

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001684/24
to the Commission
Catherine Griset (Pfe), Pierre-Romain Thionnet (Pfe)
(11 September 2024)**

Subject: Assessment of European universities and suitability of Shanghai Ranking

The Shanghai Ranking, which puts the spotlight on Anglo-Saxon universities, is often presented as a global benchmark. Yet it ignores key aspects such as teaching quality, research quality and graduate employability — all essential criteria for assessing how well universities fare.

In France, several universities have had to revise their strategies to meet the specific criteria of the Shanghai Ranking, in particular by grouping institutions together and changing their scientific research methods. However, these adjustments do not always reflect the core tasks and values of European higher education.

In view of the above:

1. What does the Commission make of the Shanghai Ranking as a means of assessing European universities?
2. Would it consider setting up an alternative ranking that is better adapted to the attributes and priorities of European higher education?
3. What could it do to support European universities so they are not forced to comply with international standards that do not correspond to their missions and intrinsic values?

Submitted: 11.9.2024

**Answer given by Ms Ivanova on behalf of the European Commission
(26 November 2024)**

The Commission acknowledges that the Shanghai Ranking is one of several global university rankings that has its own specific criteria and methodology.

As announced in the European strategy for universities ⁽¹⁾, the Commission is launching a European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO) to reflect the attributes and priorities of European higher education institutions.

EHESO will monitor and support European universities on a broad range of policy-relevant dimensions. Going beyond a pre-defined ranking list, EHESO will provide a multidimensional benchmarking tool which allows universities to compare and assess themselves on the dimensions of quality and performance they consider most relevant.

The further development of EHESO involves collaboration with Member States, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders to ensure a comprehensive and balanced approach.

To support European universities, the Commission continues to promote initiatives that align with the missions and intrinsic values of these institutions.

This includes funding programmes like Erasmus+ ⁽²⁾ and Horizon Europe ⁽³⁾, which support education, training, innovation and research.

The Commission also facilitates the sharing of best practices and fosters collaboration among European universities to enhance their global competitiveness without compromising their core values.

⁽¹⁾ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-01/communication-european-strategy-for-universities-graphic-version.pdf>

⁽²⁾ <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects>

⁽³⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en