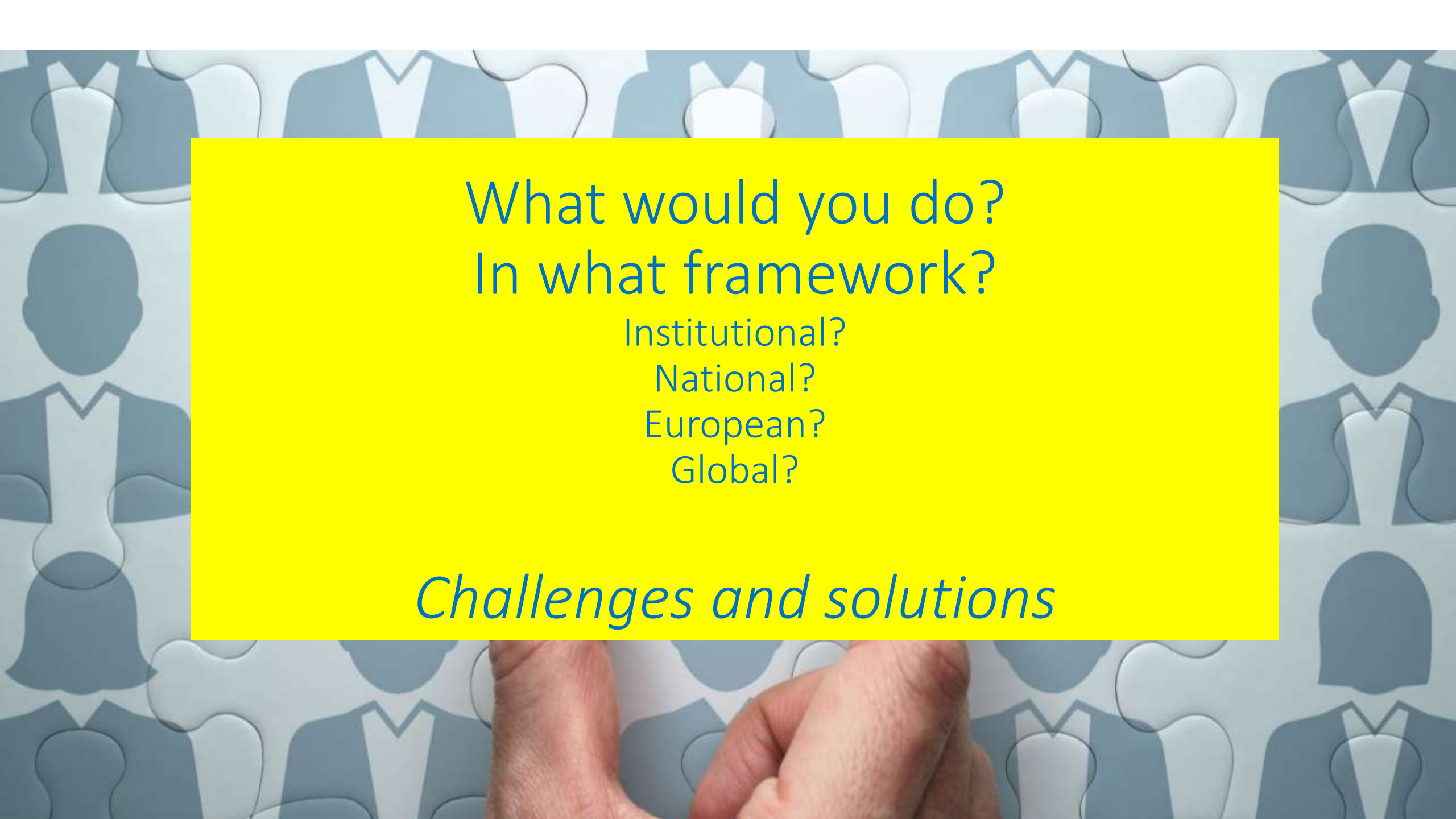
Whatever the particular model, *academic staff and students should participate meaningfully* in decision-making processes and have the right to express their views on their institution's policies and priorities without fear of reprisals.

*Academic freedom is **also** an essential element of democracy. Societies cannot be genuinely democratic without honouring academic freedom and institutional autonomy. At the same time, the **fundamental values of the EHEA cannot be fully realised except in democratic societies.***

*Academic freedom is similar to freedom of expression and is both informed by the standards of of academic disciplines and provides the condition for challenging these standards based on the results of research.*

# Academic freedom and democracy in the EHEA framework of reference

- Production, transmission, disseminate of knowledge as a public good comes first. Academic freedom has an instrumental role/is an instrumental principle – precondition for the fulfillment of the core mission of the university. **Freedom to teach, learn, research only?**
- Academic freedom is a (fundamental) right. But not for all – a professional right?
- It involves public and social responsibility of and for higher education (not just an instrumental principle)
- AF is an an essential element of democracy (contributes to democracy); requires democracy – but only when linked to the production and transmission of knowledge
- Involves internal (institutional) governance – requires a democratic internal environment, specific to higher education



What would you do?  
In what framework?

Institutional?  
National?  
European?  
Global?

*Challenges and solutions*






Discussion/possible  
lessons



1. Shared  
European values  
vs. university  
values vs.  
fundamental  
values of higher  
education

- 
- What kind of values (organizational values); re-colonizing or decolonizing higher education values?
  - Magna Charta Universitatum values (“living values”)

## 2. What are university values for? What are EHEA fundamental values for?

- National qualification frameworks vs frameworks of reference for the fundamental values
- Knowledge cluster: production, transmission, dissemination, and use of knowledge as a public good.
- Efficiency and democracy.
- Freedoms and responsibilities.



# Thank you!

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