



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

Brussels, 17 December 2012

## **New ranking targets 500 universities**

Five hundred universities from across Europe and the world are expected to take part in a new international university ranking initiated by the European Commission, it was announced today. The new listing, U-Multirank, will differ from existing rankings by rating universities according to a broader range of performance factors, aimed at providing a more realistic and user-friendly guide to what they offer. The new 'multi-dimensional' ranking will rate universities in five separate areas: reputation for research, quality of teaching and learning, international orientation, success in knowledge transfer (eg partnerships with business and start-ups), and regional engagement. Universities are being invited to sign up for the new ranking in the first half of 2013, and the first results are due in early 2014. U-Multirank will be formally launched at a major conference on 30-31 January in Dublin under the Irish Presidency of the European Union.

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said: *"This will be a modern and sophisticated ranking, capturing the full diversity of higher education. Existing international rankings still tend to attach too much weight to research reputation. Our multi-dimensional ranking will provide a more accurate and comparable guide to university quality. U-Multirank will help young people make the right study choices and it will motivate institutions to improve their performance across a whole range of activities. It will also be a useful tool for decision-makers, enabling them to be better placed to develop effective higher education strategies for the future."*

U-Multirank will be based on objective criteria and data. The Commission aims to attract a wide range of universities to take part in the first phase. It would be open to others to join in later. U-Multirank will also enable individuals to select and weigh their own priorities to produce their own, tailor-made rankings.

To ensure impartiality, quality and verification, the Commission has selected an independent consortium to carry out the ranking. The [Centre for Higher Education](#) (CHE) in Germany and the [Center for Higher Education Policy Studies \(CHEPS\)](#) in the Netherlands, will lead the initiative. They will work with partners including the Centre for Science and Technology Studies at Leiden University (CWTS), academic publishers Elsevier, the Bertelsmann Foundation and software firm Folge 3. The consortium will also work with national ranking partners and stakeholder organisations to compile accurate data.

### **Background**

U-Multirank is the culmination of an initiative which originated at a conference organised under the 2008 French Presidency of the European Union, which called for a new university ranking based on a methodology reflecting a variety of dimensions of excellence in an international context.

The European Commission subsequently commissioned a [feasibility study](#) which was carried out by a consortium of higher education and research organisations known as CHERPA and finalised in 2011. The study, based on work with 150 higher education institutions from Europe and around the world, confirmed that both the concept and implementation of a multi-dimensional ranking was realistic.

U-Multirank will be developed in 2013-2014 and will receive €2 million in EU funding from the Lifelong Learning Programme, with the possibility of a further two years of seed-funding in 2015-2016. The goal is for an independent organisation to run the ranking thereafter.

### **For more information**

[U-Multirank](#)

European Commission: Education and training

[Androulla Vassiliou's website](#)

Follow Androulla Vassiliou on Twitter [@VassiliouEU](#)

Contacts :

[Dennis Abbott](#) (+32 2 295 92 58); Twitter: [@DennisAbbott](#)

[Dina Avraam](#) (+32 2 295 96 67)

Project contact: Professor [Frank Ziegele](#) (+49 5241 97 61 24)